



*Perspectives on Work-
Family Balance and Global
Transformations*

*Bahira Sherif Trask
Human Development & Family Studies
University of Delaware
Bstrask@udel.edu*



A Momentous Moment in History

✧ "...the world has been turned upside down because women in the industrialized countries have changed their views as to their proper role in society and because governments, in at least some of these countries have changed their policies to accommodate those views" (Castles, 2003 p. 220).



Global Statistics

✧ Global female labor force:

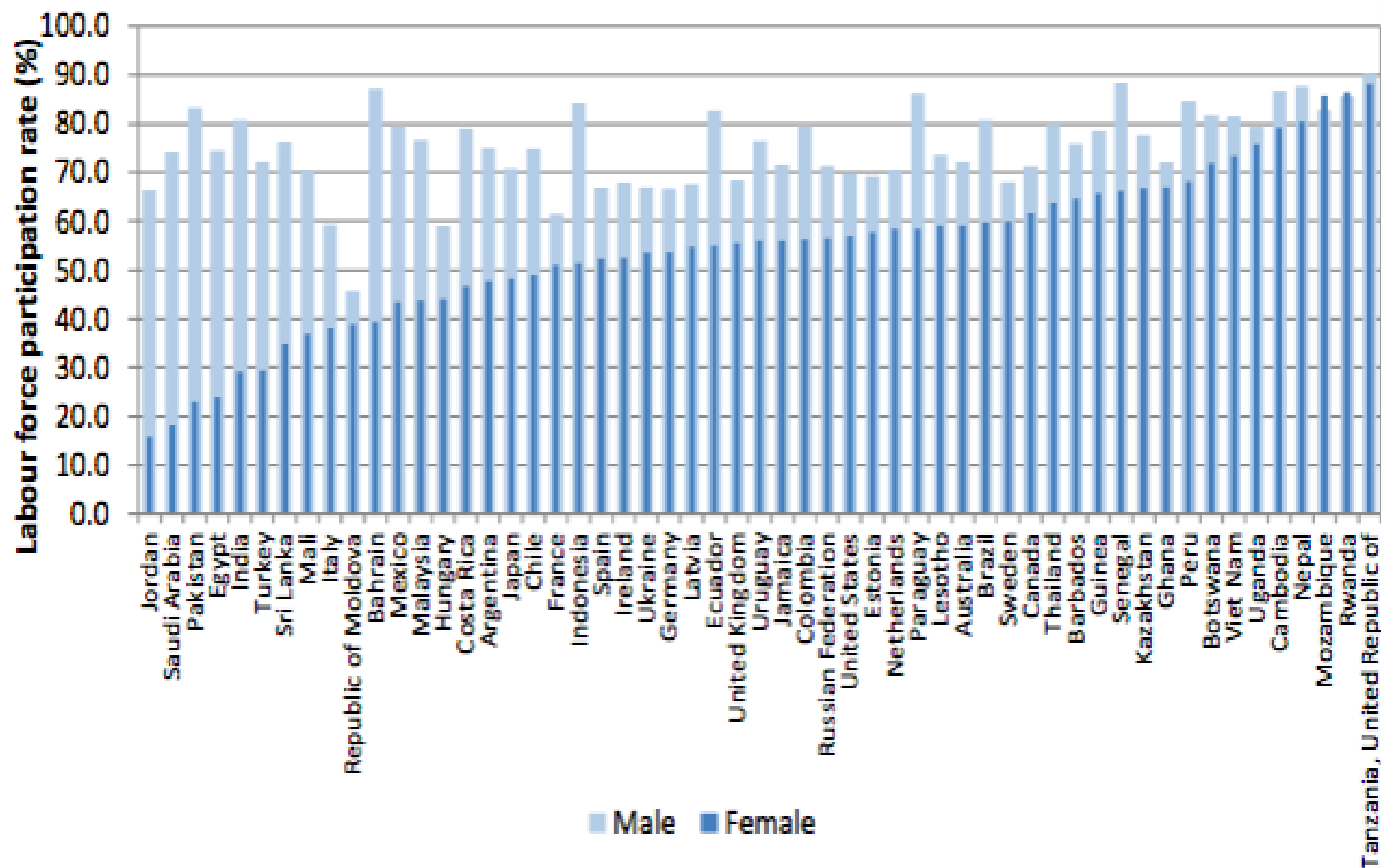
✧ 1.3 billion, approximately 39.9 per cent of the total labor force of 3.3 billion (ILO, 2012)

