

Resilience Theory: A Literature Review

with special chapters on
deployment resilience in military families
& resilience theory in social work

by

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CHAPTER FIVE: RESILIENCE-BASED POLICY

5.1 INTRODUCTION TO RESILIENCE-BASED POLICY

The previous chapter indicated that the theory of community-level resilience was still in its infancy. This current chapter suggests that the theory of resilience-based policy and resilience policy development processes have been barely birthed. As few as six publications (Bogenschneider, 1996; Chapin, 1995; Dumon, 1988; Figley & McCubbin, 1983; National Network for Family Resiliency, 1996; Weick & Saleebey, 1995) could be located addressing the question of resilience theory and policy development. Even in these six, the ideas are as yet quite unformulated and undeveloped.

The six writers concur that most family policy has been pathology or deficit oriented, rather than strengths or resilience oriented. This is particularly so in the United States of America (Dumon, 1988; Weick & Saleebey, 1995). According to Chapin (1995, p. 506), the "problem-centered approach to policy formulation with its intense focus on problem definition and assessment has not been coupled with similar attention to assessment of the strengths of the people and environment that the policy targets."

In a resilience framework, policies are not primarily focused on correcting deficits, but on promoting a social environment that is conducive to individual, family and community well-being or functioning (Chapin, 1995). Individuals who have deficits are considered to have these deficits not because of some inherent deficiency, but because of exclusion from social processes on the basis of demographic characteristics (ibid.). Consequently, resilience or strengths based policies "identify individual and community resources that can be used to create opportunities for inclusion or to provide clear-cut alternatives that bypass the predominant system 'in favor of those which work better for a given community'" (Chapin, 1995, p. 509).

In order to achieve the shift in focus from deficits to strengths, Chapin (1995) argues that policy should focus not on problems (which tend to be unique to certain demographic groups – deficient people) but on common human needs. This shift in focus "mitigates the labeling process and helps illuminate the various ways people get help in meeting these needs without being labeled as deviant or deficient" (Chapin, 1995, p. 509). In this way, policy development becomes a process of empowering families (National Network for Family Resiliency, 1996).

Figley and McCubbin (1983) argue that policy developers should take cognisance of research that demonstrates factors which promote the resilience of individuals and families in the face of adversity. Policies should focus not so much or not only on remedial strategies to help those facing adversity, but also on establishing the resistance resources which reduce the vulnerability of all people to the negative consequences of adversity. This is more in keeping with the Salutogenic perspective (Antonovsky, 1979), which argues that stress is ubiquitous and not inherently bad. One cannot finally rid society of stress, but one can raise the capacity of families to resist the negative consequences of stress (see also Bogenschneider, 1996 for an application of this approach to at-risk youth).

Weick and Saleebey (1995) emphasise the flexible nature of the modern family and the conflicts between societal values, family processes and family policies. They argue that the All-American values of individualism and economic self-sufficiency form the bedrock of modern policy. Yet, they argue, these policies consequently do not adequately support family well-being (Weick & Saleebey, 1995):

In the absence of an overarching philosophy and value system that establish [sic] societal responsibility for family well-being, these policies rest on a hodgepodge of prejudice, fears, and grudging assistance. They do not make necessary resources available to marginalized and struggling families, nor do they provide families with increasing control over such resources. (p. 142)

According to Weick and Saleebey (1995), policies that are informed by resilience theory will acknowledge the responsibility of society as a whole to the development of all families. Furthermore, families will be defined flexibly, not in traditionalist terms (nuclear families with a male head). Such policies will develop 'enabling niches' for families (as discussed in the previous chapter), that is, environments in which families fit, feel comfortable and are able to thrive (ibid.).

Ooms and Preister (in National Network for Family Resiliency, 1996) developed six principles by which to evaluate the impact of family policies on families:

- ❖ **"Family Support & Responsibilities.** Policies should support and supplement family functioning and provide substitute services as a last resort.
 - *"Underlying Value: Families fill some functions best; substitutes are a last resort.*
- ❖ **"Family Membership & Stability.** Policies should encourage and reinforce family commitment and stability, especially when children are involved.

- *"Underlying Value: Removal of family members is justified only as protection from serious harm.*

- ❖ **"Family Involvement and Interdependence.** Policies must recognize the interdependence of family relationships, the strength of family ties and obligations, and the resources families have to help their members.
 - *"Underlying Value: Solutions to individual problems shouldn't harm other family members.*

- ❖ **"Family Partnership & Empowerment.** Policies must encourage family members to collaborate as partners with professionals in service delivery.
 - *"Underlying Value: Policies usually are more relevant to family needs when families are involved in their development.*

- ❖ **"Family Diversity.** Policies must acknowledge and value the diversity of family life and recognize the different ways families may be impacted.
 - *"Underlying Value: All families need support and shouldn't be disadvantaged because of structure, cultural values, life stage, or circumstance.*

- ❖ **"Family Vulnerability.** Families with the greatest economic and social need should have first priority in government policies.
 - *"Underlying Value: All families deserve support. Policies should give special consideration to those with the greatest social and economic limitation, and to those most likely to break down."*

Although these principles are presented as consonant with family resilience theory, they seem to reflect the underlying value system of the residual welfare system, in which welfare policy is targeted at helping only those who are most vulnerable. In contrast, a developmental welfare approach aims to develop the well-being and resilience of all, not only the most vulnerable.

Dumon (1988) contrasts family policy in Western Europe with family policy in the United States, and in so doing confirms the sentiment of the previous paragraph. She says, "Family policy in Europe ... has been based on the idea or ideology of social justice, more than on any type of charity, help, or welfare. ... Therefore, family policy was not directed to deficient families" (Dumon, 1988, p. 239). Family policies are for all families and all families benefit from them, even, says Dumon, the Prime Minister.

Dumon (1988, p. 239) identifies three classes of family policy: "(1) policies aimed at strengthening families economically, (2) remedial policies, and (3) substitutional policies":

- ❖ **Economic Enabling Policies.** This category of policy has two main foci, viz family allowances and tax reductions. Both are based upon the number of children in a family unit, and are thus not about distributing resources from rich to poor (as in many other welfare systems). Rather the emphasis is on "a horizontal redistribution of income from small to large families" (Dumon, 1988, p. 240). In this way the policy is child and family centred – money is provided to the caregiver of the child (regardless of marital status or gender) and this pairing of child and caregiver is considered a family unit. Unlike other welfare policies, Western Europe has no 'means test' which must be passed in order to 'qualify' for welfare assistance – the mere fact of having a child qualifies one for financial relief so that adults who raise children are not economically disadvantaged.

- ❖ **Remedial Policies.** After the Second World War, many European countries introduced "nonmaterial" family policies that focused on providing families with "family life education and information on family matters" (Dumon, 1988, p. 240). In order to reduce the interference of the state in private matters, most of these services were outsourced to private organisations, often with 100% subsidisation. Using a quota system, governments ensured that all segments of the population (based on language, religious affiliation, culture, etc) were catered for. The remedial policies tended to focus more on individual and interpersonal well-being, in contrast with the previous class of family policies which focused more on situational elements of the family as a unit.

- ❖ **Substitutional Policies.** In the 1970s a new class of family policies emerged in Europe, namely substitutional policies, in which provision was made for services which substituted for certain family functions. Day care for children is a key example. "A new policy was the provision of household substitutes for mothers, and later on for either parent falling ill or being disabled on a temporary basis" (Dumon, 1988, p. 241). These policies were means based, with lower income groups enjoying first priority. The substitution services were paid for, however, although on a sliding scale with lower income families paying less than wealthier families.

