

City University of New York (CUNY)

## CUNY Academic Works

---

All Dissertations, Theses, and Capstone  
Projects

Dissertations, Theses, and Capstone Projects

---

6-2020

### Work–Family Conflict in Low-Income Households

Maritza G. Hiciano Ramos

*The Graduate Center, City University of New York*

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

More information about this work at: [https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc\\_etds/3757](https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/3757)

Discover additional works at: <https://academicworks.cuny.edu>

---

This work is made publicly available by the City University of New York (CUNY).  
Contact: [AcademicWorks@cuny.edu](mailto:AcademicWorks@cuny.edu)

**WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS**

by

MARITZA HICIANO

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

2020

© 2020

MARITZA HICIANO  
All Rights Reserved

Work–Family Conflict in Low–Income Households

by

Maritza Hiciano

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

---

Date

---

Carrie Hintz

Thesis Advisor

---

Date

---

Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis, D. Phil.

Executive Officer

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

## ABSTRACT

### Work–Family Conflict in Low–Income Households

by

Maritza Hiciano

Advisor: Carrie Hintz

The United States is the only country not offering paid parental leave. Paid leave is left at the discretion of employers and only a few states offer Paid Family Leave benefits. The FMLA was established to protect workers from losing their jobs in case they needed to care for an elderly person or for their children. However, since value is not placed in family structures there has not been much development in that area. The FMLA fails to account for the grand majority of people in the U.S., especially those of lower socioeconomic status. Moreover, the vast inequalities that exists based on income alone do not allow a grand portion of low-income workers access to the work policies in place. As a result, poor families face challenges that make it more difficult to meet the demands of work and family life. Research on how to address policy change to account for every worker in the United States needs to be conducted so that low income communities can have a higher chance to attend the needs of their children, elders, and themselves. Extensive research on the lives of the poor in terms of family-work life balance is lacking. Therefore, the family policies that need restructuring have not been presented with viable solutions, which would allow many working-class families the capacity to lead healthy, and productive lives. There needs to be an inclusive and modern approach to workplace policies and laws for the betterment of society at large.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

After numerous years of working on my master's degree, I cannot believe that I am finally submitting my thesis. While it was difficult completing my degree, I am proud to have gone on this wonderful education journey that allowed me the opportunity to meet a diverse group of individuals and understand different perspectives in academics. My educational experiences have been invaluable to me. A very special thanks to Professor Carrie Hintz, my advisor, who always encouraged me and kept an exciting tone throughout this thesis journey. I am thankful for Professor Hintz's guidance, patience and for helping me structure my thesis to a level that best highlighted my topic of interest. I also want to thank every professor at CUNY, from LaGuardia Community College to Queens College and finally at the CUNY Graduate Center. I had many wonderful professors at the CUNY Graduate Center and my mind has been stimulated in countless meaningful ways. Thank you for sparking my mind in ways that I did not think possible. Also, a big appreciation goes to my family and friends, who cheered me on every time that I wanted to throw in the towel. It is because of your encouragement and support that I am finally here. I am deeply grateful.

## Table of Contents

<u>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</u>	<u>V</u>
<u>LIST OF FIGURES</u>	<u>VII</u>
<u>LIST OF TABLES</u>	<u>VIII</u>
THESIS CONTRIBUTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	1
<u>CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE FOUNDATION OF CURRENT WORKPLACE POLICIES AND FAMILY DYNAMICS</u>	<u>3</u>
LITERATURE REVIEW	12
<u>CHAPTER 2 – IMPACT OF CURRENT FAMILY POLICIES IN THE U.S.</u>	<u>20</u>
FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)	20
PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (PFML)	25
FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT (FSLA)	31
WORK-LIFE FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES AT A TRANSNATIONAL LEVEL	35
<u>CHAPTER 3- DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH</u>	<u>44</u>
<u>REFERENCES</u>	<u>59</u>

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Lunch on a Skyscraper.	3
Figure 2. Single Parents Are Raising More Than One-Third of U.S. Kids.	9
Figure 3. States Following Federal Mandate of Minimum Wage	34
Figure 4. Job Loss Among Latinos Due to COVID-19.	45
Figure 5. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	51

## List of Tables

Table 1. Poverty Thresholds in 2019	13
Table 2. Percent of civilian workers with access to family leave benefits by occupational group	26

## **Thesis Contribution and Research Questions**

The purpose of this thesis is to illuminate the vast inequalities and disadvantages in workplace policies with regard to low-income families in the United States and the essentials that each policy fails to address in the lives of the poor. I will compare and contrast the lives of low-income families at a transnational level to discover if the lives of people in countries with progressive and family-friendly work policies provide for a better quality of living. Further, the task of balancing work and family for people earning higher wages differs immensely from poor single mothers and families, immigrants and/or those who are marginalized.

Despite the benefits that upper- and middle-class families receive, they constantly struggle to meet their family demands. If that holds true for individuals who have access to more resources, what can be said about women and families of lower socioeconomic status? People of lower socioeconomic status struggle to live a decent life, and many times remain in a cycle of poverty. How can people make progress when there is an unequal playing field?

This thesis will also consider the policies directly impacting low income families, which are the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA); The Equal Pay Act; the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA); and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act and Paid Family Leave (PFL). Analysis will be provided on causes of work-family conflict; health and psychological outcomes; family dynamics; race; child rearing and the effects of absent parenting. With the help of peer reviewed scholarly articles and primary data sources, this thesis aims to answer the following: 1. Why does excluding the participation of low-income individuals in FMLA hinder social advancement? 2. Why is having a lower socioeconomic class beneficial to a capitalist society? 3. How are children directly affected by the current workplace policies? Additionally, this thesis will touch on the connection between work, stress and health. Furthermore, I will explore the consequences that

women face after having a child such as depression, postpartum complications, and lack of bonding with their children due to the need to rush back to work. These implications can have deep effects in the lives of mothers and children and can cause a lot of strain in their daily living.

## Chapter 1: Overview of the Foundation of Current Workplace Policies and Family Dynamics

“The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt



**Figure 1.** Lunch on a Skyscraper.

A famous picture by Charles C. Ebbets in 1932 as construction workers had lunch on the RCA Victor building, now the Comcast building, at 30 Rockefeller Plaza.

**Source:** abalawinfo.org by Russell, M. (2017).

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the visionary of the 1930s. As the Great Depression caused much strife and grief, Roosevelt found solutions to United States’ sinking economy. The U.S Congress was largely scared to implement “socialist” methods to an already suffering nation. Still, a wave of federal programs emerged promising individuals and families’ jobs, housing, safety nets, and social security among many other benefits. While the conditions of many improved, it was not without question that many opposed the programs. In the Republican Convention of 1936, Herbert Hoover criticized the New Deal by stating, “So much for the evidence that the New Deal is a definite attempt to replace the American system of freedom with some sort of European planned existence. But let us assume that the explanation is

simply hit-and-run opportunism, spoils system and muddle” (Pepperdine University, School of Public Policy, n.d.).

The New Deal programs established in 1932 serve as the foundation for the federal workplace policies in place 88 years later. When the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA) was enacted, life was vastly different for people in the United States. The solutions proposed, such as minimum wage, time-and-a-half and the protection of children from unfair work practices, addressed the needs of a large majority of American families during that time. For instance, families in the 1930s operated via a “breadwinner” and a “homemaker model.” Life unfolded according to the clearly defined gender roles of the time. The breadwinner figure was usually a man and the homemaker a woman. Household and workplace were separate entities and “few women worked outside the home, although some, disproportionately women of color and recent immigrants, always have had relatively high labor force participation” (Boushey 2011, p.163).

Circumstances slowly shifted during World War II, when countless women launched into the workplace to support their families, as their husbands, siblings and boyfriends were drafted to war. This led to a rise in women’s empowerment and because of the feminist movement, attitudes pertaining to women in the workplace slowly started to shift. As a result, the slow and steady acceptance of women’s participation in the workplace led women to also classify themselves as breadwinners, provided a sense of empowerment, and allowed them to slowly share priorities between the home and the workplace.

In 1945, Truman proposed the Fair Deal, which promised the people of the United States legislation on public housing, social security, fair wages and the Fair Employment Practices Act, which was passed in 1946 to protect employees from being discriminated against due to religion

and race (MacLaury, 1998): “The FLSA was amended in 1955 to broaden coverage and raise the minimum wage. In 1958 Congress authorized the Department to enforce safety and health standards to protect workers in longshoring and harbor work” (MacLaury, 1998). The FLSA was amended again in 1961 to increase wage worker’s salaries. Following the FLSA came the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which was established to prevent wage discrimination based on gender. Furthermore, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was established in 1964 following the Civil Rights act of 1964. As MacLaury explains, “the independent Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was established to enforce non-discrimination in the nation's workplaces (MacLaury, 1998). After 1964, Executive Order 11246 was created via the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) in the Department of Labor to eliminate discrimination by government contractors” (MacLaury, 1998).

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973 was put in place by President Nixon to train and create jobs for people in public service. The Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) of 1974 protected private and/or corporate employees upon retirement by ensuring that pension plans had adequate protocols in place to guarantee vested amounts to employees buying into retirement plans. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) was established in 1970 “to enforce rules, or oversee state-run programs, to protect against hazards in most of the nation's workplaces” (MacLaury, 1998). In 1978 the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act was put in place as an effort to improve the skills of the underemployed (McIntosh, Picou, 1985). Also, The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 was passed to forbid organizations and/ or companies to fire women who want to have children during their tenure or are pregnant at time of hire.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 was created under the Clinton Administration to provide employment opportunities to individuals who elected not to attend college: “Goals 2000 established a national system of skill standards to certify that workers had the skills that employers needed. States were given funds to establish one-stop career centers, linking unemployment insurance, job counseling, and access to job training” (MacLaury, 1998). Finally, The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 allows employees to take 12 weeks of unpaid time off so that families can take care of sick family members or take care of any illnesses they have that require time off. The FMLA helps mothers cater to their newborn babies and recover from pregnancy or labor (DOL.Gov).

It is clear that the United States has undertaken efforts to better its society. Eight decades have passed since the inception of the New Deal and new laws and policies have been put in place in hopes of contributing to the welfare of American citizens. Still, current workplace policies do not accommodate present day way of living and have not evolved with the times, as capitalism has played a major role in which people benefit from the laws and policies in place. According to Heather Boushey, “laws and regulations—at all levels of government—play an important role in creating the setting in which families and workers manage work-family conflict. Although public policies can help ease work-family conflicts, they can also exacerbate them, particularly if the policies are based on an outdated set of assumptions about how families live and work (Boushey, 2011, p. 164). The policies are disguised as being family friendly, but they do not address the needs of every household.

The median household income of the United States is reported to be \$63,179 (US Census, 2018). Married and/or cohabitating couples work and share family responsibilities. In this “neo traditional strategy” there is a division of labor where women perform much less housework than

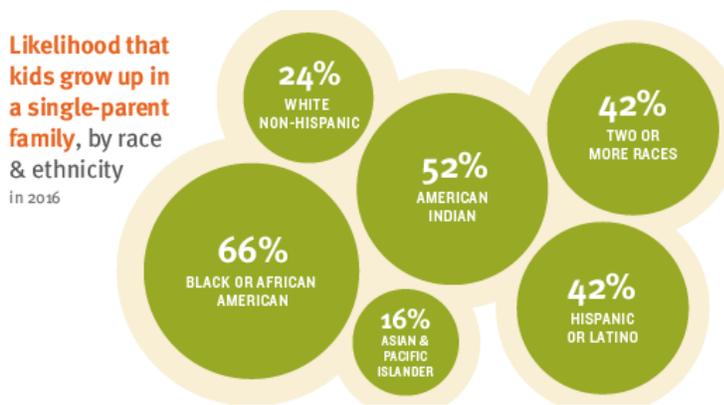
in past generations because men share the responsibilities of household labor. This arrangement is more common in married and cohabitating couples. However, chores and household responsibilities are still gendered. Gary Becker's (1965) Microeconomics Theory, explains the division of labor among families.

