The Cambridge Handbook of the Global Work–Family Interface

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22 A Cultures within Culture Perspective on Work and Family among United States Employees

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Scholarly interest in the intersection of work and family life continues to flourish. One recent advance is greater attention to how macro-level influences such as national and cultural factors shape the intersection of work and family life. For example, research has increasingly focused on examining how national policies relate to work–family experiences (see den Dulk & Peper, 2016) and comparing work–nonwork experiences based on country of residence (see Ollier-Malaterre, 2016). Considering macro-level influences such as national family leave policies and cultural dimensions of gender egalitarianism, individualism–collectivism, and power distance, complements and extends the field's longstanding interest in how individual, supervisory, and organizational factors affect individual work–family experiences.

Although the investigation of macro-level factors has added significantly to our understanding of the work–family interface, this approach has not considered the heterogeneity that may exist within a particular cultural context. For example, within the United States there are likely distinct sub-cultures that, if examined systematically, could further enhance our understanding of the work–family interface. In this chapter we introduce this notion of "cultures within culture" to the work–family literature and delineate how within-culture differences are likely to influence men and women's work–family experiences in the United States. As we outline in the sections that follow, taking a cultures within culture approach is particularly important in a country such as the United States, which is characterized by a massive landmass and a rich cultural history of diversity.

We open the chapter by providing an overview of ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), which posits that individuals and families are strongly influenced by the various systems in which they are embedded, which exist at various levels of abstraction. This provides a theoretical point of departure for the argument that considering sub-cultures within a larger cultural system is important to advance work–family scholarship. Next, we discuss the tradition of examining regional differences in attitudes, behaviors, and values within the United States, as a way to ground our cultures within culture approach in the extant literature. Given our interest in work–family issues, we focus on multidisciplinary research that has identified systematic differences in

(1) gender-related attitudes and expectations, (2) beliefs about self-protection, violence, and loyalty, (3) religiosity, and (4) political ideology and voting patterns within various areas of the United States. We conclude by offering an agenda for future research using a cultures within culture approach, proposing new ways of thinking about the intersection of culture, work, and family to advance work–family scholarship.

Overview of Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theory proposes that human development is a dynamic and progressive process that is influenced by the multiple environments in which individuals are embedded. These systems are nested within one another and influence individuals in complex ways. *Microsystems* refer to the relationship between an individual and his or her immediate setting where particular roles are enacted (e.g., the employee role is enacted in the workplace; the parent role is enacted at home). Specific microsystems are thought to exert individual-level effects on human development and behavior. Due to the fact that individuals have multiple roles, the theory also recognizes the *mesosystem*, which represents a system of microsystems. The mesosystem captures the interrelations between an individual's primary microsystems. For example, for a working parent, the mesosystem may include interactions among the workplace, family, and friendship microsystems. These mesosystems are further embedded in an *exosystem*, which includes other formal and informal social structures that influence or place boundaries on what occurs within the various settings that an individual resides in. The exosystem includes major social institutions in society, such as the neighborhoods and communities in which individuals live, the world of work, informal social networks, government agencies, and the mass media. At the highest level of analysis, and encompassing all of the systems just discussed is the *macrosystem*. The macrosystem is unique in that it reflects the overall cultural or subcultural customs, practices, norms, and expectations that overlay these other systems. The macrosystem manifests both informally (e.g., social values) and formally (e.g., laws and regulation) and provides normative information that both influences and guides individual behavior.

Scholars have applied Bronfenbrenner's (1977) theory to the work–family interface. This includes an examination of work–family crossover effects between husbands and wives (e.g., Desrochers, Sargent, & Hostetler, 2012), work–family facilitation (e.g., Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2007), and community-level factors as predictors of work–family outcomes (e.g., Voydanoff, 2005). Additionally, conceptual work by Voydanoff (2002) discusses how work–family mesosystems are likely influenced by the larger systems in which they are embedded. However, empirical research focusing on exosystem influences on work–family, such as cultural differences *within the United States* in values, attitudes, behaviors, or other social phenomena, is notably absent.

