



Work-Life Integration and the Path to Social Sustainability

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Work-Life Integration for Families with Children who have Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

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PROJECT STAFF

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Work Life Integration for Families with Children who have Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

- Phase I: Caregiver Workforce Participation Study
- Phase II: Focus groups: Parents and HR Professionals
- Phase III: Work-Life Flexibility and Dependent Care Survey
- Phase IV: Design and offer training to HR professionals
- Phase V: Resource development for families and businesses

Objectives

- ▶ To describe the dominant discourse in work–life studies in terms of work–life integration.
- ▶ To compare the work–life integration framework to the social sustainability framework.
- ▶ To consider whether work–life integration is necessary for social sustainability, and
- ▶ To suggest using a social sustainability lens to examine the nature of work itself.

Striving for Work–Life Integration in the US

- ▶ Beginning in the 1960s, reduction of purchasing power in the U.S. —growth in dual earner families (Levy, 1999).
- ▶ Recognition that in many families, one or more employed family members were giving care to dependent children or frail older adults (Meyer et al, 2000).
- ▶ Study began of the dependent care responsibilities of employees (Emlen & Koren, 1984), and work–life programs began to be offered to workers:
 - Child care resources and referrals
 - Onsite child care centers
 - Support programs for those giving elder care.

Work–Family Studies

- ▶ Scholarly work began in the 1960s with the accelerated influx of women into the workforce (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1965; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004).
- ▶ Interdisciplinary, international area of theory–building, research, and practice which examines the phenomenon of combining paid work with family care responsibilities.
- ▶ Recognition that in the industrialized North:
 - workplaces have been set up for employees who do not have care responsibilities for family members (Hansen, 2005).
 - dependent care duties were to be handled by family members (usually women) who were not employed outside the home (Rapoport et al 2002).

Differing Conceptualizations of Work–Life Issues

- ▶ **Work–family fit**— achieved when the tasks and decisions taken on by employee in response to personal, community, and societal conditions help to achieve a sense of accomplishment and meaning in blending work and family life (Barnett, 1998).
- ▶ Field of work–family studies includes investigations of:
 - Work–family conflict and spillover.
 - Work–family enhancement and facilitation.
 - Work–family borders and boundaries.

Work–Life Balance

- ▶ **Work–life balance**— “Perception that work and non–work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities.” (Westman et al, 2009).
- ▶ Balance is seen here as promoting happiness and well–being. The term is eschewed when it is linked to the notion of juggling incompatible roles.

Work–Life Integration

- **Work–life integration** refers to the degree to which people are able to find a functional and satisfactory level of accommodation in their work and personal lives (Rapoport, Bailyn, Fletcher, & Pruitt, 2002).
- Framed more inclusively to engage employed men and women with and without caregiving duties (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007).
- Lewis et al. note that the discourse is framed in gender–neutral and cultural–neutral terms and from the standpoint of personal choice.

Work Demands,
Family Resources

Family Demands,
Work Resources

Work Demands-
Family
Resources Fit

Boundary
Spanning
Demands &
Resources

Family
Demands- Work
Resources Fit

Boundary-
spanning
Strategies

Work-life Integration

Adapted from
Voydanoff, 2007

Work–Life Integration Outcomes

- ▶ Voydanoff (2007) argues that the outcomes of the integration of work and family responsibilities are:
 - Work, family, and community role performance and role quality.
 - Individual well–being.
- ▶ Voydanoff makes the case that employed family members both draw upon community resources and contribute to them, when integration is satisfactory.

Critical Challenges

▶ Care gap

- Many community supports (child care, schools, elder care programs) have schedules that do not fit well with the work day, and are often unaffordable for low-income workers.

▶ Services gap

- For families caring for those with health/mental health needs, services are generally available only during the work day, and require the presence of family caregivers.

▶ Policy gap

- Although some organizations are “family friendly” there is no statutory right to request flexible schedules or work arrangements, and no examination of the social basis for the current arrangements of work.

