Introduction

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In the last few decades we have witnessed a trend in the international labor markets that from a historical point of view can be considered as a revolution, as it has caused dramatic shifts in the lives of people and created a new social and economic reality. The percentage of women in the active work population has increased rapidly in the USA, Europe, and Australia, as in many other regions around the world, to reach what seems to be its saturation point in most Scandinavian countries and dramatic increases in some southern European countries such as Spain. As a consequence we have seen the proliferation of dual-income families where role expectations toward men and women, both in their work activities and their domestic responsibilities, have radically changed (Bond, Galinsky, & Swangberg, 1998).

The male model of work prescribes an ideal employee who is male, full-time, and continuously at work from the end of the education, fully committed to the organization, and without any responsibilities outside of work (Lewis, 1997). This model is no longer valid and has become outdated (Bailyn & Harrington, 2004). In addition, we can also observe a change in attitudes toward what constitutes a successful career, especially among the generations X and Y. Young talents have started to question old assumptions about how work is done, how to show commitment, where and when to work, and how to advance in the company. Having a highly paid job and a career no longer seems to be the most important and central objectives of these individuals in life. They strive for a more "complete" life that includes both a successful professional and a personal life. Parallel to these changes in the workforce, work itself has undergone major changes over the last decades. With the introduction of IT and telecommunication technologies work has become more complex and fragmented. Technology has created a sense that life is moving faster and that more and more activities are squeezed into shorter amounts of time. New technologies have made it possible to perform job tasks from everywhere at any time,

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and have increased the number of interruptions during work as well as expectations of speedy replies, fragmenting time and indirectly, affecting productivity. Employees, especially in professional and managerial work settings, feel increasingly pressured to not only work faster but also to work longer hours (Milliken & Dunn-Jensen, 2005).

We still need to come to grips with the positive and negative consequences of the massive integration of women in the workforce. Among the positive effects are the increase in nations' productivity, the wealth and consumption power of families, the financial independence of women, and an improvement of gender equity. On the other hand, as both men and women are working, family time is coming under pressure. Due to this new mix of gender equity, shifting role expectations, and family time scarcity, many men and women are required to find a new modus vivendi quite different from the traditional breadwinner model. Judging from the high rate of separations and divorces, many couples seem to struggle with the new reality. Separations of couples have resulted in an increasing prevalence of new family forms, like mono-parental and mixed families, in which two single parents together raise their children of previous marriages. In these families, working men and women are experiencing increasing levels of work–family conflict.

In order to avoid or cope with work–family conflict and the resulting strains, couples have started to postpone and control their procreative activity, resulting in an increasing average first childbearing age and a considerable reduction in fertility (most western European countries now have fertility rates below the substitution rate). Only immigration maintains the necessary levels of productivity. In sum, it is clear that although the incorporation of women is improving productivity in the short and mid term, it may have a detrimental effect on the workforce in the long term since there will be a gap between available talent and demand, unless solutions can be found for combining work and caring responsibilities.

We do not need to wait for the next generation to see the clash between this socio-demographic trend and economic reality. Already we see that employers and employees are in opposite camps when they claim more flexibility. For employers, flexibility means availability for the firm, mobility, and willingness to work beyond "nine to five" to meet fluctuations in customer demands. For many employees this translates into long working hours, extra time, and weekends. Employees on the other hand have a kind of flexibility in mind that is

almost diametrically opposed to this concept. They refer to availability for the family, working closer to home or at home, and the possibility to interrupt or reduce work to attend family needs and emergencies.

In order to deal with this new paradox, firms have started to adopt what have been coined "family-friendly" or "work–life" human resource policies. This reflects that today's business community increasingly recognizes the importance and value of finding a healthy harmony between professional and personal responsibilities, both in terms of meeting the needs of individual employees and the demands of stakeholders to balance social and economic interests. It has become a critical element within the management of human capital – a vital aspect of corporate governance – to secure a prosperous future for the firm through the management of attraction, retention, promotion, and succession of highly skilled and motivated personnel. With the aging of the work population and the resulting scarcity in certain labor markets, the "war for talent" will only become more intense in the decades to come. Therefore we can expect that work–life policies will only continue to proliferate in firms in the future. Many leading organizations have taken steps to implement comprehensive strategies to aid work–life harmony; these begin with a move to introduce policies and practices that help to alleviate conflict between work, family, and personal responsibilities. However, if such policies and programs are only superimposed on "ideal worker" practices they may not sufficiently contribute to an improved work–life integration of their employees (Bailyn & Harrington, 2004). Policies need to progressively develop into actions centered around engineering a positive cultural change, that is, steps toward creating a strong, supportive, and well-equilibrated professional environment.