Existing Research on Cultures within Culture in the United States

Although the work–family literature is silent with regard to cultural differences *within* the United States, there is a longstanding history of dividing the United States into distinct regions. These geographic areas are characterized by unique features, reflected in common characteristics of individuals who reside in them. The premise anchoring this line of research is that individual-level behaviors and attitudes eventually become expressed as higher-level social, political, economic, and health indicators (Rentfrow et al., 2013).

In political geography, research has focused on historical migration patterns and the consequent effects on political subcultures (Elazar, 1994) as well as how ethnic diversity relates to regional political values (Heppen, 2003). Geographic sociological research has examined regional differences in the pervasiveness of social capital (i.e., the extent to which Americans are connected to their families, neighbors, and communities), finding that people in the West, North Central, and Mountain states report higher levels of social capital than those living in the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast states, presumably due to differences in religiosity, ethnic diversity, and exposure to mass media (Putnam, 2000). Spatial epidemiologists have found regional differences in disease prevalence and mortality. This includes documented differences in stroke mortality in the United States, with higher rates in the South and lower rates in the Northeast and Mountain census regions of the West (Lanska, 1993). These differences presumably relate to socioeconomic, demographic, and lifestyle differences (e.g., social norms for health and nutrition) in different areas of the United States (Glymour, Avendano, & Berkman, 2007).

Of particular relevance to the study of work and family is the well-developed body of scholarship on regional differences in gender role attitudes (e.g., Powers et al., 2003; Twenge, 1997), beliefs about self-protection, violence, and loyalty (e.g., Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Vandello, Cohen, Grandon, & Franiuk, 2009), religiosity (e.g., Furman, Benson, & Canda, 2004, 2011), and political ideologies and voting patterns (e.g., Lieske, 2010). Although researchers use somewhat different regional conceptualizations, findings consistently demonstrate more traditional attitudes and conservative ideologies in the Southern regions of the United States.

A Cultures within Culture Approach to Work–Family Scholarship

Research examining differences in attitudes, behaviors, and values within different areas of the United States has focused almost exclusively on examining regional differences. There are several distinct streams of research examining regional differences, yet they share a common emphasis on ideals for family life and/or societal expectations for women and/or men. It is these literatures that we review next. Before doing so, it is important to acknowledge that this literature is restricted in scope to a focus on geographically based regional differences. Nonetheless, it

provides a useful starting point for thinking about how within-country differences in attitudes, behaviors, and values may relate to work and family, and how taking a cultures within culture approach captures a potentially important source of variability that has been largely ignored in industrial-organizational and organizational behavior work–family research. Although existing empirical research on regional differences provide an important starting point in thinking about cultures within culture, we will extend this thinking beyond regional differences in the future research section to consider other characteristic features such as urbanization, more discrete voting patterns within states, and community differences in access to high-quality childcare in an attempt to broaden our thinking about cultures within culture.

Regional differences in gender-related attitudes and expectations. Differences persist in the traits ascribed to men and women. Specifically, women continue to be perceived by others as more communal relative to men (i.e., warm, caring, sensitive) whereas men are perceived as more agentic relative to women (i.e., assertive, competitive, forceful) (Abele, 2003; Brosi, Spörrle, Welpe, & Heilman, 2016). Social role theory (Eagly & Steffen, 1984) posits that social perceivers derive their expectations of gender roles based on their experiences with individuals in "typical" social roles (i.e., where a specific gender is overrepresented compared to the rest of the population). Because women have been traditionally overrepresented in lower-status, communal roles such as nursing and childcare, and men have been overrepresented in higher-status, agentic roles such as management and politics, societal expectations and stereotypes have emerged in which women are expected to be more caring and nurturing and men more assertive and dominant. Even as women have become increasingly represented in non-traditional, agentic roles, research has demonstrated the persistence of gender-based expectations (Brosi et al., 2016).