Clearly, a great deal more work is required to unpack what is meant by resilience-based policies. Some of the key ingredients that can be synthesised from these six authors and hints from previously cited writers are:

- ❖ Policies must move from a deficits emphasis to a strengths emphasis.
- ❖ Policies must create environments that are conducive to healthy resilient families.
- ❖ Policies must incorporate resilience research that identifies protective community factors.
- ❖ Policies must focus on the development of all families, not exclusively on vulnerable families.
- ❖ Policies must be flexible, must involve the participation of its clients and must cater for the diverse range of family types, cultures, norms, etc.
- ❖ Policies must aim both to create experiences that promote resilience and to reduce experiences that create vulnerability.

5.2 WORK-LIFE INTERFACE

A unique example of resilience-based policy is the area of the work-life interface. I am using the term 'work-life interface' to refer to the often conflictual relationship between the occupational or work role/system and the personal, 'life' or family roles/systems of people. Changes in the modern workforce, particularly since the 1980's, have led to great increases in work-life conflicts (Googins, 1991). Employers are increasingly having to address how to reduce these conflicts in order to retain qualified personnel, reduce absenteeism, increase productivity and improve client satisfaction. Most organizations at the turn of the 21st century have introduced policies that facilitate this interface – work-life initiatives, alternative working arrangements, family-friendly policies, etc.

None of the literature on the work-life interface is explicitly grounded in resilience theory. Nevertheless, there are a number of characteristics of this field which suggest that it can be meaningfully considered as an example of resilience-based policy:

- ❖ The work-life policies promote the interface between two conflicting systems in order to promote the well-being of both systems.

- ❖ The outcome of work-life policies can be described as a balance between demands and capabilities between the two systems of work and family.
- ❖ Work-life policies create a societal system that is much more flexible and cohesive, characterised by greater commitment and a greater ability to cope with stress and change.
- ❖ Work-life policies in general focus on the entire working community rather than only on those with problems, and in this way have a preventive, strengths-building approach rather than a purely remedial one.

This section will provide an overview of theory related to the work-life interface in order to clarify the concept, provide examples of work-life conflicts and highlight the impact of such conflicts on the workplace and on the family/person, provide examples of work-life policy initiatives, and highlight the impact of such policies on the workplace and on the family/person.

5.2.1 THEORY OF THE WORK-LIFE INTERFACE

The theory of work-life interface originates in two sets of changes, viz changes in the workforce and changes in organizational processes. In addition, much work-life theory addresses the degree or nature of the interface between these two systems.

5.2.1.1 Changes in the Workforce

The workforce has changed dramatically over the past few decades. Society has also changed greatly, along with economic change, cultural change, and changes in the workplace itself. These changes have necessitated radical change in how one thinks about work and in how employers approach employees (O'Connell, 1999), and more and more companies are realising the importance of attending to the family and other social needs of their employees (Moore, 1997).

The 'Baby-Boomer' generation, which entered the workforce during the 1960s, placed great emphasis on work. Their personal identities were very tied up with their work identity (Gibbon, 1995). Consequently, they had a very strong work commitment or psychological contract. Many of these workers were prepared to put in 60 or more hours

of work per week (Keele, 1984) and were willing to sacrifice family time for work time. Workers prior to that, in the wake of the Depression, were willing to take any job that provided security, and found their family or religious identity as important as their work identity (ibid.).

The employee of the last two decades of the 20th Century, Generation X, however, is seeking a better balance between work and family life, and is demanding that the workplace take a less central role in life (Allen & Russell, 1999). One of the reasons for such a shift is the changing demographic of the workforce. Only a small percentage of the workforce conforms to the traditional American family type: breadwinner husband and stay-at-home mother/wife. "In fact, it is estimated that among American two-parent heterosexual families, only 20% fit the description of a traditional household" (ibid., p. 166).

As we move into the 21st Century, one may wonder what is in store for us. A team of panellists believe that one of the major changes in the workplace during the first decade of the 21st Century will be a shift towards "working to live, not living to work" and that companies will free up workers to seek fulfilment at home and in the community (Kemske, 1998). These panellists believe that in the future work will not occupy the centre of people's emotional lives and identity (ibid.; see also Segal, 1989).

One of the main changes in the demographics of families is the rising number of dual-income families (Portner, 1983). In Canada the percentage of all two-parent families that were dual-income families increased from 20% in 1961 to 40% in 1981 and to 65% in 1991 (Duxbury, Higgins, & Lee, 1994, p. 449). In the USA in 1997, 78% of married full-time employees had a partner who was also employed (Bond, Galinsky, & Swanberg, 1998, p. 5).

In addition, increasing numbers of families have only one parent – whether divorced parents, never-married parents or widowed parents (Portner, 1983). "In 1991, 12.8% of Canadian families were classified as single-parent families, ... the majority of which are headed by women" (Duxbury et al., 1994, p. 449). In 1997 in the USA, almost 20% of employed parents were single parents (Bond et al., 1998, p. 5).

Other studies have indicated that increasing numbers of employees are responsible for the care of children or elderly relatives (Weiss, 1998). As society ages it is likely that there will be a tremendous increase in the percentage of employees caring for the elderly. Currently, about one in four American households cares for an elderly family member or friend, and about 60% of caregivers find that caring for an elderly person

causes them to miss work, arrive late, leave early, take extended lunch breaks, etc (Rachor, 1998, p. 20).

Men are taking an increasingly active role in family life, way beyond the traditional role of 'providing' for the family economically (Cohen, 1993; Segal, 1989; Stanford, 1998). Although employed mothers still spend more time with their children than do fathers (3.2 vs 2.3 hours respectively per workday in 1997), employed fathers in 1997 are spending 30 minutes more per workday with their children than they did in 1977, while employed mothers' time per day has remained constant (Bond et al., 1998, p. 5). In addition to spending more time with their children, employed fathers are spending more time on home chores – "mothers' workday time on chores has decreased by 36 minutes per day [from 1977 to 1997], while men's time has increased by one hour" (ibid., p. 6).

Ellen Galinsky is quoted as saying (in Pleck, 1993):

When we first started doing this the groups of men and women sounded very different. If the men complained at all about long hours, they complained about their wives' complaints. Now if the timbre of the voice was disguised, I couldn't tell which is which. The men are saying: "I don't want to live this way. I want to be with my kids." I think the corporate culture will have to begin to respond to that. (p. 234)

The establishment of the Fatherhood Project in 1981 (Levine & Pitt, 1999) provides an example of the growing commitment of men to life beyond the workplace. This project aims to help men find a better balance between work and family responsibilities. The Fatherhood Project lists 19 additional websites dedicated to addressing fatherhood issues, particularly work-family issues (ibid.).

5.2.1.2 Changes in the Workplace

In addition to changes in family structures, there have been major changes in the workplace as well (Cooper, 1998). Three of the main changes are "downsizing, diffusing information via computerized telecommunication technologies, and increasing reliance on high-involvement team approaches" (Crouter & Manke, 1994, p. 117):

- ❖ **Downsizing.** Many American organisations began a substantial process of downsizing during the 1980s and 1990s. These retrenchments went beyond the natural shrinking of the formal market during a recession, but reflected changes in the way the contemporary market is being structured. In order to gain a corner of the global market, companies are having to be smaller and more efficient ('lean &

mean'), and are out contracting specific portions of their work. This has implications for both those who are laid off and those who remain behind. (Crouter & Manke, 1994)

- ❖ **Information Technology.** More and more production and service processes are becoming automated. Consequently, fewer workers are required with technical or manual skills, and workers are increasingly required to work with data rather than materials. This places greater conceptual and cognitive demands on workers, fewer workers are needed and the boundaries between workers and managers become blurred. (Crouter & Manke, 1994)
- ❖ **High-involvement Teams.** Many companies are making increasing use of high-involvement work teams to solve work problems. Previously, workers became highly specialised in their specific field, often without understanding the broader process. Work teams require everyone to know most everything about the process, providing workers with a much broader range of knowledge and skills. Consequently, work becomes more stressful and demanding and workers become much more emotionally and psychologically involved in the work. (Crouter & Manke, 1994)

These changes in the workplace – downsizing and retrenchments, shortened work weeks, privatisation, increasing self-employment, working by contract rather than life-long employment, the rapid changes in technology, increased mechanisation and depersonalisation of work processes, increasing percentage of women in the workforce, etc – have had and will continue to have a profound impact on society's workforce and families (Cooper, 1998). The changes introduce various challenges for families including: (1) having to cope with marked job insecurity, (2) learning to incorporate work and family into the same building as more and more people work from home, (3) coping with working longer hours, (4) the shifting roles and power relationships between men and women at work and home, (5) changing levels of commitment or loyalty towards work, and (6) changes in the factors that motivate people to work (ibid.).