Applying Becker's theory to work- family issues helps us understand the components on couples making the most out of the resources that are available to them. There are three main components of the Microeconomic Theory: 1) time availability perspective 2) resources bargaining perspective and 3) economic dependency model. Firstly, the time availability perspective focuses on the partner who has flexibility in time. This may be the person who works part-time, or whose job is not as demanding as the other partner's. Couples use this method to rule out who is to spend time taking care of children and household chores (cooking, cleaning, running errands).

Secondly, the resources bargaining perspective is based on self-interest and the person who bargains for this position wants to pursue a different career path, or may want to work from home, or feels completely comfortable taking care of the household while their partner works. For example, women or men who want to pursue careers as artists quit their job in order to spend more time pursuing their goals. Thirdly, the economic model's focus is based on the fact that marriage is seen as a contract and partners are expected to contribute to the household as it is mutually beneficial. The implications that arise from the microeconomic perspective are that no matter how "equal" this view may appear, women are the ones who sacrifice their careers for their households. It is evident that women are the ones with the lowest paying jobs and perhaps work less hours than men. It is less common for a man to adopt the roles of the Microeconomic Theory.

As a result, men contribute less to household chores, even if holding egalitarian views. In some circumstances men will rather pay more rent instead of helping with chores. Generally, women are still viewed as the housemakers and plenty of women carry the load of work, child responsibilities, cooking and household labor. Nonetheless, egalitarian households operate on the belief that household labor must be split 50/50. They do not subscribe to the gender roles that society views as fitting for women and men. For example, men can cook and clean. Women can mow the lawn and make households repairs, which are typically viewed as male role. With jobs requiring more time from their employees, families find themselves struggling to fit work with family responsibilities and vice versa.

Furthermore, current policies fail to take into consideration that a high percentage of children live in single parent households. Figure 2 depicts the percentage of children living in a single parent family by race and ethnicity in 2016. Balancing work-family responsibilities while in a single parent household poses its own set of complications. Many single women and men find themselves struggling to make ends meet, to afford childcare, and to be more present in their children's lives. Moreover, due to increases in cost of living, families are facing trouble meeting childcare responsibilities and meeting work demands. There is also a dilemma that families in the United States face: childcare and caring for the elderly. With statistics such as, “**American businesses can lose as much as \$34 billion** each year due to employees' need to care for loved ones 50 years of age and older,” it is no wonder that employees face obstacles in obtaining employer paid leave (MetLife Caregiving Cost Study, 2006). Family dynamics have certainly changed, and current policies do not address the needs of this new generation of families.



**Figure 2.** Single Parents Are Raising More Than One-Third of U.S. Kids.

**Source:** Datacenter.kidscount.org (2018).

Another change in today’s society is that, generally, people do not stay in one company for the rest of their careers to work their way up the corporate ladder and retire in their 60s. This is true for the current working generation, which does tolerate inadequate salaries, and many change their jobs more often than in the past trying to seek better opportunities. As explained by Rachaniphorn Ngotngamwong (2019):

Millennials, also known as Gen Yers, are a unique generation, different from their predecessors in many ways, particularly in their short-term commitments and organizational stays. The results of a US study indicated that approximately 60% of employed Millennials were active job seekers (Ware, 2014), and although job satisfaction was a top priority for some Millennials (Jalnawala, 2018), they did not need to be dissatisfied at work to move on to a new job (Ware, 2014). As long as a new job offer was more attractive, there was a big tendency to move, no matter how long they had worked with their current employer (Ware, 2014). In a survey conducted by Monster.com, a career site, a relatively high percentage of employees (71%) indicated that they were happy with their work, but then as high as 73% had thoughts of moving on to a different job (Fisher, 2015). In a New Zealand study conducted on Millennials, it was reported that there was wide acceptance amongst employers that their Millennials would leave in two years (Lawson Williams National Staff Turnover Survey, 2018). Therefore, it has been a business challenge to find and keep good and young talent (Fallon, 2009). (Ngotngamwong, 2019)

Changes in work, gender, and family roles, as well as societal values, have inspired researchers to delve deeper into the work-life balance of individuals and families in the United States, mainly of upper and middleclass socioeconomic backgrounds. As Leah Ruppner

explains in *Conflict Between Work and Family: An Investigation of Four Policy Measures*, “In the context of women’s increased labor force participation, conflict between work and family has received much attention. Work and family are considered greedy institutions that compete for individuals’ time (Friedman et al. 1998; Pittman 1994). As more couples come to rely on a dual-earner wage, the number of individuals balancing work and family demands is higher today than ever before” (Ruppner, 2013, p.327). There have been countless studies on work-family conflict, specifically focusing on American employees of the upper middle class and those holding high managerial positions in the workplace. Studies seek to improve and/or find alternatives to present work-family issues. There is particular interest on the high demands that work puts on families and the policies that are in place to protect them. With this new-found interest, researchers have focused on women in the workplace and how they balance work and family.

As with any subject matter, there are differing views on women participating in the workplace while meeting the needs of their families. A lingering question for professional women is: Can you have it all? An example of this dilemma is the work of Anne-Marie Slaughter, former director of policy planning at the State Department. Slaughter wrote an article for the Atlantic called, “Why Women Can’t Still Have It All.” Slaughter stated, “when people asked why I had left government, I explained that I’d come home not only because of Princeton’s rules (after two years of leave, you lose your tenure), but also because of my desire to be with my family and my conclusion that juggling high-level government work with the needs of two teenage boys was not possible.” In order for a woman to have it all, she has to define what having it all means to her, not society. According to Slaughter, people were not happy with her decision to leave Washington. She received “reactions from other women [her]

age or older that ranged from disappointed (“It’s such a pity that you had to leave Washington”) to condescending (“I wouldn’t generalize from your experience. *I’ve* never had to compromise, and *my* kids turned out great””) (Slaughter, 2012).

In 2013, Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer of Facebook, wrote a book called, *Lean In*, with the purpose of empowering and reaching thousands of professional women. Sandberg encouraged women to “sit at the table” and not wait for permission to get noticed at work. Sandberg’s advice for professional women was music to many ears and prompted several discussions about family, work-life balance and how to “have it all.” Slaughter and Sandberg are two successful women with dissimilar point of views when it comes to work-life balance and both provide a unique and privileged approach to the topic at hand. Can women have it all? Some say they can, but not at the same time. It appears that there is societal pressure to create a combination of Superwomen and Stepford Wives, a burden that is not placed upon men.

In general, this section has provided a brief overview of policies, laws, research on, and opinions about work life conflict and/or work life balance. Later sections will provide deeper analysis on the effects of policies surrounding work life conflict and its impact on a specific population, low income individuals, who are often disregarded in self-help books, in research, and especially in policymaking.

## Literature Review

“America is still the land of opportunity for most, but it is not a land of opportunity for all. If we are to remain an exceptional nation, we must close this gap in opportunity.” -Marco Rubio

In 2018, a total of 44,257,979 people lived in poverty. The U.S. employee population consisted of 151,800,893 and out of that number, 10,077,734 lived in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau). How can the United states close the gap of opportunity? If we are able to close the gap, why is it not being done? In matters of work and family, the working class, and/or people living in poverty get the short end of the stick when it comes to benefitting from work-and-family-friendly policies in the United States. Millions of individuals live a life of scarcity in the “greatest land of all.” Largely, poor individuals are discarded by society. People hold preconceptions of poverty and fail to consider the systemic foundations that cause people to remain in poverty (Wiese, 2019). How many times have you heard that people are poor because they want to be? How many times have you heard, “poor people need to work harder?” Below is a table depicting the poverty threshold for 2019. The table is broken down on what is considered “being poor” by calculating income on family sizes. The table is often used to determine if people qualify for services and/or programs offered by the government. Why does income play a role in terms of being eligible for family friendly benefits?

Story et al. (2018) found that people who worked nonstandard hours were more susceptible to “psychological distress” when compared to people who worked standard hours (9-5). Story et al. (2018) also discovered that workers following nonstandard work schedules demonstrated higher rates of health complaints, sleep difficulties, tiredness, and psychological problems: “In fact, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), a part of the World Health Organization (WHO), released a statement in 2007 indicating that chronic disruption of circadian rhythms via shift work was a probable human carcinogen. Impoverished mothers of

infants and toddlers may be particularly vulnerable to psychological distress due to stress resulting from work family conflict, as they struggle to manage multiple jobs, shifting schedules, and meet their family’s needs” (Story, et. al, 2018, p.43).

Poverty Thresholds for 2019 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years									
Size of family unit	Related children under 18 years								
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight or more
One person (unrelated individual):									
Under age 65.....	13,300								
Aged 65 and older.....	12,261								
Two people:									
Householder under age 65.....	17,120	17,622							
Householder aged 65 and older.....	15,453	17,555							
Three people.....	19,998	20,578	20,598						
Four people.....	26,370	26,801	25,926	26,017					
Five people.....	31,800	32,263	31,275	30,510	30,044				
Six people.....	36,576	36,721	35,965	35,239	34,161	33,522			
Seven people.....	42,085	42,348	41,442	40,811	39,635	38,262	36,757		
Eight people.....	47,069	47,485	46,630	45,881	44,818	43,470	42,066	41,709	
Nine people or more.....	56,621	56,895	56,139	55,503	54,460	53,025	51,727	51,406	49,426

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

**Table 1. Poverty Thresholds in 2019**

Shirley Lung (2010) author of “The Four- Day Work Week: But What About Ms. Coke, Ms. Upton, and Ms. Blankenship?” stated that:

The work-family interface has not often explored the role of structural characteristics such as income in the associations among work stressors, work-family conflict and family stressors. Relations between work-to-family interference and family are stronger for individuals with lower household incomes than for those with higher household incomes. The work/family conflicts of poor and low-income women remain invisible in mainstream discussions about reform of working hours. “Family-friendly” reforms such as compressed work weeks, part-time jobs, reduced hours, and other alternative work schedules largely address the interests of professional women who can trade income for time. Expanding work/family discussions to address the needs of poor and low-income women who are immigrants, single parents, and involuntary part-time workers who labor in low-wage industries such as home care, clerical services, and office cleaning (Lung, 2010, p.1119).

Michael Ford (2010) agrees that, “research on the work-family interface has not often explored the role of structural characteristics such as income in the associations among work stressors, work-family conflict and family stressors. Relations between work-to-family interference and family are stronger for individuals with lower household incomes than for those with higher household incomes. The work/family conflicts of poor and low-income women remain invisible in mainstream discussions about reform of working hours.” (Ford, 2010, p. 144). There are two ways that families experience work-family conflict: One, when job demands are too high and consume family time. Two, when family demands interfere with work schedules and/or priorities. There are countless challenges that employees with low income face. Work-family conflict has been linked to numerous health outcomes. Stress is one example. Constant and or chronic stress leads to serious complications such as high blood pressure, migraines, high cholesterol, anxiety, frustration, depression, kidney failure and even heart attacks. Also, stress may contribute to obesity and poor food choices. In terms of healthcare, working class individuals cannot afford to deduct monthly healthcare benefits from their paychecks, even if their jobs offer that benefit. Low-income individuals do not usually receive the full benefits (health care, paid time off and/or paid sick days) that white collar jobs offer. Not having access to health care is a challenge for poor families since it is costly to take care of a sick child or family member. For low-income workers, there is no freedom in flexible work schedules and often they cannot tend to family responsibilities. Many of these families have to rely on the help of their neighbors and/or their family member to make their lives work. What happens when children do not understand that their parents have to work and feel neglected?

Several low-income families with single parent households remain in a cycle of poverty. Low-income workers have less job security, as they are easily replaceable by companies. Their

income is not sufficient to sustain a family, which sometimes may lead a person to seek welfare, or public assistance, which they may or may not receive. The poverty threshold for a family of 5 is currently \$30,680 per year, which means that if a family of 5 earns a little over that threshold, they are disqualified to receive any government assistance (aspe.hhs.gov). Moreover, families are facing trouble with meeting child responsibilities and not having a flexible work environment that may support them when there is a necessity, especially in low-income immigrant families trying to adjust to American society. With this in mind, some immigrant parents often work 2 or 3 jobs to keep their families afloat or work very long hours to sustain their households.