The title of the book

Inspired by leading scholars like Susan Lewis and Rhona Rapoport we have become aware that words are not neutral. Therefore a short note on the terms in the title is warranted.

Harmonization

The central term in the title of the book is *harmonizing*. We use the term harmonization to refer to both *relieving conflict* and *seeking*

enrichment between the domains of work, family, and personal life. Two competing arguments dominate the scholarly discussion about outcomes associated with the engagement in multiple life roles. According to the scarcity argument, individuals have limited resources and energy. Engaging in multiple roles means competition for these limited resources, thereby causing psychological distress and role strain, since there is only a finite amount of resources and energy available to the individual (Goode, 1960). Based on this argument work–family conflict has been defined as a type of inter-role conflict which is experienced by an individual when the role demands stemming from one domain (work or family) are incompatible with role demands stemming from another domain (family or work) (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).[1] Since the late nineteen sixties, hundreds of studies and books have been published, generally or implicitly based on the scarcity argument/role theory, focusing on the antecedents and

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[1] Work–family conflict has been related to important individual and organizational problems such as absenteeism, intentions to leave work, decreased organizational commitment, and decreased job, family, and life satisfaction (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Aryee, 1992; Bedeian, Burke, & Moffet, 1988; Higgins, Duxbury, & Irving, 1992; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Lyness & Thompson, 1997; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). In addition, negative mental and physical health outcomes (e.g. depression, stress, job burnout) have been associated with high levels of work–family conflict (Boles, Johnstone, & Hair, 1997; Frone, 2000; Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk, & Beutell, 1996). More recently scholars have called for a more balanced approach that recognizes the positive effects of combining work and family roles (e.g. Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Frone, 2003). Experiences in one role can produce positive experiences and outcomes in the other role. Greenhaus and Powell (2006) refer to this mechanism as work–family enrichment. Work–family enrichment as well as work–family conflict is bi-directional; work can interfere with family (referred to as work-to-family conflict or work-to-family enrichment when work experiences improve the quality of family life) and family can interfere with work (referred to as family-to-work conflict or family-to-work enrichment respectively; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). In addition, time-based, strain-based, or behavior-based work–family conflict can be distinguished (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Time-based conflict occurs when role pressures stemming from the two different domains compete for the individual's time. For example, an employee who is unexpectedly asked to travel abroad may fail to attend a sick child. Strain-based conflict occurs when the strain experienced in one role domain interferes with effective performance of role behaviors in the other domain. For instance, a father who had to deal with a mounting conflict at work may come back home irritated and bad-tempered, resulting in shouting at his children. Behavior-based conflict is described as conflict stemming from incompatible behaviors demanded by competing roles. An example is a military officer commanding her children as if they were little soldiers.

consequences of work–family *conflict*. Until very recently, it was the
dominant paradigm. Over the last decade, the work–family literature
has begun to pick up the argument of enhancement theory (e.g. Barnett
& Hyde, 2001; Frone, 2003; Greenhaus and Powell, 2005). Very much
in the spirit of positive psychology, followers of the enhancement
theory (Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974) work on the premises that engaging
in multiple roles can have a positive and enhancing effect on the
individual. Their argument is based on the assumption that multiple
roles generate social and economic resources. Accordingly, involve-
ment in multiple roles often generates social support, added income,
increased self-complexity, and opportunities to experience success,
which in turn can create a satisfactory self-image and life situation
(Barnett & Hyde, 2001). Experiences in one role can produce positive
experiences and outcomes in the other role. From our point of view
both the conflict and enrichment perspectives are relevant for designing
policies in the firm. Therefore we integrate them under the term
harmonization.

Work, family, and personal life

In this book some authors use the terms work–family and work–life
policies interchangeably, although one may argue that these are not
neutral terms and reflect the degree of inclusion of different employee
groups: employees with families (work–family policies) or both
employees with and without families (work–life policies). Many
firms see the issue as even broader and speak of diversity policies, to
include employees of different gender orientation, race, and culture.
We choose to distinguish family and personal life, although many could
argue that family is part of personal life, for two reasons. First, we want
to recognize and stress that when designing policies, we need to keep in
mind both groups, employees with families and employees without
families. Many firms focus on – or give priority to – employees with
families, as they are considered to be more in need of firm support given
their responsibility over others. The degree of inclusion is an ethical
and strategic decision of the firm, and often reflects the socio-cultural
set-up of the labor force or client base and stakeholders of the firm.
Second, even if firms decide to focus on employees with families alone,
it is recommended they think of work–family policies encompassing
benefits that directly enhance the personal life of the employee, as

activities aimed at personal development and harmony will indirectly impact the employee's family life.