One of the major changes in the workplace is the large number of women who are now working. Almost half of all employed people (46-49%) are women (Gini, 1998, p. 3). Although they make up only 3% of senior managers, women have an influence on the nature of the workplace, and its responsiveness to the needs of families (ibid.).

5.2.1.3 The Myth of Separate Worlds

All of these changes in modern society have resulted in a gradual collapse of what has been termed the “myth of separate worlds” (Andrews & Bailyn, 1993; Davis, 1982; Googins, 1991; Neenan, 1989; Segal, 1989). The equivalent concept of ‘separate spheres’ can be described as follows (Skrypnek & Fast, 1996):

The separate spheres model regards work and family as naturally and biologically determined separate systems. It is assumed that the nuclear family is the universal, desirable family form, that work and family are static, unchanging institutions, and that gendered division of labor and gender inequality are inevitable and necessary for societal and family stability. Conflict is believed to arise when families fail to keep the spheres separate. (pp. 795-796)

In pre-industrial society the worlds of work and family were often identical. The industrialisation took much of the work out of the home and into a new world – the work world – triggering the separation of the spheres of work and family (Andrews & Bailyn, 1993). Men occupied and controlled the work world while women occupied and largely controlled the family/home world (Brinkerhoff, 1984). “In short, in pre-industrial times the family unit served as both producer and consumer, whereas contemporarily the family consumes as a unit but produces in separate, disjunctive roles that are external to the family” (ibid., p. 5).

This distinction between work and family systems is evident in sociology, which examines two main social structures (Davis, 1982):

The first is the rational bureaucratic organization, as described by Max Weber (Henderson and Parsons, 1947); the second is the primary group, as conceptualized by Cooley (1923). The typical work organization, of course, belongs to the first category; the family unit is invariably classified in the second. (p. 3)

This first conceptualisation of the relationship between family and work, referred to as the ‘separate worlds model’ has dominated much of academic and popular thinking (Andrews & Bailyn, 1993). The world of work is seen as a masculine world, the world of men, while the family is seen as the world of women. Issues regarding childcare and family responsibilities are thus relegated to the private sphere and are seen as having no place at work (ibid.). The world of work can be thought of as making the following demand on employees: “While you are here, you will *act as though* you have no other loyalties, no other life” (ibid., p. 263). The myth of separate worlds serves the “interests of employers by permitting them to deny the possibility of any spillover of negative or dysfunctional effects of organizational policies and procedures upon the family life of employees” (Neenan, 1989, p. 59).

A second conception of the relationship between family and work is referred to as the 'spillover effects model' (Googins, 1991; Segal, 1989; Skrypnek & Fast, 1996). Here, the two worlds of work and family are considered intersecting and the characteristics of one or other is thought to spillover into the other. Most commonly, spillover refers to the negative consequences of the work spilling over into the family (Brinkerhoff, 1984; Marshall, 1991; Marshall, Chadwick, & Marshall, 1991; Skrypnek & Fast, 1996). There is, however, much interest in the spillover of marital and life satisfaction into job satisfaction, and vice versa (Neenan, 1989).

A third conception of the relationship between family and work is referred to as the 'interactive model' (Skrypnek & Fast, 1996). In this model the worlds of work and family are considered to be closely interrelated and contribute both positively and negatively to the other. The emphasis is on the mutuality of the relationship between the two systems, and it is believed that the systems can be better integrated. The close interrelationship between work and the rest of life can be seen in the strong correlations and mutual causation between job and life satisfaction, even longitudinally (Judge & Watanabe, 1993).

Ishii-Kuntz (1994) takes the challenge to the separation of the worlds of paid work and family somewhat further than many other writers. This author notes that in many third world countries there is no physical separation between work and family:

Many men and women around the world who work in their homes for pay are engaged in a variety of economic activities: They assemble electrical and electronic parts, package and label industrial goods, weave carpets, produce shoes and purses, sew traditional clothes, peel shrimp, and process seaweed. (p. 495)

Such a blurring of work and family is becoming increasingly common in the first world as well, particularly with the explosion of information technology and IT based occupations (Ishii-Kuntz, 1994) and the increasing number of women who are becoming self-employed in order to be at home with their children (Boden, 1999). With the work and family roles so enmeshed it becomes difficult to talk about work-family conflicts as if they are two separate spheres colliding. A different paradigm is required.

5.2.2 WORK-LIFE CONFLICTS

Work-life conflicts, usually played out in the arena of work-*family* conflicts, involve difficulty in balancing family and work responsibilities. Portner (1983) identifies several main sources of work-family stress:

- ❖ **Perceived Social Expectations.** People may have perceptions about what society expects of them that create stress at the work-family interface.
- ❖ **Self-expectations.** People may place unrealistic expectations on themselves to be superhuman – juggling work, family and social responsibilities with ease.
- ❖ **Employer Expectations.** Employers may have unrealistic expectations regarding the number of hours to be worked in a week, the flexibility of working hours and travelling and the expectation that family responsibilities will never intrude on work time.
- ❖ **Allocation of Time and Energy.** There is only a finite quantity of time and energy available to any one person, and sometimes there is not enough to meet all the demands and expectations of work and family.
- ❖ **Child-care Responsibilities.** Working parents often worry about their 'neglect' of child-care responsibilities.
- ❖ **Household Responsibilities.** Managing work and household responsibilities is a source of stress for many employed women, who continue to be largely responsible for housework, even when they are employed fulltime.

5.2.2.1 Role-Overload

Work-family conflict is the result of an inability to balance the demands of both work and family (Duxbury et al., 1994):

Each of these roles imposes demands requiring time, energy, and commitment to perform the role adequately. The cumulative demands of multiple roles can result in role strain of three types: overload, interference from work to family, and interference from family to work. (p. 450)

Perceived role-overload has been shown to be predictive of perceived stress (Berger, Cook, DelCampo, & Herrera, 1994), providing support for role strain theory. Role-

overload occurs when the cumulative demands from the various roles a person carries reduce the chances of success in any of those roles (ibid.). The scarcity hypothesis, which is part of this theoretical frame, suggests that a person has a finite quantity of personal resources. When a person is carrying an excessive number of roles, their time and energy are drained, resulting in a sense of role-overload, role strain (trying to juggle these various roles) and stress (ibid.).

Despite the increasing involvement of men in family responsibilities, women continue to experience more role-overload than men (Brinkerhoff, 1984):

In the event of role overload, the wife is often expected to be the adaptive one, because her work role is usually considered lower status. Family emergencies, such as a sick child, are usually handled by the wife's juggling her occupational responsibilities, not by the husband. (p. 8)

The consequences of the role overload experienced by employed mothers are illustrated by some of the findings of the 1992 National Study of the Changing Workforce (Galinsky, Bond, & Friedman, 1996). In this study, employed mothers in comparison with employed fathers:

- ❖ Were more likely to be single parents (23% vs 4%),
- ❖ Worked fewer hours per week (38.3 vs 47.1 hours),
- ❖ Were more likely to work part-time (26% vs 4%) (see also Boden, 1999; Caputo & Dolinsky, 1998),
- ❖ Were more willing to trade job advancement in order to work part time (29% vs 14%),
- ❖ Were more willing to trade job advancement in order to work at home regularly (36% vs 20%),
- ❖ Were more willing to trade job advancement in order to have flexitime (41% vs 31%),
- ❖ Were more likely to want their jobs to retain the current level of responsibility (43% vs 32%),
- ❖ Were less likely to want more job responsibility (51% vs 64%),
- ❖ Were more likely to be responsible for cooking family meals (83% vs 11%),

- ❖ Were more likely to feel tired when getting up in the morning (48% vs 35%),
- ❖ Were more likely to feel emotionally drained from their work (30% vs 23%),
- ❖ Were more likely to experience minor health problems (23% vs 11%), and
- ❖ Were more likely to feel nervous and stressed (38% vs 19%).