Due to the low socioeconomic status of many of these families, children are unable to see their parents after school and rely on the care of a neighbor, grandparents, or stay enrolled in an afterschool program, if the afterschool programs are available in their communities. The number of hours that these parents work prohibits them from paying close attention to their children's developmental progress in school. Often times they rely on a flawed school system to educate and raise their children. It is vital to understand that there are different ways that a parent can influence their child, whether beneficial or not. There is also the dilemma that families in America face: childcare and caring for the elderly while trying to pay for other expenses.

In *A Theory of Role Strain* (1960), William Goode explained that when individuals adopt multiple roles, it creates strain in their lives, as the demand to hold multiple roles leads them to bargain about which demands take priority over the others (495). The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, which was developed by Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti in 2006, states that work characteristics could be divided in two areas: resources and demands. Job resources were defined as anything that contributed to the psychological, emotional, and physical wellbeing of an employee. Demands were characterized as responsible for the stress and negative

aspects of a workplace. The model indicated that if job demands were higher than resources, employees would have a higher chance of burnout and stress. However, if a job provided positives, it would be able to counterbalance the demands, resulting in a better-balanced and happier employee.

While people earning minimum wage often work in low skilled positions, it does not mean that they do not have challenges at work. Often times, low skilled workers experience abuse in the workplace, which can be detrimental to their wellbeing and that of their families. In their study “Abusive Supervision and Work-Family Conflict: The Path through Emotional Labor and Burnout,” Dawn Carlson, Meredith Ferguson, Emily Hunter and Dwayne Whitten studied “conservation of resources theory.” Conservation of resources (COR) theory is centered around the idea that people want to keep, nurture, and cherish the things that they value. It focuses on the concept that human perceptions hold an inherent bias to “overweight resource loss” and “underweight resource gain.” With this in mind, conservation of resources theory suggests that stress happens when vital resources are “threatened with loss,” when significant resources are lost, and lastly, when individuals fail to obtain significant resources after exerting much effort. Conservation of resources theory is a “motivational” theory that seeks to explain human behavior on the foundation of an evolutionary desire to obtain and maintain resources in order to survive. This is thought to be essential to human behavior in terms of the preservation of individual strengths and social connections (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, and Westman, 2018). Their research focused on emotional labor and how it causes burnout in people. Carlson et al. (2012) described emotional labor as “management or alteration of emotion in carrying out job duties. Labor surface acting is characterized by outward displays of emotion that do not match the actor’s true feelings, whereas deep acting occurs when employees aim to experience the

emotions that are expected at their jobs” (Carlson et al.,2012). In other words, individuals were found to inhibit their true feelings while at work because they wanted to be “professional.”

Carlson et al. (2012) argue that individuals who constrain their feelings may experience burnout more quickly than people who are able to assertively express and/or openly talk about the inequality they experience at work. In addition, individuals who had an unapproachable or unsupportive supervisor were more likely to expend energy by forcing a happy face at work while internally feeling distraught. Subordinates put on this front because they fear repercussions from their supervisors. Individuals fear that they may experience more abuse and/or lose their jobs if they stood up to their supervisors. According to Carlson et al (2011), “investing more time into work likely takes away from time at home and COR theory predicts that resources are lost as individuals juggle both work and family roles. This potential or actual loss of resources may lead to conflicts in the work- family interface” (Carlson et al., 2012). Work issues may leak into family life and children and spouses can greatly suffer the consequences, as the person under stress may develop substance use disorder, or displace their anger on their spouse and children, leading to domestic violence and more.

In a study by Jenny M. Hoobler and Daniel J. Brass titled “Abusive Supervision and Family Undermining as Displaced Aggression,” family undermining was explored in terms of subordinates who misdirected their anger to their family when in reality, they were irate due to work. From previous studies we were able to see that individuals bottled up their emotions at work. However, when individuals came home to their family, they displaced their aggression onto their family members. According to Miller (1941) “when provocateur is one’s boss, workers are unlikely to fight back out of fear and punishment. Rather than confront their superiors, subordinates may exert their aggression on the bastion of their control— relationships

in their home and personal life” (Cited in Hoobler & Brass, 2006, P. 1127). Displaced aggression is transmitted to family members via arguments and negative moods. In addition, subordinates decrease their involvement in their family’s life. For example, they may be thinking about work while at home and not give attention to their household duties. Evidently, individuals become withdrawn and isolate themselves from family activity (Hoobler & Brass, 2006).

Tepper (2000) found that employees with more abusive supervisors had a “higher turnover, less favorable attitudes toward job, life and organization, greater conflict between work and family life and greater psychological distress” (Tepper, 2000, p.186). Work and family conflict occurred in those who had fewer job options available to them. Carlson & Ferguson (2011) results showed that spillover theory and family- work conflict and work family conflict were positively related. Carlson and Ferguson (2011) implied that the effect of abusive supervision added to family tension and work family conflict (Carlson and Ferguson, 2011). The COR theory explains: “employees who perform surface acting will deplete emotional resources, resulting in burnout and subsequently work-family conflict. Engaging in surface acting provides employees with little energy and emotional resources to balance work and family demands, and the depletion of resources is likely to exacerbate other stressors both at work and at home” (Carlson et al., 2012, p. 856).

Hoobler and Brass’s study (2013) found that supervisors who felt that their employee had not done a good job were more aggressive to their workers. The families of the subordinates described feeling undermined by their spouses. Hoobler and Brass’ study established that after experiencing abuse at work, those same employees were more likely to transfer the aggression they received, to family members who had a passive personality at home. In Jenny M. Hoobler and Jia Hu’s study, abusive supervision was tested by looking at affect and how individual

perceptions were linked. The research supported the interactional justice model and found that negative affect had to do with the way supervisors approached their victims. An employee's negative affect was associated with "family member perceptions of work-family conflict" (Hoobler and Brass, 2013).

Due to the challenging circumstances that most of the working-class face, it is my hope that people's personal stories could be given space in research. In RuthEllen Josselson's view, "narrative is the presentation of process, of a self in conversation with itself and with its world over time. Narratives are not records of facts, of how things actually were, but of a meaning making system that makes sense out of the chaotic mass of perception and experiences of a life (1995)." In other words, in analyzing narratives, qualitative researchers delve into how humans process emotions, handle difficult situations and make sense of their world. In studying the lives of individuals, some of us come across narratives that teach us about courage, pain, rites of passage, love, personal freedoms and human rights. Stories have the power to give readers front row seats into the life experiences of others. Narratives give deep insight into time, place and how certain life events have the muscle to shape people's attitudes in how they react to the world around them. Life stories also help to create unity amongst human beings despite race, sexual, and cultural differences. Narratives are useful in social research, in starting conversations, opening doors for healing and identifying missing links in human connectivity. It is important that policymakers consider the strenuous and arduous life that low income individuals face and allow for inclusivity in regard to workplace policies.

## **Chapter 2 – Impact of Current Family Policies in the U.S.**

### **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

Many people in the United States assume that because they have a job with entitled benefits, they automatically qualify for Family Medical Leave. On the one hand, the United States Department of Labor (DOL) meticulously outlines who is covered by the FMLA. On the other hand, lines of qualifications are blurred when it comes down to specifics. In this section we will examine the FMLA according to the Department of Labor guidelines and delve deeper into who truly qualifies for FMLA and who are the individuals who least benefit from this law.

Below is a description of FMLA from the DOL briefly outlining the guidelines:

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides eligible employees of covered employers with unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons. Eligible employees may take up to 12 workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- The birth of a son or daughter or placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care, and to bond with the newborn or newly placed child;
- To care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition, including incapacity due to pregnancy and for prenatal medical care;
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job, including incapacity due to pregnancy and for prenatal medical care; or
- For any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that a spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a military member on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status. (DOL, *The Employer's Guide to Family Medical Leave*, pg.6)

Firstly, employee attainment of FMLA is contingent upon their employer's eligibility. Employers eligible to receive FMLA are those in the private, public/federal and school sectors. Eligibility rules are different across each of these divisions. For the purpose of this paper, we will not discuss FMLA employer eligibility in the

public/federal or public schools' domains, as FMLA is provided to all workers regardless of the numbers of those employed. However, we will focus on the eligibility criteria that exists for employees regardless if they work for the public and/or private sectors.

Disparities can be observed across hierarchies of employees. The DOL's Employer's Guide to Family Medical Leave states the following:

A private-sector employer is covered by the FMLA if it employs 50 or more employees\* in 20 or more workweeks in the current or previous calendar year. An employee is considered to be employed each working day of the calendar week if the employee works any part of the week. The workweeks do not have to be consecutive.

Employees who must be counted include:

- Any employee who works in the United States, or any territory or possession of the United States,
- Any employee whose name appears on payroll records, whether or not any compensation is received for the workweek,
- Any employee on paid or unpaid leave (including FMLA leave, leaves of absences, disciplinary suspension, etc.), as long as there is a reasonable expectation the employee will return to active employment,
- Employees of foreign firms operating in the United States, and
- Part-time, temporary, seasonal, and full-time employees. Others who do NOT have to be counted include:
  - Employees with whom the employment relationship has ended, such as employees who have been laid off,
  - Unpaid volunteers who do not appear on the payroll and do not meet the definition of an employee,
  - Employees of United States firms stationed at worksites outside the United States, its territories, or possessions, and
  - Employees of foreign firms working outside the United States. (9)

Thus far, the FMLA seems like a fair, all-encompassing law. However, employee eligibility determines if they have the opportunity to take leave from their jobs, keep their benefits and return to the same or similar position in their companies after returning from their leave. This is even the case for the public/federal sectors. In most cases, when employees need to take medical leave, they need to put it in writing 30 days before taking

off. Special circumstances are given when there is already a family crisis and/or the individual or their family member is under medical treatment. In that case, employees are to immediately contact their supervisors for an instant approval (The Employer's Guide to the Family and Medical Leave Act, p. 15). In general, the FMLA is not a law that provides monetary relief to families when taking off work. It only offers job protection to eligible workers. The following are a list of guidelines of when employees are eligible to take FMLA:

An eligible employee is one who:

1. Works for a covered employer,
2. Has worked for the employer for at least 12 months as of the date the FMLA leave is to start,
3. Has at least 1,250 hours of service for the employer during the 12-month period immediately before the date the FMLA leave is to start (a different hours of service requirement applies to airline flight crew employees) and
4. Works at a location where the employer employs at least 50 employees within 75 miles of that worksite as of the date when the employee gives notice of the need for leave.

Here we can clearly begin to understand why the eligibility for FMLA are not all-encompassing. Even though it seems that the majority of workers are covered by FMLA, the reality is that there are impediments that do not allow most individuals, who are more likely to work part-time and change jobs more often, to benefit from FMLA. Even individuals who do qualify for FMLA hesitate to take leave as they cannot afford to.

In 2012, the Department of Labor conducted an FMLA survey as a follow up to their 1995 and 2000 surveys on the same. The study found that:

Most leave taken is for the employee's own illness (55%). Leave for pregnancy or a new child, and for illness of qualifying relative (spouse, child, or parent), is less common (21% and 18% respectively). Leave for other qualifying reasons, including military reasons, is quite rare (2%). Most leave is short. Nearly half of all leave events last 10 days or less (42%); less than a fifth (17%) last more than 60 days. This distribution is similar across eligible and ineligible employees" (FMLA-2012-Executive-Summary, p.2).

Furthermore, Boushey (2011) reported that between 1999 and 2000 the FMLA covered 44 million people out of approximately 128 million working in the United States. Only 16.5% took FMLA and only 17.9% took leave to care for a newborn. In addition, 7.8% took maternity leave and/or disability and 47.2% took leave to tend to their own illness. Also, 27.1% left the workplace to care for a sick family member (pg. 174). According to Boushey (2011) the FMLA has two main problems: one, that those qualified to take leave are unpaid for the twelve weeks in which they are away from work and two, "unpaid leave is not adequate to the needs of low- and moderate- income families. For them, the right to job- protected leave is nice, but not enough. The FMLA's second shortcoming is that it excludes half the labor force, many whom are the workers who may need coverage the most" (Boushey, 2011, p. 174).