The purpose of the book: from policy to practice

The purpose of the book is to provide the reader with ideas and guidelines on how to create a working environment that encourages the harmonization of work, family, and personal life, while respecting the bottom line. Although many books on individual work–family conflict and dual-income families have been published, few of them pretend to offer a practical guide to managers who want to develop work–life policies and practices in the firm. This book points at the strengths and pitfalls associated with different types of work–life policies, and explains the necessity of a supportive culture, and the development of work practices that promote this harmonization. By going beyond formal policies, and emphasizing the need for practice, we recognize the fundamental importance of the support and accountability of middle managers, an often strongly underestimated source of failure in implementing these policies. The book is very practical in nature, illustrating different points with cases and examples, and helping firms to assess themselves on different dimensions by providing easy-to-use checklists and questionnaires. The scope of the book is clearly international, with contributions from authors from three continents. We pretend to offer ideas and advice that is neutral to the specific legislative context of the firm, which falls outside the scope of this book. We encourage our readers from different parts of the world to take inspiration from the many examples given throughout the book and to take innovative initiatives that are compatible with their labor markets and legal contexts. This is a book for (human resource) managers who are about to embark on developing work–life policies, or who want to deploy policies in subsidiaries of their firms in different regions around the world. Second, it will be of interest and use to a broad range of practitioners, teachers, consultants, and coaches who want to advise their clients or students in the development of these policies.

The content of the book

In this book, we are covering a broad spectrum of concerns for human resource scholars, managers, and consultants who are interested in (the

theme of) adopting, designing, and implementing work–life policies. The book is organized into three parts. In the first part – "Describing different work–life policies, policy development, and pitfalls," comprising Chapters 1 to 5 – the authors describe various work–life policies introduced in different working environments and their role in the harmonization of work, family, and personal life. In the second part – "Policy design, implementation, and deployment," comprising Chapters 6 and 7 – implementation and policy development is presented and commented upon. In the third part – "Cultural change," comprising Chapters 8 and 9 – the authors present ideas on how to plan and implement change, as well as barriers to a successful employment of change.

With Chapter 1 – "Strategic HR and work–life balance" – Paula Caligiuri and Nicole Givelekian (both Rutgers University, USA) open the book with a broad strategic HR perspective, focusing on employees who occupy critical or core positions in the organization and excel in them. As a result of the centrality to a firm's success, core positions tend to be associated with high stress, long working hours, and constant spillover from work to personal life. In order to reduce the risk of stress and burnout, prevent decreased job satisfaction and occupational commitment, and ultimately improve firm productivity, the authors argue in favor of promoting work–life balance among core employees. The authors affirm the importance of taking into account individual differences and personal characteristics as they affect employees' perceptions of their work–life balance, when they feel out of balance, the amount of spillover they are comfortable with, etc. As core employees tend to be achievers and high-performers it is crucial for the company not to over-utilize them, causing stress, ill-effects, and turnover intentions. The authors suggest several ways to promote greater balance in core employees, like services helping reduce the non-work hassles, wellness programs to increase employees' physical and psychological well-being, and recreational activities.

In Chapter 2 – "Reviewing policies for harmonizing work, family, and personal life" – Steven Poelmans (IESE Business School, Spain) and Barbara Beham (University of Hamburg, Germany) analyze traditional human resource policies and practices aimed at improving the work–family balance of employees in organizations. In order to guarantee that the review of these policies and practices does not remain at a purely theoretical level, the authors provide examples of work–life

programs and policies successfully implemented in various companies. First, they briefly address the adoption decision. Second, they describe the human resource policies known for possibly improving work–life balance, providing practical examples of companies which have implemented single policies as well as bundles of work–life arrangements. They offer a detailed overview of flexibility policies, leave arrangements, care provisions, supportive arrangements, and conventional provisions for job quality and compensations/benefits. They also provide useful checklists stating the business benefits, advantages, and disadvantages of these work–life arrangements. Finally, the authors point out the importance of creating a family-supportive organizational culture and introduce a new paradigm for work–life harmonization.