Overall these results point to the consequences of stress overload. Employed mothers continue to carry the dual responsibilities of both family and work, while fathers remain primarily engaged in the world of work (although the men's results are not insignificant). The 1997 replication of the above study (Bond et al., 1998, p. 7) revealed, for example, that in dual-income families when a child is ill and needs medical attention 83% of employed mothers indicated that they would take time off from work, while only 22% of fathers said that they would take the time off. Employed mothers are, therefore, more likely than employed fathers to make adjustments to their working schedule to cater for family needs (Lee & Duxbury, 1998).

A study of 318 people found that dual-career families experienced the highest work-to-family conflict, and that dual-career and single parent families experienced the highest family-to-work conflict (Eagle, Icenogle, & Maes, 1998). It is likely that these families experience the highest role overload.

Perceived control over one's life has a moderating effect on role-overload. Even when individuals experience the same objective quantity of role-overload, perceived control reduces the stress effects of the overload (Duxbury et al., 1994, p. 463). This would suggest that giving workers greater control over the structure of their work (eg working hours, place of work, flexitime, etc) would contribute to the reduction of the negative consequences of carrying multiple roles.

Work overload was found to predict negative physical health in another study (Barnett, Davidson, & Marshall, 1991). However, being able to help others at work was found to moderate these negative health consequences. Furthermore, getting a higher salary and having a satisfying intimate partnership were as powerful at directly predicting health as was work overload.

5.2.2.2 Work-to-Family and Family-to-Work Interference

Work-to-family conflict or interference occurs when the general demands of the workplace, the amount of time devoted to work tasks and the stress or strain caused by the work system interfere with the completion of family tasks (Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrin, 1996). There are three primary processes of work-to-family interference, viz time (spending excessive time away from the family), psychological (being psychologically absorbed in work to the exclusion of family) and energy (being physically or emotionally drained by the work demands) (Small & Riley, 1990).

Conversely, family-to-work conflict or interference occurs when the general demands of the family, the amount of time devoted to family tasks and the stress or strain caused by the family system interfere with the completion of work tasks (Frone et al., 1997; Netemeyer et al., 1996). There has been a tendency for researchers to concentrate largely on work-to-family conflict and to equate the term 'work-family conflict' with 'work-to-family conflict' (eg Burley, 1995; Matthews, Conger, & Wickrama, 1996). Part of the reason for this may be that family boundaries appear more permeable than work boundaries, allowing work stress to permeate the family more easily than for family stressors to permeate the workplace (Eagle et al., 1998). Some researchers have begun to examine the reciprocal role of the conflicts (Crouter, 1984).

A series of studies found that work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict both correlated negatively with organisational commitment, job satisfaction, life satisfaction and relationship agreement, and positively with burnout, job tension, role conflict, role ambiguity and the intention to leave the organization or employer (Netemeyer et al., 1996, p. 406). In addition, family-to-work conflict correlated positively with searching for another job and negatively with relationship satisfaction, while work-to-family conflict correlated positively with number of hours worked (ibid.).

A study of 277 professional psychologists found that work-to-family conflict was negatively correlated with marital adjustment (Burley, 1995, p. 490). Two mediating variables (spousal support for one's career and perceived equity in the division of labour at home) were found to account for 34% of the relationship between work-to-family conflict and marital adjustment (ibid., p. 492).

Another study of 337 couples explored the relationship between work-to-family conflicts and happiness or satisfaction with the marriage (Matthews et al., 1996). The researchers found that the work-to-family conflicts experienced by both partners

influenced their own and their partner's psychological distress, which in turn both directly and indirectly (via the impact on the hostility versus warmth and supportiveness of the marital interactions) influenced marital satisfaction (ibid., p. 71).

A model testing study of 372 employed adults (Frone et al., 1997) had a number of interesting findings. Firstly, the study demonstrated that support in the workplace reduced work distress and work overload, which in turn reduced work-to-family conflict. Conversely, support in the family reduced family distress and parental overload, which in turn reduced family-to-work conflict (ibid., p. 162). Secondly, work related distress led to work-to-family conflict, which in turn led to family distress. Conversely, family related distress led to family-to-work conflict, which in turn led to work distress (ibid., p. 163). Thirdly, work-to-family conflict was associated with negative family outcomes, while family-to-work conflict was associated with negative work performance (ibid.).

A study of 334 male and 189 female married white-collar workers found complex relationships between work and family functioning (Hughes, Galinsky, & Morris, 1992). The researchers hypothesised that although there would a direct relationship between job characteristics and marital qualities, this relationship would be mediated by work-family interference. Some support for this hypothesis was found, such as the finding that the significant positive relationship between the job characteristic of high pressure and low supervisor support and the marital quality of marital tension was fully accounted for by the variable work-family interference (ibid., p. 40). Other findings did not support the hypothesis, however, such as the finding that "having an enriching job was directly associated with more marital companionship, independently of" work-family interference (ibid.). The researchers conclude with a statement quite congruent with resilience theory:

One possibility is the process of positive carryover, explicated by Piotrkowski (1979), in which the satisfied worker generates positive energy and interactions in the family domain. This process may be important for marital quality and may be distinct from the mere absence of negative mood states. (p. 40)

One researcher (Crouter, 1984) investigated the spillover from family-to-work using semi-structured interviews with 55 employees. Two thirds of the respondents (37 out of 55, 67.3%) reported that there was family-to-work spillover. Both positive and negative spillover was reported (ibid., p. 430). Positive spillover included being able to translate interpersonal skills learned in the family (such as sensitivity to people's needs, communication, etc) into the workplace. Negative spillover included the inhibiting effect of the family (restricting the employee from fulfilling work demands) and the influence of negative energy and mood spilling over from the family into the workplace. Women with

young children were found to report the highest levels of family-to-work spillover, while women with older children or no children and men (all men) reported similarly lower levels of spillover (ibid., p. 425).

In a study of factors predicting job satisfaction and intention to resign among police officers, family related factors were not significant (Burke, 1994, p. 794). However, the upsets at work, concerns of the impact of the job on one's health and safety, the burden on the families of police officers to behave in an exemplary fashion and emotional exhaustion all contributed to reduced job satisfaction and increased intention to resign (ibid.).

A study of female school teachers, 78% of whom were parents, found work-to-family conflict did not directly predict intention to resign, but that it did predict stress symptoms, which in turn predicted intention to resign (Kirchmeyer & Cohen, 1999, p. 69). Work-to-family conflict was reduced through the availability of workplace support, operationalised as the employer's respect for and accommodation of the workers' nonwork life. Family-to-work conflict predicted work absenteeism and stress symptoms, and was reduced by effective personal coping skills that seek to reduce work-family strain. There was also a direct relationship between work-to-family and family-to-work conflict.

In a study of 989 Finnish technical designers (Feldt, 1997) the Sense of Coherence (SOC) of employees was examined as a moderator of the relationship between work characteristics and well-being. As in other research, SOC contributed significantly to the protection against psychosomatic symptoms and emotional exhaustion, accounting for 25.8% and 14.5% in the variance of each respectively (ibid., pp. 139-141). The relations between work characteristics (such as organisational climate, good relationships with managers and time pressures) and well-being (both psychosomatic symptoms and emotional exhaustion) were moderated by SOC, albeit only somewhat. Employees with low SOC scores tended to have low well-being in the presence of negative work circumstances, while the well-being of employees with higher SOC scores tended to be independent of work circumstances (ibid.). Interestingly, having a demanding job was found to increase emotional exhaustion for employees with low SOC scores, but to *decrease* emotional exhaustion for employees with high SOC (ibid.). This last finding "supports the assertion of Antonovsky (1987b) that some work factors can be salutary when accompanied by a strong SOC and pathogenic when accompanied by a weak SOC" (ibid., p. 144).