Ultimately, what is at stake here is that FMLA leaves out a vast number of workers, specifically those who earn lower wages and do not have a wide range of benefits in the first place. The Family Medical Leave Act operates on an outdated system. Current places or employment have evolved in terms of technology and employment working conditions (Boushey 2011, p. 174). Another area where FMLA falls short is that lower income individuals often work part-time. A lot of the time they hold numerous part-time jobs to stay afloat. For these

individuals, FMLA will always be out of reach. Even if their employer qualifies for FMLA according to governmental guidelines, some will be unable to meet the 1,250-hour requirement needed in order to be eligible for leave. According to a recent article titled, “Employment barriers within low- and moderate- income communities,” published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Residents of poorer communities often lack the necessary resources, opportunities, and capabilities to find and maintain jobs with decent pay” (Lisa Hyung, pg. 2). If this is the case, we can deduce that the grand majority of lower income individuals will not qualify for FMLA due to the constant changes in work environments. FMLA does not follow a worker throughout their entire work tenure like social security does. Low wage workers are the last to benefit from FMLA. Being without an income for 12 weeks is not a good incentive to miss work, even when sick or caring for a loved one because food, medicine, and other necessities are prioritized. The challenges for numerous low-income families is the need for child and elder care. Unfortunately, most of the weight is placed on mothers, who take on both tasks while simultaneously working (Boushey, 2011).

Furthermore, in a study by Dodson (2013), it was reported that even in two parent households, earning minimum wage was not enough. Parents still had a hard time covering basic needs and even less the costs associated with childcare. At the same time, Dodson stated that minimum wage work was taxing with challenging work hours without sick leave or time flexibility. Mothers intensely deal with work- family conflict due to having to make tough choices in regard to children and elder care needs, which can regularly conflict with their employment. For these mothers it is a never-ending problem because if mothers choose to prioritize family matters then they face employer “sanctions”, which may include warnings, suspended pay, and depending on the severity, termination (Dodson, 2013).

As Dodson notes, low income workers are easily replaced. Therefore, not many will fight for their rights for fear of losing their only source of income. This places an immense strain on some low-income families and consequently can lead to family malfunctions due to work-family stress spillover. One of the major problems with FMLA, as previously mentioned, is that the system has not made progress and it does not address the need of a modern society. Designing an all-inclusive policy to relieve families of work-family conflict entails changing the 1930s' laws and "social insurance models" that the United States still upholds (Boushey 2011). President Roosevelt and his allies meant well when they wanted to protect the rights of workers. However, they did not foresee that decades later, mothers would be breadwinners, and that "most Americans families would need income support and flexibility when a family member needed to provide care. Updating the basic labor standards and social insurance to address conflicts that arise between work and family today is the next step" (Boushey 2011, pg. 182).

### **Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML)**

In contrast to FMLA, paid family and medical leave (PFML), is not a federal mandate and it is offered at the discretion of employers and sometimes used in combination with short term disability to provide paid benefits to workers needing to take time off work due to needing to take care of themselves (this varies by state), of a child, or a sick family member. PFML is not to be used to run errands or attend to situations such as picking up a child from school, going to the doctor etc.

Furthermore, in February of 2020, the Congressional Research Service provided a report on Paid Family and Medical Leave in the United States, which provided information on the current states offering paid family leave. The following are the guidelines listed for those states:

Some states have enacted legislation to create state paid family and medical leave insurance programs, which provide cash benefits to eligible workers who engage in certain caregiving activities or for whom a serious medical issue interferes with their regular work duties. California, Rhode Island, New Jersey, New York, and Washington currently operate such programs, which offer 16 to 52 weeks of total benefits to eligible workers in a benefit year (in those states, total family leave insurance benefits are limited to 4 to 12 weeks). The New York program began phased implementation in 2018 and will be fully implemented in 2021. Three other states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws creating such programs, but they are not yet implemented and paying benefits. The District of Columbia legislation took effect in April 2017, with benefit payments scheduled to start in July 2020. Massachusetts’s program was signed into law in June 2018; its benefit payments are to begin in January 2021. Connecticut and Oregon enacted legislation in 2019; benefit payments are to begin in January 2022 and January 2023, respectively.

Table 2 depicts the percentage of workers with access to paid family and unpaid leave. The percentages for employees who qualify for paid leave are much lower than for those who qualify for unpaid family leave. A closer inspection of table 2 will demonstrate that people in lower earning jobs are least likely to benefit from paid leave. Workers with higher earning jobs are more likely to receive family leave.

<b>March 2018 Occupational Group</b>	<b>Paid family leave</b>	<b>Unpaid family leave</b>
<b>Management, professional, and related</b>	27%	94%
<b>Service</b>	11%	83%
<b>Sales and office</b>	18%	89%
<b>Natural resources, construction, and maintenance</b>	11%	84%
<b>Production, transportation, and material moving</b>	8%	88%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Compensation Survey

**Table 2. Percent of civilian workers with access to family leave benefits by occupational group**

In addition, the Congressional Research Service provided information on a 2017 study conducted by the Pew Research Center, which looked into the practices of paid family and

medical leave and its impacts on employees, especially those of lower income. According to Sarah Donovan, author of the congressional report:

Consistent with BLS data, the Pew study indicates that lower-paid workers have less access to paid leave; among leave takers, 62% of workers in households with less than \$30,000 in annual earnings reported they received no pay during leave, whereas this figure was 26% among those with annual household incomes at or above \$75,000. The Pew survey reveals differences in access to family and medical leave across demographic groups. For example, 26% of black workers and 23% of Hispanic workers indicated that there was a time in the two years before the interview they needed or wanted time off (paid or unpaid) for family or medical reasons and were not able to take it; by contrast 13% of white workers reported they were unable to take such leave. Relatedly, among those who did take leave, Hispanic leave-takers were more likely than black or white workers to report they took leave with no pay. (Donovan 2020, Pg.7)

In January of 2019, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) published an article called “Racial and ethnic disparities in access to and use of paid family and medical leave: evidence from four nationally representative datasets.” The BLS obtained datasets from four places: 1. American Time Use Survey (ATUS) Leave Module; 2. The Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC); 3. The National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW); and 4. The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) (bls.gov, Monthly Labor Review, 2020). According to the data collected, “Hispanic workers have lower rates of paid-leave access and use than their White non-Hispanic counterparts.” (bls.gov, Monthly Labor Review, 2020).

Based on the information provided, it is clear that low wage earners do not benefit from the current paid family medical leave, especially those in minority groups. Not offering paid leave to the working class further widens the economic gap. Granted, the government cannot force employers to offer this benefit. However, it leaves the working class in a vulnerable position. It is noteworthy to add that so far, the only law in place that can guarantee coverage or

some protection to low income individuals is the Pregnancy Discrimination Act. As specified by the U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), “The Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) forbids discrimination based on pregnancy when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, such as leave and health insurance, and any other term or condition of employment”(DOL.GOV, Pregnancy Discrimination).

Generally speaking, pregnant women/ mothers are protected against discrimination in the workplace. However, the extent of that protection is only for the period in which a person is pregnant. After, new mothers have to rely on the qualification of FMLA in order to take 12 weeks of unpaid vacation and still secure their job. If a mother is not covered by FMLA, they will be unable to take maternity leave for long. Research by Nomaguchi, Fetro and Marshal (2019) demonstrated that mothers with young children feel more pressure balancing work and family. These mothers also have lower earning capabilities, less managerial support, and less opportunity for job mobility when their children are newborn and toddlers (303).

Correspondingly, research exists that proves the significance of baby and mother bonding. Not allowing a mother to spend time bonding with their babies significantly impacts secure attachment. Agreeing with the work of John Bowlby (1973) and his attachment theory, securely attached children grow up to be self-assured individuals with a sense of worth and deserving of good nurturing relationships (Borelly et. Al 2015). On the opposite end, insecure attachment can lead to children mistrusting their mothers and having trouble in developing close relationships. Insecure attachment often happens when mothers are not available to care for their children’s needs. A study done by the U.S. Department of Labor (2010) found that “55% of women with children under 3 and 51% of those with children under the age of 1 were in the paid workforce in

2009. In addition, a “National Survey of America Families indicate that over 40% of all children under age 5 spent at least 35 hours a week in care with someone other than their parents” (Palley 2011, 1160).

Likewise, not having a social support system can cause an array of problems for low income mothers. Among these issues are a higher chance of still births, preterm deliveries, preeclampsia, depression, stress, substance use, and nutritional deficiencies among other numerous health problems. Nagahawatte and Goldenberg (2008) reported that generally women of lower socioeconomic status were associated with lower health outcomes (Nagahawatte and Goldenberg, 2018). Nagahawatte and Goldenberg (2008) found that “black women were three times more likely to die in pregnancy than white women, twice as likely to have a still birth, approximately twice as likely to have a preterm birth and three to four times as likely to have a very early preterm birth as women from other ethnic groups” (Nagahawatte and Goldenberg, 2008, p. 81). Similarly, Chandra et al (2018), stated that “stressors” related to poverty, such as unpredictable housing, could contribute to mental health conditions such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, phobias, distrust and somatization affected poverty (p.43). It is also reported that women of lower socioeconomic status receive less prenatal care, which would allow them to be screened for serious conditions and their health to be monitored through their pregnancy (Nagahawatte and Goldenberg, 2008, p.81).

Research supports that there is a relationship between low income and depression, especially if women live in stressful environments and also suffer material deficiencies (Nagahawatte and Goldenberg, 2008, p. 82). It is important to note that there are higher obesity rates in women of lower socioeconomic status, which is associated with increasing the risks of

“gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, large size for gestational age and fetal macrosomia, and caesarean delivery” (Nagahawatte and Goldenberg, 83). Nagahawatte and Goldenberg (2008) conclude by stating that the higher health risk factors in women of lower socioeconomic status, paired with the fact that there is less access to care, explains the differences in pregnancy outcomes between the rich and the poor (84).

Nevertheless, there will be critics who will disagree with the arguments presented in my thesis. Plenty of individuals will say that the U.S. government provides welfare programs such as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and that the U.S. offers a comprehensive tax policy for all parents and that this aid should be enough to address the needs of the working class. With that comes many assumptions about poor people. For example, “work harder to get ahead” or “people just want to live off the government and not work.” In order to qualify for TANF, “women are required to “work out of the home in order to be eligible for financial assistance” (Palley 2011, 1160).

The following are benefit qualifications as specified in [benefits.gov](http://benefits.gov):

In order to qualify for this benefit program, the applicant must be either pregnant or responsible for a child under 19 years of age. Also, the applicant must be a U.S. national, citizen, legal alien, or permanent resident; **have low or very low income**; and be **under-employed (working for very low wages)**, unemployed or about to become unemployed.

Each state and territory decides the benefits it will provide. Each state and territory also establish the specific eligibility criteria that must be met to receive financial assistance payments or other types of benefits and services. Thus, you must check with the TANF agency in the area that you reside to learn whether you are eligible to receive financial assistance or other TANF benefits and services.

I have taken the liberty to place in bold type some of the requirements of the TANF policy that make it extremely hard for the working-class to obtain those benefits. Poverty cannot be so strictly defined. There are multiple levels of poverty and it is unfair to deny struggling families the help needed due to not meeting the poverty threshold in the U.S. This entire program excludes the grand majority of working American citizens. Based on eligibility requirements, it almost seems as though that in order to qualify for *anything* income must be nonexistent. As far as the tax policy that the U.S. has in place for parents with children, “families with dependent children are eligible for up to \$3000 in tax deductions for one child and up to \$6,000 for two or more children up to 35% of their expenses” (Palley 2011, p. 1162). Despite these lump sum cash benefits, research shows that families spend these funds on “durable goods” as opposed to ongoing expenses (Palley 2011, p.1162).

### **Fair Labor Standards Act (FSLA)**

To put it simply, and for the purpose of this thesis, the FSLA is to ensure that nonexempt workers receive a minimum wage and that if they work more than 40 hours, they receive time-and-a-half. For low wage earners, life is not only arduous, it is costly. It is without doubt that the

cost of living is high in the United States and even more in states like California and New York. Unfortunately, for many individuals who earn federal minimum wage (\$7.25 per hour) life does not improve. The last time that the federal minimum wage saw an increase was in 2007 (Jain 2019). In 2019, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a legislation to gradually increase the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour by year 2025 (H.R.582 – Raise the Wage Act). In addition, they established an indexing process to take effect in year 2026 for the purpose of tying minimum wage to inflation so that it can automatically adjust itself from year to year (H.R.582 – Raise the Wage Act).