✧ Ranges from 16 per cent in Jordan to 90 per cent in Tanzania

Global Statistics: 1960 - 2010

- ✧ North America: 31 % - 49%
- ✧ Europe: 32 % - 53 %
- ✧ Caribbean: 26 % – 38 %
- ✧ Central America: 16 % – 35 %
- ✧ Middle East & North Africa: 17% – 26%
- ✧ South America: 21% - 59%
- ✧ East Asia & Pacific: 71%
- ✧ Sub-Saharan Africa: 62%

Figure 3. Labour force participation rate by sex in 2012,* selected economies



Note: 2012 are preliminary projections.

Source: ILO, *E4FBP*, 6th edition (July 2012 update).



Women's Employment

- ✧ According to the ILO (2012)
 - ✧ 30 percent of women are employed in agriculture
 - ✧ 50 percent of women are employed in the service industry
 - ✧ 15 percent of women are employed in industry
- ✧ In industrialized world: almost 85 per cent of women work in either education or health care
- ✧ In developing world: women move from agriculture to service except for East Asia

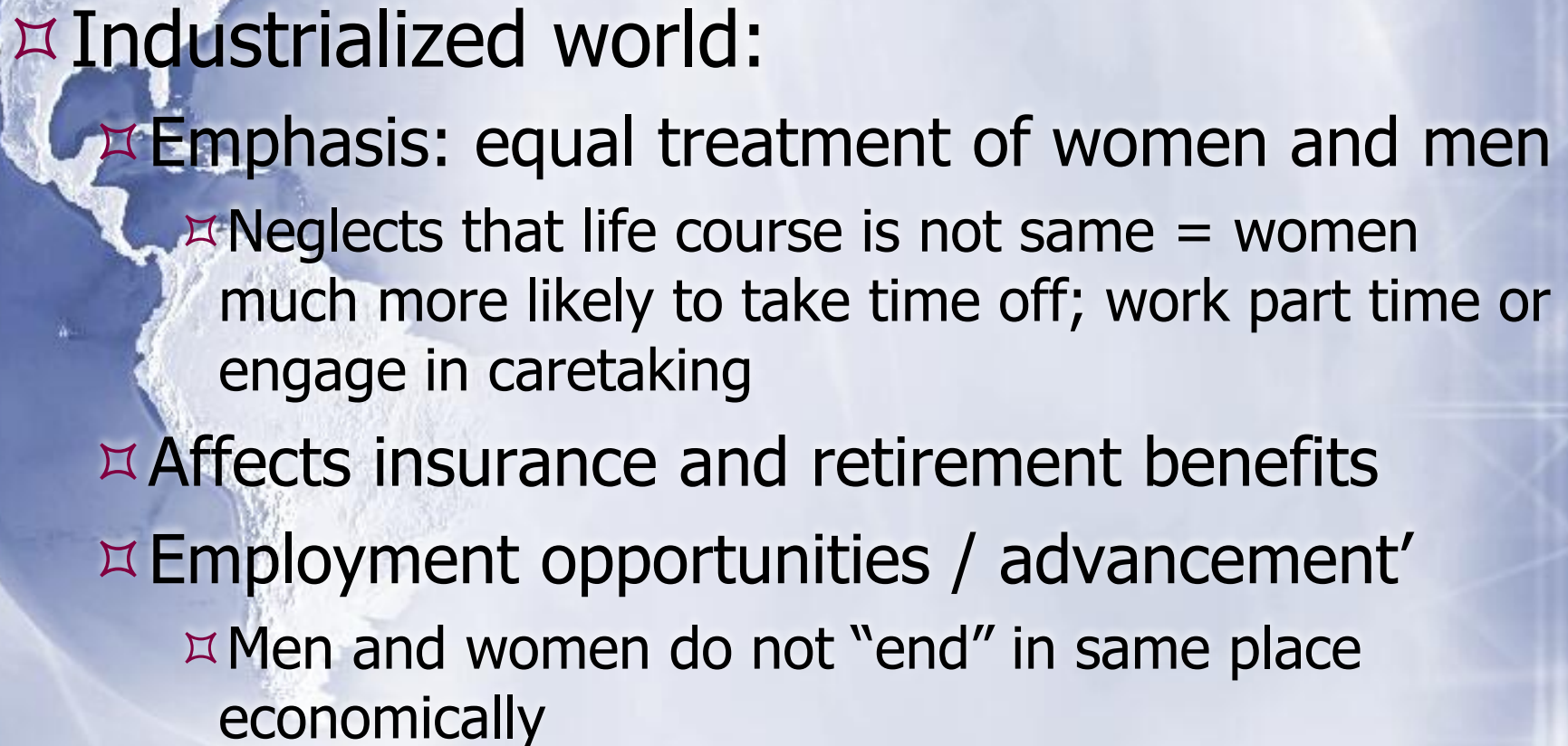
Developing World

- ✧ Influx of women into the labor force over last 30 years or so
 - ✧ Low wage production for export
 - ✧ Labor intensive manufacturing
 - ✧ Service jobs / migration
- ✧ Women's Rights Movement:
 - ✧ Main focus and strategy: Attaining and maintaining access to paid employment
- ✧ Globalization
- ✧ Beneria: Supply met Demand!

Women's Employment

- ❖ Statistics do not always capture non-standard employment; unpaid work
 - ❖ ie. Women's roles / life course transitions not clearly represented in formal statistics
 - ❖ Women more likely to drop out and come back to jobs vs male pattern of job switching
- ❖ Women more likely to be involved in "vulnerable" employment
 - ❖ 50.4 % (women) vs. 48.1 % (men) - 2012
 - ❖ Masks great variability between regions