5.2.3 WORK-LIFE POLICIES

5.2.3.1 Types of Policies

There are, perhaps, six main groups of work-life policies: family-related leave, child care, adult dependent care, alternative working arrangements, education and wellness programmes, and benefits (Crouter & Manke, 1994; Skrypnek & Fast, 1996).

Family-Related Leave

“Family-related leave includes maternity leave, other parental leave for new mothers and fathers, bereavement leave, and family responsibility leave” (Skrypnek & Fast, 1996). Family responsibility leave was the most frequently cited form of support employees received from employers to assist them in balancing work and family responsibilities – cited by 58% of respondents in one study (Lee & Duxbury, 1998).

The Employment Relations Bill in the United Kingdom has introduced longer (18 weeks) and more flexible maternity leave policies with greater protection to mothers making use of such leave as well as parental or domestic leave for both mothers and fathers of biological and adoptive children (Aikin, 1999). Some companies in the United Kingdom have extended these benefits. One company allows employees with more than six months’ service to take 40 weeks leave after the birth of a child. If both parents work for the company, the couple can share the leave period, with the mother returning to work after three months and the father taking the rest of the leave, for example. The policy also applies to same sex couples who have a child, as well as to adoptive parents with more than one year’s service (Johnson, 1999). Two nurses in the United Kingdom won a court case over an attempt to force them to work shift patterns that they argued was detrimental to their ability to adequately care for their children (Whitehead, 1999).

The introduction of family-related leave, particularly the inclusion of parental leave for both men and women, indicates a movement away from the separate worlds myth (Skrypnek & Fast, 1996). Older maternity leave policies prevented fathers from participating in family responsibilities (including prenatal classes, the birth of a child, the ongoing care of children during times of illness, etc). It assumed that women were exclusively responsible for family matters and that the woman would be at home to attend to them. The man’s primary responsibility was in the place of work.

Surely the provision of family-related leave has positive consequences for families – people have time to care for their families, men have greater opportunities to participate in family life, infants have greater opportunities to bond with both male and female caregivers, etc. It also has some positive consequences for employers – workers may be more willing to stay employed, women are more likely to return to the workplace after having a child, employers save on the costs of recruiting and training new employees, etc. Ultimately, employers who institute a full range of family-related leave benefits are indicating that the responsibility for children is collectively held by parents, employers and the state (Skrypnek & Fast, 1996).

About half of the companies (49%) in one survey allowed their employees to take some time off to care for a mildly ill child, without having to put in vacation leave or lose pay (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. iv). About three-quarters of the companies surveyed (74%) provide men with the required 12 weeks paternity leave, and a further 16% allow more than this. However, only 13% of companies provide men with at least some replacement pay during paternity leave. Ten percent of the companies surveyed believed that employees who make use of flexitime and parental leave jeopardize their career – this is in contrast to the 40% of employees who believe this (ibid.).

Child Care

Half the companies surveyed in one study reported that they provide employees with Dependent Care Assistance Plans that help employees pay for child care with pretax dollars, while only 9% provide child care facilities at or near the workplace (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. v). Only 6% of companies provide child care for school children during vacations, and 4% provide back-up or emergency care for employees when their usual child care arrangements fail. About a third of the companies (36%) provide employees with information about child care facilities in the community. Only 36% of companies providing some form of child care benefit believe the benefits to the company outweigh the costs (ibid.).

Adult Dependent Care

“Adult dependent care refers to a broad range of services, from transportation and housekeeping assistance to institutional care, for aging or disabled individuals who cannot live independently. The vast majority of these services are provided by family

members" (Skrypnek & Fast, 1996, p. 804). Research in the United Kingdom indicates that eldercare will eclipse childcare as the central work-life programme in the 21st Century (Overell, 1996).

In a national survey of companies in the USA in 1992, 23% indicated that they provide an information and referral service to employees who are caring for an elderly family member (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. vi). A national survey of employees in 1997 found that 25% of employees had provided care to an elderly relative during the previous year, providing an average of almost 11 hours care per week, equally distributed for men and women (Bond et al., 1998, p. 15; see also Googins, 1991). More than a third of these employees had to reduce their work hours or take time off work to provide this elder care, again men and women taking off equal amounts of time (Bond et al., 1998, p. 15).

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, women employees are more likely to be caring for an elderly person than for a preschool child (Overell, 1996, p. 7). Employees (of both sexes) are as likely (one in six) to be caring for an elderly person as women employees are to be caring for a child under 16 (ibid.).

In response to this new form of care, some organisations are offering benefits to employees to assist them in balancing the demands of work with the demands of caring for an elderly or disabled relative (Anfuso, 1999).

Alternate Working Arrangements

"Alternate working arrangements allow employees to alter the number of hours they work, when they work, and where they work and include part-time work, job sharing, condensed work weeks, flexitime, shorter work days, and work-at-home arrangements" (Skrypnek & Fast, 1996, p. 807; see also Barham, Gottlieb, & Kelloway, 1998).

In the 1998 Business Work-Life Study in the USA of 1057 for-profit and not-for-profit companies with 100 plus employees (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. ii), most companies allowed workers to take time off to attend school and child care functions (88%) and to return to work on a gradual basis following the birth or adoption of a child (81%). Most companies allowed their workers to work flexitime (68%) and to work from home (57%) on occasion. Job sharing, routinely working from home and routine flexitime were not frequently allowed options (24-37.5%). Gallinsky and Bond (ibid.) found that 46% of the companies surveyed believed that these arrangements benefited the company, while only 18% believed the costs outweighed the benefits. (see also Greenwald, 1998)

Educational & Wellness Programmes

Many organisations are offering employees and families educational programmes that seek to facilitate the work-family/life interface.

Keele (1984) presents one such programme designed for business executives, which aims to develop a healthy family system able to withstand the stresses of the business life. Van Breda (1998a, 1999a) presents a programme designed for couples in which one partner is required to travel as a routine job requirement. The programme, the Separation Resilience Seminar, aims to develop the capacity of these families to resist the stress of repeated separations of one family member out of the family system. Wiersma (1994) conducted research into the behavioural strategies employed by dual-career couples to solve work-family role conflicts, the results of which could be of value in counselling or educational programmes with such couples. A growing number of counsellors in organizations and employee wellness programmes are addressing ways of helping employees find a better balance between work and family priorities (Hitchin & Hitchin, 1999).

In a survey of 1057 companies in the USA, 56% indicated that they provided an Employee Assistance Program designed to assist employees with work or personal problems and 25% provided workshops or seminars on parenting, child development, care of the elderly or work-family problems (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. vii). Very few companies provide any kind of service to the families of employees – 5% of the companies in this study provide an EAP service to the teenage children of employees, 3% provide a counselling service and 2% provide workshops and seminars (ibid.). Given the interrelatedness of family well-being and employee functioning, this figure is surprisingly low.

In the same study it was found that 62% of companies train their supervisors in how to manage a diverse workforce, 44% consider how well supervisors manage the work-family interface during performance assessments, 43% train their supervisors in how to respond to the work-family needs of employees, and only 22% provide a career counselling programme or a management or leadership programme for women (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. ix).

Some companies have found a parallel between the health of an employee's relations at home and at work. They strive to train their employees in interpersonal skills that are transferable across the various domains of their employees' lives (Moore, 1997). One manager says (ibid.):

Every dollar we invest in a person's marriage is as important as every dollar spent "on the job". ... People don't change character, personality traits and habits on the drive to work or on the way home. It's all the same. The biggest lie in corporate America is "just leave your problems at the door". (p. 19)

Other Family Benefits

Some companies offer "cafeteria benefit plans that permit employees to select an individualized set of benefits" (Crouter & Manke, 1994, p. 122). For example, one parent may choose to exchange a family medical aid scheme (which the other parent in a dual-career family is taking) for child-care support or an educational scholarship (Portner, 1983).

