Chapter 1
Examing Tensions in Telework Policies

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines workplace policies related to virtual work, with a specific focus on telework policies. Such policies are important to successful telework in communicating rules and expectations and providing a basis for negotiation between individual teleworkers and their employers. A content analysis of 35 state government telework policies revealed that such policies are characterized by two major tensions between autonomy and control and between flexibility and rigidity. The first tension relates to issues such as individual versus organizational responsibility for monitoring performance, providing equipment, and ensuring physical and data security, while the second tension relates to the standardization of working hours and eligibility criteria, whether rules are clear or left ambiguous, and the degree of work/family balance. Although explicit contradictions between stated benefits and realities of telework implementation may be problematic, most of the policies used tension productively by providing enough ambiguity to allow for competing individual and organizational interests to co-exist. Practical implications for teleworkers and their managers are suggested.

INTRODUCTION

There is little debate about the growing importance of virtual work (e.g., telework, virtual teams) in organizations. In some cases these virtual forms represent a type of alternative work arrangement driven predominantly by employee needs and in other instances they reflect management efforts to leverage global expertise in dealing with organi-
zational challenges—but in all situations, virtual forms present several key communication challenges for organizations and their members. From a communication perspective, there has been an interest in issues such as communication technology use (Scott & Timmerman, 1999; Timmerman & Scott, 2006), cross-cultural communication (Cramton & Hinds, 2004; Gibson & Gibbs, 2006; Grosse, 2002), distanced leadership (Connahston & Daly, 2004; 2005), fostering identification and shared identity (Hinds & Mortensen, 2005; Sivunen, 2006; Wiesenberg, Raghumark, & Garud, 1999), and creating trust (Jarvenpaa, Shaw, & Staples, 2004; Walther & Bunz, 2005) among virtual workers and teams (for a review, see Gibbs, Nekrassova, Grushina, & Abdul Wahab, 2008).

One additional communication topic that has not yet received adequate attention concerns the policies and guidelines surrounding virtual work. Organizations have historically developed policies surrounding issues such as operating procedures, governance, member rights and duties. One function of socialization efforts in most organizations (see Jablin, 2001) is to introduce new members to the formal policies and guidelines of the organization. Even though important informal communication may not always align with these formal policies—which sometimes go unread or are even unknown to organizational members—one should not underestimate the importance of these policies. They do communicate official guidelines and rules relevant to rewards/sanctions so that members know how to act; thus, they represent a type of directive in Speech Act Theory (see Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). Even when unknown or unfamiliar, they are legally forceful. They are often produced in response to organizational practices and may in turn shape various practices. A wide range of organizational members are involved in the creation of such documents—and an even greater percentage are impacted by them. They may also serve as a starting point for ongoing dialogue about issues or even as something to be communicatively resisted.

Although the growth in information and communication technologies (ICTs) has led to increased development of policies governing communication—occurring in various types of organizations, with policies developed by multiple stakeholders, and producing online policies that are discussed and updated with greater regularity than ever before—it is not clear how extensive or adequate those policies addressing virtual work are. Regardless, such policies may matter greatly. The success of teleworking, for example, largely depends on whether organizations effectively communicate its necessity and benefits to their employees, which can be done partially by “the provision of carefully crafted organizational policies” (Perez, Sanchez, & Caricar, 2003, p. 68). However, when policies do not communicate effectively, are not carefully crafted, or otherwise suggest inconsistencies, virtual work practices are almost certainly influenced. As we attempt to illustrate in this chapter through the use of a dialectical framework applied to virtual work (Gibbs, 2009), these policies regularly reveal contradictions and tensions that challenge virtual workers and the organizations for which they work.

Thus, one objective of this chapter is to establish the importance of workplace policies related to virtual work, focusing most specifically on telework policies. We then describe the methods used to analyze a set of telework policies from U.S. state governments—which allows us to meet our second objective of describing policies and articulating tensions that exist within and across them. Finally, we seek to offer some scholarly and practical implications from this work. Better understanding of the nature of virtual work policies as a form of communication is essential for describing virtual work behaviors, organizational rewards, and several other workplace dynamics.
WORKPLACE POLICIES

Although most of the interest in what is broadly called communication and information policy research has centered on "how regulators, governments, and public policies shape communication—information industries and social practices" (Mueller & Lentz, 2004, p. 155), this type of large scale policy research has not examined policies in the more local for-profit, nonprofit, or government workplaces where communication policies are developed and enforced. Our focus is to examine those workplace policies as organizational messages (see Scott & Choi, 2009) and to focus on the content of those documents as they reveal and create tensions. This is consistent with Corman's (2006) call for organizational communication scholars to focus more on messages. It also aligns with a recognized tradition of examining written forms of communication produced by the organization and its members as an important means of constituting organizational life (see Cheney, 1983).

Not only do work-related policies represent a form of organizational communication, but they also regularly address communication rights and responsibilities. Prior studies have examined communication policies in contexts such as school board meetings (Castor, 2007), work-family benefits (Kirby & Krone, 2002), and school meal programs (Legreco, 2007). For example, adopting structuration theory and using discourse tracing methods, Legreco examined the talk, texts, and larger discourse that operate during a major policy change in the state of Arizona school meal programs designed to promote healthier eating habits. By showing how different "policies are formulated through dialogue and deliberation, implemented through negotiation between consumer and producer, and evaluated against other initiatives and programs" (p. iii), Legreco’s research highlights the important communicative role played by policies in the organization of everyday experiences. Kirby and Krone also used a structurational approach to examine ways in which organizational members’ discourse about the issues addressed by formally stated work-family policies may work to undermine the actual use of such policies.

ICT Policies

More related to virtual forms of work, policy-related research on new ICTs exists as well and most commonly examines privacy policies (see D’Urso, 2006; Townsend & Bennett, 2003), telecommunication policies (see Whitman, Townsend, & Alberts, 1999), and/or acceptable use policies (see Barnes, 2002; Simbulan, 2004). However, also included here are various security policies, online access guides, records retention policies, netiquette standards, computer ethics codes, Internet use policies, technology management guidelines, intellectual property/copyright/trademark policies, technology checkout and personal use guidelines, and more. As Scott and Choi (2009) argue, concerns about issues such as cyberslacking and records retention—especially in light of the Sarbanes-Oxley legislation following the Enron scandal (Lange & Nelson, 2005)—have resulted in various ICT policies becoming increasingly common in the workplace (American Management Association, 2006). Despite this, surprisingly little research has focused on these messages directly.

