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# Flexible working patterns: towards reconciliation of family and work

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## Introduction

In the past decade, especially in northern countries of the European Union, some major changes have occurred regarding labour matters. One of the most popular changes has been the implementation of working arrangements which provide flexibility in a number of areas such as working time, place of work, task or job content, and rewards. Flexibility in working time includes a variety of arrangements for part-time work, job sharing, flexi-time, fixed-term contracts, subcontracting and career/employment break schemes.

These flexible working arrangements have been introduced for a variety of reasons. These include economic factors and the need to improve productivity and competitiveness, often through strategic human resource management (Brewster *et al.*, 1994) and change programmes (Hutchinson and Brewster, 1994). Other reasons for their introduction include changes in the composition of the workforce and the use of flexible working arrangements as a way of recruiting and retaining staff. In some instances, employers have been required to introduce flexible working arrangements as a consequence of industrial agreements.

The trend to flexible working arrangements has economic and social benefits. Not only does it improve productivity and competitiveness, but it is increasingly recognized as a way to reduce unemployment and as an important tool for reconciling work and family life (DeRoure, 1995). This paper examines the role of flexible working arrangements as a means of providing for balance between work and family life in Europe and specifically in Greece. The first part of the paper examines social and economic changes and the second part adds to the discussion by describing another model of flexible working arrangements and its contribution to understanding the relationship between work and family. The third part of the paper examines flexibility in the European labour market and particularly in Greece.

## Social and family changes

Economic, technological, social and family changes have encouraged the introduction of flexible working arrangements. The influence of economic and

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technological changes was discussed in the introduction to this Special Issue of *Employee Relations*. This section focuses on the changes involving social and family developments.

In traditional pre-industrial societies, work and family were united as a whole with the family being the main production unit. This is reflected in the term work economy (*olkovuia* in Greek) which comes from the words *olko* meaning home and *voun* meaning care. So economy meant originally taking care of home matters. Later, in industrial societies the division between work and private life became sharp. However, the percentage of married women working outside their home was still low while the extended family came into support the working mother with the family obligations.

Today, in western industrialized countries, the family can differ in size from a one parent wage-earner to a dual career professional couple, and the extended family is becoming a rare phenomenon. Regardless of differences in family structure, there is a common wish on the part of the working population at all levels, to reduce the separation between family and work and the possibility to achieve a better balance between working life, family obligations, leisure and socializing. This has led to a serious debate and policy formulation in the EU concerning the reconciliation of family and work and to a number of activities which are adopted both by countries and organizations (Papalexandris, 1996). The experience in the USA, the UK, other European countries and Australia that indicates policies specifically designed to accommodate work and family responsibilities are most likely to be introduced where governments encourage and support them or when employers regard them as beneficial for business (Kramar, 1993).

Today 40 per cent of women of the EU are in the labour market, while at the same time there is a high appreciation of family as an institution and of family values. However, the family's living circumstances and the requirements imposed by work make child rearing more and more expensive and difficult. As a result, those who have children work harder and have less money, while those who are childless have more freedom and more money (Papalexandris, 1996). The situation appears to be equally difficult in the USA where, despite corporate and public policies, the work-family dilemma is still very strong (Smolowe, 1996).

Thus we can see a conflict emerging between work and family. This conflict may lead either to a clear dominance of work over the family life and a "fully mobile society of single persons" or to a reshaping of the present everyday lives of families through changes in existing family policies (DeRoure, 1996). If we all agree that the second alternative is the most desirable for the major part of the population, an adjustment in the organization of work is needed in order to facilitate the upbringing of children, bring paid work in line with family responsibilities and create employment opportunities for those undertaking substantial family responsibilities. This will require a more equitable sharing of duties between men and women (Moussourou, 1996).

Until now, women have made the adjustments necessary to accommodate work and family responsibilities. They continue to do most of the housework and childcare (Cook, 1992; Smith, 1993, p. 13) and to bear the stress and conflict associated with combining employment and family responsibilities (Keith and Schaeffer, 1980; Pleck *et al.*, 1980; Wolcott, 1991).

