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Finding Time: The Economics Of Work-Life Conflict



Synopsis

Employers today are demanding more and more of employees' time. And from campaign barbecues to the blogosphere, workers across the United States are raising the same worried question: How can I get ahead at my job while making sure my family doesn't fall behind? Heather Boushey argues that resolving work-life conflicts is as vital for individuals and families as it is essential for realizing the country's productive potential. The federal government, however, largely ignores the connection between individual work-life conflicts and more sustainable economic growth. The consequence: business and government treat the most important things in life—health, children, elders—as matters for workers to care about entirely on their own time and dime. That might have worked in the past, but only thanks to a hidden subsidy: the American Wife, a behind-the-scenes, stay-at-home fixer of what economists call market failures. When women left the home out of desire and necessity—the old system fell apart. Families and the larger economy have yet to recover. But change is possible. *Finding Time* presents detailed innovations to help Americans find the time they need and help businesses attract more productive workers. A policy wonk with working-class roots and a deep understanding of the stresses faced by families up and down the income ladder, Heather Boushey demonstrates with clarity and compassion that economic efficiency and equity do not have to be enemies. They can be reconciled if we have the vision to forge a new social contract for business, government, and private citizens.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The feminist econ book I never knew I needed—Finding Time is just as essential as Sheryl Sandberg's Lean In and Anne-Marie Slaughter's Unfinished Business. In fact, it picks up where they left off—Boushey makes the financial case for reform, pointing to data that proves that policies like paid leave increase productivity in the workplace, decrease turnover, and, in turn, fuel the economy as a whole. (Michelle Ruiz Vogue 2016-04-20)

[Boushey] present[s] evidence that workplaces with flexible, accommodating schedules are more productive than those that emphasize long hours and rigid schedules—[Finding Time] note[s] that countries with extensive work-life policies have higher social mobility and are often more competitive than the United States. (Stephanie Coontz American Prospect 2016-04-01)

[An] ambitious, fast-paced, fact-filled, and accessible book—[Boushey] has a masterful understanding of the nuts and bolts of policy design and has impressively cataloged an array of promising state and local examples. Her policy proposals are not off the beaten path, but her overall argument—simple as it sounds—is a fresh one. (Janet Gornick Science 2016-04-15)

This thoughtful and engaging book exposes a vitally important and timely topic, and Boushey is uniquely positioned to address it. (Ruth Milkman, City University of New York)

Heather Boushey presents a compelling case for why achieving the right balance of time with our families and at our workplaces is vital to the economic success and prosperity of our nation. I've been honored to see her work up close through The Shriver Report—and I'm now glad that it's going to be available to an even wider audience. This is a must read for the public and policymakers alike. (Maria Shriver)

Time is our most precious asset, and families feel like they have less and less of it. Heather Boushey's important book shows that there is much that policy can do to reclaim our time and our lives. In a rational world its arguments would have an important impact on the future of American economic policy. (Lawrence H. Summers, President Emeritus and Charles W. Eliot University Professor, Harvard University)

This is a thoughtful and intelligent book. (Tyler Cowen Bloomberg View 2016-08-29)

Boushey argues that better family-leave policies should not only improve the lives of struggling families but also boost workers' productivity and reduce firms' costs. (The Economist 2016-09-10)

Boushey offers an ambitious public policy agenda to address the increasingly common situation where both the mother and father work outside the home and thus have less time to care for their families—[A] brilliant book. (Suzanne Kahn Dissent 2016-10-01)

Boushey presents detailed innovations to help Americans find the time they need and help businesses attract more productive workers, revealing how economic efficiency and equity do not have to be enemies. (ISE

Heather Boushey is Executive Director and Chief Economist at the Washington Center for Equitable Growth.

This is hands down the most accessible book on an economic topic I've read. Boushey is brilliant for not only naming the problem (The American Wife as the Silent Partner for American Business), but for making sure that the solutions she is offering are already tried and tested. Brava!

excellent informative

A wonderful book on a crucial topic! This book tackles an issue affecting most American families: work-life conflict. Boushey does a comprehensive job tackling the problem from several angles. She provides rich historical details, a thorough overview of the most relevant data, a guide to the key economic mechanisms behind work-life conflict, and several well-considered policy responses. (Boushey also provides the reader with an appendix of detailed information on data sources and methods as well as a trove of rich source material.) This is an important scholarly work, yet Boushey presents her arguments in a captivating way, holding the reader's attention through a combination of reasoned analysis and lighter examples, including a few vivid metaphors. As one example, Boushey describes the disruptive transitions in the workforce as analogous to the eruption of Mt. St. Helens. Yet, as time passed, the mountain recovered, and today, hikers can walk to the rim of the mountain's new summit, since there are numerous new paths up the mountain. Likewise, despite the disruption in labor markets and family life, there are important ways that policy can respond to give us new paths forward. Boushey describes four essential ways forward: (1) policies addressing family and health leave for workers, (2) policies focused on predictable and reasonable work schedules, (3) policies addressing high-quality childcare and elder-care, and (4) efforts to ensure that solutions reach those throughout society. Boushey makes compelling arguments that these policy responses to work-life conflict are within our means as a society, given the economic mechanisms at hand. This book is essential reading for anyone interested in the problems of work-life conflict.

Boushey..does a good job putting in context the impact of a lack of family centric policies from corporate that can impact overall gdp..but family growth and cohesiveness policy's remain elusive

with most c suite to concerned about the expense side of the ledger

Was looking forward to this book but i regret, it is a disappointment. The author rambles about her childhood and Mt St Helens or TV shows like Downtown-Abbey. Many sentences are vacuous e.g. "housing is one of the largest expenses for the typical middle class family." Really? As teenagers would say: Dah. Or, "the typical middle-class family looks different today then in the past." Really? Is that so? [Dah]. It's unfortunate because this is an interesting subject-matter especially in year 2016, with a large female labor force but Ms Boushey does this area of study a disservice. With an approbation from Mr Summers combined with an interesting topic, i was almost sure this would be a fun read; i was wrong.

Wonderful book!

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