Attitudes toward women and gender role expectations are closely intertwined with family, employment, and women's participation in social structures, such as political and religious institutions (Powers et al., 2003; Twenge, 1997). Social role theory and the emergence of stereotypes for people in their "typical roles" has led to the stereotype of the male breadwinner and the female homemaker (Eagly, Wood & Dieckman, 2000), reflecting differences in expectations regarding men and women's dedication to work and family. Moreover, there is some evidence that female college students still expect their future work and family lives to adhere to these gender expectations, anticipating that they will spend more time doing housework and caring for children than men, and earn lower salaries than their husbands (Fetterolf & Eagly, 2011). There is also evidence that, although men and women value work–life balance equally, men are less inclined to seek out flexibility to be with their children than women, partially due to gendered expectations regarding femininity and masculinity (Vandello, Hettinger, Bosson & Siddiqi, 2013).

Although gender role attitudes have become more egalitarian over time, numerous studies document that both men and women in the Southern United States (which includes states such as Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and South Carolina) hold more conservative beliefs about women's roles relative to people in other regions. For

example, although the gap has reduced over time, longitudinal data from the General Social Science Survey indicates that Southerners still tend to have less favorable views about women in politics than non-Southerners (Campbell & Marsden, 2012). Moreover, Twenge's (1997) meta-analysis of changes in attitudes toward women found that for a twenty-five-year period (1979–1995), Southern men's attitudes toward women lagged behind other regions in the United States by five to ten years. Powers and colleagues (2003) likewise found more egalitarian gender role attitudes among both men and women in the non-South when compared to the South, although the differences were not large. There is also some evidence that gender role expectations are more clearly prescribed and culturally mandated for Southern women than for Southern men. As an illustration, Suitor and Carter (1999) found regional differences in college students' view of adolescent gender norms. Consistent with more conservative and traditional gender roles, students viewed adolescent girls in the South as more likely to report gaining prestige by having a good reputation/virginity than adolescent girls in the North. By contrast, college students perceived adolescent girls in the North to gain prestige with behaviors that countered traditional gender stereotypes, such as using drugs and alcohol and sexual activity. The ways that adolescent boys are perceived to gain status (e.g., sports, grades) did not vary by region.

Regional differences in beliefs about self-protection, violence, and loyalty. A more specific aspect of gender role attitudes and expectations involves normative pre-scriptions about violence, self-protection, and honor, which is referred to by Cohen and Nisbett (1994) as a "culture of honor" (p. 552). They argue that a strong culture of honor develops in social systems where law enforcement is absent and/or inade-quate, and because of this, it is necessary for the preservation of oneself, one's family, and one's home. Building on this work, Vandello et al. (2009) argue that a culture of honor is tied to notions of *both* femininity and masculinity. In regions with a strong culture of honor, femininity is associated with loyalty, sacrifice, and altru-ism. These beliefs pervade romantic relationships and influence attitudes about male violence against women. By contrast, toughness and the belief in justifiable violence are key features of masculinity in cultures of honor (Cohen & Vandello, 2001). This manifests in men's need to control women and in their reactions to betrayal. In support of this idea, Vandello and colleagues (2009) found that men from a strong culture of honor were more likely to endorse a woman staying in an abusive relation-ship and a man's use of violence against a woman in situations involving infidelity compared to those not residing in a strong culture of honor.

Of particular interest to the present chapter is the finding that the culture of honor phenomenon is associated with the American South.[1] For example, Cohen and Nisbett (1994) found that white Southern males in particular hold much more favorable attitudes about the use of violence for self-protection, in response to insult, and for socializing children than do non-Southerners. Southern white men are also more likely to respond aggressively, have greater physiological stress responses, and

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[1] Some studies also find evidence of a stronger culture of honor in the American West (see Cohen, 1998) and also among Latinos (Vandello et al., 2009).

are more likely to perceive a threat to their masculine reputation in response to an unprovoked insult (e.g., being called an "asshole" by a stranger) compared to Northern white men (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996). Interestingly, Southern males are also more likely to believe that their peers endorse aggressive norms and to perceive that others encourage aggression when witnessing interpersonal conflicts (Vandello, Cohen, & Ransom, 2008). Collectively, this suggests that strong normative beliefs may help perpetuate a culture of honor in the South. In line with the notion of regional differences in culture of honor, 2010 data from the American Bar Association ("What are the State Laws that Mandate Arrest for DV Assault?," 2011) identifies 21 states that mandate arrest for domestic violence assault (Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Washington). Notably, only four of these states are those that are typically characterized as "Southern" (Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia).