The need for people to have better control over working time and the hours they wish to devote to work varies according to their age, sex, mobility, qualifications, pay, professional aspirations and family status. For example, availability of professional time is lower for women when they have young children and for people in general when they feel the need for training or retraining, or when they approach the end of their careers. On the contrary, people feel the need to put more hours in their work just after studies, before starting a family and during stages for career when they assume greater responsibilities and see opportunities in their career development.

It has been shown that the extent to which work and family have been successfully accommodated is influenced by factors such as:

- attitudes, expectations and priorities accorded to work and family roles by both partners (Verbrugge, 1986; Wethington and Kessler, 1989);
- schedule compatibility, that is the regularity of patterns of work and flexibility and autonomy of the worker arranging those hours (Pleck *et al.*, 1980); and
- the opportunities available to spend time together as a family and time available to complete domestic tasks (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1991, p. 10).

Working conditions, such as flexible hours of work and employment schedules, job autonomy and supervisory relationships affect family and employee satisfaction (Vanden Heuval, 1993). Job satisfaction, stress and poor health have been found to be outcomes of heavy job demands and little decision-making power (Karasek, 1979; Karasek *et al.*, 1981). Similarly, when a supervisor is not supportive of an employee's childcare needs, considerable stress at work and home is created (Fernandez, 1986).

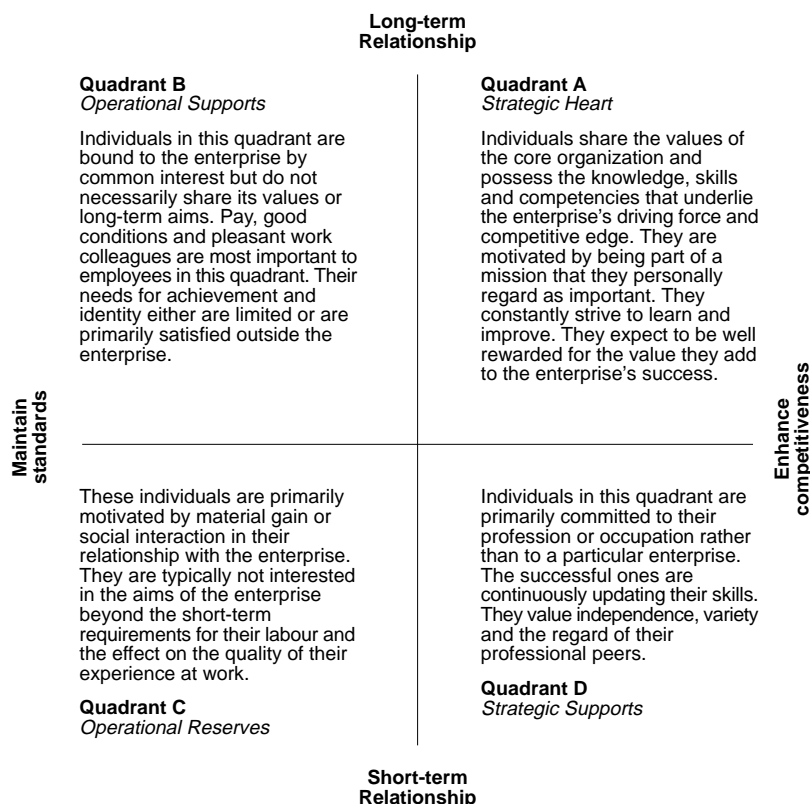
Therefore, flexible working arrangements appear to meet the needs of business resulting from economic and technological changes and also go some way to satisfying the needs of employees attempting to combine employment and family life.

### **“Contributors” and flexible working arrangements**

A number of models have been used to conceptualize the variety of working arrangements available in organizations, and were described in the introduction to this Special Issue of *Employee Relations* and they include the “flexible firm” and the “shamrock” organization. One of these, the “contributor” model, is particularly opposite to the reconciliation of family and work. It develops Handy's “shamrock” framework by elaborating on the implications of Handy's

central hypothesis that “instead of one workforce there are now three, each with a different kind of commitment to the organization, a different contractual arrangement, a different set of expectations. They each have to be managed in different ways” (Handy, 1990, p. 75). The contributor model indicates that individual’s requirements for different types of work relationships could vary throughout their working life and consequently, at certain times flexible working arrangements would satisfy their needs. The contributor model is briefly outlined in the next section.

