The Changing Workforce: Implications for Work & Family Integration

Module 4 – Course 15.343

Managing Transformations in Work, Organizations, and Society

Check-In From Module 3: Strategic Partnerships

Application Assignment:

- **Pick a Strategic Partnership relevant to your work setting (not labor-management)**

  - **What lessons from labor-management partnerships apply?**

  - **What are the two or three key changes in management practice needed to successfully manage various types of strategic partnerships over an extended period of time?**

Today's Guests

- **Beth Boland, Partner, Mintz, Levin, Colin, Ferris, Glovsky & Popeo**

- **Mark Byers, Director, Student Life Counseling, Harvard Law School**

- **Mona Harrington, Program Director, MIT Workplace Center**

Today's Objectives

- **Explore How Work and Family are Related**
- **Discuss "State of the Art" Practices**
- **Outline the Elements of a Systemic Approach**
- **Focus on What Managers can and need to do!**
- **Discuss Practices in Your Organization—today and your vision 5 years from now**
- **Identify Changes Needed to Get There**

"I wish there were more flexibility, especially in our production environment... this year alone I lost three excellent employees. They had each become single parents for one reason or another...,It just breaks my heart. Traditionally production has been a male-oriented thing, where one partner stays at home with the children and the other one works crazy schedules…*the world is changing, but the schedule is not.*"

Source: P. Monique Valcour and Rosemary Batt, "The Family-Responsive Employer: A Definition and Empirical Test," in Phyllis Moen, <u>Couples and Careers: Adaptive Strategies over the Life Course,</u>

Our View: A Systemic Strategy

- **A Dual Agenda:**
  Integrating Work *AND* Family Life
- **A Holistic Approach**
  - **Individuals & Families**
  - **Employers**
  - **Unions and Professional Associations**
  - **Community Groups**
  - **Government--local, state, and federal**

A Holistic Approach to Work & Family Responsibilities

Governments

Firms

Work ⇄ Family

Community Groups & Intermediaries

Unions & Professional Assns.
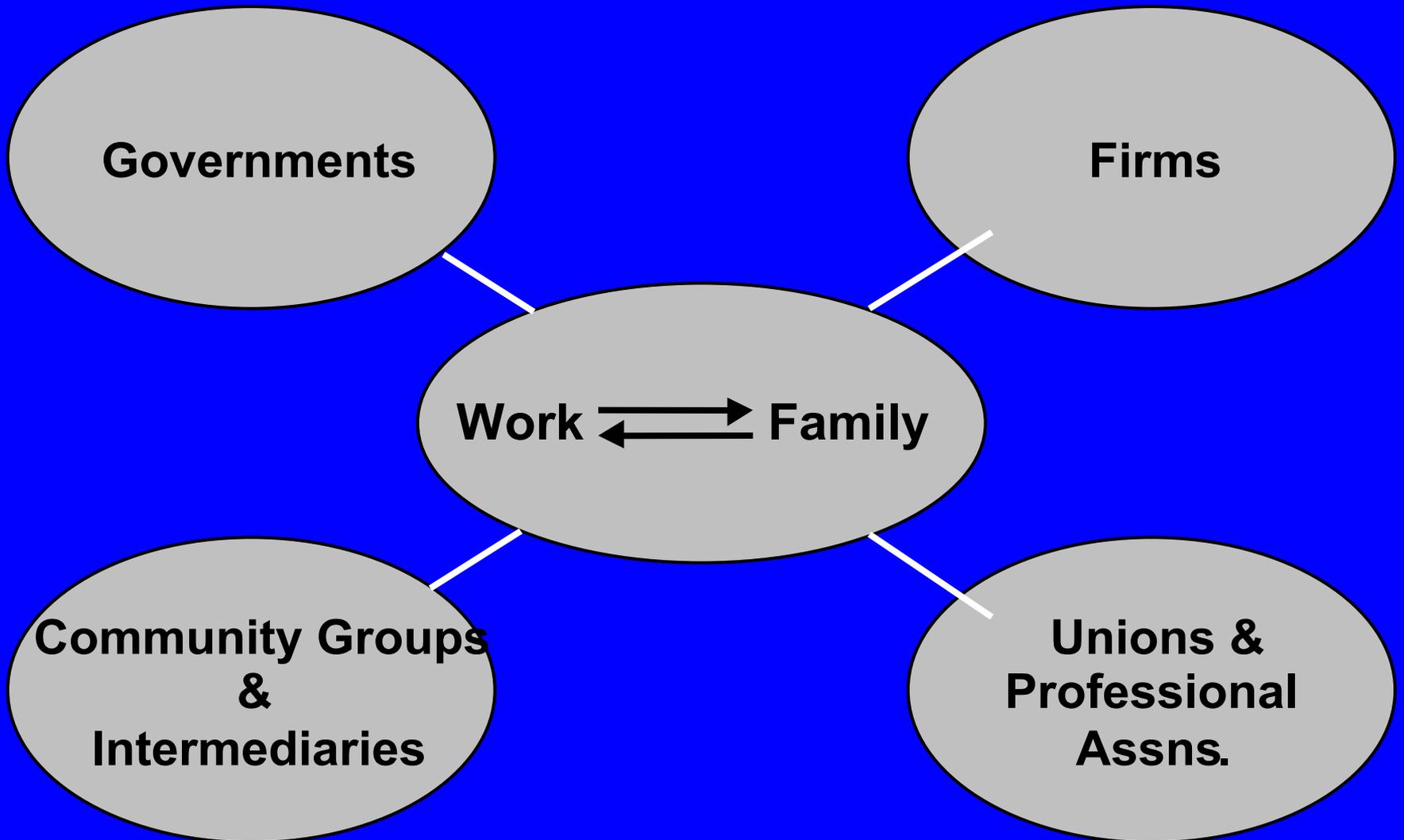
Traditional Image of Work & Family