It is important to note that states have their own set of rules pertaining to minimum wage. This is thoroughly explained by Komal Jain:

As a result of these financial pressures and to adjust for factors such as the local cost of living, 30 states and several localities have enacted their own mandates for a higher minimum hourly wage rate than the federal one. State minimum wage. For example, the State of Washington departs from the federal minimum wage as it mandates a minimum wage of \$12 per hour. Increases are mandated each year through 2020, after which there will be an annual cost-of-living adjustment based on the consumer price index (CPI) for Washington. Eight states (Alaska, Florida, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, South Dakota, and Vermont) increased their state minimum wage rates automatically based on cost-of-living increases in 2019, while others (Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Oregon, and Rhode Island) joined Washington in raising their state minimum wage rates based on previously enacted ballot measures or legislation. Michigan will also see increases. More-over, in May 2019 Connecticut became the latest to pass legislation requiring a minimum wage of at least \$15 per hour to be in place by 2025 or earlier (others include California, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, and New Jersey). Some states, such as Oregon, have adopted a state minimum wage higher than the federal minimum wage for non-exempt workers that increases annually. On the other hand, some states have enacted statutes that adjust the minimum wage only slightly above the federal standard, for example West Virginia, where the minimum wage is \$8.75. Several state minimums match the federal minimum wage, and some states have not enacted any minimum wage provision and rely on federal law to mandate minimum wages.

The problem with the Fair Labor Standards Act is that it fails to take into account that people living in poverty and earning \$7.25 per hour, as life gets costlier, helps continue the cycle of poverty. Therefore, many working-class individuals end up taking on extra work and still struggle to stay afloat. As previously stated, some individuals do not have the opportunity for job security or paid leave benefits. If those struggling earn a little above the poverty threshold, they will be ineligible for social welfare programs such as food stamps. The poverty cycle is hard to break when people are given little incentive to improve their situations on top of trying to balance their family and work lives. Moreover, can you imagine how hard life must be for recent immigrants who do not speak English and do not know how to navigate the system in the United States of America? Parents put their children through school hoping that their teachers will cover the practicalities of a good education. Due to language barriers some parents are unaware that in low income districts, teachers are sometimes overwhelmed with 30 students in their classrooms, little available resources and outdated books that would not make for a good education. The disservice that is caused in low income schools is vast. A living wage is crucial to the success of many working families; it determines whether people have access to better food, safer neighborhoods, better schools for their children and health services.

Nonetheless, there are employers and others who oppose an increase to the minimum wage as they believe that their businesses and/or the economy would not thrive and as a result would lead to less employment (Jain 2019). On the one hand, I agree with business owners that raising the minimum wage can be costly to employers and some businesses may be unable to afford it, but on the other hand, business owners, no matter their size, have full control of how much their hourly workers earn by manipulating their working hours and sometimes only offering part time work to multiple employees. Consequently, some employees do not have the



## **Work-Life Family Friendly Policies at a Transnational Level**

The United States is part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It is also the only country that does not offer a federal paid-leave program to its citizens (OECD Better Life Index, United States). The grand majority of the countries within the OECD offer family friendly policies to their citizens. This section focuses on the national profiles of Norway and Spain to compare individual Quality of Life with that of the United States. Most of the data presented in this section is from the OECD. Norway is a country notable for its high ranking in work-life balance, life satisfaction, and generous family policies. Spain, on the other hand, does not offer extensive family friendly policies, but still manages to provide paid leave to working individuals, which is something the United States, a mega powerful country, does not. Nonetheless, it is important to note the cultural components and economical differences that allow these countries to function and/or thrive the way that they do. It is also significant to take into account that the societies in Norway and Spain are more homogenous than in the United States, which can play a vital role in how they carry out their policies/laws.

### **Norway Demographics Characteristics**

Norway is located in the northwestern part of Europe. Its capital is Oslo and the Norwegian population consists of 5,467,439. The people of Norway are a mix of Norwegian 83.2%, other European 8.3%, and other 8.5% (CIA.gov). The country's official languages are Bokmal Norwegian and Nynorsk Norwegian. About 70.6% of the population follows the Evangelical Lutheran religion. The birthrate in Norway is relatively low at 12.2 births per 1,000

people and it is reported that 1.84 of children in Norway are born female. Norway's population unemployment rate is low at 4.2%. Unemployment rates for youth 15-24 is 9.7% (CIA.gov).

### **Norway's National Laws and Policies:**

In Norway, women's participation in the labor force is higher than most advanced countries with a percentage of 64.8%. Norway is a country reasonably advanced in terms of family friendly policies, which allows for a more egalitarian society and more female involvement in the labor force. Interestingly, in 2018, the OECD reported that women's unemployment rate in Norway was lower than men's at a percentage of 3.6% and men at a rate of 4.1%. In reference to Dahl (2006), Norway operates on the "social-democratic regime," marked "by institutionalized redistribution in which the welfare state provides universal social rights based on full employment (Esping-Andersen 1990) (p.34)." Dahl (2006), explains that because Norway's social programs are costly, they require individuals to be employed in order to benefit (34) because their system is sustainable so long as the population is taxed at high rates. The OECD reports that Norway taxes its single and childless citizens at a 27.5% rate. The "social-democratic regime" was established to help increase women's labor participation as well as the elderly. Dahl (2006) reports that "the Nordic welfare state model is characterized by a low degree of social inequality; a large body of empirical evidence shows the Nordic welfare states enjoy a high level of social equality" and lower poverty rates as compared to other nations part of the OECD (34).

Dahl (2006) explains Norway's parental leave and daycare policies as follows:

#### *Parental Leave*

Effective in 1994, parents with a newborn child are granted a full-year leave with a compensation rate of 80 percent. Alternatively, the parents can take forty-two weeks off with 100 percent compensation. Nine weeks are reserved for the mother around the time of birth and four weeks are reserved for the father. If he does not take out his quota, it is withdrawn. The parents can share the remaining months

between them as they wish. Research shows however, the large majority of the available months are taken by the mothers. In 1999, the mothers took 90 percent of the period and there has been little change in this pattern over the past years (Skrede 2004:167). The degree to which mother's occupational careers and future labor market participation are affected by this arrangement is hard to tell. Probably, the effect of this scheme alone on gender equality in the long run is negligible but if added to the "de-commodifying" effect of the next program the effects may be more pronounced.

#### *Cash Benefit to Families with Small Children Who Do Not Utilize Subsidized Daycare*

A new cash allowance for families with small children was introduced in 1998. This benefit is paid to all families (lone parents as well as couples) with small children (up to three-years-old) provided they do not use a daycare center receiving a state subsidy. A full monthly cash benefit is equivalent to one month's state subsidy of care for one child in a public pre-school (about 3700 NOK). If the child is in a state-sponsored daycare center for less than thirty hours weekly, the family will be entitled to a reduced cash benefit. Combined with maternal allowance for one year, this benefit, thus, enables (one of the) parents to stay at home to take care of a child for three years. The cash benefit has three major objectives: first, to allow the families to spend more time taking care of their children; second, to enhance the freedom to choose the childcare of preference; and third, to increase equity in the subsidies to families with small children (Ot.prp. nr. 56 1997-98: 1) (46).

Compared to the United States, Norway is a much more family friendly country. Granted nothing is truly free, but the generous policies provided are a collective effort of all society. In this case all individuals feel well taken care of and importance is placed on the wellbeing of families. Due to healthcare and education being free for students 18 and under, it can ease the burden on lower earning families and because Norway's citizens have access to more daycare options, no one is truly left out (Dahl, 2006).

#### **Spain Demographics Characteristics**

Spain has a population of 50,015,792. Spaniards or Spanish are the correct terminology to refer to the people of Spain. Spaniards make up 86% of the population and 68.9% of the people of Spain are Roman Catholic. The official language in Spain is Castilian Spanish, but 17% of the population speaks Catalan. 7% of people in Spain speak Galician and 2% speak Basque. The birth rate in Spain is low at 8.7 births/ 1,000 population. It is estimated that 1.51 children are

born female. It is also noted that 98.4% of the Spanish population can read and write. The unemployment rate in 2017 was 17.1% and in youth ages 15-24, the unemployment rate totals at 34.3%. (Source: CIA.gov).

### **Spain National Laws and Policies:**

Spain's women labor force participation is at 53.1% (OECD 2018). Spain, with its global standing, remains as one of the countries with a large employment gender gap when compared to the *Organizations for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD)* list. Overall, unemployment rates are highest amongst women (17.1%) than men (13.8%). Women are also more likely to work part-time (57%) rather than full time. Even though Spain is trying to reconcile family and work, Spain lacks family friendly policies. It is important to note that Spain has the characteristics of a collectivist society.

In collectivist societies, the welfare of the community is more valuable than the wellbeing of a single person. In other words, collectivists place importance in building strong communities where people take care of one another. Due to this view, we may infer that Spain does not view family and work as separate domains. According to Antonia Calvo Salguero et al, "in collectivist cultures the family is at the center, whereby the prosperity and wellbeing of the family is the essential core that gives meaning to one's life and brings about personal happiness. Then, work tends to be seen not as a means for improving oneself, but rather as a way of increasing the family's wellbeing" (2012). If this is likely, then work & family in Spain do not need to reconcile. This might explain why there are not many laws and/or policies supporting family and work. Salguero et al. (2012) stated that, "Spain is viewed as a one of the most relevant cultural dimensions of Spanish society, and one that differentiates it from other cultures (such as the North American culture), is the cultural model of family and work. Spain is characterized by a gender culture that leans toward strong family relationships and toward a low level of

individualism” (Salguero et al. 2012, p.121). We can deduce that they hold on to traditional gender norms and practices, which is having a male breadwinner and a female homemaker. With this in mind, there are several policies that allow families to reconcile family with work. Most of these policies were put into practice to increase women’s labor participation.

### **Childcare Provision**

Female labor participation is largely determined by access to childcare. If childcare is unavailable, women in Spain opt to stay at home to care for their children and/or to care for the elderly. As Guner et al. put it, “the care of children or sick adults together with other family responsibilities are the main reasons for women to stay out of the labor market, while they do not seem to affect the labor force participation in males (2014).” The public education system in Spain has been able to provide school enrollment to children under 3 years old under a law enforced in 1990. This law permits parents to enroll their children in schools whenever they feel the need to without the school system turning them down due to age. Moreover, Guner et al (2014) established that “at the age of three, 97% of children were enrolled” in the public education system, which is a big increase since 1986. As a result, families who benefit from this policy continue to work more hours as their children age. For children ages 0-2, private childcare services are more practical for mothers because this allows them to continue with their employment. Unfortunately, there is a high price to pay to remain employed. Mothers with children in private childcare services paid approximately \$256 euros in 2005 (Guner et al., 2014). Of course, this rate varies across Spain, but it is an estimate of \$353.00 US dollars and because of this, some mothers rather opt out of employment to take care of their children.

In some households, childcare is replaced with “family networks,” which is when immediate family members take care of the children while the parents are at work. Grandparents in this instance play a crucial role in how parents are able to manage work and family (Guner et

al., 2014). Another important factor allowing mothers to remain employed in Spain is immigration. Due to the large number of immigrants employed in household services, “including both housekeeping and caring for children and elderly dependents,” women in Spain are able to shorten their “children-related” breaks from employment and were able to retire much later than women who did not have these services available to them (5).

### **Parental Leave**

In Spain, parents are allowed 16 weeks of paid parental leave whether to care for their biological children or to adopt. Mothers benefit from the full 16 weeks of paid leave and fathers mostly benefit from 10 weeks. This policy is in place to encourage mothers to return to the labor force upon having a child since this facilitates their ability to nurture their child during the most important time of a newborn’s life. Job protection is a key element in why women can return to the workplace after giving birth. Additionally, Spain allows mothers an hour a day to breastfeed their children up to when the child is 9 months old. If the mother does not want to use her breastfeeding hours, she must then make the choice to accumulate to prolong her paid parental leave.