The Path to Social Sustainability

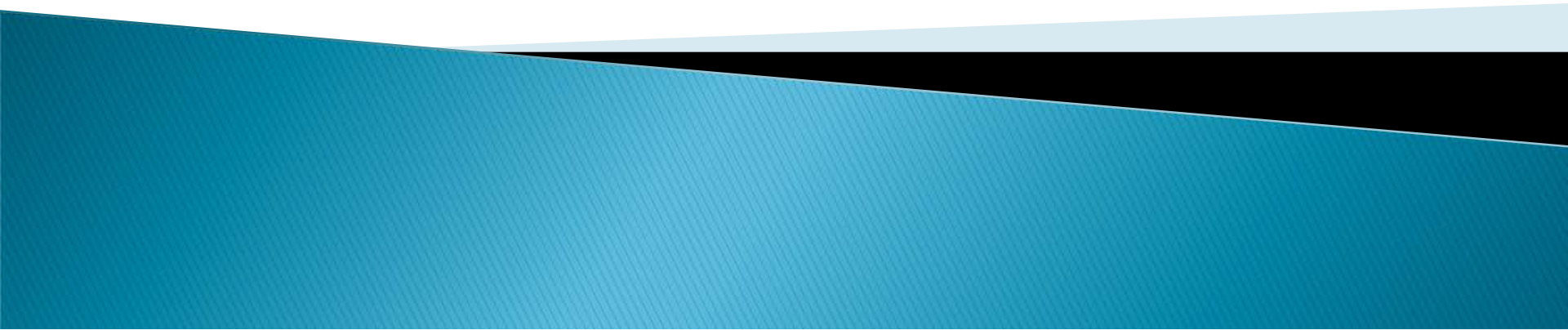
- »» “A productive and sustainable workforce will go hand in hand with healthy and sustainable families.” (Emlen, 2010)

What is social sustainability?

“that social aspect of sustainability should be understood as both:

- a) the processes that generate social health and well-being now and in the future, and
- b) those social institutions that facilitate environmental and economic sustainability now and for the future.”

(Dillard, Dujon, & King, p. 4).



How do we know when we've attained social sustainability?

- ▶ “Social sustainability occurs when the formal and informal processes, systems, structures, and relationships actively support the capacity of current and future generations to create healthy and livable communities. Socially sustainable communities are equitable, diverse, connected and democratic and provide a good quality of life.”

(Western Australian Council of Social Services, 2002, reported in McKenzie, 2004, p. 18)

Work–life integration and social sustainability

- ▶ Focuses on processes leading to high quality role performance and individual well–being in the lives of **current** workers.
- ▶ Requires social institutions of workplace, families, community to provide needed supports so that workers can attain **economic stability**.
- ▶ Involves processes leading to social health and well–being **now** and **in the future**.
- ▶ Calls for social institutions to facilitate **economic and environmental sustainability**.

Work–life Integration

Social Sustainability

Work–life integration and social sustainability

- ▶ Communities with **high levels of social connection and inclusion of diverse families** have been shown to promote better work–life integration (See Bookman, 2004, and Kagan et al., 2008).
- ▶ Socially sustainable communities are **equitable, diverse, connected, and democratic** and **provide a good quality of life** (WACOSS, 2002).

Work–life Integration

Social Sustainability

Work–life integration and social sustainability

- ▶ **Gender equity** in the workplace is a major consideration:
 - Adaptations are needed so that workers who provide care for family members are not penalized;
 - Contributions of a diverse workforce are valued.
- ▶ Social sustainability also requires the **participation of women** in economic development and in the paid workforce in both developed and developing countries (Strange & Bayley, OECD, 2008).

Work–life Integration

Social Sustainability

Work–life integration and social sustainability

- ▶ The attainment of work–life integration requires that **children and youth are cared for and educated well** while their parents participate in paid work (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2003).
- ▶ Social sustainability involves planning for the reproduction of sustainable societies—including **workforce attachment of the following generations.**

Work–life Integration

Social Sustainability

Is WL integration necessary for social sustainability?

- ▶ Adults giving care to family members are increasingly needed to participate in the paid workforce.
- ▶ Rising levels of disability claims and use of sick leave have been observed internationally (Geurts et al., 2000).

Is WL integration necessary for social sustainability?

- ▶ When faced with overwhelming care demands, caregivers leave the workforce, reducing the economic circumstances of their families (Brennan & Brannan, 2005).
- ▶ Alternatively, employed workers have chosen to have lower numbers of children leading to decline in the birth rates of many developed countries (Lewis et al., 2007).

Socially Sustainable Work

- ▶ Work is recognized as critical for sustainability, since it is a key way in which human needs are met through exchanges between society and nature.
- ▶ Socially sustainable work will also require a change in current discourse on work–life integration, which recognizes the importance of future generations of workers, and the critical need to have environmentally–sustaining work (Littig & Griessler, 2005).

Socially Sustainable Work–life

- ▶ Rapoport et al (2002) have called for a “dual agenda” approach to socially sustainable work, which calls for equitable arrangements in the workplace which recognize that work and personal life have equal importance.
- ▶ The dual agenda approach calls into question the assumptions upon which modern work–lives are based.
- ▶ The social sustainability approach to work may open dialogs about the valuing of “economic growth for its own sake regardless of social factors and the quality of life” (Lewis et al, 2007)

Slides and References

- ▶ Can be obtained at:
 - www.rtc.pdx.edu/PDF/presWork-LifeUnderstandingSustainability2010-5-21-10.pdf