Organizations have now begun to actively draft such policies, partly in response to perceived misuse of such tools in organizations (Zetter, 2006). Indeed, Simmers (2002) suggests explicit and clearly communicated policy is key in addressing issues related to loss of intellectual property, sexual harassment lawsuits, productivity losses due to online activity, security threats, and network overload. The 2006 Workplace E-Mail, Instant Messaging &..Blog Survey from the American Management Association (2006) revealed that 76% of organizations have e-mail usage and content policies, with another 68% using policy to control personal e-mail. Thirty-one percent of organizations have instant messaging policy in
place. In each case, these numbers reflect notable increases from surveys done in previous years.

Thus, organizational policies specifically related to ICT use have become increasingly common in recent years. Although research on them from any organizational perspective remains relatively limited, it does exist. For example, Pollach’s (2006) study of privacy policies from 50 commercial websites notes that such policies often omit critical information and fail to communicate in a transparent manner. Simmers (2002) reports case studies of eight diverse organizations, each of which illustrates the important role of Internet usage policies—but also the delicate balance in how restrictive they are and the necessity to communicate such directives clearly. Simbulan (2004) examined employee’s perceptions of their organization’s Internet use policy—noting that policies must be clear and that specific time frames were needed for personal use of technology. In one of the more extensive works in this area, Siau, Nah, and Teng (2002) examined the acceptable Internet use policies (AIUP) of three groups of organizations (i.e., educational institutions, Internet service provider, and non-Internet service providers). These authors conclude that policies were generally not comprehensive and contained a number of gray areas. Collectively, these studies suggest both the relevance of this type of policy research and the potential for such policies to be problematic.

TELEWORK POLICY

Telework

One set of policies clearly linked to virtual forms is what are known as teleworking or telecommuting policies. The terms telecommuting and teleworking have often been used interchangeably (Ellison, 1999) to refer to using ICTs to perform work ‘at a distance’ (Mokhtarian, Salomon, & Choo, 2005), but they were distinguished by Nilles (1998) who defined teleworking as “any form of substitution of information technologies for work-related travel” and telecommuting as “periodic work out of the principal office, one or more days per week, either at home, a client’s site, or in a telework center” (p. 1). Whereas telecommuting emphasizes a reduction in physical travel, telework is a broader category that emphasizes the crucial role of ICTs in reducing or overcoming spatial and temporal limitations in performing work (Garrett & Danziger, 2007; Halford, 2005). We focus on the broader term ‘telework’ here, and define it as an alternative work arrangement in which workers are allowed to perform their tasks elsewhere, usually outside conventional offices using communication technologies to interact with others (Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Baruch, 2001). This academic definition is also in line with that of the Telework Enhancement Act of 2009, which provides a formal definition of telework as a “work arrangement in which an employee regularly performs officially assigned duties at home or other worksites geographically convenient to the residence of the employee” (The Telework Enhancement Act of 2009, p.2).

The need to study telework policy is heightened by the number of people engaged in this form of virtual work. Even with the significant difficulty in accurately counting teleworkers (Mokhtarian et al., 2005), low end estimates suggest it includes 8.6 million U.S. households (Makower, 2009). Other marketing research reported a jump to 17.2 million in late 2008 (WorkatWork, 2009) and estimated that another 29 million commuters will enter the U.S. workforce between 2009 and 2016, totaling to nearly 43% of all U.S. employees (Suitecommute, nd). A recent agreement between the U.S. General Services Administration and the American Federation of Government Employees regarding a new national telework policy supporting broad use of telework by federal employees (McCrehin, 2008) could further raise those numbers.
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The current numbers and potential growth of these virtual workers—not to mention variations in how often they telework and from where they do remote work—create several opportunities and challenges for organizations and their members (both those who are and are not teleworking). One of those concerns development of policy for such programs, which can be viewed as attempts to formalize and clarify expectations and practices regarding teleworking.

Practitioner Perspectives on Policy Development

A number of trade publications as well as telework consultants and groups have specifically pointed to the need for policy. “As more and more employees clamor for the ability to telecommute, it is imperative for companies to have in place a viable telecommuting policy” (Hoskins, 2006, p. 1). For some, the focus of such policies is on minimizing risk and liability for the employer (Prince, 2000; Suitemmate, nd; Thibodeaux, 2003). “The more precise you can be, within the law, the better you will be at controlling your risk exposures,” claims one expert (Prince, p. 22). For others, the emphasis is on cost and productivity issues (Donaldson, 2002; Mills-Senn, 2006). “To avoid those problems [performance issues], work-from-home policies must be well-defined” (Mills-Senn, p. 24).

In fact, industry practitioners and other telework experts suggest a wide range of issues that might be covered in telework policies (see Hoskins, 2006; Prince, 2000; Suitemmate, nd). Hoskins suggests these fall into three categories: work concerns, location concerns, and policy concerns. Work concerns may include amount of work expected, setting hours for work and tracking time/attendance, measuring performance, and communication expectations. Location concerns include who owns and provides equipment, who covers what costs, safety issues, and securing intellectual property. Policy concerns address eligibility requirements, termination requirements, and number of days one can/must telework. Of course, other issues such as arrangements for child and pet care cut across categories. Thus, developing sound policy that appropriately covers a range of issues in this growing area likely presents many organizations with a challenge.

Scholarly Perspectives on Policy Development

Scholarly efforts to examine policy as it relates to teleworkers take several different forms. For some, the connections have been at broader societal levels where social policies encouraging telework are examined (World Wide Waves, 1999). In other cases, the focus has been on policies related to the environment (Nelson, Safirova, & Walls, 2007), IT/broadband (Trkman, Jersey-Blazic, & Turk, 2008), and trade unions (Horner & Day, 1995) as they might then influence telework practices. Baker, Moon, and Ward (2006) specifically examined workplace accommodation policies related to telework, noting that “less examined are the policy and regulatory barriers preventing effective telework outcomes for people with disabilities” (p. 424).

In general, however, specific scholarly examinations of actual telework policies appear extremely rare. Igbaria and Tan’s (1998) edited volume on the virtual workplace does not include the term policy in the index, and none of the several specific chapters examining telework look specifically at policy. McCloskey and Igbaria’s (1998) chapter providing a detailed review of existing empirical pieces suggests no prior focus on policy, although some findings had implications for policy. As a more recent illustration of that, Major, Verive, and Joice’s (2008) examination of telework and dependent care produced agency policy recommendations from federal home-based teleworkers they surveyed. These included a desire for more flexibility in types and arrangements, permitting dependent care tasks while telework-
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...ing, improving fairness and consistency related to telework eligibility, and training managers how to accept and support teleworkers.