Regional differences in religiosity. Conservative religious beliefs can exert powerful influences on attitudes and behaviors regarding divorce, gender equality, and sexual activity (Adamczyk, 2013), among other issues. In the United States, Christian fundamentalism (also referred to as evangelicalism) exemplifies religious conservatism and is associated with patriarchy, female submissiveness, and traditional gender roles in the family (Bendroth, 1999; Hall, Anderson, & Willingham, 2004; Korb, 2010; Scanzoni, 1983). Conservative Christian subcultures also strongly encourage mothers to stay at home (Hall et al., 2004) and espouse the sacredness of life, which influences views on abortion and divorce (D'Antonio, 1983). The more literal interpretation of the Bible, which is associated with Christian fundamentalism, further reinforces traditional ideals about women. This includes passages in the Bible that discuss women's lesser status than men and the importance of obedience to one's husband (e.g., see Ephesians 5:22–23), as well as the role of motherhood as a central feature of women's religious identity (e.g., 1 Timothy 2:11-15a) (Brinkerhoff & MacKie, 1988).

There is also considerable research on the association between various aspects of religiosity and attitudes related to the work–family interface. Both religious behaviors (e.g., attending church) and religious attitudes (e.g., self-report religious beliefs, fundamentalism) are positively associated with more traditional gender role attitudes (Brinkerhoff & MacKie, 1988). Religious conservatism is also related to greater religious ethnocentrism (i.e., beliefs in the superiority of one's own religion; Altemeyer, 2003), opposition to women's right to abortion (Hoffman & Johnson, 2005), discriminatory attitudes toward others (e.g., blacks, women, homosexuals; Kirkpatrick, 1993), and the number of hours women spend on housework (Ellison & Bartowski, 2002). There is also some evidence that more conservative Christian women have children earlier in life, have more children, earn less income, place greater emphasis on the importance of mothering versus working, and attain lower levels of education than women raised in mainline churches (Gonsoulin, 2010). Finally, Colander and Giles (2008) found that Evangelical women are more

likely to view work and motherhood as separate roles that should not be entered into simultaneously.

Regional differences in religiosity, and in particular Christian fundamentalism, are well documented. The American Bible Society's 2016 survey of Bible reading practices reports that the top five Bible-minded cities, an index that reflects Bible reading practices and beliefs about the accuracy of the Bible, in the United States are Chattanooga, Birmingham, Roanoke/Lynchburg, Shreveport, and the Tri-Cities in Tennessee (Kingsport, Bristol, Johnson City), all of which are in the South ("America's Most Bible-Minded Cities," 2016). Consistent with this survey, a 2011 Gallup poll (Newport, 2012) found that nine of the ten "most religious" states were in the South (e.g., Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia). The one exception was Utah, which ranked second in "most religious" due to the large concentration of Mormons. However, interestingly for Utah in particular, is the fact that this state has the largest percentage of non-religious Americans (28%) among these top ten states, indicating a rather polarized population regarding religion. It is also notable that none of the "least religious" states were in the South (e.g., Vermont, Maine, Alaska). The South also leads other regions in terms of both the percentage of Americans who have had a "born again" experience and church attendance (Dillon & Savage, 2006).

Regional differences in religiosity permeate many facets of life. For example, social workers in the South and Midwest were more likely to openly endorse the use of religion and spirituality in their work with clients (Furman et al., 2004). Individuals in the South also tend to have more discriminatory attitudes toward homosexuality (Herek, 2002; Sullivan, 2003), and native Southerners tend to be less willing to extend civil liberties to groups that hold beliefs that run counter to fundamentalist Christianity, such as atheists and homosexuals (Ellison & Musick, 1993). Likewise, corporal punishment of children is more strongly endorsed in the South compared to other regions of the United States (Flynn, 1994). This has been attributed to more literal interpretation of the Bible by those residing in the Bible Belt, a region that includes much of the American South, where fundamentalism is widely practiced.