 - ❖ More likely to be in segregated occupations

Social and Ideational Perspectives

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- ✧ Industrialized world:
 - ✧ Emphasis: equal treatment of women and men
 - ✧ Neglects that life course is not same = women much more likely to take time off; work part time or engage in caretaking
 - ✧ Affects insurance and retirement benefits
 - ✧ Employment opportunities / advancement'
 - ✧ Men and women do not "end" in same place economically



Social and Ideational Perspectives

- ❖ Developing world (also poor in industrialized world):
 - ❖ Working outside of the home is strategy for **collective survival** not path for individual advancement
 - ❖ Women's work may lead to more opportunities but not always
 - ❖ Mothers have opportunities but girls not
 - ❖ Domestic abuse is on rise

The Role of Market Ideology

- ✧ Response to globalization in industrialized and developing world:
 - ✧ Reduced social spending
 - ✧ Maximizing exports
 - ✧ Loosening economic regulations
 - ✧ Work places – decentralized wage fixing
 - ✧ Self-management



Globalization is Changing Role of States

- ✧ Primary goal the promotion of a market economy instead of providing services to the citizenry
- ✧ The state is moving its responsibility for education, health and the welfare of individuals away and onto the family



✧ Market is perceived as “value free”

✧ “These services are thus being reconstituted, but with **the family**, not the state, as the fundamental building block in society”
(Blackmore, 1999, p. 40-41)

✧ Institutions that have historically mediated between markets and individuals, governments, unions, educational systems, are being weakened and reorganized