Many companies have introduced various benefits that make working a little easier for employees. These include dry-cleaning, take away meals, subsidised lunches, fitness centres or fitness centre memberships, onsite hair salons, onsite car washes and casual dress codes (Federico & Goldsmith, 1998; Flynn, 1995).

Some companies have introduced various benefits to promote the family lives of employees. For example, the National Institute of Information Technology, "rents a limo and kicks in \$100 to cover the cost of a night out for the employee and his family" on each anniversary of their employment (Unknown, 1999, p. 19). NIIT also provides employees with \$100 each year for "granny gratitude day" in order for employees to celebrate with their grandparents or other family members (ibid.). NIIT attributes policies such as these for their low turnover rate of only 12% compared with the industry standard of 20-40%. Other companies provide a \$1,000 savings bond to children born to their employees (Cowans, 1998).

Other employers are allowing employees to turn business trips into combined family vacations, by allowing their employees to travel with the family (McGuire, 1999). Some companies are allowing their employees to bring their children to work on occasion to see where the parents work (Terez, 1998), while others are allowing women to bring infants to work on a continual basis (Lonkevich, 1998; Martinez, 1997). Some even allow employees to bring their pets to work (Stamps, 1997). Some companies have made provision for women to either breastfeed their infants on site or have established facilities for mothers to express and store breast milk during the day for use by their infants in childcare the following day (Danyliw, 1997).

A number of companies (23% of companies in a 1995 survey) are offering families adoption benefits (Manewitz, 1997, p. 97). Apart from extending maternity and paternity type leave to adoptive parents, some companies are offering financial assistance to adoptive parents. Some companies give parents \$3,000 per adoption, including the "adoption of stepchildren after remarriage and grandchildren when empty-nesters assume child-rearing responsibilities" (Wojcik, 1998). One company gives \$4,000 per child, increased to \$6,000 if the child has special needs, in addition to paying "a licensed adoption fee (including fees for placement or counseling), legal costs (including attorneys fees or costs of legal proceedings), state-required home study fees, temporary foster care prior to placement, and domestic transportation for the child and parent" (Manewitz, 1997, p. 96).

5.2.3.2 Men and Childless Adults

There is some debate about whether or not men (who are traditionally seen as having little involvement in family life) and childless adults, both married and unmarried, would be interested in or make use of work-family programmes. Some writers have indicated a 'backlash' against the work-family initiatives from those employees who feel their needs as single adults are neglected by companies who devote all their attention to employees with children (Young, 1998).

Single Employees. One study, for example, in which it is unclear whether the respondents are from the general population or the single/unmarried population, found the following:

- ❖ "To 'With all the work/family programs being introduced today, are single employees without children being left out?' 80% responded yes.
- ❖ "To 'Do single employees end up carrying more of the burden than married employees?' 81% answered yes.
- ❖ "To 'Do single employees receive as much attention to their needs as married-with-children employees?' 80% responded no.
- ❖ "To "Will Corporate America see a backlash from single employees?' 69% said yes" (Flynn, 1996, p. 58).

Male Employees. Regarding men, there is growing evidence that indicates that men are becoming increasingly involved in family life and that the traditional stereotypes that men spend an average of 10 minutes per day with their children are untrue (Pleck, 1993). Together with this growing involvement in family life (Berry & Rao, 1997) is a growing interest from men in utilising work-family programmes (Pleck, 1993):

Men's interest in using specific policies to reduce work-family stress is also increasing. In surveys of large samples of Dupont employees, the proportion who said they wanted the option of part-time work to allow them to spend more time with their children rose from 18% in 1985 to 33% in 1988 (Thomas, 1988). The percentage expressing personal interest in leave to care for newborn children increased from 15% in 1986 to 35% in 1991; the proportion interested in leave to care for sick children rose from 40% to 64% in the same period ("Labor Letter," 1991). (p. 223)

Haas (1993) provides a review of the work-family policies in Sweden, highlighting the way these policies promote the equal involvement of men in parenting and facilitate the work-family interface of men and fathers. *Inter alia*, she notes that Sweden has introduced the following policies since 1968:

- ❖ "At childbirth, men are granted 10 days off from work with full pay – so-called daddy days – to take care of family responsibilities and to become acquainted with their new offspring" (Haas, 1993, p. 240).
- ❖ "In addition to the daddy days at childbirth, Swedish men have access to a wide array of programs designed to help working parents care for children. ... The programs were deliberately designed to help fathers as well as mothers combine work and family roles" (Haas, 1993, p. 241).
- ❖ "Since 1974, employers have been *obliged* [italics added] to grant parents of both sexes paid leave with job security at childbirth or adoption. Parents receive at least 90% of their former salary. As of 1991, fathers and mothers could share up to 12 months of this generously paid leave, 3 additional months of low-paid leave (approximately \$10 a day), and 3 months of unpaid leave" (Haas, 1993, p. 241).
- ❖ "Fathers as well as mothers are allowed to take up to 120 days off work per year, with pay, to care for sick children or to step in for sick caretakers" (Haas, 1993, p. 241).
- ❖ Both fathers and mothers "may reduce their workday to 6 hours (with a corresponding loss of pay) until their children reach age 7" (Haas, 1993, p. 241).

- ❖ "A government-subsidized network of high-quality child care facilities helps working parents retain an attachment to the labor force. Parents pay only 8% of the cost of a place in a day care center or licensed day care home" (Haas, 1993, p. 241).

Although these policies seem to have had an impact on Swedish society (women are more likely to be employed and men have more liberal attitudes towards their role in the family), men continue to attend primarily to the workplace while women continue to attend primarily to the family (Haas, 1993). Nevertheless, Swedish work-family policies appear to have eased the work-family interface for many men and women.

Childless Employees. Regarding employees without children, many feel their lot has deteriorated as employees with children obtain unfair benefits (Picard, 1997):

Childless ... employees complain that they are expected to work later, travel more, and forfeit weekends and holidays. They are also less likely to be granted flexible work schedules; they must justify leaving early; they get transferred more often; and they pay health care premiums that are less generously subsidized than those of coworkers with families. Childless workers are often hesitant about speaking up because they do not want to appear to be anti-family or to be called complainers, but the resentment is likely there. (p. 33)

Alternative Family Structures. Studies of men and single employees suggest that organisations need to be more flexible in how they define 'family' so as to accommodate a wider variety of family types, including single adults, fathers, gay couples, etc (Young, 1998). The inclusion of gay couples in work-family benefits is illustrated by the finding that 43% of organisations with domestic partner benefits cover same-sex relationships, while a further 21% limit the benefits to only same-sex partnerships (Starcke, 1997, p. 53).

5.2.3.3 Work Culture

There is a growing number of people arguing that it is inadequate to merely put in place programmes which offer greater flexibility to workers who are juggling work and family responsibilities (Moskowitz, 1997; Skrypnik & Fast, 1996). What is required is a fundamental change in the work culture (eg Warren & Johnson, 1995). One study reports that "today's employee commitment is most strongly correlated with management's recognition of the importance of personal and family life, and the effects of work on workers' personal lives" (Laabs, 1998, p. 54; also Talley, 1998). One manager argues that people looking for work will take a job that pays 30% less than another because that job has the right kind of culture (Ernst, 1998).

The finding that the proportion of female *managers*, rather than the proportion of female *employees*, increased the chances of organizations introducing work-family initiatives suggests that many companies require a fair amount of pressure to accommodate family needs (Ingram & Simons, 1995, p. 1479). Nevertheless, even in companies where programmes to ease the work-family interface are available, many employers and managers continue to behave as they always did, making the use of such programmes difficult (Berry & Rao, 1997). This is well illustrated by the following statement by a manager, "Work/family is not an issue here, because there are no women in this firm" (in Andrews & Bailyn, 1993).