Regional differences in political ideology and voting patterns. In the United States, the political structure is typically described as a two-party system, with the Republican Party espousing more conservative views on issues such as the importance of military strength, social welfare, LGBT issues, and government regulation, than the Democratic Party (Pew Research Center, 2014). In fact, sociological scholars argue that right-wing politically conservative think tanks have had a substantial impact on cultural values regarding sexual abstinence and virginity, as part of a larger social agenda to protect the sanctity of the American family (Deerman, 2012; Rose, 2005).

In terms of regional differences in political ideology, voting patterns indicate that the Southern states (with the exception of North Carolina and Florida) as well as some regions of the Midwest and Mountain states, in recent past history (i.e., past two decades) tend to vote Republican. By contrast the Western states have historically endorsed the Democratic Party in this same time period ("Election Polls—

Presidential Vote by Groups," 2016). As noted previously, individuals in Southern states also tend to hold the most conservative political attitudes on a wide range of topics of potential relevance to work–family (e.g., divorce law, abortion; Weakliem & Biggert, 1999). It has also been noted that by the late twentieth century, Southerners shared a conservative political agenda distinct from other regions of the United States (Markusen, 1989).

A discussion of political ideology must recognize its complex interplay with religious beliefs. The Pew Research Center's report on political preferences among religious groups in the United States found that Evangelical religions (e.g., Church of the Nazarene, Southern Baptist Convention) strongly lean toward or identify with the Republican Party whereas Jewish, Unitarian, and several historically black religious groups (e.g., African Methodist Episcopal Church, National Baptist Convention) endorse or lean toward the Democratic Party (Lipka, 2016). Some conservative religious leaders have also made strong public alliances with the Republican Party. A striking example of this is the Moral Majority, a prominent American political organization founded in 1970 by Baptist Minister, Jerry Falwell and associates, which openly supported Ronald Reagan's election in 1980 and mobilized millions of voters (Bendroth, 1999). A major platform of the Republican Party at this time was a focus on "family values" – efforts to protect the moral future of the American family by promoting traditional gender role norms, pro-life values, and a strong focus on traditional two-parent heterosexual households (Alphonso, 2016; Bendroth, 1999).

Another illustration of how politics and religion are closely intertwined is the National Right to Life movement ("National Right to Life," 2016), which is deeply rooted in Christian fundamentalist beliefs and endorsed by the Republican Party (Castle, 2011). In fact, the 2016 Republican Party Platform ("The 2016 Republican Party Platform," 2016) explicitly "opposes the use of public funds to perform or promote abortion or to fund organizations, like Planned Parenthood . . . (and) . . . will not fund or subsidize healthcare that includes abortion coverage" (p. 13). The platform goes on to note that they will support the appointment of judges that respect "traditional family values" (p. 13) and support states' rights to exclude abortion providers from Medicaid and other federal healthcare programs. In fact, recently enacted federal and state laws and policies aimed at restricting women's access to abortions have been put forward by conservative state legislators. Many of the states with the most restrictive provisions are in the South (i.e., Mississippi, South Carolina, West Virginia, Kentucky; Castle, 2011).

In addition to political ideology and voting patterns, conservative political beliefs relate in predictable ways to traditional gender roles and traditional family structures. Women scoring higher on measures of right-wing authoritarianism, which is strongly associated with conservative political beliefs and traditional gender roles (McAdams et al., 2008; Rubinstein, 1995), prefer more masculine and conventional partners. These women are also less likely to have an advanced degree, more likely to be married only once, more likely to have children, and are more likely to be underemployed than their less conservative counterparts (Duncan, Peterson, & Ax, 2003). There is also evidence that political views relate to family ideals and moral beliefs. In

a two-part study, McAdams and colleagues (2008) found that political conservatives more often described their family ideals in terms of rules-reinforcement (i.e., the importance of authority, such as parents, government, church, God) and self-discipline (i.e., the ability to control one's emotions and urges to lead a more disciplined life) when compared to liberals. In the second study, they examined political conservatism and moral beliefs, finding that conservatives emphasized respect for authority, loyalty to family and country, and working hard to stay pure and good. By contrast, liberals emphasized commitment to reducing the suffering of others, as well as concerns for fairness, justice, and equality.