These recommendations for policy, like much of what is suggested by telework consultants and trade publications, are about specific workplace policies that directly impact teleworkers and other organizational members. Indeed, Baker et al. (2006) conclude that an appropriate focus for telework-related research is not on broad societal policies, but on more localized ones:

...available evidence suggests that telework at present remains a practice customized to the needs and capabilities of a particular employer and employee. ...In particular, relatively little is known about the range of current telework practices and policies among employers, and research gaps persist in the documentation of actual implementation outcomes. (p. 426)

The research reported here attempts to provide some of that focus. In looking specifically at telework policies, we also recognize the complexity and challenges of constructing such communication. As Major et al. (2008) and Kirby and Krone (2002) both note, policies and practices are not always aligned. We suspect in part that this relates to potential inconsistencies, contradictions, uncertainties, and other variations within and across telework policies. We turn next to a framework useful for analyzing these sorts of organizational tensions.

DIALECTICAL TENSIONS IN TELEWORK AND TELEWORK POLICIES

A growing body of literature focuses on articulating contradictions and tensions in various organizational settings (Pepper & Larson, 2006; Poole & Van de Ven, 1989; Seo, Putnam, & Bartunek, 2004; Tracy, 2004; Trethewey & Ashcraft, 2004). Grounded in Bakhtin’s (1981) dialogism, dialectical theory was originally applied to the study of interpersonal relationships (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996), but it has been extended to organizational settings as well and recent studies have focused on communicative tensions in contexts as varied as correctional facilities (Tracy, 2004), information technology use (Jian, 2007) and family farm succession planning (Pitts, Fowler, Kaplan, Nussbaum, & Becker, 2009).

A framework of organizational tensions is helpful in analyzing the necessary contradictions and dualities that arise whenever competing goals and interests exist in organizations (Trethewey & Ashcraft, 2004). Tensions or dualities are defined as bi-polar opposites that often work against each other; rather than being simple alternatives between mutually exclusive options, the choice to focus on one pole elicits tension and makes it difficult to enact both ends of the continuum at once (Seo et al., 2004). Rather than regarding tensions or contradictions as anomalies or exceptions, a tensional approach situates tensions and ambiguity—rather than clarity, stability, consensus, and rationality— as normal, routine features of organizational life (Eisenberg, 1984; Trethewey & Ashcraft; Weick, 1979). Further, rather than necessarily being problematic features of organizing that need to be reconciled or eliminated, tensions may be productive in that focusing on contradictions rather than consistency helps surface inconsistencies in our logic and assumptions and presents researchers with "opportunities to discover different assumptions, shift perspectives, pose problems in fundamentally different ways, and focus on different research questions" (Poole & Van de Ven, 1989, p. 564). Research has distinguished dialectical tensions from simple contradictions (which involve an either-or choice between two opposing alternatives) and paradoxes (which are dilemmas that require impossible choices between mutually exclusive or non-existent options). While simple contradictions and pragmatic paradoxes have been found to limit options and constrain action (Tracy, 2004), complementary dialectics are more productive in that they generate new,
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creative options and transform or transcend the given opposition by enabling the merging of opposites through embracing both alternatives as “both-and” options (Putnam & Boys, 2006; Tracy).

Processes of global and virtual organizing, in particular, have been found to be fraught with tensions due to the complex nature of virtual work and the fact that virtual workers are embedded in multiple organizational, geographical, and cultural structures (Gibbs, 2009). Gibbs identified three major tensions in interaction in a global software team: autonomy versus connectedness, inclusion versus exclusion, and empowerment versus disempowerment, and found that such tensions were managed through responses of selection, transcendence, and withdrawal.

Tensions in Telework

Participatory and democratic work practices and structures have been characterized as fraught with communicative tensions (Stohl & Cheney, 2001). As such, telework comprises one such high-involvement participatory organizational arrangement. The popular discourse of telework often touts its alleged benefits to individual employees, organizations, and society more broadly. News articles and reports on telecommuting repeatedly cite organizational benefits such as reduced employee turnover and increased productivity as well as individual benefits of higher job satisfaction (Barett, 2008; Goluboff, 2006; Sedgeyick, 2009). Telecommuting is also associated with societal benefits such as reduced commuting costs (Makower, 2009) and is often regarded as a strategy for combating high gas prices, reducing dependence on foreign oil, and easing road congestion (Barett). Similar claims are made in the academic literature about reduced traffic and increased time and energy efficiency (Novaco, Kilier, & Broquet, 1991) and greater productivity as well as many individual level benefits such as enhanced worker autonomy, flexibility, work-life balance, and work-family relationships (e.g., DuBrin, 1991; Golden, 2006; Kurland & Bailey, 1999; Lautsch, Kossek, & Eaton, 2009). Employees’ greater autonomy and flexibility in choosing where and when work takes place are also thought to have a positive impact on job satisfaction, productivity, and health conditions (e.g., reduced stress) (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Golden, Veiga, & Simsek, 2006).

Such unqualified benefits are not always empirically observed, however. For example, many indicators point to the fact that travel and congestion continue to increase (rather than decrease) along with the rise of telecommunication (Mokhtarian, 2009). Other studies have challenged the promised benefits of telework by showing that such anticipated results are not always evident in reality or that conflicting consequences are evident. Perhaps these conflicting findings are the result of inherent contradictions in telecommuting. Telecommuting has been identified as inherently paradoxical (Hylmo & Buzzanell, 2002); for example, many organizations claim to be supportive of telework yet fail to widely embrace it as part of organizational life (Khaifa & Davidson, 2000). Further, telework can function as both success and threat to organizational practices and individual outcomes. On one hand, it can enable organizations to be more flexible, reduce costs, and respond to changing workforce needs, and enable teleworkers to better manage personal and work demands (Pinsonneault & Boisvert, 2001). On the other hand, telecommuting poses a threat by dissolving attachments based on face-to-face communication and leaving teleworkers socially isolated and physically, temporally, and psychologically disconnected (Golden & Veiga, 2005; Hylmo & Buzzanell).