One of the main reasons for such a perspective is the reluctance of many workers to make use of work-life programmes for fear of one or other form of discrimination or career disadvantage (Milligan, 1998) – and this is particularly so for men (Pleck, 1993). Men who make use of work-life benefits, such as parental leave, are more likely to be seen as lacking commitment to the organisation, and are thus less likely to be recommended for rewards (Allen & Russell, 1999). Women, in contrast, are less penalised than men for making use of work-life benefits, probably because such benefits are seen as more congruent with the traditional role of women as mothers and family makers (*ibid.*). Many managers are more likely to allow junior employees and women to make use to work-life programmes such as alternative work arrangements than senior employees and men (Barham et al., 1998).

There is a double message given to many employees: "Although men have been encouraged to increase their involvement in family responsibilities, employers may not want them to stray too far from the current norms" (Allen & Russell, 1999, p. 185).

In a national study of companies in the USA, employers were asked to what extent they believed their companies had a supportive culture (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. viii). Just over half the companies (55%) indicated that it was very true that supervisors were "encouraged to be supportive of employees with family problems and to find solutions that work for both employees and the organization" and 66% indicated that it was very true that "men and women who must attend to family matters are equally supported by supervisors and the organization" (*ibid.*). However, only 19% believed it was very true that "the organization makes a real and ongoing effort to inform employees of available assistance for managing work and family responsibilities" and 31% believed it was very true that "management takes employees' personal needs into account when making business decisions" (*ibid.*).

One of the most powerful predictors of whether an organisation provides work-family initiatives is the presence of women in top executive positions (defined as the CEO or a direct reporter to the CEO). In a national survey of companies with 100 or more employees, 30% had no women in top executive positions, while 70% had one or more female top executives and 14% of these had women in half or more of these top positions (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. xii). The influence of women in top positions is well illustrated by this study – Companies with women in half or more of the top positions are more likely than companies with no women in top positions to (ibid.):

- ❖ Provide traditional flexitime (82% vs 56%).
- ❖ Provide childcare on or near the workplace (19% vs 3%).
- ❖ Provide dependent-care assistance plans (60% vs 37%).
- ❖ Provide elder care resource and referral programmes (33% vs 14%).

Galinsky and Bond (1998, p. xiii) report similar findings regarding the presence of minorities in top executive positions, although only 27% had one or more minorities in these positions.

Some companies have introduced policies and practices which are not directly aimed at easing the work-family interface, but which promote an image to the employees of the company being concerned for human well-being. For example, a number of companies have introduced policies allowing employees to take off time from work (up to 10 hours paid leave per month) to engage in volunteer work (Hays, 1999a). These programmes appear to have little positive or negative impact on the company's revenue, but create a perception in the minds of the employees that the company cares about people and the well-being of the community, which in turn increases their loyalty towards the organisation and creates a more conducive work environment or culture. "Employer-sponsored opportunities for volunteerism tend to increase not only employee commitment and morale, but the company's reputation in the broader community" (Hays, 1999b, p. 66).

The effects of a supportive supervisor or an organizational culture supportive of family life have been well documented (Laabs, 1998; Lee & Duxbury, 1998; Milligan, 1998; Young, 1998). Some organisations have introduced mandatory training for supervisors in promoting the work-life interface of their subordinates (Seitel, 1998; Vincola, 1998) and some authors are publishing guidelines to help supervisors become more family-friendly (Ramsey, 1998; Van Breda, 1999b).

The connection between work culture and work-life policies is illustrated by the following “work/family change model proposed by Dana Friedman and Ellen Galinsky of the Families & Work Institute” (Lobel & Faught, 1996, p. 55):

- ❖ “In Stage I, organizations take a programmatic approach in responding to family needs. Without challenging existing norms, they try out a number of initiatives, such as resource and referral services, flexible benefits plans, and parenting seminars.
- ❖ “In Stage II, a number of developments take place. Top management begins to champion some programs; a work/family manager or group may be named; and human resources policies and benefits are evaluated for their contribution to work/family issues.
- ❖ “In Stage III, the company’s culture becomes truly ‘family friendly.’ The company may change its mission statement; it may evaluate managers on how well they handle employees’ work/life conflicts; and it may mainstream work/family issues and integrate them with other efforts, such as diversity.
- ❖ “Finally, in Stage IV, the company integrates work/life concerns with business planning” (Lobel & Faught, 1996, p. 55).

5.2.3.4 Effects of Work-life Policies

A study (Warren & Johnson, 1995) of 116 employed mothers with preschool children found that work-family role strain was predicted by a number of workplace variables. Work-family role strain was defined as a sense of not being adequately able to fulfil the demands of both work and family life. In this way it is a combination of the work-to-family conflict and role-overload concepts. Organisational climate (measured by the perception of the organisation being accommodating of employees having difficulties balancing work and family demands and the availability of family-oriented benefits), supervisor support (measured by the sensitivity of the supervisor towards work-family conflicts and the flexibility of the supervisor in adjusting work demands) and use of family-oriented benefits each significantly reduced work-family role strain (ibid., p. 166). However, when all three were combined, only organisational climate remained significant, suggesting that the family-friendliness of the organisational culture is an overriding factor in the capacity of women to balance work and family demands (ibid.).

One study examined the effects of work-life initiatives on two organizations (Szostak, 1998), including shifting administrative tasks from professionals to administrative assistants, reorganising the flow of work and allowing flexitime and telecommuting. The researchers found several positive effects on the productivity and well-being of employees:

- ❖ "The average percent of work time spent doing real underwriting rose to 60 percent, compared to 52 percent before the experiments;
- ❖ "Employees reported that they were able to spend more quality time with their families;
- ❖ "Disturbed sleep, a common manifestation of stress, decreased dramatically. The number of employees reporting that sleep was 'frequently' or 'sometimes' disturbed dropped to 50% from 79%. This finding has major relevance for increased productivity on the job;
- ❖ "For virtually all weeks in the [experimental] period, on-time turnaround was at or above 80 percent, meeting a key production goal; and
- ❖ "Flexitime helped employees meet work and family responsibilities" (Szostak, 1998, p. S13).

Landauer (1997) and others have identified several main benefits of family-life programmes to employers:

- ❖ **Employee Time Saved.** Employees making use of in-house counselling and referral services save time (an average of 17 hours per year (Landauer, 1997)) that they would have spent going to community organisations for help.
- ❖ **Increased Motivation and Productivity.** When employees believe their company cares for them and their family, they are more willing to give more (Landauer, 1997). Employees who have access to flexitime tend to be less stressed, more productive and more committed to their jobs than those who work in inflexible organisations (Collins, 1997, p. 12).
- ❖ Furthermore, certain flexible work schedules are good for both the employee and the organisation. One company found that employees who worked a compressed work week of four 10-hour days, rather than the usual five 8-hour days, completed 36% more job transactions per day (Martinez, 1997, p. 111). The company attributes the

increase to a quieter environment in the early morning and evening, employees getting into a work pattern over the ten-hour day, increased contact with customers, etc.