In summary, considerable research from psychology, sociology, political science, women's studies, and religion point to the importance of taking a cultures within culture approach to better understand the work–family experience of workers in the United States. When considered collectively, this research illustrates considerable within-country diversity on phenomena of high relevance to work and family and provides a foundation for other ways to think about systematic differences in attitudes, behaviors, and values within the United States.

An Agenda for Future Research

Given the dearth of work–family research taking a cultures within culture approach, there are many avenues for future research. We first discuss conceptual issues regarding how we might operationalize different cultural characteristics of the United States. This includes a discussion of the strategies used in the research described above, as well as a consideration of alternative operationalizations that may have utility for both widening and sharpening the lens by which we examine cultures within culture. Following this discussion, we outline three broad substantive topics to guide future research on the topic.

Existing and alternative approaches to study cultures within culture. A consideration of cultures within culture requires a categorization system that identifies discrete and relatively homogeneous within-country groupings of some sort. The traditional approach has been to classify states into various regions for comparison, although the theoretical and conceptual rationale for particular groupings is often given short shrift. Most frequently the South is compared to other regions of the United States. This might consist of South versus North comparisons (e.g., Vandello et al., 2008), Deep South (e.g., Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana), Border South (e.g., Kentucky, Oklahoma, Tennessee) and Non-South (e.g., Michigan, Arizona, New York) comparisons (e.g., Cohen & Nisbett, 1994), or comparisons between the South and the Non-South (e.g., Twenge, 1997). In other studies, United States Census classifications of states into regions (e.g., South, Midwest, West, Northeast; Cohen, 1996) were used for comparison.

Although this manner of examining cultural differences within the United States likely has utility for some work–family research questions, we encourage researchers to consider alternative approaches as well. One strategy is to create within-

country groupings based on family-friendly legislation that expands upon federal laws (e.g., Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, Family Medical Leave Act of 1993, breastfeeding provisions in the 2010 health reform law). For example, according to the National Partnership for Women and Families (2016a), thirty-five states have implemented (or are in the process of passing) at least one piece of family-friendly legislation expanding upon the current federal policies. For example, California, Rhode Island, Washington, New Jersey, and New York have each passed their own paid parental leave policies, with New York proposing the most generous policy to date of up to twelve weeks of paid parental leave for men and women (National Partnership for Women and Families, 2016b); notably, none of these are Southern states. Additionally, many states have passed domestic violence leave statutes (e.g., Oregon's safe leave act), expanded rights for nursing mothers (e.g., time and place to pump statutes), provided additional accommodations for pregnant workers (e.g., reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers statutes), and implemented requirements for employers to provide paid sick days (e.g., paid sick days statutes). As such, legislative differences in various areas of the United States may provide a unique vantage point by which to explore cultures within culture differences in work–family experiences without relying solely on geographic proximity to classify regions of the United States.

Another strategy is to create a cultures within culture metric that captures the number of women in key political positions (e.g., mayor, governor, House of Representatives, state senate), with the argument being that this in part reflects prevailing attitudes and normative expectations for women. Another approach would be to index the proportion of women business owners or CEOs in a community, zip code region, or state. Other family-related categorization systems to identify cultures within culture might involve examining divorce rates, ease of filing for divorce, and processing time for divorces to be finalized (The Huffington Post, September 5, 2013) or "baby friendliness," an index that considers parental leave policies, number of per capita mom groups, number of per capita childcare centers, and the percentage of nationally accredited childcare centers (Bernardo, 2016). The examination of community, state, and regional voting patterns, as well as church membership, may also be used to capture cultures within culture. Such measures may be used to reflect social norms and attitudes that have bearing on individuals' choices regarding work and family, as well as others' expectations for the integration of work and family roles. Finally, creating a classification system based on urbanization (e.g., comparisons of urban, suburban, and rural areas) may provide a unique vantage point to explore how cultures within culture relates to the work–family interface, given some evidence of nuanced differences in attitudes toward same-sex relationships, abortion, and religiosity as a function of the rurality (Dillon & Savage, 2006). Likewise, comparing areas of the United States based on the level of poverty ("Poverty USA Full Screen County Map," 2016) may shed light on a wide range of work–family experiences due to the constraints that poverty places on access to healthcare, childcare, education, and employment.