- A Male "Breadwinner" with a Wife at Home Attending to Family and Community Affairs

- Today less than 25% of all married families fit this image

Visible Changes in the Workforce

- 60% women work
- Women account for 48% of the workforce
- 75% mothers with children work
- 65% mothers with children under 6 work
- Hours of work up 24% for married women; 8% for single mothers since 1969
- 25-30% of households provide elder care; projected to double in next 10 years

So, Why is it so Hard?

- **Cultural Barriers to "Putting the Issue on the Table"**
  - **A Private Matter**
  - **A Family Matter**
- **Piecemeal Approaches have Dominated--No Single Actor Can Solve the Problem Acting Alone**

Hidden Assumptions: "The Ideal Worker"

- Hours of work signal commitment & productivity
- Fulltime work, ready to move, critical to career development
- Family care is women's work and role
- Family issues are private and personal--not the responsibilities of business

Employers

- **The First Group we Turn to for a Response**

- **Acting out of Self-Interest--to make it easier for more people to work more hours--produces:**

  The Family-Friendly Employer

Employer state of the art practices

- **Flexible hours**   **70%**

- **Part-time option (for some)**   **80-90%**

- **Child care**   **20%**

- **Paid time off for family reasons**   **25-39%**

Evidence: Practices in Use

- Considerable growth in "family friendly" practices on the books
- Mostly for high level, scarce employees
- But, consistent findings of:
  - Low use rates
  - Negative consequences feared if used

The Legal Profession as a Case Study

Expert Panel

Beth Boland

Mark Byers

Mona Harrington

Discussion Questions

- Discuss the current state of work and family practices and benefits in your work site.

- Outline the vision for work and family outcomes for your organization in five years

- List two most important changes in your organization needed to realize this vision

Moving Forward: Can we jumpstart a Collaborative, Systemic Approach?

Or
Are we Doomed to Replicate the old Battle Lines ?