Saul (1996) develops Handy’s model by distinguishing between the contribution of individuals and organizations to organizational objectives and the length and nature of the employment relationship. Figure 1 shows these as dimensions which define four quadrants. The vertical dimension defines the operational duration of the relationship of the individual or organization to the strategic core; and the horizontal dimension defines the nature of the contributor’s expected contribution to the enterprise. The common characteristics of individuals and organizations in each of the quadrants is described in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.**  
Contribution of  
individuals and  
organizations to  
organizational  
objectives

In circumstances where a person is expected to meet existing performance standards, it could be expected that the employment relationship would primarily be a commercial one where individuals are paid for the hours they work. The desired outcome of these contributors would be the maintenance of performance standards and staying within budget. In terms of Figure 1, this includes individuals and organizations in Quadrants B and C. Among the contributors in Quadrant B would be contractual alliances with ancillary services such as computing services, many part-time employees and shiftworkers. The contributors in Quadrant C would include workers who provide temporary service delivery such as casual employees.

On the other hand, where the purpose of the contributor relationship is to enhance competitiveness, the relationship would typically involve professional services or a leadership role, both of which involve open-ended commitment to the success of the enterprise and/or an enhancement of the contributor's professional reputation. These contributors are located in Quadrants A and D. Those in Quadrant A would include members of the strategic core, such as managers and professionals with core competences required by the organization; contractual alliances with strategic suppliers and part-time professionals. The members of Quadrant D would include contractual alliances with specialist professional advisers and project partners. Saul argues it is necessary to "devote more effort to communicating to these contributors the organization's mission, strategy, environmental threats and opportunities. Rewards will be appropriately linked to the success of the enterprise" (Saul, 1996, p. 24).

Different working arrangements provide for flexibility in each quadrant. For instance, part-time working arrangements could exist for operational supports and members of the strategic core, while fixed-term contracts could exist for strategic supports. Casual/temporary work arrangements would exist for operational staff, such as customer service staff.

Saul (1996, pp. 30-3) argues that individuals can move between quadrants throughout their working life depending on at what stage of career and life cycle they are. He argues that managers need to establish contributor relationships in terms of the expected duration of work required by the business (Waterman *et al.*, 1994) as well as the needs of the contributors. In order to do this, there needs to be dialogue between managers and contributors and a culture which supports such dialogue. Such dialogue would need to occur whenever there was a significant shift in the circumstances of the organization or the individual.

However, at the present time the reasons for introducing flexible working arrangements in each quadrant will vary. Where there is a desire to recruit and/or retain individuals in Quadrant A with the competences critical for organizational success, work arrangements, such as being able to work fewer hours through part-time work, job redesign or job-sharing can be used. On the other hand, casual or part-time working arrangements will be introduced for

operational supports as a way of meeting peaks and troughs of labour demand, or in times of labour shortage, as a way of recruiting or retaining labour.

Although patterns of employment vary across European countries, similar trends are visible. "There have been increases in almost every form of employment – except the traditional, full-time, long-term job" (Cranfield Network, 1995, p. 13). The growth in part-time employment has been substantial, particularly in The Netherlands, Switzerland and France, where between 58 per cent to 69 per cent of organizations increased their use of part-time working arrangements. There has also been a much greater use of fixed-term, casual and temporary arrangements and use of subcontractors (Centre for European Human Resource Management, 1996).

These flexible employment policies have been used for a range of occupations, and therefore contributors to organizations. They cover professional and managerial employees who would be considered part of the strategic heart in Quadrant A, or as strategic supports in Quadrant D when engaged as consultants or on fixed-term contracts. They also cover manual and clerical workers, who could be engaged either as operational supports in Quadrant B, or as operational reserves in Quadrant C. A study of 32 organizations in 14 countries found flexible working arrangements had been introduced for a variety of occupational groups and that the "main benefit for the employee is in terms of improved ability to create healthier balance between work and family commitments" (Hutchinson and Brewster, 1994, p. x).