An agenda for future research. In this section we focus on three areas that we believe could benefit from a cultures within culture focus. This includes (1) individual perceptions of work–family experiences, (2) work and family decision-making, and (3) work–family experiences among individuals in non-traditional marriages and families. We recognize that there are many other areas of work–family inquiry that could also benefit from this approach. As such, the ideas presented below are selective and should be viewed as a starting point for work–family scholars, rather than an exhaustive list of research priorities.

One area that holds promise is an examination of *individual perceptions of work–family experiences.* An important starting point seems to be the investigation of systematic differences in the average reported level of work–family conflict for working women and men as a function of various features of one's place of residence in the United States. It may be that work–family conflict tends to be lower for both genders in areas with more family-friendly legislation, whereas women in particular may report more work–family conflict in areas of the country characterized by more traditional gender-related attitudes or religiosity. It would also be interesting to examine differences in the direction (work-to-family versus family-to-work) and/ or type (time-based, strain-based, behavior-based) of conflict using a cultures within culture approach (e.g., comparing areas in the United States based on the percentage of women in elected political positions or divorce rate), and again, exploring what role gender may play here. For example, in areas marked by more egalitarian gender role attitudes, working women may experience lower work-to-family and family-to-work conflict because social expectations for the caregiving role are more relaxed and there is greater acceptance of women working outside the home. By contrast, for women living in areas where gender role attitudes are more traditional, working women (but not men) may be in a double-bind such that both directions of work–family conflict are higher (due to stronger pressure for women to fulfill family obligations, which exacerbates both types of conflict). Somewhat consistent with this idea, a recent study by Clair and colleagues found that working moms (but not women without children or men) who lived in zip codes characterized by a greater proportion of women working outside the home (which may signal greater acceptance of working mothers) reported less negative work–life spillover (Clair, King, Anderson, Jones, & Hebl, 2015).

In terms of the type of work–family conflict, we may find that time-based conflict is higher in areas of the country with longer commute times ("WNYC Average Commute Times," 2013) or more "fast-paced" lifestyles, such as large metropolitan areas. By contrast, strain-based conflict may be greater in cultural niches characterized by greater environmental stressors (e.g., noise, population density), based on research linking allostatic load to the neighborhood characteristics of poverty, even after controlling for household poverty, self-reported neighborhood environment stress, stressful acute life events, and alcohol use (Schutz et al., 2012). The notion of "riskscapes" (Morello-Frosh & Shenassa, 2006, p. 1150) – characteristics of the social and physical environmental that contribute to poor health outcomes – may also be useful in framing a discussion of how community or regional differences in factors such as land use/zoning, housing quality, poverty, access to services, and

neighborhood quality relate to the experience of strain-based work–family conflict in particular.

Another area where an examination of systematic within-United States differences may be informative involves *work and family decision-making*. For example, in areas of the country with more polarized views on appropriate behavior for men and women, we might expect differences in the division of paid and household labor among partnered men and women, which has been linked to a wide range of work–family outcomes (for a review, see Shockley & Shen, 2016). Although we are not aware of any research examining such differences within regions of the United States, this premise is consistent with socialization and gender role attitude theories which posit that early childhood experiences affect the way that women (and men) perceive themselves and form beliefs about what is expected of them by others (Shockley & Shen, 2016). Moreover, previous research examining the macro-level effects of nation-level factors (e.g., country of origin) on gender differences in both paid work hours and hours spent in childcare (Craig & Mullan, 2010) suggests that a cultures within culture focus may yield unique insight into work–family outcomes among American workers. It may also be that characteristic features of different areas of the United States are associated with different expectations for family life and anticipated work–family conflict, which in turn may influence decisions about both work and parenthood, particularly among young women.