A Holistic Approach to Work & Family Responsibilities

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Work ⇄ **Family**

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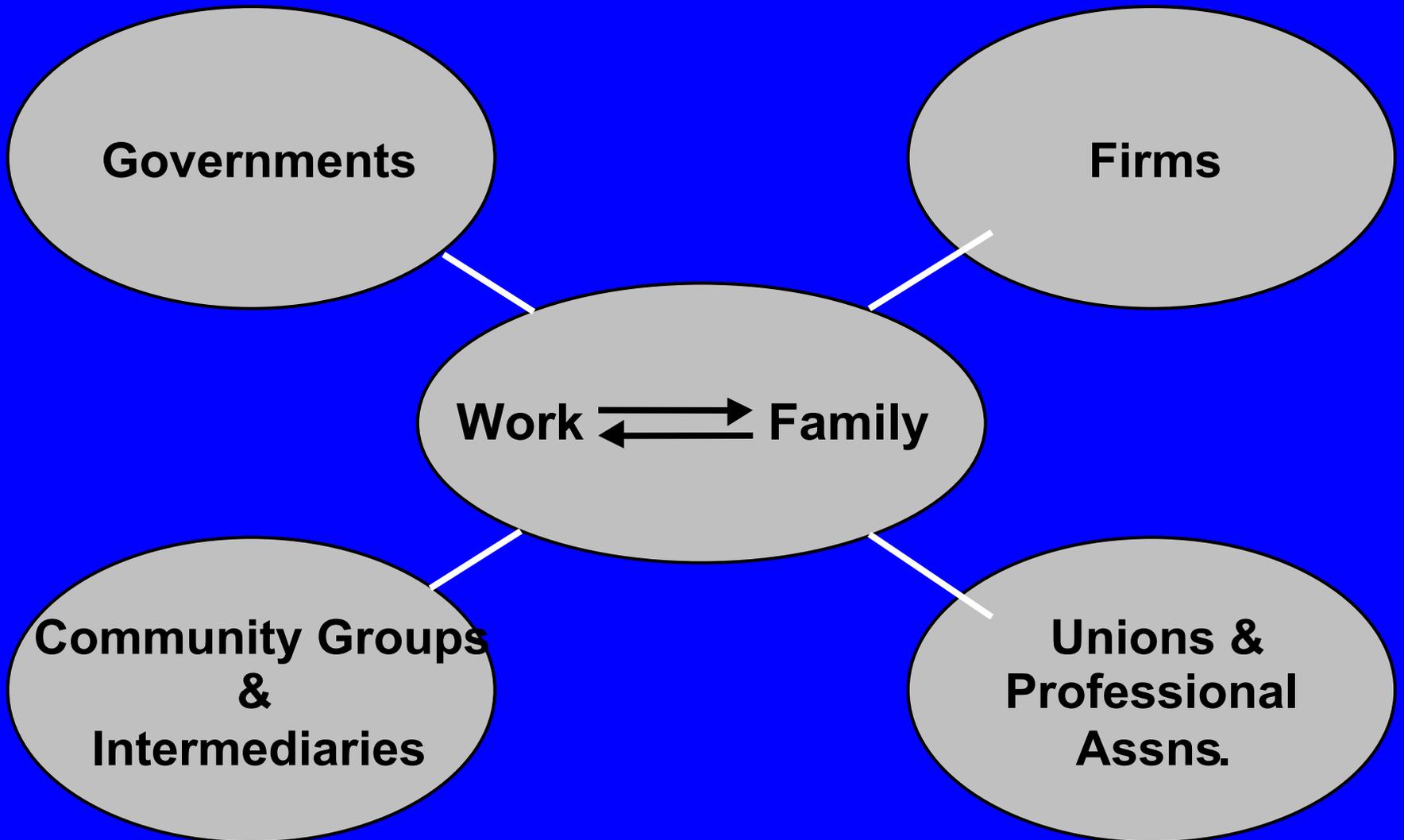
Government Policy Agenda

- **Paid Leave—flexible and linked to private practices**
- **Reduced hours—flexibility in scheduling**
- **Addressing Basic Economic Needs of Working Families**
  - **Living wage**
  - **Health coverage**
  - **Child care**
  - **Education and training**
- **Employee voice—reform of labor laws**
- **Creating State Work-Family Councils and a National Working Families Summit**

Source: <u>Integrating Work and Family Life: A Holistic Approach</u>, Sloan Foundation Work Family Policy Network, 2001.

What else is needed from Employers?

- **Get to the root cause--work design--challenge hidden assumptions**

- **Work on changing the culture**

- **Give employees & co-workers a voice in shaping policies, schedules, implementation**

- **Work with other "actors" with a stake in the issue!**

Unions & Professional Assns: What Else is Needed?

- **Organize, Recruit for *Work* *and* Family**
- **Get more Women into Leadership Positions**
- **Work in Coalition with Community Groups**
- **Work Together with Local Employers**
- **Encourage Experimentation in Public Policy**
- **Build a Positive Workplace Culture**
- **Support Quality Part-Time Work Policies**

Action Assignment

- **Identify a policy in your organization that has been designed to address work/life issues – educate your self on the specific provisions or intent of the policy**

- **Interview 2-3 people who should be able to benefit from the policy – in order to better understand how the policy works in practice (at least for this limited sample)**

- **Be prepared to discuss lessons learned**

Summing Up

- **Work with other actors--systemic approach**
- **Challenge traditional, hidden assumptions**
- **Put the *dual agenda* on the table**
- **Involve the workforce--shared control**
- **Develop a collaborative workplace culture**
- **Experiment with local solutions**