Globalizing Influences: Work Re-configured

- ✧ Ideal worker concept spreading
- ✧ Globalization focuses on cost cutting – obscures needs of workers
- ✧ Conflicting Interests of Employers vs Employees
 - ✧ Quality of jobs with respect to earnings, hours, conditions



Global Spread of Market Ideology Favors:

- ✧ Focus on competitive individuals instead of community concerns
- ✧ Women tend not to fit the ideal of the independent worker who fully exploits his or her own potential in a competitive environment



Women are Especially Vulnerable:

- ✧ Gender wage gap has increased due to

- ✧ Outsourcing

- ✧ Downsizing

- ✧ Individualized contractual employer / employee relations

- ✧ Women who work part time are not covered by collective bargaining agreements nor are they unionized



Decisions in Families Impact Labor Force Decisions

✧ Families divide work into:

✧ Paid work

✧ Unpaid work

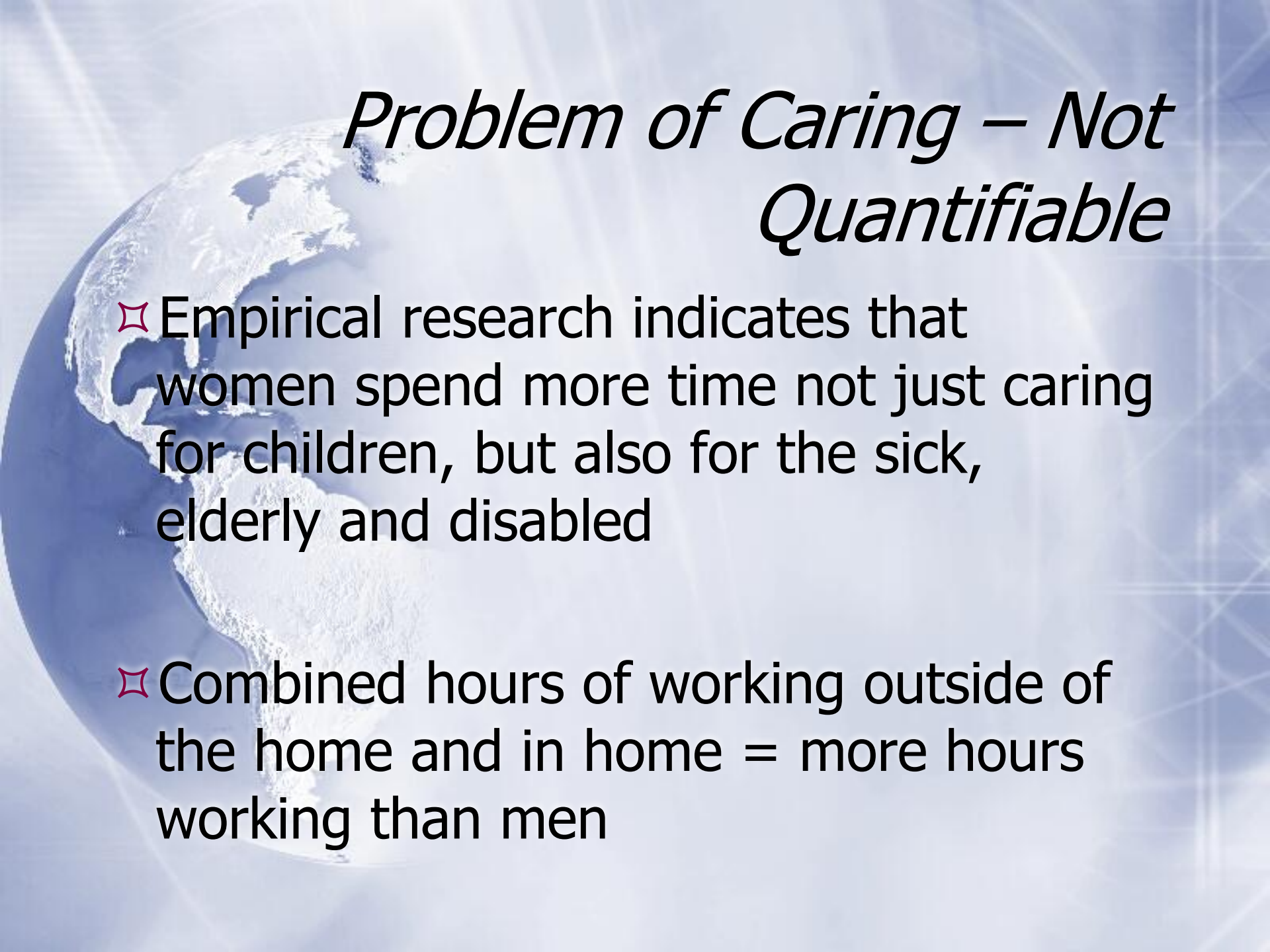
✧ Caring labor

✧ This is influenced by:

✧ Beliefs about appropriate gender roles


✧ Who can earn more

✧ Availability of supports such as extended family or quality child care




Problem of Caring – Not Quantifiable

- ✧ Empirical research indicates that women spend more time not just caring for children, but also for the sick, elderly and disabled
- ✧ Combined hours of working outside of the home and in home = more hours working than men



Global Shift in Social Values

- ✧ Women are much more likely to try to find ways to accommodate having a family with balancing work demands than in the past
- ✧ Women's economic contributions are today more prized in the marriage market over their domestic skills
- ✧ Having an education and being gainfully employed have become precursors to family formation



Family Friendly Policies Have Macro-Implications

- ❖ Women are choosing employment over having children, leading to lowered fertility rates everywhere except Sub-Saharan Africa
- ❖ Family friendly policies that allow women to complete their education and take on paid employment with quality child care have seen increased fertility rates



Work-Family Reconciliation Remains Complex

- ✧ Which policies are appropriate in differing contexts remains highly disputed