### **Flexibility in the European workplace**

European organizations have responded to these developments by introducing flexible working arrangements. Economic pressures such as the need to increase competitiveness and reduce costs were the major causes for the introduction of flexible work policies in European organizations. However, the second most important reason was the desire in organizations to recruit and retain members of the labour market who would otherwise not be available to work because of family and non-work commitments (Hutchinson and Brewster, 1994). The European Union (EU) has developed initiatives to encourage employers to develop policies to reconcile work and family life.

### **Forms of flexible working arrangements**

Flexible working arrangements take a number of forms. These include:

- flexibility in working time arrangements (flexi-time, annualization of hours, four-day week, individual/collective management of working hours);
- flexibility in the number of hours worked (part-time work, job-sharing, 32 or even shorter hour-week, compressed working time etc.). Flexibility in the way that periods of work can be broken up (career breaks, parental leave, sabbatical leave, etc.); and

- 
- flexibility with regard to place of work (teleworking, combination of working some days in the office and some days at home).

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In addition to these flexible working arrangements, people with family responsibilities can also benefit from support measures designed to assist with children who are young, sick or on vacation. They can also assist with eldercare responsibilities. These support measures include:

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- childcare services;
- workplace catering and laundry service;
- support when returning to work after maternity;
- paternal leave;
- childcare referral service; and
- eldercare services.

### **European Union and work and life balance**

The European Community (EC) has promoted the equal treatment of women in employment. Early “Action Programs” adopted by the EC Council of Ministers focused on equal pay and improvement in legal provisions, while more recent initiatives have strong work and family themes. The EC’s *Third Action Program on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 1991-95* suggests that equal employment policies should take into account “the interrelationships between work, the family and other aspects of everyday life. In other words, the objective of increasing equality in employment cannot be achieved unless accompanied by action to increase equality in other areas, such as family responsibilities”.

At the policy level, certain serious initiatives have taken place to promote work and family reconciliation. The first initiative in 1986 was called “Childcare and other measures aimed at reconciling working and family responsibilities for women and men”. The second initiative, introduced in 1993, was called “Co-ordination group on positive action and aims at positive action for women”. The third and most recent initiative, introduced in June 1994, was called “Families and work network” and it is still operating.

The “Families at work network” was established to achieve the following objectives through a series of actions/initiatives (Stewart, 1994):

- to promote organizational methods designed to achieve balance between personal and family life;
- to support measures for families and mobile professionals; and
- to award the European social innovation prize to companies which have started practices enhancing a better balance between working and family.

These awards were made for the first time in June 1995 in Stockholm, when one large company from Germany, one SME from Denmark and one state-owned organization from France, won the prize for their respective categories.

The network disseminates information about strategies which could be used to promote work and life balance by organizing national seminars in each member state and circulating a publication under the name *New Ways*. Its contribution so far has been very positive and it has stimulated a number of further initiatives, in different EU countries, on the work and family balance.

### **Examples of work and family initiatives in the EU**

There is considerable variation among countries in the provision of equal opportunity legislation, child care, family leave provisions and other support services. Conservative western European countries such as Germany are less progressive than Scandinavian countries, where governments have provided for paid leave and child care services since the 1960s (Kaplan, 1994, p. 47). Many countries provide for paid family leave in order to care for sick family members, for instance Sweden allows for up to 60 days a year and Portugal allows 30 days for children under ten years.

Organizations in European tertiary and public service sectors have also introduced flexible working arrangements to enable employees to balance their work and family lives. Many organizations in the tertiary sector (insurance companies, banks, social security) and in the public sector have flexi-time, providing employees with choices about the time they start and finish work. These hours are crucial for the organization of aspects of family life such as shopping, children, meals (DeRoure, 1996).