Telework has been framed as a mysterious alternative work arrangement in which questions arise as to what teleworkers are doing (and whether they are working) and how to maintain relationships without routine interactions (Hylmo & Buzzanell, 2002). Hylmo and Buzzanell’s study of telecommuters revealed a variety of tensions
and paradoxes: teleworkers routinely worked more hours than in-house employees and faced a paradox of control as the systems that were designed to allow for more autonomy ended up limiting their freedom and flexibility, as well as being marginalized by in-house employees due to their lack of physical presence. Further, telecommuters expressed confusion over how to do their job, how to advance in the organization and how to maintain relationships with co-workers and they faced a tension in being expected to perform well without sufficient resources (p. 344). Another empirical study of teleworkers identified a tension between perceived organizational demand versus personal life objectives, which produced a secondary tension between autonomy/comfort and control/anxiety (Jian & Rosiek, 2009).

**Tensions in Policies**

Work analyzing organizational policies has also found them to reflect tensions. An analysis of 300 U.S. state government policies regarding the use of ICTs revealed nine tensions related to issues of anonymity and identifiability (Scott & Choi, 2009). These tensions were largely associated with the revealing of personal information and dealt with issues such as privacy and confidentiality, identification of personal information, use of names/passwords, anonymity, and signing of documents. For example, policy messages suggested that anonymity was to be prohibited, but not ignored; that personal information should not be collected, but that information should be collected that is personally identifying; and that user identity should be protected, but that users should be identifiable. The contradictory messages contained in these policy documents illustrate the complexity of such policy and the challenges associated with developing reasonable ICT policy due to disagreements over issues such as what constitutes personally identifying information.

Similarly, we suspect some of the tensions surrounding telework generally may both result from and lead to problematic telework policies. Despite the demonstrated importance of tensions in global and virtual organizing, telework, and in organizational policies about ICTs, research has yet to examine tensions in telework policy. This chapter represents an attempt to fill this gap, as we address the following research question: *What types of tensions are evident in U.S. state telework policies?*

**METHODS**

Among many possible virtual work policies, we looked at U.S. state government telework policies (including the District of Columbia). The data collection for this study was part of a larger policy-based research project conducted in the spring of 2008 in which publicly available ICT policies were collected for analysis on a number of research topics. This policy database was composed of a variety of ICT-related policies—including, but not limited to, those addressing telework. As Scott and Choi (2009) argue, state governments seem an appropriate context for such work because (a) policy may be better developed here given constitutional protections applicable to public employees, (b) they represent sizable employers who have historically made use of ICTs, and (c) as a public entity their policies are more readily available online. Furthermore, many state governments have regularly offered telework to some degree for the past few decades.

We found 35 states having some sort of telework policy through an extensive search for the web-published policy documents. We included a variety of search terms including telework, telecommuting, flexible and alternative work arrangements, flextime, and flexplace, in order to capture as many related policies as possible. We recognize that these terms are not synonymous but wanted to cast a wide net in light of the varying ways in which telecommuting has been labeled and defined (Mokhtarian et al., 2005). Most state
governments had their search functions linked to the Google search, but when we could not locate any relevant policy from a state government website, we tried an independent search from the Google website using the same search terms with the name of the state. If we could not locate any policy documents after at least 30 minutes to an hour searching for one, we concluded that the particular state government did not provide them specifically on its website.

**Analysis**

We employed a qualitative content analysis to examine the identified telework policy documents of the state governments, and three co-authors openly and independently coded those policy documents using ATLAS.ti software. The software is particularly designed for coding sizable amounts of qualitative data; it lets individual coders access documents and code the content by any unit of analysis (i.e., word, sentence, or paragraph) electronically. All three coders initially coded several policies in common in order to establish major coding categories and ensure consistency in coding. We then discussed these major codes and repetitive themes found in those documents. Based on the discussion, the coding framework was established and all 35 state policies were divided among the coders and coded independently.

Our analysis resembled the general process of grounded theory regarding constant comparison and coding steps (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). However, our coding was directed by the broader dialectical theoretical framework; we focused on dialectics as the central phenomenon around which we formulated relationships among the codes. The first step in our data analysis was line-by-line open coding, which helped classify the data into different categories and themes. During this initial coding, we started observing dialectical tensions in policy documents of the state governments. Following open coding, axial coding was used to identify primary and secondary dialectical tensions.

**FINDINGS**

Overall, our analysis indicated that state telework policies ranged from a few to 20 or more pages, although most were between 5-10 pages long. The two most commonly used terms were ‘telework’ and ‘telecommuting.’ Most followed a common format and contained the three categories set forth by Hoskins (2006): work concerns (rules for work hours and measuring performance), location concerns (ownership and provision of equipment and security issues), and policy concerns (eligibility and termination requirements). Telework policies generally started with a preamble addressing the purpose and benefits of telecommuting (to the individual, organization, and community), and went on to address specific eligibility criteria and rules for telework implementation. There was variation, however, in the degree to which policies spelled out specific requirements and guidelines versus leaving room for agencies to work out the details. In response to our research question, the analysis of state telework policies revealed two major sets of tensions: autonomy versus control and flexibility versus rigidity. These primary tensions will now be discussed along with the secondary tensions associated with them.

**Autonomy vs. Control**

In any workplace, a tension between employee autonomy and supervisor or employer control of employee work performance exists. However, due to the shift in workspace and the possibility of reduced communication between employees and their supervisors, the autonomy versus control tension seems to be more prominent for teleworking as a work format; employers still expect teleworkers to observe the same requirements as in the office whereas employees inevitably view
telework as an opportunity to be free from a controlled office environment. Teleworkers may want to enjoy some of the autonomy in their home or non-office workspace. On the other hand, due to the nature of telework, it is hard for managers to monitor whether teleworkers actually observe the job requirements that are enforced in the office and they may need to impose additional controls to ensure this.

A major tension was evident in the telework policies we studied between allowing for this individual autonomy of teleworkers while maintaining organizational control. This tension was reflected in the framing of telework as (a) a management option versus an employee choice, (b) in the degree to which teleworkers are monitored by the agency versus self-managed, and (c) in the delegation of responsibility for telework infrastructure and security to agencies versus individual teleworkers.

**Voluntary, But Not a Choice**

There was a high degree of consensus in the policy wording that telework was to be a management option rather than an employee choice, privilege or a universal benefit—although most policies simultaneously stressed that telework was to be voluntary for employees. In this sense, an implicit tension existed in that telework was something seen as voluntary for employees yet not up to them to decide. The slippage in language here can be interpreted to mean that employers decide who is eligible to telework, although they cannot oblige employees to telework (except in rare cases of mandating telework).