- ❖ **Employee Retention.** Employees at IBM overall rated work-family balance sixth in a list of 16 factors influencing their retention. Employees rated as having the highest performance at IBM, however, rated work-family balance second in the list (Landauer, 1997). Another company reduced attrition of new mothers by 50% by allowing a more flexible return-to-work policy (Martinez, 1997), and yet another company reduced the attrition of women employees from 16.2% to 7.6% after three years of work-family and diversity programmes (Lobel & Faught, 1996, p. 51; Moore, 1997, p. 51).
- ❖ Several authors have noted that although work-family/life policies may not impact noticeably on revenue, or may even impact negatively on revenue, such policies promote recruitment of quality employees (Moskowitz, 1997) and the retention of these employees (Thatcher, 1998). One company estimates that their work-life programmes have improved retention rates, saving them \$2 million per annum in recruiting, hiring and retraining costs (Martinez, 1997).
- ❖ **Decreased Healthcare Costs and Stress-Related Illnesses.** A study conducted in 1992 found that “employees from companies with supportive work/family policies were half as likely [as workers from companies without such programmes] to experience stress-related illness or job burnout, regardless of whether they participated in the programs” (Landauer, 1997, p. 4).
- ❖ **Absenteeism.** Studies show that 46% of unscheduled work absences are family related, while only 28% were related to personal illness (Landauer, 1997, p. 4). Furthermore, companies that introduced work-life policies reduced this rate by 50% among those who used flexible work options (ibid.). Another company reduced absenteeism by 30% by allowing flexible working hours, including working four longer days in order to have one off each week (Martinez, 1997). Another study found that workers who can make use of alternative working arrangements are absent for only two days per year in comparison with workers in low-flexibility jobs who are absent an average of six days per year. They also tend to be late less often (Collins, 1997, p. 12).
- ❖ Similarly, companies that provide back-up child care facilities or services reduce the amount of time parents take off from work when regular child-care falls through –

one company found that 3200 days of absences were prevented over one year, and estimated that the company consequently saved a conservative net of \$40,200.00 (after paying the operating costs of \$419,000.00) (Lobel & Faught, 1996, p. 52).

- ❖ **Human-Investment.** While most literature on work-life benefits attempts to demonstrate the financial advantage of such policies and programmes to the company, some literature argues that these programmes are valuable in that they develop the capacity of the people in the company. Such an investment in human capacity may have no financial advantage, and may even cost the company at face value. Nevertheless, it is argued that such an investment promotes the development and loyalty of employees.
- ❖ For instance, "at IBM, high-performers ranked work/life programs second in importance, after compensation, as a factor contributing to their desire to stay with the company. This compares with the fifth-place ranking these programs received from the employee population in general" (Lobel & Faught, 1996, p. 53).
- ❖ **Customer Retention.** Studies show that companies that promote the work-family/life interface have employees who have better job satisfaction, which in turn results in better performance and customer relations, which in turn promotes customer retention (Martinez, 1997).

Other research suggests that such policies may have less effect on the work-life interface than generic working conditions. The 1992 National Study of the Changing Workforce, for example, found that while job characteristics (such as autonomy, job demands, job security and control over one's work schedule) explained 6% of work-family/life conflict, family oriented fringe benefits (such as flexitime, leave and dependent care) and a supportive workplace did not explain work-family conflict (Galinsky et al., 1996, p. 129). Employed parents coped better and experienced less stress when they had more job autonomy, less demanding jobs, more job security, more control over their work schedules, a more supportive supervisor and workplace culture, and equal opportunities for advancement (on the basis of gender and race) (ibid., p. 131).

5.2.3.5 Symbiosis

It would, of course, be naïve to think that companies put work-life initiatives in place out of altruistic concern for the well-being of employees and their families. One author notes somewhat sardonically, "These 'perks' are really nothing more than the greed of the '80s dressed all warm 'n fuzzy in the fleece of the '90s" (Ellerbe, 1998, p. 10). The number of publications that argue how work-family initiatives increase the productivity of workers and the revenue of companies testifies to the 'greed' motivation for many companies introducing such initiatives (Federico & Goldsmith, 1998; Starcke, 1997).

Some employees feel that work-family benefits increase the work component of the work-family balance – "A parent who isn't forced to dash away at 5 pm to fetch a child from a day care center across town can squeeze in an extra hour of work before dashing down to pick up the child at an on-site day care facility" (Stamps, 1997, p. 43). This may be confirmed by one manager's report that a family benefits policy has allowed his company to increase production without increasing the workforce – clearly more work is being done by these employees in exchange for benefits which supposedly enhance their quality of family life (Unknown, 1997).

However, a more balanced view suggests that companies who initiate work-family policies "pursue a double agenda in the workplace – one that considers both the employer's and the employee's needs – which not only eases employees' lives but also leads to enhanced productivity and other tangible business benefits" (Starcke, 1997, p. 56). A colleague of mine came to refer to this as symbiosis (Heinrich Potgieter, personal communication, January 25, 2001).

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

Work-life policies are certainly not theoretically or empirically grounded in resilience theory. Nevertheless, they have a number of qualities that suggest that they could be used as a prototype of a new generation of resiliency-based policies.

At the end of section 5.1, a set of six key ingredients of resilience-based policies were presented, based on the six papers on the subject. The discussion on work-life policies presented above can be critiqued in relation to these six ingredients:

- ❖ **Policies must move from a deficits emphasis to a strengths emphasis.** Many or most of the work-life policies and initiatives described do just this. Although the provision of Employee Assistance Programmes and other similar counselling and remedial services fall within the ambit of work-life policies, they certainly do not make up the work-life arena. Many of the work-life policies attempt to bring out the best in employees and employers/supervisors, both at home and at work.
- ❖ **Policies must create environments that are conducive to healthy resilient families.** Although the policies under discussion are workplace policies, they contribute to family healthy resilient families by reducing work-to-family conflict, role overload and spillover, and by improving the demand-capacity balance. In effect, they create a social system in which there is a better fit between families and workplaces.
- ❖ **Policies must incorporate resilience research that identifies protective community factors.** Although work-life policies are not consciously linked with resilience theory and research, there is some attempt to create a community/workplace environment that is conducive to healthy individuals, families and work teams. The research on work culture detailed in section 5.2.3.3 indicates the awareness among many companies that what is required is not merely a number of programmes that support families, but a fundamental, second-order shift in the work environment in which workers spend half their waking hours.
- ❖ **Policies must focus on the development of all families, not exclusively on vulnerable families.** EAP services focus almost exclusively on vulnerable families, but work-life policies as a whole provide services to all families, not just vulnerable families. The mood of most of the literature I have studied on work-life policies suggests a sense of developing all employees into healthy, well-rounded, happy, productive, fulfilled individuals and family members. The tone is not primarily one of fixing up or helping families that are falling apart or experiencing difficulties.
- ❖ **Policies must be flexible, must involve the participation of its clients and must cater for the diverse range of family types, cultures, norms, etc.** Many of the work-life initiatives are quite liberal in their understanding of families – many promote men as fathers, many attend to the acquisition of children through adoption and not only through birth, many attend to same sex couples. Section 5.2.3.2 on men and childless adults did, however, indicate the tendency of work-life initiatives to devolve to work-family initiatives, effectively excluding and even prejudicing

people who are not part of a family system or who do not have children. That section concluded with the remark that work-life initiatives would need to broaden their conception of family even further.

- ❖ The degree to which the participation of employees and families in the development of work-life policies and initiatives is promoted is not clear from the literature. Clearly, resilience-based policies, even in the workplace, would require a community development approach, in which employees are able to contribute to shaping the nature of the policies that are implemented for their benefit.
- ❖ **Policies must aim both to create experiences that promote resilience and to reduce experiences that create vulnerability.** There is probably a tendency for work-life policies to concentrate more on reducing vulnerability-creating experiences than promoting resilience-creating experiences. Child and elder care facilities and family-related leave are principally concerned with giving employees the opportunity to restrict the development of family problems. These initiatives serve to help families that have problems prevent these problems from getting larger or more intrusive in the workplace.
- ❖ Other initiatives, such as alternative working arrangements, education and wellness programmes and benefits such as time off for volunteer work or on-site gym facilities, probably are more effective in promoting resilience. These policies serve to enhance the quality of life of employees regardless of whether there is any kind of risk or not. As such, they can be considered primary prevention interventions.

As the field of resilience theory develops to larger systems (from individual and family, through to community, workplace and society) it is likely that the field of resilience-based policy will also develop. Considerable effort will be required to develop the conceptual frameworks that have evolved at individual and family levels to these higher levels. It is hoped that this exploration of work-life policies will provide a platform to advance this thinking.