Although the service sector offers employees some flexibility, the industrial sector remains more rigid, especially for people employed in production work. Shift work is often the rule, with the production system requiring work teams at all times. The distribution sector, health (hospitals), transport (air, sea, trains, roads) and the Post Office are sectors at "high-risk", with anti-social working hours incompatible with family life. Some organizations in these industries have encouraged the opening of commercial childcare facilities, open 24 hours a day, or have defined collective time management systems.

Flexible work practices have been available in some European organizations for more than two decades. A German aerospace company introduced flexi-time in 1967 to assist employees with traffic congestion (Hopkins and Johnson, 1987, p. 33), while in France and Belgium, flexible working arrangements were introduced to eliminate overtime. A variety of flexible working arrangements have specifically been introduced to assist employees deal with their family responsibilities.

#### *Germany*

A number of initiatives have been introduced in Germany. These include a scheme designed specifically to assist with child care and known as "individual work hours". It was introduced in Ludwig Beck, a retail department store



employing 2,000 employees in Munich. Employees decide on their work schedules each month, in consultation with their supervisors. They are required to work a minimum of 60 hours and up to a maximum of 163 hours (Hogg and Harker, 1992, pp. 77-8). A German software company, CONDAT GmbH, allows employees to choose their hours of work, with normal working hours ranging between 30 and 40 hours, without any specified core hours.

The case of Volkswagen remains an excellent example of a collective agreement involving the introduction of flexible working arrangements which facilitate the work-non-work life balance, as well as providing a redistribution of working hours in an attempt to avoid redundancies. Volkswagen is part of the car manufacturing sector, which employs almost 100,000 employees. It introduced a reduced working week of 28.8 hours a week for a four-year period.

Also, in Germany the new term *mobilzeit* (movable time) is replacing the term part-time which carries a negative connotation (European Community, 1996). *Mobilzeit* includes various options such as job sharing, longer summer holidays, compressed working hours and involves men and women across a range of occupations, including professionals. Companies are encouraged to create mobile posts and are offered consultants' advice which is partly funded by the state.

#### *France*

In France some companies use the four-day working week: a week made up of four days of about more or less ten hours work a day. Opinion polls show that workers and employees think that three days of freedom a week largely make up for the four intensive working days. These changes are not contested by workers (Papalexandris, 1996).

In one French service company, parents who take leave to care for their children are protected financially and in terms of job security. The company provides parents who take parental leave with an additional compensatory payment, guarantee of a job to come back to and they are replaced during this period by a job-seeker of the same sex (preservation of the proportion of women in work).

#### *Denmark*

In Denmark a law established a systematic rotational system providing for paid leave on the basis of unemployment benefit to any worker who has been employed for over five years in an organization for a variety of reasons. The leave can take a number of forms, including leave for a few hours per week, or a few weeks a year or for a longer period such as a year. Job-sharing formulae have been invented this way. After a year in operation, the law is regarded as a success and will carry on for a few years, with a sliding scale system for the amount of benefit entitlement.

#### *UK*

A number of initiatives have been introduced in the UK. These include the wide availability of flexitime and the increasing availability of working-from-home

arrangements, known as flexiplace schemes. Oxfordshire County Council introduced a flexiplace scheme as part of a comprehensive work and family programme which also included part-time and job-sharing arrangements (Hogg and Harker, 1992, pp. 128-30). Although job-sharing is popular in the UK, it remains at the discretion of the employers, as there is concern to safeguard the freedom of employers above the freedom of working parents (Lewis, 1992, p. 422).

An interesting programme was introduced in a non-profit organization "Parents at Work" which is campaigning against people staying for excessively long hours in the office. The "go home on time" seminar, held in June 1996, aimed at showing that working too many hours does not necessarily mean increased productivity, while it is against a normal family and personal life.

#### *Belgium and Sweden*

In Belgium and in Sweden various campaigns aim at promoting the equal sharing of family responsibilities by men and women.