## **Spain Law for Reconciliation of Work and Family**

The law to promote reconciliation of work and family in Spain was passed in 1991. This law is in place to balance work and family life. According to Guner et al. (2014), “this new law introduced the possibility of family- friendly arrangements between the worker and the firm. In particular, the law allows parents to ask for an unpaid leave of up to three years after birth. However, the same job position is only guaranteed if the spell is shorter than a year. After that period only a job of similar category is guaranteed (6).” Moreover, the Law on Equal Opportunities for men and women allows families to “increase the duration of unpaid parental leave that is counted for retirement social security benefits from 1 to 2 years (Guner et al., 2014). As cited in Gunar et al (2014), “Lapuerta, Baizan and Gonzalez (2010) explore the incidence of unpaid parental leave among workers. They show that only about 46% of women with children under 3 years old were entitled to parental leave in 2006 since most Spanish women leave the labor market during the first few years of maternity.”

Furthermore, the law promotes conciliation of work and family and allows parents the possibility of reducing their daily work hours. This is only if they are parents of children under the age of 7. As an added bonus, this law makes it illegal for employers to fire employees if they ask for a reduction in hours. However, this law only protects employees under contracts. The employer is not obligated to renew an employee’s contract if they do not desire it. This law also allows mothers to remain employed part-time if they desire. Unfortunately, this law is not beneficial to women young enough to have children or those starting their careers, as employers do not deem them fit for promotions or the like because they assume that childbearing women will leave the workplace as soon as they reproduce. Not many people in Spain during the 1990s

were employed part-time, so a law was passed in order to eliminate the biases against part-time employees.

“Individual and Institutional Constraints: An Analysis of Parental Leave Use and Duration in Spain” by Irene Lapuerta, Paul Baizan and Maria Jose Gonzalez (2011) emphasizes the extent to which people, policies and workplace culture have an effect on parental leave use in Spain. Lapuerta et al. agree that having children enforces gender inequalities because it is more natural for mothers to take the paid parental leave as opposed to fathers. Many times, women are forced to choose between being a mother or their careers. As previously noted, Spain is a country with a very low fertility rate and even though this is so, plenty of women are out of the workforce. Parental leave policies allow mothers to be able to come to work after having a child. Also, literature suggests that parental leave discourages gender gap and promotes equal childcare opportunities as fathers can have the opportunity to be involved in their children live from an early start. Lapuerta et al found that parental leave is closely associated with to income, especially for men (Lapuerta et al., 2011). Results show that the more education a person had, the more they were likely to refrain from using parental leave. Another important finding was that highly educated women were more likely to retain employment than lower educated women. This study supported the view that reconciliation of work and family is possible amongst highly educated individuals.

## **Cash Benefit for Mothers**

Another benefit that Spain provides its residents is a cash benefit for working mothers and their children. Only mothers of children less than 3 years old qualify for this cash benefit. One hundred Euros per month (and per child) is allocated to qualifying working mothers. However, requirements for eligibility depend on the number of hours worked by the mothers and “the cash benefit is sizeable; it represents 30% of the average cost of private day-care centers in Spain. Compared to the working females’ observed earnings, it is about 13% of a primary educated female’s monthly earnings, 8% of a secondary educated one or 5% of a college educated one” (Guner et al.,2014, p.8).

Even though there are noticeable differences between Norway and Spain in terms of family friendly policies, it is important to take into account that both countries place high importance on childcare and family wellbeing in contrast to the U.S. These societies tend to focus more on the welfare of families and especially of children. Norway reportedly offers free health care and education to youth 18 and under. The United States has a long way to go to reach a level of better quality of life, especially for the poor. Unfortunately, the US has not made a significant childcare policy a priority. (Palley 2011, 1159). Palley (2011), states that, “much U.S. social welfare policy views family matters as “off limits “to government intervention (1160).” However, this poses many problems, as it restricts the quality of women and children. Unfortunately, there is not a complete U.S childcare policy. Instead we have a mixture of programs that are not aimed at addressing childcare (Palley 2011, 1160).

### **Chapter 3- Discussion and Implications for Research**

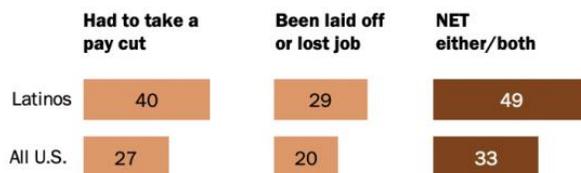
The Coronavirus pandemic of 2019 (COVID-19) urges us to think about U.S. labor practices and how the way that we are working is truly not working for the grand majority of U.S. citizens, including the middle class (policies), working class and/or low-income individuals. Our world quickly turned upside down when the Coronavirus pandemic reached the United States. As lockdown rules were executed, we were quickly forced to come up with creative ways to continue to do our work, attend school, find childcare, and figure out a plan on how to meet our basic needs and try to adapt to our new normal as much as possible. One of the reasons why the U.S. was able to quickly adapt to these new changes was due to the help of the working class.

For many low-income families who had to still report to work, life was even more challenging, as some figured out childcare, eldercare, and determined if they needed to sacrifice employment due to not having access to a babysitter. Sadly, this was the case for many single low-income women as the costs associated with childcare was too high and did not make it worthwhile to report to work. During the pandemic, the Pew Research Center reported that compared with the entire U.S. more Latinos experienced job loss from COVID-19 than any other ethnic group. Even though research has recognized that work-life conflict is present in all social classes, the difficulties of low-income families have been shown to be of greater stress due to lack of resources. This thesis has focused on the impact that work policies have on the working class and how little research exists in the work family interface on this population (Perry-Jenkins, Smith, Wadsworth and Paul Halpern, 2017). Current research in work-family conflict and work-family balance does not reveal the differences between the levels of conflict across social classes even though the inequities across the social hierarchy are vast (Perry-Jenkins, Smith, Wadsworth and Paul Halpern, 2017). It is not a surprise that the working class does not

have access to flexible work schedules and is more likely to deal with demanding work settings that require mandatory overtime. Workers have little autonomy, depend on fluctuating work shifts and have to endure more “time- pressure productivity targets and unpaid family leave than their middle-class counterparts” (Perry-Jenkins et al., 2017). Research demonstrates that knowledge is limited in the diverse effects of how work policies affect the working class and their families (Perry-Jenkins et al., 2017). In advancing the research in this area, it is important to delve deeper into the outcomes of workplace policies on the working class and their families. Additionally, it is highly important to examine the connections between social class and gender and how these are responsible in determining how individuals navigate work and family life. It is important to compare lives across social classes and at an individual level to demonstrate that in countries like the U.S. the inequality gap widens for the poor as it reduces for the middle classes. (Perry-Jenkins et al., 2017).

**More Latinos than U.S. adults overall say someone in their household has had pay cut or lost a job due to COVID-19**

*% who say they, or someone in their household, have \_\_\_ because of the coronavirus outbreak*



Notes: Hispanics are of any race. Share of respondents who didn't provide an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 19-24, 2020

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Figure 4. Job Loss Among Latinos Due to COVID-19.**

There are many advocates that agree with the fact that people of color, the poor / working class are the ones suffering the most from this pandemic. This is not to minimize the distress of others, as the virus has unfortunately made an impact in the lives of countless individuals and their families. In an article written by Joseph William, titled “Coronavirus Could Crush the Poor,” it was reported that, “the coronavirus health emergency could wreak even more havoc in low-income communities of color. African Americans, for example, suffer from disproportionately higher rates of chronic conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes, and infection with the COVID-19 virus on top of those pre-existing conditions can be serious” (Williams, 2020).

Frances Fox Piven, author of “Our Endless War on the Poor,” detailed that despite the U.S. being a powerful and rich country, a 2017 report indicated that it had the second highest poverty rate within the developed countries along with the second lowest rate of child poverty (20). Piven (2020) reported that Federal budgets under the Trump administration have alleviated the taxes of the rich while cutting vital programs or monetary support for the poor and that 700,000 people could potentially lose food stamps benefits under a new federal regulation (20).

In today’s society, people are becoming more accepting of each other’s differences. However, that does not mean that all individuals understand the impact of poverty at a micro level. Dodson (2013), mentioned that a vast number of working parents earn low and unsustainable wages that fail to cover the most basics of needs: “Typical new economy jobs include personal care services, retail work, elder and childcare, food services, home health care, hospitality, cleaning, entry-level health care, and telemarketing work. These jobs are not only poorly paid, they also often have no job benefits, no reliable schedules, and offer no pathway to better jobs in the future. In addition, most offer little or no flexibility. These low-income jobs are

more likely to have work schedules that disrupt ordinary family routines; to obstruct working parents' ability to care for their children and other vulnerable kin; to have few or no job benefits that could be used for family leave time; and to be the least flexible (Galinsky, Bond, & Hill 2004; Williams & Boushey, 2011). Employees earning less than \$25,000 annually are much less likely to have any work flexibility than are higher-paid workers (Richman, Johnson, & Buxbaum, 2006). Millions of working families face trade-offs every month: food or fuel, childcare or health care, rent or electricity. Aside from low earnings, the lack of job benefits (such as sick leave) in combination with family- disruptive schedules mean that these families face great difficulty finding childcare that allows them to show up consistently at work” (259).

Statements like Piven's demonstrate that the gap of social inequality and wealth distribution is only widening. Also, there seems to be a misunderstanding in the way many understand social mobility, which is not as simple as saying, “work hard to get ahead.” If this were the case, many more working-class families would climb up the social ladder. These individuals do work, but the pay they earn is not enough to make a significant difference in their way of living.

It is clear, class inequalities still exist in today's America and not all is fair and balanced as advertised. Not everyone gets the same job opportunities and not all in American society understand that there are differences in the way lower income individuals are marginalized whether intentionally or covertly. For example, there have been studies that certain corporations, did not hire people who had “ethnically derived names” (Jowell, R., & Prescott-Clarke, P. (1970). These are the same establishments claiming to hire based on an equitable and fair playing field, but some hiring managers in the study passed up names associated with being

ethnic regardless of experience, or employment qualifications. These covert acts of racism contribute to the disparities and do not allow many people of color to advance in society.

As covered in “Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation,” by Eduardo Bonilla Silva (1997), in racialized social systems, there is a hierarchy “that produces definite social relations between races. Race placed in the superior position tends to receive greater economic remuneration and access to better occupations granted higher social estimation often has the license to draw physical as well as social boundaries between itself and other races.” This is evident in gentrification. Affordable housing and gentrification are other areas that add to the inequality problem in the United States. This is apparent in parts of the USA, where sometimes taxes on housing are high enough to keep the lower class out.

Numerous social services organizations exist to try and remedy the inequality. However, a strong system to spearhead this movement is still not in place. Despite the efforts in motion, many individuals grow up poor, some youths are out of school and out of work, and plenty of minority women and their children reside in shelters due to domestic violence. On another note, I believe that it is patronizing to say that low income individuals cannot thrive without the help from established social services organizations. This belief reinforces the acceptance that poor people are “condemned,” or lack the capacity to thrive on their own. People fail to realize that the problems stem from the way the system was designed and was not further develop to address the needs of current populations. It is a cycle? The question is: Is it more beneficial for America to continue with “laissez faire racism?”

In his book, “*Our Kids*,” Robert Putnam discussed the differences between Port Clinton, Ohio in the 1950s compared to its current state. Apparently, Port Clinton in the 1950s conveyed what the “American Dream” promised and it was a perfect example of social mobility. Children

of the wealthy played with the poor and attended the same schools, parties, and social activities. None of the students mentioned in the case studies felt that they were unfortunate or poor and were encouraged to do better for themselves. The two African American students portrayed in the story suffered from racial tensions but were portrayed as having a good life where immediate neighbors treated them fairly and with respect. All students went on to college and made something of themselves and this served as evidence that they had moved up the social ladder. Later in chapter one, Putnam mentioned that life in port Clinton, Ohio changed dramatically due to changes in the economic systems and due to affluent individuals moving into the town seeking peace, exclusivity, the building of bigger homes and condos. As a result, the town kept gentrifying and slowly created a gap between the rich and the poor. The affluent individuals mentioned in the chapter, were highly engaged in their children's education, social activities and personal growth. The poor people, in contrast, struggled to make ends meet and to fight for a better life.