For example, the New York state government’s telework policy highlighted the positive aspects of telework in general. Several of the employee benefits were to provide “greater empowerment,” “improve morale and flexibility,” and “increase family interaction.” However in another provision, it emphasized the understanding of telecommuting as another management tool to “improve agency operations.” Ultimately, this policy ended up stressing what was of foremost value: the options of management. This tension can also be seen in the following policy statements:

*Offering state employees the opportunity to telework is a management option and employees must follow the policies established by their agency... Teleworking is not an employee entitlement. When employee participation is voluntary, telework may be terminated with reasonable notice by the employee or by the agency. Note: some positions include telework as a condition of employment. In these cases, unilateral termination of telework will not be possible. [Washington]*

*Offering the opportunity to work at home is a management option; telework is not a universal employee benefit. An employee’s participation in the State’s telework program is entirely voluntary. The employee, supervisor or manager may terminate teleworking without cause. [Arizona]*

**Organizational Surveillance vs. Self-Surveillance**

Efforts to monitor the telework arrangements also reflected a tension between individual and organizational surveillance. Some policies included ongoing monitoring efforts by the agencies with further reporting to higher levels of the state, while others provided more of an expectation for employee self-monitoring. Due to the shift to a remote workspace, supervisors’ monitoring of teleworking performance became a critical issue. Many state governments’ policies mentioned that maintaining constant and clear communication between teleworkers and their supervisors or coworkers was important in order to keep them apprised of their work performance and maintain a connection with the main office. Many policies emphasized supervisors’ responsibility for monitoring teleworkers’ remote
work performance—and when supervisors were concerned about a teleworker’s ability to work independently or about whether certain tasks were suitable for virtual work, it was suggested that they not implement telecommuting for their work divisions.

While working away from the central office, the primary modes of communication for telework employees will be by telephone and e-mail systems. The teleworker and supervisor will work together to create a reasonable communication plan, including when and how they will communicate daily. Teleworkers are responsible for informing their supervisor and others, in accordance with existing practice, of how to reach them. [California]

Supervisors approving a telework arrangement for their employees must ensure that: the teleworker’s position description is up to date; the performance appraisal is up to date and that the teleworker has at least a satisfactory performance evaluation; provide a signed telework agreement that itemizes state equipment and supplies to be used, designations for work hours and location; provide clear understanding of job duties and standards of how work is to be monitored and evaluated. [Indiana]

Some state governments suggested that suitable jobs for teleworking were those that could be done independently without frequent observation by supervisors. North Carolina’s policy stated that there should be no demand for constant and in-person contact by supervisors, co-workers and/or customers in teleworking. However, such a general statement seems to be inconsistent with a more specific level of provision that indicates the same level of control for teleworking sites as in the government office. The specific provision says that “management reserves the right to require the employee to report to the central workplace on scheduled telework days.” There was some overly intrusive control appearing in several state governments’ telework policies. Beyond the extent of reasonable guidelines, these statements reveal an excessive level of control that may create discomfort for teleworkers. The following illustrates this kind of teleworkers:

Managers...need to decide whether or not to require the same dress code for work at home. [Montana]

Although the policy does not mandate that a particular dress code be enforced for teleworkers, raising this as an issue for discussion may be perceived as intrusive by teleworkers, who are not accustomed to having their employer dictate what they wear in the privacy of their home. In addition to dress code, other state government policies expected teleworkers to observe work norms in the same way they did in a traditional office. Although most state government policies required teleworkers to set aside some time during the day to be reached by their supervisors, Arizona’s more rigid policy explicitly stated,

While teleworking, employees should be reachable via telephone, within reason, during agreed upon work hours. Teleworkers must notify the office if they leave their telework location, much like they would inform the receptionist when leaving the traditional office during the work day. [Arizona]

To the contrary, Colorado’s policy took into consideration some concerns for teleworkers. Its policy explicitly mentioned that “teleworkers are reluctant to leave their phone on their telecommute days, even to use the restroom or take a break, because someone who called might think they are not working.” Colorado’s policy emphasized trust between the state government and the teleworkers as essential for the successful implementation of its telework program:
Managerial trust is also critical. The employee must be trusted to do the work assigned and manage time appropriately and the supervisor must be trusted to manage by results or outcomes. The manager must trust or be open to the arrangement itself. [Colorado]

Organizational vs. Individual Responsibility

Finally, autonomy versus control was evident in a tension over whose responsibility it was to provide and maintain office equipment and ensure security of the home office and data. Due to the shift in teleworkers' main workspace from the state government office to their home or other alternative places, provision of equipment and establishment of a remote office were issues. There was a great variety in state governments' telework policies in terms of who was to provide necessary equipment for teleworking including communication technologies; some allowed teleworkers to use their personal equipment, but required them to be responsible for any maintenance and liability even if they were used for work purposes. The issue became more complicated when it came to installing state-owned software into employee-owned computers. Most policies discussed the safety of home workspaces and requested teleworkers to self-certify that their home office was safe and free from health hazards. Some state governments were willing to provide any equipment needed for working at home, but also required teleworkers to secure work-related data including confidential information and limit the use of equipment for work purposes and by authorized users only.

Provision of Equipment

State policies varied in terms of whose responsibility it was to provide the equipment, supplies, and telephone/data connection for telework. Some stated clearly that agencies were to provide all equipment:

Agencies remain liable for state-owned equipment located at the employee's telework location and assume the risks associated with the equipment... Office supplies for use by teleworkers at their alternate worksites should be provided by the state and should be obtained during the teleworkers' in-office work time. [Washington]

Others did not clearly specify who should provide such equipment, merely that

The agency should ensure that the employee has appropriate equipment to safely perform the job without increased risk of injury and should establish minimum safety requirements... All equipment used by the employee, whether provided by the agency or the employee, should be ergonomically correct. [Wisconsin]

Still others, such as Tennessee, distinguished between full-time and part-time teleworkers, stating that the agency should provide necessary equipment, supplies, and telephone/data connection for full-time telecommuters, but that part-timers were responsible for providing their own equipment. Policies also differed on whether agencies were to be held liable for job-related injuries or illnesses. While some left this unclear, others stated clearly that agencies were not responsible:

The State shall not be liable for injury or property damage to third persons at the telecommuting work site. Telecommuter agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the State, its agents and employees, from and against any and all claims, demands, judgments, liabilities, losses, damages or expenses resulting or arising from any injury or damage to any person, corporation or other entity caused directly or indirectly by the telecommuter's acts, omissions, bad faith, willful misconduct or neg-
Physical and Data Security

Tensions were also evident in designated responsibility for maintaining security and confidentiality of data, with most policies regarding this as a joint effort in which teleworkers were responsible for safeguarding and protecting company information and materials from unauthorized disclosure or damage, while following security procedures developed by the agency. This dual responsibility can be seen in the following statement:

"Materials, documents, etc. transported from the official work station are the telecommuter's responsibility. The telecommuter will protect the Department records and documents from unauthorized disclosure or damage and will comply with the Department policies and procedures regarding such matters...To protect confidentiality and guard against data contamination, telecommuters will follow Department approved data security procedures." [Tennessee]

These differences illustrated a tension in determining the responsibility for maintaining a safe, secure home office environment between state entities and individual teleworkers. By assigning dual responsibility, it was unclear who would be to blame if a violation should occur and to what extent individual teleworkers could be held accountable.

Overall, the autonomy-control tension suggested that the relationship between the individual telecommuter and the employer was not clear-cut in terms of the decision to telework, the degree to which performance monitoring was to be handled by the supervisor or the teleworker, and whether the organization or the individual held more responsibility for the provision of equipment and the security of the physical office and data. Although a few policies were clear in specifying organizational control, the ambiguous wording of most of them implied that this tension was to be negotiated between the individual teleworker and his or her supervisor.

Flexibility vs. Rigidity

A second major tension could be seen between flexibility and rigidity. Policies varied in the rigidity versus flexibility of their wording, in terms of standardized versus ad hoc eligibility criteria and guidelines for teleworkers, the degree to which rules were clearly stated versus left ambiguous, and in how much leeway they allowed telecommuters to balance work and family.

Standardized vs. Ad Hoc

The tension between flexibility and rigidity was evident in the criteria for eligibility to telework as well as the degree of specificity of the rules regarding what teleworkers were and were not allowed to do. First, there was a tension related to eligibility to telework. Some policies provided extensive lists of criteria for teleworkers, such as "no pending personnel related disciplinary action, portable job duties, availability of a work site suitable for telecommuting, not in probationary status...supervisor agreement and approval, nature of the work to be accomplished, job duties with clearly defined performance requirements that are measurable and results oriented, willingness to participate in telecommuter training and Department surveys..." as well as personal qualities such as "dependable, self motivated and responsible, good organizational skills, effective communicator, adaptable to change, results oriented" [Tennessee]. Despite these detailed criteria, Tennessee's policy also included a statement that "An employee is selected to participate at the sole discretion of the Department," indicating that telecommuting arrangements cannot be completely standard-
ized but are somewhat ad hoc or determined on a case-by-case basis. This was evident in other policies as well:

*It is anticipated that approval to allow telecommuting will be on a case-by-case basis.* [Wisconsin]

Most policies noted that not all state employees were eligible for teleworking, but certain criteria should be met such as quality of previous work performance, suitability of individual task, and employees' general and independent work skills. Even when these criteria were provided to determine one's eligibility, it was often stated that teleworking requests were to be evaluated case by case for each individual worker and the eligibility of a position could be changed depending on the circumstances. Therefore, we identified this somewhat inconsistent application of policy rules as another example showing the tension between standardized rules versus ad hoc application of them.

*The Department has identified the job classes and positions considered appropriate for telecommuting. Requests will be considered on an individual basis to determine if the incumbent has the necessary skills and abilities to be a telecommuter and if the duties of the incumbent's position can adequately be performed by telecommuting or telework.* [Florida]

**Eligible position - A position having measurable quantitative or qualitative results-oriented standards of performance that is structured to be performed independently of others and with minimal need for support and can be scheduled at least one day a pay period to participate in teleworking without impacting service quality or organizational operations. The eligibility of a position may change depending on circumstances.* [Georgia]

Statements about eligibility requirements to telework may be the most ambiguous part of telework policy. As discussed previously, in most state governments, telework was pronounced as the management's option, not the employees' privilege or right. The fact that state governments view telework as a management option may be related to the fact that they are intentionally or strategically ambiguous (Eisenberg, 1984) with respect to the eligibility of telework and the jobs that are suitable for telework. Employers, in this case state governments, did not seem to be specific about the extent to which the policies included standardized statements regarding who was eligible to telework and what kind of jobs were suitable. Although an individual employee may satisfy the publicly stated eligibility conditions, under certain circumstances, state governments cannot accept all eligible applicants from their point of view. As a result, whether an employer permits certain employees to telework is fully dependent on the employer's managerial evaluation. For employers, such a managerial judgment may not be appropriately represented in these policy statements. Thus, a tension between standardization and ad hoc occurred when state governments tried to define the eligibility of teleworkers and the boundaries of eligible work.

The tension between standardization vs. ad hoc emerged further when state governments' telework policies specified the provision for equipment:

*The division director shall determine, with information supplied by the employee and the supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs for each telecommuting arrangement on a case-by-case basis.* [North Dakota]

*The decision to provide equipment will be made on a case-by-case basis based on funding availability and whether or not a business case can be made to fund equipment for the employee.* [North Carolina]
Georgia’s telework policy also took an ad hoc approach regarding workspace. Contrary to some states that rigidly defined what a workspace should be (e.g., Colorado), Georgia’s policy only mentioned that the state government needed to make “on-site visits at mutually agreed-upon time.” But, basically, this state’s approach to this issue operated upon “a case-by-case basis.” Such an ad hoc approach may or may not appear to be more rigid than teleworkers expect. In some way, this approach may provide some room for teleworkers to negotiate for more favorable telework conditions. The degree of the negotiation may be dependent upon the specific relationship between employer and employee.

**Clear vs. Ambiguous Statement of Rules**

Similar to eligibility and equipment issues, it seemed that there was a tension between formally and clearly stating the rules or expectations for teleworkers and leaving some ambiguity in what was allowed. First, policies varied in terms of how clearly they spelled out expectations about the workschedules and working hours of teleworkers. Many policies stated that the same policies and number of work hours applied to teleworkers as when they worked in the office.

_The total number of hours that employees are expected to work will not change, regardless of work location. Employees agree to apply themselves to their work during work hours._ [Virginia]

_Each agency must establish internal policies and procedures related to telecommuting._ [Virginia]

Other policies left it vague and requested agencies to come up with their own policies, sometimes providing suggestions for what types of issues such policies could include.