- ✧ Different philosophical orientations about how this is to be paid for



Work-Family Reconciliation Remains Complex

- ✧ Empirical research indicates that:
 - ✧ Countries that espouse “traditional family values” do the least in terms of providing policies and services that support women and men as they struggle with the demands of negotiating work and family responsibilities.
 - ✧ Countries that have consciously embraced fundamental family and work transformations have implemented policies that actually support individuals and employers



Macro Level Policy Responses

- ✧ Pathways to return to the labor force needs to be built into the educational system;
- ✧ Unpaid family care work needs to be recognized
- ✧ Tax policies need to take family stages in account – family friendly taxation and social security;



Macro Level Policy Responses

- ❖ Public campaigns to challenge gender stereotypes
- ❖ Improving part-time work by associating it with benefits
 - ❖ For women and men
- ❖ Temporary part-time work that allows for re-integration into the workforce



Employer Policy Responses

✧ Workplace flexibility:

- ✧ All research indicates most important policy shift
- ✧ Not just changing hours – but day to day flexibility
- ✧ Compensatory time where employees can bank hours



Employer Responses

- ✧ Employed individuals need choices and options (flex time / benefit buffet)
- ✧ Part time work / tele-commuting needs to be an option
- ✧ During different part of life course need varying options



Policies that Support Both Employers and Employees

- ✧ More equitable policies especially with respect to paid time off for family responsibilities
 - ✧ In US – lowest paid workers least likely to have paid sick leave
 - ✧ Diminished engagement and retention
 - ✧ Bad for individuals and families
 - ✧ Problematic for small employers
 - ✧ Potentially a social insurance fund like Social Security / disabilities programs



Policy Implications

- ✧ Need for joint collaborations / partnerships: this is not just an employer – employee issue
- ✧ Educational systems / Schools
- ✧ Health care providers
- ✧ Community providers
- ✧ Governments



Thank You!