Areas of the United States also differ in various aspects of childcare (Schute & Durana, 2016), family-friendly legislation (National Partnership, 2016a), and residential mobility (United States Census Bureau, 2012), all of which may affect decisions related to caregiving as well as where to work and live. With regard to caregiving, differences in cost, quality, and availability of childcare (Schute & Durana, 2016) undoubtedly affects parents' decision-making regarding care for their children. It is also likely that due to greater population density, more urban areas have greater formal childcare options, enhancing availability and perhaps quality as well, due to greater competition. However, informal care from family members, neighbors, and friends may be more common in less urbanized areas, regardless of regional or state differences in legislation, due to tighter-knit communities and strong kinship ties in more rural areas (Beggs, Haines, & Hulbert, 1996). We also know that there are differences in the "family friendliness" of various states, based on the presence or absence of family-friendly legislation. This may affect decision-making about where to live and work. It may also influence decisions regarding whether one or both parents take parental leave as well as the length of leave taken.

A final area that may benefit from a cultures within culture approach involves the study of *work–family experiences among individuals in non-traditional marriages and families.* Although there is evidence of increasing social acceptance of sexual minorities, there is considerable variability within the United States on a variety of indicators of social tolerance, such as the incidents of hate crimes ("Hate Crimes by State," 2016) and social acceptance of same-sex marriages. Prior to the 2015 landmark United States Supreme Court ruling allowing same-sex couples to marry, only 37 states and the District of Columbia had legalized gay marriage ("State Same-Sex Marriage State Laws Map," 2015). This may provide a unique vantage point to

examine within the United States differences in the work–family experiences of sexual minorities. This might include examining the amount of work–family conflict experienced by LGBT employees and differences in actual and perceived organizational support for work–family among employees as a function of hate crimes committed in the area or the number of LGBT residents in one's community. A comparison of the family-friendly benefits available to LGBT employees as a function of where individuals live and work is also important, both in terms of cataloging the availability and use of particular benefits, and relating variation in benefits across communities, states, and regions to work–family outcomes.

Other non-traditional family structures may also be important to examine using a cultures within culture approach. This might involve examining regional or urban–rural differences in the effects of single parenthood, pregnancy, divorce status, and stay-at-home fatherhood on women's job and career experiences. A related line of research might focus on the acceptance of men's decisions to take paternal leave and stay at home to care for children, and the downstream effects of these decisions when men re-enter the workforce. We know that career interruptions are negatively related to pay for both genders (e.g., Evers & Sieverding, 2014), but we know nothing about how regional differences may attenuate or exacerbate such effects. Finally, there may be characteristic differences in extended family support systems across areas of the United States that are important to consider. For example, due to less geographic mobility in some areas of the country and stronger family ties, intergenerational caregiving may vary by region or urbanity. Although some research has documented the negative effects of eldercare responsibilities on employees (e.g., Barrah, Schultz, Baltes, & Stolz, 2004), in intergenerational families there may be care *benefits* as well. Although largely unexplored in industrial-organizational psychology and organizational behavior, grandparents may provide an important source of childcare support, as well as emotional support, to working parents.

In conclusion, we draw on ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) to advocate for a cultures within culture approach when studying the intersection between work and family in the United States. Individuals are embedded in larger social systems, and these systems have the potential to impact how individuals experience and perceive work–family phenomena. We provide compelling evidence from complementary literatures that suggest systematic differences within the United States may affect how men and women perceive their roles and others' roles in society, which in turn may carry over to their expectations for both work and family, as well as their behaviors in each role. Extending research paradigms to include a cultures within culture perspective has the potential to provide novel insights and propel work–family scholarship in new and exciting directions.

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