_A mutually established telecommuting schedule must be defined and agreed upon by the telecommuter and supervisor and remains on file in the Department. However, the Department’s needs take precedence over the telecommuting schedule...The telecommuter must be reachable during the periods outlined in the telecommuting work schedule._ [Tennessee]

Some policies were rather rigid in their flexibility. Other policies negotiated work schedules differently, but with a similar mix of flexibility and rigidity. For example, the following policy allowed for employees and supervisors to agree on a work schedule, but with a rigid requirement to specify detailed working times in writing:

_Work schedule, i.e. number of times per week/month, hours, specific day(s), etc. Include a statement that any hours worked outside of the agreed to workschedule or changes in the agreed to work hours (including working additional hours) must be pre-approved in writing._ [Washington]

Finally, some policies seemed to be excessively rigid in their specification of rules and guidelines for teleworkers. For example, Wisconsin’s policy was quite restrictive, explicitly prohibiting activities such as “non-work activities, including basic homemaking tasks such as dishes, laundry, etc.” and discouraging visitors, and requiring that:

_Employees who see clients should be subject to drive by checks of the residence to ensure visitor safety. If deficiencies are found in the maintenance/upkeep of accessible areas (such as the driveway, sidewalk, and stoops), the employee should be given a reasonable amount of time (60-90 days) to make corrections/improvements, with no visitors allowed until the corrections are made._ [Wisconsin]

Wisconsin’s policy also provided three detailed worksheets to administer related to (a) employee
eligibility, (b) a telecommuting agreement form (including detailed items such as how often to check email), and (c) a safety checklist. These worksheets provided little room for flexibility of interpretation, and such restrictive policies could be seen as imposing additional constraints on teleworkers (such as ensuring home maintenance) that would not normally be expected of in-house employees.

Work/Family Balance

A final sub-theme under the tension between flexibility and rigidity of policy documents related to work-family balance is an inconsistency between the suggested benefits of teleworking and the application of the rules in practice. Although many policy documents stated the benefit of flexible scheduling for individual teleworkers, which could assist with coordination of their family obligations, most policies mandated that teleworkers have a separate arrangement for dependent care.

Tennessee’s policy cited “assistance with family obligations” as an employee benefit of telecommuting; however later in the policy, it stated that “The telecommuter shall have family arrangements, which allow the telecommuting work site to be a productive working environment.” There is considerable ambiguity here in terms of what constitutes a “productive working environment.” Other policies explicitly prohibited attending to family or other personal responsibilities during work.

Telecommuting is not intended to serve as a substitute for child or adult care. If children or adults in need of primary care are in the alternate work location during employees’ work hours, some other individual must be present to provide the care. [Virginia]

Family pets/animals should be restricted from the work area. Child care/elderly care activity or related responsibilities should occur outside of the workday and not within the dedicated work area. [Wisconsin]

Other policies, however, acknowledged that teleworkers may take advantage of telework in order to take care of their dependents, at least at certain times.

Telework should not be used as a regular substitute for full-time dependent care. The state recognizes that one advantage of working at home is the opportunity to have more time with dependents, but it is the teleworker’s responsibility to ensure that he or she is fully able to complete work assignments on time. [Montana]

Employee will also not undertake to provide primary care for an adult. In some cases the manager may give approval, on a temporary basis, for a teleworker to provide primary care for another family member. [Montana]

Hawaii’s policy explicitly stated that telework contributes to minimizing work/home conflicts.” Such an orientation on a broad level does not materialize at the specific level. When it comes to dependent care, it is required of teleworkers “to agree not to undertake to provide primary care of children/others during core hours.” Although this state’s policy does not state that teleworkers should not take care of their dependents at any time, it adds additional conditions:

Telecommuters shall not undertake to provide primary care during core hours for a child (or children) under twelve (12) years of age or a person who has a serious health condition or disability. If such person will be present during that time, another individual shall be present to provide primary care, and if such person is ill and care is required on a temporary basis by the
Table 1. Primary and secondary tensions in telework policies

<table>
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<th>Issues</th>
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telecommuter, prior approval by the supervisor shall be obtained. [Hawaii]

Whereas tensions in specifying eligibility criteria to telework and working hours were more productive in allowing for managerial discretion and for teleworkers to negotiate with their supervisors, the tensions around work-family balance seemed to be more problematic as they involved contradictions within policies between what was promised and what was allowed in practice. The primary and secondary tensions are summarized in Table 1. The implications of these findings will now be discussed.

DISCUSSION

Our analysis of state government telework policies revealed two key tensions in the form of autonomy vs. control and flexibility vs. rigidity. The autonomy-control tension pertains to the degree to which employee autonomy was maintained relative to organizational control, relating to issues of organizational monitoring versus self-surveillance, the extent to which the decision to telework was a management option versus an employee choice, and the degree to which providing equipment for the home office and ensuring physical and data security were the responsibility of the individual teleworker or the state agency. The second tension of flexibility-rigidity encompasses the extent to which policies were standardized versus ad hoc, whether rules were clearly stated or left ambiguous, and the degree to which work and family were explicitly separated or allowed to blend. Although the tensions were evident in different ways, they both represent facets of the larger tension between individual freedom (in the form of autonomy and flexibility) and organizational constraint (through control and rigidity). We will now discuss the implications of such tensions for telework policies and for virtual work more broadly.

Our findings revealed that most tensions arose in the form of discrepancies across different state policies rather than explicit contradictions within the same policy. This suggests that state governments take different approaches to telecommuting and the degree to which they mandate its terms rather than leaving them open to interpretation by agencies and individual teleworkers. Such tensions are likely to be less problematic than contradictions within a single policy, as state governments operate relatively independently and their employees are unlikely to work independently with those of different states. They do indicate competing perspectives on how telework should be implemented, however, which reflect inconsistencies in our understanding of telework processes more broadly.