#### **Flexible working arrangements in Greece**

The need for reconciling work and family appears quite intense in Greece as it may help in three of the major problems facing the country. These problems include developments resulting from demographic changes associated with a decreasing birth rate and the ageing of the population; high unemployment rates of about 10 per cent, with particularly high rates among young people; and economic problems resulting from slow growth rates and an urgent need to raise competitiveness. Flexible working arrangements have been suggested as one way of dealing with these issues by the Association of Greek Industries, a body to which most large Greek companies belong.

Flexible work arrangements are common in many small and medium size Greek firms which are owned and run by family members. They take a variety of forms and vary across industries. Work at home in the form of *façon*, similar to the French term "outwork", or homeworking in the UK, is a very common source of employment for women workers sewing clothes or producing handicrafts, jewellery and toys. These workers are paid on a piece basis. About 225,000 people are employed in this way in Greece. Outsourcing and subcontracting is a common way of working in engineering, mining and constructing firms where there is no regular demand and companies prefer to subcontract according to their needs. Contract flexibility is used extensively by the State which hires temporary and seasonal employees for certain jobs (fire department, post office), by tourist enterprises which use seasonal employees, by merchant marine where seamen have to stop after seven months of travel, and in agriculture where both farming and industrial processing units require a seasonal type of employment. Job-sharing can be found in nursing, house cleaning or distribution posts. Flexibility in tasks is also very common and is considered one of the major advantages of small companies, allowing them to survive and face the competition of larger firms.

Until recently a considerable percentage of people working under this type of flexible pattern especially in small-medium firms, did not enjoy the benefits enjoyed by full-time, continuous workers. Their employment conditions and rewards compared unfavourably to those workers whose conditions were determined by legislation. Only recently have part-time workers gained official legal status in Greece.

Part-time employment was established officially in Greece in 1990 with Law 1892, although under the form of the fixed-term contract it had been practised since 1925. As official statistics show, only 4.5 per cent of the labour force works on a part-time basis in Greece, against the 14 per cent of the European Union. However, Greece has the second highest percentage in temporary employment (17.6 per cent) after Spain (25 per cent) against 9.6 per cent in the EU in general. According to a recent survey, part-time workers amount to about 162,000 persons. An alarmingly high proportion of these would prefer to work full-time; 38 per cent could not find a full-time job. In comparison, 30 per cent did not want a full-time job, 6 per cent were students and the rest declared various reasons for preferring this type of job.

Labour unions and employers view part-time work from different perspectives. Labour unions have reservations and are sceptical about the part-time model as revealed by recent research carried out by the Institute of Work of the General Conference of Greek Workers on *New Ways of Working in Greece*. In a public debate on the issue, appearing in the Greek press, employers' associations said "yes, in necessity only" and workers said "no, if a reduction of salaries is included" since Greek workers are the lowest-paid in Europe (Papalexandris, 1996).

It has been acknowledged in Greece that in order to effectively reconcile work and family responsibilities and possibly encourage women to bear more children, a number of policies, including flexible working hours, need to be introduced. Other policies suggested by the General Secretary for Equality are the development of an infrastructure to care for children and the elderly and a change in the prevailing models of male and female roles in the workforce and in the family (Pantazi, 1996).

On an organizational basis, some large Greek organizations apply measures which show a high degree of social responsibility and a serious effort to solve the work-family dilemma. Below are three examples of initiatives undertaken in three Greek companies included among the 11 Greek organizations which were candidates for the European Award 1995, organized by the European Network "Family and Work".

- (1) *ELAIS* is a food manufacturing firm which places emphasis on the quality of the family life of its employees. In order to promote that quality, the company has taken measures discouraging overtime and the holding of more than one job, including: one additional monthly pay per year, additional private insurance, an additional retirement programme,

loans for acquisition of a home or a car, awards to employees' children who have excelled in their studies.