Putnam touched on the topic of family involvement as a big role in the success of a child. In current Portland, Ohio, the more affluent folks did not feel the need to help the less fortunate get ahead because in their mind, "everyone had the same opportunity to thrive." In an ideal 1950s Portland, Ohio world, this would have been the case, as the community sought that all promising children had their chance and there were people who helped to get them ahead. In some ways, I agree with the affluent families that a large part of one's ability to thrive in the world comes from how involved parents are with their children at a young age. I disagree with the notion that "we all get a fair start." It is degrading, perhaps even clueless, to believe that we all get a fair start. There are plenty of things that money buys. Wealth allows rich individuals and families to get a head start such as: quality education, healthier food, better health care,

encouragement of artistic exploration and a network of highly influential peers, who can then turn into business partners. Money allows for those who appreciate it the possibility to grow in numerous beneficial ways both personally and professionally.

Still, wealth allows individuals to explore supplementary activities. They get involved in the boards of nonprofit and social services organizations. Many donate to important causes and this exposure certainly helps them become aware of the issues at large. A lot of us have heard the saying of: “Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.” Poverty works the same way and it needs to be attacked at a systemic level. Throwing money at organizations only helps alleviate immediate problems for some families. It is surface level aid. Sure, some help is better than no help. I agree and it is not that there is a dislike for the rich, on the contrary, it is the false idea that everything is fair and equal that is being critiqued.

According to Abraham Maslow, a psychologist, in order for human beings to reach their full potential, they have to advance all of the stages on the social hierarchy pyramid, which entails the following: physiological, safety, love/ belonging, self-esteem and ultimately, reaching self-actualization. Applying this concept to the poor, some are barely even making ends meet and can only work to pay rent, utilities, clothe and feed their children. Now, that in combination with a bad education system and other social pressures, it can be extremely difficult to get out of the poverty cycle and advance the social ladder. To illustrate, many poor individual’s do not ever make it out of the “physiological needs” bucket. Is this not a bigger problem than you thought?



## Maslow's hierarchy of needs

**Figure 5. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

**Source:** ThoughtCo.com by Hopper, E. (2020)

One of the main problems is that a capitalist society needs a working class to further its own agenda. There are a large number of minorities and working-class individual who do make it to college, and they get an education, but college alone does not guarantee anyone a job. There are plenty of college-educated peoples working in coffee shops with an overwhelming amount of student debt. Many lower socioeconomic millennials grew up hearing that the way out of poverty, or the way to accomplish anything, was through a good education. Can you imagine the class of 2012 and their disappointment after graduating from college and experiencing the distress of not finding a job? Landing a job takes skills and if colleges and universities do not implement these core skills into a curriculum, many students will graduate without knowing how to format and or create a proper resume. Templates found online are simply not enough because people need to know how to market themselves.

Furthermore, research has shown that that children who attend schools lacking in funding “are the students who need the most assistance in and out of school. They are generally more likely to have developmental issues and to score low on school tests, fall behind in school, get

entangled with the criminal justice system, and fail to graduate from high school or attain a college degree (Suitts, 2013; Tough, 2016). Little wonder, therefore, that the learning gap for low-income students across the nation, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, has remained virtually stagnant since the turn of the century” (Suitts, 2016, p.38). It is clear that the education system continues to fail low income children and does not invest in their teacher’s salaries so that no child is left behind.

Ironically, education can serve as the foundation to inequality and disadvantage. Similarly, some poor families do not encourage their children to go to college due to the high costs associated with a higher education and being misinformed about the benefits available to working class and poor families. Going back to the statement that parents are responsible for influencing their children, several poor families lack higher education themselves, so some may not see the importance of a higher education. How is this the problem of the wealthy? For one, many cannot relate to the struggles of the working class or poor. The advantage of growing up rich means that people can take more risk, travel more, and have a better standard of living. The working class cannot appreciate such luxuries; they have to make sure that they can take care of their basic needs, which at times, are difficult to meet. How then can they rise on the social ladder?

All in all, social disparities even exist between people of the same social classes, as mentioned in “Code of the Street” by Elijah Anderson with the comparison between “decent” and “street.” Essentially, “Code of the Street” signifies a number of rules that people living in poor neighborhoods follow to navigate their systematically oppressed and racially segregated regions. These rules affect their interpersonal relationships and encompass their daily interactions. For instance, the notion that young men will resort to violence if challenged in a

public setting in order to maintain their street credit and the respect of their peers (Burgason, 2017). In the book, the people portrayed as being “street” had their own social order and showed more resistance to the demands of society. Where these the souls who did not want to conform? Did they give up because of lack of guidance, or because they thought the “dream” was unattainable? The “decent” individuals were the working-class poor who envisioned a better future for their children and were more likely to conform to society’s standards for a better future. It seems that society creates lines of separation instead of unifying to benefit each other.

Another area that is important to touch upon is immigrant children and their struggles. Newcomers experience discomfort, isolation and even find school challenging while learning English as a second language. This is something that I dealt with growing up in the United States of America and in New York City, one of the most expensive places to live. Furthermore, not having parents as involved due to having to meet work demands, or who do not understand the English language, can hinder a child’s success in school. This is especially difficult when parents trust the school system to at least help with the task of educating their children. Unfortunately, that is often not the case and depending on the school district, some public schools, as previously mentioned, do not have adequate funding for new books, materials and art or music classes. Some of the schools located in low socioeconomic neighborhoods merely scrape by and it can be challenging to work to the benefit of a child under these circumstances.

Another area that poses difficulties for immigrants is that some do not know how to navigate the social services arena and require help. Also, some minorities and immigrants alike do not know of the community-based organizations that have the funds to tutor and/or offer extra help to students in need. Another complication that may arise is, culture. Certain cultures do not want to integrate with mainstream America. It is not unusual that some cultures do not want their

children out after a certain time or have them involved in extracurricular activities due to fear of “bad influences.” Some immigrants do not agree with the liberty and the rights given to children/young adults in the United States. Nonetheless, it is important that parents be involved in their children’s education, especially if children struggle with the acquisition of a second language. Failure to provide the essential educational building blocks can hinder a child’s future. Parent and child relations may have an effect on the way children view their education. If children, or youths have loving and understanding parents, they may be inclined to succeed in school, as opposed to having a permissive parent. Permissive parents may or may not worry too much about their children’s education, or future. These are the types of parents that do not set expectations and often give in to their children’s demands, which can be true if parents are working all the time. Children and teenagers need guidance. Schools do not have all of the answers. It is up to the parents to formalize a tailored educational system for their children. If nurtured in a safe and trusting environment, children and/or teenagers could be more successful in their language skills and future careers. When children grow in unhealthy home environments, the damaging effects may leach into their schoolwork and negatively influence their future. Although not every case is the same because some individuals are introspective and have self-awareness, there are many factors that come into play here.

Further research is essential in order to comprehend probable influences on parent child relations, such as children’s individual characteristics, and outside “familiar activity” such as peers and social influences. School administrators and teachers should come together and inform parents of the importance in their involvement in their children’s future. It can be challenging for immigrants to seek help, but even while facing hardships in the United States, many parents are involved. While not all situations are equal, there needs to be more focus to the needs of

immigrants and minorities. This way, newcomers will not feel lost, embarrassed or isolated due to not speaking the host country's language and not fitting into mainstream society. While there are many programs that aid in these causes, still need to be more outreach and orientation toward parents and most importantly to parents, or illegal immigrants living in fear of deportation.

In spite of all, most people of lower socioeconomic class know the value of hard work, and because of this encourage their children to succeed and become professionals in hopes of achieving a “better” life in the future. As stated by Piven (2020), “American poverty policy was and is shaped within a political culture that denigrates the poor, just as it applauds—indeed, seems to worship—the affluent. In the American mind, to be poor is not simply to have little in the way of money or material goods. Rather, poverty is tightly linked to a wide assortment of personal failures, from sloth to addiction. People are believed to be poor because of their personal failings. However, research shows that the opposite is true: When household income increases, other problems like poor school performance or drug use tend to diminish” (Piven, 2020, p. 22).

Reverend William Barber II (2020), author of “The Real Epidemic is Poverty,” states that poverty is a “moral crisis” and that COVID-19 has revealed the deep injustices that poorer populations face as most death and suffering will be upon them due to disadvantages in access to healthcare or paid sick leave. Barker also mentions that, “though children appear less vulnerable to the virus than adults, America’s nearly forty million poor and low-income children are at serious risk of losing access to food, shelter, education, and housing in the economic fallout from the pandemic. The underlying disease, in other words, is poverty, which was killing nearly 700 of us every day in the world’s wealthiest country, long before anyone had heard of COVID-19.

To redeem the soul of America—and survive a pandemic—we must have a moral fusion movement that cuts across race, gender, class, and cultural divides” (William, 2020, p.6).

The significance in the study of work family conflict in low income families is that the current policies in place are not adequate to sustain working families. Unfortunately, the government has failed to get involved in the improvement of our childcare system and workplace policies. The programs that are available fail to address the needs of many families and some women are forced into “low wage based” market work due to Welfare reforms that contain income eligibility margins (Palley, 2011). The United States needs to implement programs that more people could have access to. A quality education, childcare, paid leave and more accessible family friendly policies, would alleviate the suffering of many families in the U. S., especially the poor living in vulnerable conditions. The truth is that the working class is suffering and many middle-income individuals as well. The income distribution in the United States is inequitable. Without a doubt, policies will definitely change in every part of the states. However, having those basic needs addressed would be good for society at large. If we modeled those 3 essential areas, like the Nordic countries, the working class in the United States could have a higher chance at succeeding and not struggling and society at large would be much better off.

As we explored, the FMLA, PFMLA, FSLA, and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act are not inclusive policies/laws and certainly not beneficial as those who may qualify for FMLA still do not take their full leave as family demands require an income. One of the main issues is that the U.S. government sees family care as an individual problem rather than a societal one (Palley, 2011). In order to improve the quality of life for the working class, policies must be inclusive and a greater need for childcare and protection must be prioritized by public policy.

As proposed by Jenkins et al (2017), “to support working parent’s mental health, especially in vulnerable low-income families, and, in turn to enhance child development, requires solutions that address workplace policies, work conditions, affordable child care, and knowledge of mental health and parenting” (Jenkins, 2017, p.625). The exploration of a higher minimum wage is vital. The possibility of paid parental leave and universal childcare for working class individuals and on a paying scale for those that can afford it should be explored. Failure to address these needs will contribute to an ever-growing wage gaps and inequalities.

In addition, employers can help the issue by being active participants lessening the stress of their employees. An employee’s work environment should be safe, not hostile. In a capitalist society such as the United States, profit is prized at the expense of family. For low-income families, the little they earn is motivation to keep showing up to work, even if work is detrimental to their health. In order for positive changes to happen for those in low wage positions, there needs to be open communication so that workers feel they matter at their companies, regardless of their standing within the company or earning wages. Employers should be visionaries and start building daycare facilities in their workplaces as an added benefit and to attract talent. Unfortunately, people holding low wage jobs are not prioritized due to employers believing that they are easily replaceable. Would it be not costlier to constantly hire new employees than to retain them?

Another recommendation for employers is to respect their employee’s personal time. If an employee clocked out for the day, the employer should refrain from contacting him/her at home. When employers feel that their employee is available 24/7 that is invasion of privacy. Those are current recommendations from many researchers studying the dynamics of work and family. Who are we kidding? Most low wage employees cannot take part in those

recommendations. However, managers should encourage individuals to ask for help and they should have an open-door policy where workers may voice their feelings. Managers should try to show empathy and train supervisors to be fair and balanced with their staff. Organizations could have a stronger employee retention by immediately rewarding people when they perform well. An appreciation note goes a long way, or if appropriate, a raise.

All in all, these recommendations are easier said than done. The truth is that low wage workers are undervalued, are mistreated, and current policies do not protect them or their families. Due to the fact that low wameworkers do not have other sources of income and must feed their families, it makes it easier for employers to demand more of their time. Consequently, working class families may not be as involved in their children's lives and of their family's lives, which cause other unfortunate issues and perhaps the continuation of the cycle of poverty. All things considered, it is inconvenient to a capitalist society to remedy the "problems of the poor" at a systemic level, but we must not give up the fight toward a more equitable society, which in turn can be beneficial for all.