When considering the broader discourse about telework, however, a number of policies did suffer from internal tensions between the stated benefits of telework (such as greater flexibility in balancing work and family care) and the realities of telework implementation, which included fairly rigid rules about not caring for dependents and other specific prohibitions of performing domestic work during
work hours. There are differences in the extent to which state governments allow teleworkers to exercise their discretion with regard to what they can and cannot do at home. At the very least, overly rigid stipulations of telework policies may be at odds with what teleworkers anticipate as some degree of flexibility while teleworking. This disconnect calls into question the extent to which telecommuting and other virtual work arrangements provide more individual freedom or more control of workers’ home lives, and the extent to which the realities of telework live up to its often-cited promise of providing more freedom, flexibility, and work-life balance. Whereas much of the popular and academic discourse on telework emphasizes these individual benefits (e.g., Barrett, 2008; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Golden & Veiga, 2005), telework policies seemed to focus more on providing mechanisms to ensure organizational control in ways that may in fact impose additional constraints on teleworkers by regulating their actions within the home rather than enabling autonomy and flexibility. Taking a tensional perspective enables us to account for both individual and organizational needs/goals and ways in which they are inter-related, as well as encouraging us to develop creative responses to transcend polar oppositions and attend to both poles (see Gibbs, 2009; Putnam & Boys, 2006). It is also helpful in understanding the complexities of telework processes, rather than classifying their outcomes into simple categories of positive or negative.

Further, although few policies contained striking contradictions, the majority did use ambiguous language that did not clearly specify rules and eligibility criteria. While contradictions regarding dependent care may be confusing or problematic, our findings suggest that most telework policies used tension effectively by providing enough ambiguity to bridge diverse individual and organizational interests and allow them to co-exist (Gibbs, 2009). Literature on dialectical tensions has found that productive tensions allow for both alternatives to be embraced rather than forcing the selection of one or the other (Putnam & Boys, 2006; Tracy, 2004). In this sense, telework policies need to be worded to allow for autonomy of state agencies and individual teleworkers as well as organizational control (at both the state and agency levels); they should allow for both flexibility and standardization in interpretation and implementation. Successful policies can thus be expected to strike a balance between these opposing poles and incorporate both. Although prior research on organizational tensions has focused mainly on the lived experiences of organizational members (e.g., Gibbs; Jian & Rosiek, 2009; Tracy), this chapter makes an important contribution by examining formal communication in the form of policy messages and establishing that communicative tensions exist in such messages as well—and that such tensions may even be necessary and useful.

**Practical Implications**

Our findings have practical implications for the implementation of virtual work policies in organizations. Although prior literature on telework (Mills-Senn, 2006; Prince, 2000) would prescribe that policies be written to eliminate ambiguity and provide the utmost degree of clarity, telework practices and virtual work practices more broadly involve inherent oppositions between diverse organizational and individual goals and the need to maintain both autonomy and control, flexibility and standardization. As such, effective policies are not necessarily those that provide the greatest level of clarity (which would select poles of control and rigidity while ignoring the simultaneous need for autonomy and flexibility), but rather incorporate enough ambiguity to allow for these conflicting needs and interests to be mutually attained. While we are not advocating unclear policies or vague guidelines, our findings do suggest that state governments and other organizations should develop strategically ambiguous policies that allow for these tensions to
coexist and do not overclarify or overspecify the terms and conditions, in order to allow for more autonomy and flexibility of interpretation and execution of terms and rules. Further, teleworkers and managers should use policy as a guide and point of departure for conversations about virtual work—not the final word.

Across these state governments, the findings here suggest several differences in some of their telework policies. Although we cannot label some policies as preferable to others, this does point to an opportunity for these organizations to compare policies and work toward development of some best practices. For both managers and individual teleworkers, our findings would suggest the value in fully knowing the policies that do exist. Not only does such knowledge provide one with guidance about organizational expectations, but also the tensions in such policies can reveal space for negotiation and opportunities to create desirable virtual work arrangements. Further, understanding the tensions and contradictions inherent in telework policies may help to reduce potential conflict between managers and the employees surrounding the interpretation of telework policies by making each side aware of the interests and concerns of the other. The mere presence of a formal policy in an organization does not necessarily guarantee effective communication between managers and teleworkers.

The high level of ambiguity in many policies leaves much of the implementation of telework rules and procedures up to individual managers to negotiate with individual telecommuters. This suggests that successful telecommuting arrangements may require managers to develop supportive, trusting relationships with teleworkers rather than simply enforce policy and rules in a uniform way. Our findings suggest that enacting organizational policy should not be considered a fixed process, but rather an ongoing process involving all parties. The tensional view we take draws attention to the constitutive role of policies in shaping interaction as they are continuously interpreted and enacted through the participation of all involved organizational members. It is often implicitly accepted that enforcing policies is solely the responsibility of management. But making sense of the ambiguity in such policies raises the necessity of employees’ participation in the process of enacting such policies.

**FUTURE RESEARCH**

Future research should explore ways in which various forms of telework discourse coincide or conflict, by comparing the communication of managers, teleworkers, and non-teleworking coworkers to the discourse contained in telework policies to identify further tensions. The impact of such formal policies and the degree to which policies are followed and shape telecommuting arrangements should also be assessed. The communicative responses to policies and the tensions they contain also warrant study, as well as the ways in which policy is a relational construction, in that the employer-employee relationship influences how policies are interpreted and implemented. Of course, we have only examined policy in one type of organization here; thus, future research should extend this analysis by examining policy in the private sector and in organizations whose members are more globally dispersed.

**CONCLUSION**

As telework and other forms of virtual work become more and more prevalent, policies related to such work have become increasingly important to organizations. Yet, scholarly analysis of these important organizational documents has often lagged behind. Our objectives in this chapter were to establish the importance of workplace policies related to telework and to articulate tensions that exist within and across them. Our dialectical framework relies on the premise that
telework policies contain tensions and ambiguity that may be necessary in order to balance conflicting individual and organizational interests, and that the existence of such tensions may allow space for specific procedures to be interpreted and negotiated within the context of particular employer-employee relationships. Our findings identified tensions in the form of ambiguity within and across policies themselves, as well as disconnects between affordances provided by the policies and the larger discourse of telework. We believe the communicative tensions we discuss here offer both practical implications and guidance for future scholarly efforts in this area.

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Examining Tensions in Telework Policies


Examining Tensions in Telework Policies


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Examining Tensions in Telework Policies


ENDNOTES

1. When we found more than one telework policy document within a given website, the priority choice was a state-wide policy and the most recently updated version of the policy.

2. There needs to be a cautionary interpretation about the fact that no policy document was available for a state government because we found these cases: (a) restricted access to the government materials in which the policy document might exist in a different format (e.g., written document, handbook) but not be publicly available, (b) departmentalization of telework implementation (i.e., telework adopted and applied by each agency of a state government but no state-wide policy available, and/or (c) the establishment of a general guideline or policy under consideration.