- (2) *TITAN*, a large cement company, has a social policy which includes among others social services, additional health services and coverage of health costs, family planning programme, social and cultural activities involving employees' family members, university scholarships, occupational orientation and summer camps for employees' children.
- (3) *COSTEAS-GITONAS*, a private educational institution has adopted measures which try to satisfy family needs including: keeping children at school in accordance with their parents' working hours, organization of seminars for family and workplace relations (for both employees and parents of students), full or half scholarships for the children of employees and parents of students), educational leave granted to employees with allowances that make it possible for them to take along their families, child birth-leave up to one year (paid by the company), "compressed" week of three or four working days, more working hours for more pay, possibility of part-time work, etc.

These examples show that some large Greek organizations are very sensitive to the work-family issue. They indicate that a variety of policies have been used to promote a balance between work and family life, and in one organization, the educational institution, flexible working arrangements were used to do this.

In this respect, the Greek State has taken a series of measures which include a 16-week maternity leave, a three-month parental leave period, reduced hours of work for mothers of young children, increased number of hours during which day-care centres can look after the children of working parents and the creation of out-of-school creative occupation centres for children. The General Secretariat for Equality is particularly concerned with the need to change the prevailing gender roles, and feels that this can be achieved through the media, formal education and training programmes for educators in matters of gender equality.

### **Assessment of flexible working arrangements**

Traditionally, employees with flexible working arrangements have been located in Saul's Quadrants B or C, which are often found in small companies in deregulated markets (Saul, 1996). These employees lack social security benefits, receive low pay, often work long hours and have no security of employment. This has given a negative image to flexible working arrangements. However, the introduction of these practices can gain acceptance in an environment where the government provides a legal framework for the development of social consensus and a guarantee of no exploitation. This was made clear during the "Work and Family" conference held in May 1996 in Athens where, apart from part-time work, the annualization of working hours seemed to be gaining the approval of labour unions.

Also, as raised in an earlier part of the paper, flexible work policies are now being used increasingly for people regarded as the strategic core or the strategic reserves. These people are now increasingly engaged on fixed-term employment contracts, engaged as consultants or employed on reduced hours. One Australian bank has acknowledged that many professional women with children want to work fewer hours than required in a full-time job and have redesigned some professional jobs so they can be done in three days.

As stressed by DeRoure (1996), flexibility can win full recognition only if the following rules are followed:

- the rule of free choice (employees should have the choice to work in an atypical fashion or not);
- the reversibility rule (employees should be able to return to the status they had in the past or adopt another status if they so wish);
- the non-discrimination rule ("flexible" employees should not be subjected to discrimination as regards access to promotion and training); and
- the *pro rata* rule (social rights should always be at least proportional to the actual time worked).

### Conclusions

Work and family policies have been found to have a positive effect on employees and on organizational outcomes. Studies in the USA (Eichman and Reisman, 1992, p. 51; Families and Work Institute, 1993; Friedman, 1991; Galinsky *et al.*, 1991, p. 128) show that policies such as child care referral services and workplace-based child care centres, flexible working arrangements and family leave improve employee morale, enhance recruitment and retention, increase productivity, reduce absenteeism and improve public image.

In particular, flexible working arrangements can serve a number of organizational purposes including increasing competitiveness and productivity; fostering organizational change; and improving recruitment quality and the retention of labour. They can also promote social outcomes such as the redistribution of work between the employed and the unemployed and foster healthier family lives. For individuals, flexible working arrangements can facilitate the reconciliation of work and family needs and allow individuals to balance both responsibilities. The benefits of flexible work policies were demonstrated in a major bank in Australia with improved customer service and reduced turnover and absenteeism resulting from their introduction (*Australian Financial Review*, 1992, p. 12).

The use of flexible working arrangements, particularly part-time work, is becoming more widespread throughout Europe. A range of flexible arrangements is being used for a variety of occupations and, as a consequence, the nature of the employment relationships of those contributing to the work of the organization is becoming more diverse. Many organizations are now made

up of highly-skilled, as well as less-skilled people, engaged on a range of employment contracts: full-time, part-time, casual/temporary, subcontractor and fixed-term contract.

The integration of family and work through well-designed employment flexibility represents an opportunity for the stakeholders of organizations, and a challenge which has implications for hierarchy, authority and contribution which transcend its original boundaries of cost-effectiveness.

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