## References

- Anderson, E. (1999). *Code of the street: Decency, violence, and the moral life of the inner city*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Andrias, K. (2019). An American Approach to Social Democracy: The Forgotten Promise of the Fair Labor Standards Act. *Yale Law Journal*, 128(3), 616–709.
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands–resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), 273–285. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000056>
- Balestra, C., Boarini, R., & Tosetto, E. (2018). What Matters Most to People? Evidence from the OECD Better Life Index Users' Responses. *Social Indicators Research*, 136(3), 907–930. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1007/s11205-016-1538-4>
- Barber II, W. J. (2020). The Real Epidemic Is Poverty. *Progressive*, 84(2), 6–7.
- Becker, G. S. (1965). A theory of the allocation of time. *The Economic Journal* 75(299), 493–517.
- Bergqvist, C., & Saxonberg, S. (2017). The State as a Norm-BUILDER? The Take-up of Parental Leave in Norway and Sweden. *Social Policy & Administration*, 51(7), 1470–1487. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1111/spol.12251>
- Bialystok, E., & Miller, B. (1999). The problem of age in second-language acquisition: Influences from language, structure, and task. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 2(2), 127–145. doi:10.1017/S1366728999000231
- Bianchi, S. M., Sayer, L. C., Milkie, M. A., & Robinson, J. P. (2012). Housework: Who Did, Does or Will Do It, and How Much Does It Matter? *Social Forces*, 91(1), 55–63. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1093/sf/sos120>
- Boggiano, A. K., Barrett, M., Weiher, A. W., McClelland, G. H., & Lusk, C. M. (1987). Use of the maximal-operant principle to motivate children's intrinsic interest. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53(5), 866–879. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.53.5.866>
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (1997). Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation. *American Sociological Review*, 62(3), 465–480. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.2307/2657316>

- Borelli, J. L., Somers, J. A., West, J. L., Coffey, J. K., & Shmueli-Goetz, Y. (2016). Shedding light on the specificity of school-aged children's attachment narratives. *Attachment & Human Development*, 18(2), 188–211. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1080/14616734.2015.1134605>
- Boushey, H. (2011). The Role of the Government in Work- Family Conflict. *Future of Children*, 21(2), 163–190. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1353/foc.2011.0012>
- Carlson, D., Ferguson, M., Hunter, E. and Whitten, D. (2012) Abusive Supervision and Work-Family Conflict: The Path through Emotional Labor and Burnout. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23, 849-859. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.05.003>
- Carlson, D.S., Ferguson, M., Perrewe, P.L. and Whitten, D. (2011) The Fallout from Abusive Supervision: An Examination of Subordinates and Their Partners. *Personnel Psychology*, 64, 937-961. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2011.01232>.
- Carlson, D. L., Miller, A. J., Sassler, S., & Hanson, S. (2016). The Gendered Division of Housework and Couples' Sexual Relationships: A Reexamination. *Journal of Marriage & Family*, 78(4), 975–995. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12313>
- Crandall, V. C. (1966). Personality characteristics and social and achievement behaviors associated with children's social desirability response tendencies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 4(5), 477–486. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0023891>
- Cohn, D. V., Anderson, M., Auxier, B., Kennedy, B., Diamant, J., Horowitz, J. M., Devlin, K. (2020, April 17). Fact Tank - *News in Numbers*. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank>
- Congressional Research Service. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44835>
- Dahl, E., & Pedersen, A. W. (2006). Gender, Employment and Social Security in Norway. *Gender Issues*, 23(1), 32–64. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1007/s12147-006-0003-0>
- Dean, H. (2007) Poor parents? The realities of work-life balance in a low-income neighbourhood. *Benefits: a journal of poverty and social justice*, 15 (3). pp. 271-282.
- Dean, H. (2007). Tipping the Balance: The Problematic Nature of Work—Life Balance in a Low-Income Neighbourhood. *Journal of Social Policy*, 36(4), 519–537. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1017/S004727940700116X>

- Dodson, L. (2013). Stereotyping Low-Wage Mothers Who Have Work and Family Conflicts. *Journal of Social Issues*, 69(2), 257–278. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1111/josi.12014>
- Duvander, A., Lappegård, T., Andersen, S., Garðarsdóttir, Ó, Neyer, G., & Viklund, I. (2019). Parental leave policies and continued childbearing in Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. *Demographic Research*, 40, 1501-1528. Retrieved April 15, 2020, from [www.jstor.org/stable/26727040](http://www.jstor.org/stable/26727040)
- Executive Summary*, Retrieved from: <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/legacy/files/FMLA-2012-Executive-Summary.pdf>
- Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993*, 29 U.S.C. §§ 2601–2654 (2006).
- Ford, M. T. (2011). Linking household income and work-family conflict: a moderated mediation study. *Stress & Health: Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress*, 27(2), 144–162. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.1328>
- Goode, W. (1960). A Theory of Role Strain. *American Sociological Review*, 25(4), 483-496. Retrieved from [www.jstor.org/stable/2092933](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2092933)
- Habig, J. E. (2008). Defining the Protected Class: Who Qualifies for Protection Under the Pregnancy Discrimination Act? (Cover story). *Yale Law Journal*, 117(6), 1215–1224. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.2307/20454678>
- Henly, J. R., Shaefer, H. L., & Waxman, E. (2006). Nonstandard Work Schedules: Employer- and Employee-Driven Flexibility in Retail Jobs. *Social Service Review*, 80(4), 609–634. <https://doi.org/10.1086/508478>
- Hoobler, J. & Brass, D. (2006). Abusive supervision and family undermining as displaced aggression. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(5), 1125-1133. *The Journal of applied psychology*. 91. 1125-33. 10.1037/0021-9010.91.5. 1125.
- Hoobler, J. & Hu, J. (2013). A model of injustice, abusive supervision, and negative affect. *The Leadership Quarterly*. 24. 256–269. 10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.11.005.
- Hopper, E. (2020, February 24). *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* [graphic]. [www.thoughtco.com](http://www.thoughtco.com). <https://www.thoughtco.com/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-4582571>

- Isaksen, L. W., & Bikova, M. (2019). Egalitarian ideologies on the move: Changing care practices and gender norms in Norway. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 29(5), 627–639. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928719867789>
- Jain, K. (2019). Minimum Wage. *GPSolo*, 36(5), 24–27.
- Jowell, R., & Prescott-Clarke, P. (1970). Racial Discrimination and White-collar Workers in Britain. *Race*, 11(4), 397–417. <https://doi.org/10.1177/030639687001100401>
- Keeter, S. (2020, March 30). *People financially affected by coronavirus outbreak are experiencing more psychological distress than others*. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/03/30/people-financially-affected-by-covid-19-outbreak-are-experiencing-more-psychological-distress-than-others/>
- Kids Count Data Center. (2018, June 12). Single Parents Are Raising More Than One-Third of U.S. Kids [Graphic]. [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org). <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/updates/show/204-single-parents-are-raising-more-than-one-third-of-us-kids>
- Krogstad, J. M., Gonzalez-Barrera, A., & Noe-Bustamante, L. (2020, April 3). *U.S. Latinos among hardest hit by pay cuts, job losses due to coronavirus*. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/03/u-s-latinos-among-hardest-hit-by-pay-cuts-job-losses-due-to-coronavirus/>
- Lung, S. (2010). The Four-Day Work Week: But What About Ms. Coke, Ms. Upton, and Ms. Blankenship? *Connecticut Law Review*, 42(4), 1119–1137.
- Netherlands: *Country Health Profile 2019*: en. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/netherlands/netherlands-country-health-profile-2019-9ac45ee0-en.htm>
- Ngotngamwong, R. (2019). Why Do Millennials Leave? *Human Behavior Development & Society*, 20(4), 7–17.
- Nilsen, A. (2012). Work, Life Course, and Gender. *European Societies*, 14(1), 113–134. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1080/14616696.2010.547943>
- Noda, H. Work–Life Balance and Life Satisfaction in OECD Countries: A Cross-Sectional Analysis. *J Happiness Stud* (2019). <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1007/s10902-019-00131-9>

- Nomaguchi, K., & Fetto, M. N. (2019). Childrearing Stages and Work–Family Conflict: The Role of Job Demands and Resources. *Journal of Marriage & Family*, 81(2), 289–307. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1111/jomf.12521>
- OECD (2020), *Gender wage gap (indicator)*. doi: 10.1787/7cee77aa-en (Accessed on 17 April 2020)
- OECD (2020), *How's Life? 2020: Measuring Well-being*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9870c393-en>.
- Perry-Jenkins, M., Herman, R. J., Halpern, H. P., & Newkirk, K. (2017). From Discovery to Practice: Translating and Transforming Work-Family Research for the Health of Families. *Family relations*, 66(4), 614–628. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12267>
- Perry-Jenkins, M., Smith, J. Z., Wadsworth, L. P., & Halpern, H. P. (2017). Workplace policies and mental health among working-class, new parents. *Community, Work & Family*, 20(2), 226–249. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1080/13668803.2016.1252721>
- Pew Research Center. (2020, April 3). *More Latinos than U.S. adults overall say someone in their household has had pay cut or lost a job due to COVID-19*. [https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/03/u-s-latinos-among-hardest-hit-by-pay-cuts-job-losses-due-to-coronavirus/ft\\_2020-04-03\\_covidhispanics\\_01/](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/03/u-s-latinos-among-hardest-hit-by-pay-cuts-job-losses-due-to-coronavirus/ft_2020-04-03_covidhispanics_01/)
- Piven, F. F. (2020). Our Endless War on the Poor. *Progressive*, 84(2), 19–23.
- Poortman, A.-R., & Van Der Lippe, T. (2009). Attitudes Toward Housework and Child Care and the Gendered Division of Labor. *Journal of Marriage & Family*, 71(3), 526–541. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2009.00617.x>
- Putnam, R. D. (2015). *Our kids: The American dream in crisis*. Simon & Schuster.
- Racial and ethnic disparities in access to and use of paid family and medical leave: evidence from four nationally representative datasets: *Monthly Labor Review*. (2019, January 1). Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2019/article/racial-and-ethnic-disparities-in-access-to-and-use-of-paid-family-and-medical-leave.htm>
- Ruppanner, L. (2013). Conflict Between Work and Family: An Investigation of Four Policy Measures. *Social Indicators Research*, 110(1), 327–347. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1007/s11205-011-9933-3>
- Russell, M. (2017). *Lunch on a Skyscraper, 1932 by Charles C. Ebbets*. Retrieved from <http://abalawinfo.org/fair-labor-standards-act-flsa/>

- Sandberg, S. (2013). *Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead*. Alfred A. Knopf.
- Slaughter, A.-M. (2019, June 3). Why Women Still Can't Have It All. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/>
- Story, C. R., Koch, J. M., Daniel, S. S., Reboussin, B. A., & Grzywacz, J. G. (2018). Impact of Work Schedule, Race, and Psychological Distress among Impoverished Mothers. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 42(5), 43–53. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.5993/AJHB.42.5.4>
- Tepper, B. (2000). Consequences of Abusive Supervision. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 43(2), 178-190. Retrieved April 25, 2020, from [www.jstor.org/stable/1556375](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1556375)
- Thévenon, O. (2011). Family Policies in OECD Countries: A Comparative Analysis. *Population & Development Review*, 37(1), 57–87. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2011.00390.x>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2019, September). *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2018* (Report No. P60-266). Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2019/demo/p60-266.pdf>
- U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). (2018, March). *Federal Work-Life Survey Governmentwide Report OPM*. Retrieved from <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/worklife/federal-work-life-survey/2018-federal-work-life-survey-report.pdf>
- Warren, T., Fox, E., & Pascall, G. (2009). Innovative Social Policies: Implications for Work–life Balance among Low-waged Women in England. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16(1), 126–150. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.gc.cuny.edu/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2008.00433.x>
- Wiese, J. L., Loomis, C., & Mitchell, T. (2019). Shifting Societal Attitudes: Examining the Effects of Perspective Taking on Attitudes toward and Derogation of the Poor. *Journal of Poverty*, 23(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10875549.2018.1496375>
- Williams, J. P. (2020). Coronavirus Could Crush the Poor, Advocates Warn. U.S. News & World Report - *The Report*, 9–12.
- Winston, P., Coombs, E., Bennett, R., Antelo, L., Landers, P., & Abbott, M. (2019). Paid family leave: supporting work attachment among lower income mothers. *Community, Work & Family*, 22(4), 478–511. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2019.1635436>