In Chapter 3 – "Integrating career development and work–family policy" – Tammy Allen (University of South Florida, USA) examines the intersection between individual and organizational career development with that of work–family needs and policies. First the author reviews the literature examining career implications for individuals as a function of their family structure and use of family-supportive benefits. She gives examples of various studies showing ample evidence that family and using family-supportive benefits may be detrimental to an employee's career, resulting in fewer promotions, smaller salary increases, and decreased involvement in training opportunities. Next she offers recommendations for integrating work and family with employee development. For instance, she suggests expanding ideas regarding flexibility by constructing the flexibility concept so as to encompass the entire career course. This way, taking a few months/ years should not be a barrier to future career advancement prospects. Also, she proposes to implement mentoring programs as a way to increase a company's competitive advantage through employee learning and development. In addition, supervisors' support in meeting non-work demands is introduced as a way of alleviating employees' work–family conflict. Therefore training supervisors in employee family concerns might encourage the usage of work–family programs and help both supervisors and employees improve their quality of life. It can also help the former acquire such skills as flexibility, promoting cross-training among employees, communication, coordination, and team-building.

In Chapter 4 – "Work–life balance on global assignments" – Paula Caligiuri (Rutgers University, USA) and Mila Lazarova (Simon Fraser

University, Canada) address the importance of companies supporting employees on global assignments in managing their work–life balance as both the employee and the family are going through an adaptation phase. Therefore to contribute to the successful outcome of the assignment, these organizations must become more involved in the non-work aspects of their assignees and families (e.g. help establish social ties, find communities, re-establish hobbies, sports, and places of worship in the host countries.). In the first part of the chapter the authors complete an important informative task by tackling in detail the adjustment difficulties the expatriate, and his/her partner and children might experience during relocation. They also bring into the discussion a new category of "assignees" – "non-traditional expatriates" or "flexpatriates" – and describe personal and family challenges they are facing. Then they highlight some examples of the practices organizations have developed to enhance global assignees' work–life balance. The practices comprise pre-departure decision-making; cross-cultural training, including language skills training; in-country support – including various networks and services, but also special in-company policies; career assistance, accompanying partner support, and general work–life assistance. In addition to covering the difficulties emerging on global assignments, the authors make sure to mention the positive outcomes for the assignees as well as their families.

In Chapter 5, Joan Gentilesco-Giue and Oana Petrescu (both IBM) present an IBM case study, a story about changing mindsets at IBM. A globally conducted survey showed the existing need of balancing the work and life of IBM's employees. Therefore it required the application of new management strategies that would "empower" the employees in the workplace and help adapt their needs of balancing work and life to the place of work. First, the authors describe the existing work–life strategy and work–life programs. Next they concentrate on the concrete steps IBM took on the global level. Besides the introduction of different work–life benefits, they address change of unnecessary/ unproductive work practices and the improvement of the workplace, so that employees feel comfortable there. Nevertheless, the authors mainly focus on the change of the mindset of both managers and employees relative to the acceptance of a flexible work environment at IBM and different supporting tools provided by the company.

In Chapter 6 – "Stages in the implementation of work–family policies" – Steven Poelmans (IESE Business School, Spain), Shilpa Patel

(MTL Instruments Group, UK), and Barbara Beham (University of Hamburg, Germany) discuss how work–life policies can be implemented and applied in general (implementation) and in specific cases (allowance) to reduce conflicts between responsibilities at work, in the family, and in personal life. They focus on how to identify a realistic path for development; where to begin when introducing initiatives; what challenges companies face; and what pitfalls some organizations have already encountered in the implementation of improvement opportunities. The authors introduce the four-phase "Family Responsible Company Development Model," based on five consecutive national surveys of work–life policies in organizations in Spain, which defines the organization's present status in terms of family responsibility. The phases are described through the lenses of the four fundamental elements of change that are: policies, practices, culture, and enablers. The model, being an instrument of change, is complemented by on-line evaluation and diagnostic tools designed to help assess the needs and priorities of the organization in its development towards a family responsible firm.

In Chapter 7 – "Policy deployment across borders: a framework for work–life initiatives in multinational enterprises" (MNEs) – Anne Bardoel and Helen De Cieri (both of Monash University, Australia) discuss the advantages of a global work–life strategy and the challenge of work–life policies introduction across a global context with the consideration of local conditions. Most significantly, the chapter provides practical advice to organizations, especially to human resource practitioners in MNEs. The authors develop a framework that can be used to guide managers' decision-making to build a global work–life strategy and they illustrate how this framework can be applied, by analyzing approaches to work–life strategy in several MNEs. To highlight the challenges that managers may face, the authors compare an MNE that is at an early stage of developing a work–life strategy with other firms that are well advanced in this area. In this way they provide examples of strategies in which managers deal with such challenges.

In Chapter 8 – "Barriers to the implementation and usage of work–life policies" – Cynthia Thompson (Baruch College, CUNY, USA) addresses the causes of (non-)usage of work–life policies, such as poor communication, fears of detrimental career effects, improper implementation of programs, or absence of technical and management