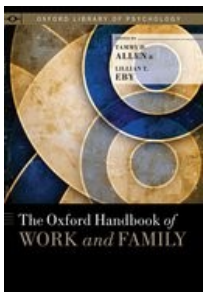

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CHAPTER

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26 Considering Underrepresented Populations in Work and Family Research

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Abstract

In this chapter we discuss the ways in which work–family researchers can better include underrepresented populations in work–family scholarship. Extant research on five example populations is reviewed: low-income workers; immigrants; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals; single parents; and formerly incarcerated individuals. Methodological challenges are reviewed that contribute to the underrepresentation of such populations in the work–family field. In conclusion, we draw themes common among these populations and present recommendations for expanding work–family research to include more diverse population characteristics.

Keywords: work–family, work–family conflict, populations, underrepresented, diversity

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Introduction

Much of what we have learned about work and family issues is based on a relatively specific and narrow slice of the working population. Samples in work–family research typically consist of middle-class to upper-class, white-collar workers (Casper, Eby, Bordeaux, Lockwood, & Lambert, 2007). Workers are most often employed in large organizations and live in western countries, particularly the United States (Chang, McDonald, & Burton, 2010; Poelmans, O'Driscoll, & Beham, 2005). Participants are also typically white, married, heterosexual, and have children at home (Casper et al., 2007; Chang et al., 2010).

Limited population scope is problematic for two reasons. First, a large number of individuals who struggle to manage work and family responsibilities do not fit into the typical sample dimensions. The International Labour Office reports that approximately 631.9 million workers can be classified as working poor across the globe (2011), and in the U.S. workforce, the majority of the top 10 occupations can be classified as low-wage jobs, including customer service representative, retail salesperson, and food preparation worker (Bureau of

Labor Statistics, 2012). Single adult households make up approximately one-half of all households in several countries including the United States, Canada, Japan, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Finally, there are approximately 594,000 same-sex couple households in the United States (Lofquist, 2012). In short, there are several unique and significantly large segments of the population that have been underrepresented in work and family research.

Second, the work–family interface differs as a function of the population of interest (cf. Powell, Francesco, & Ling, 2009). Alternative populations have characteristics, norms, and challenges that change fundamentally the ways in which individuals define, experience, and respond to work–family conflict, work–family enrichment, and work–family balance. For example, work–family conflict and enrichment experiences may be moderated or predicted by cultural values held by specific regions or countries (Powell et al., 2009; Spector et al., 2004). As another illustration, low-income parents may view their work role as
p. 363 an integral and essential ↳ part of their family and parenting role because of the criticality of regular income to family survival (Hennessy, 2009). As a final example, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals may experience considerable stigma and discrimination, possibly resulting in reduced likelihood to seek out and/or obtain formal and informal support for work–family challenges (Ragins, 2008). The above examples are not well informed by the existing body of research. Consequently, the work–family realities of these groups are not well-understood. Given these concerns, more thoughtful consideration and inclusion of underrepresented populations in work and family scholarship are warranted.

In light of these population-based limitations, this chapter has three goals. The first is to highlight five populations, low-wage workers, immigrant workers, single parents, LGBT parents, and formerly incarcerated parents. Our choice of five is meant to be illustrative as there are others worthy of consideration. In discussing each population we identify characteristics and experiences shared by members of the population and discuss their implications for the work and family interface. Next we will identify methodological and pragmatic challenges that have restricted the consideration of underrepresented populations, and discuss paths for moving forward. Finally, we summarize critical voids and present an agenda for advancing more inclusive work and family scholarship.

Population Reviews

Low-Income/Low-Wage Positions

Low-income workers have long been identified as an underrepresented population in work and family research (Agars & French, 2011; Casper et al., 2007). Although attention has increased, we remain in the early stages of understanding the work and family challenges faced by low-income workers and their families. One of the most prevalent challenges in the work domain is that low-income jobs are designed with little consideration of family responsibilities. Low-income workers frequently occupy low-wage, shift-work jobs, with little or no flexibility and unpredictable schedules. Such irregular conditions make meeting family responsibilities difficult if not impossible for many (Bromer & Henly, 2009). Scheduling instability also creates challenges for workers seeking to maintain government-provided benefits for health care or child care, as government benefits are often dependent on meeting minimum work hour requirements (Legerski, 2012). Furthermore, challenges to one's ability to meet family responsibilities are made worse because schedules are typically created with minimal notice and employee input (Swanberg, James, Werner, & McKeachnie, 2008). Finally, because of the ease with which low-wage workers can be replaced, employers are often unsympathetic in helping employees meet family demands (Breitkreuz, Williamson, & Raine, 2010).

Low-income workers also typically occupy positions that offer limited formal supports and minimal control (Lambert & Henly, 2009). Formal work–family benefits and programs that have been developed for full-time or higher-level positions are typically not made available for workers in low-income positions (Lambert & Haley-Lock, 2004). Instead, low-income workers rely heavily on developing interpersonal relationships and informal solutions in the workplace (Swanberg, 2005), on the generosity of their co-workers (Lambert, Haley-Lock, & Henly, 2012), and on informal support from work and nonwork (family and community) domains for mitigating work–family conflict (Griggs, Casper, & Eby, 2013). For low-income workers, the value of control is most closely tied to the number of hours worked and their stability (Lambert et al., 2012). Evidence suggests that having control and having flexibility afford low-income workers the opportunity to reduce the negative consequences of work–family conflict (Moen, Kelly, Tranby, & Huang, 2011). Unfortunately, these arrangements are rare (Lambert & Haley-Lock, 2004).

The nonwork environment also creates challenges for low-income workers that directly impact their ability to manage work and family responsibilities. Health disparities as a function of socioeconomic status (SES) (Williams & Jackson, 2005) mean that low-income workers are more likely than higher SES individuals to have personal and or family member health issues to manage. Individuals in low-income positions are less likely to have reliable transportation (Lambert et al., 2012) or safe and reliable child care (Weigt & Solomon, 2008)––two fundamental resources for managing work and family responsibilities. In addition, many low-income workers are single parents, commonly single mothers, for whom work is a means through which they serve their family role (Breitkreuz et al., 2010; Hennessy, 2009). Finally, personal career perceptions and choices are impacted. Low-income workers may feel forced to turn down new work responsibilities in return for increased stability, even when those opportunities could bring additional financial resources or career opportunities (Sheely, 2010).

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Immigrant Workers

Immigrant workers are infrequently represented in work and family scholarship yet face great challenges to managing the work–family interface. We first review findings that can be generalized to both documented and undocumented immigrants, then focus on undocumented immigrants as a population facing slightly more extreme circumstances. To begin, immigrant workers frequently have job work characteristics that lead to more stress than the typical white-collar worker. Immigrant workers are often the minority in their place of work, which creates social and emotional burdens that add to the demands created by typical work tasks (Chien-Juh, 2009). Furthermore, immigrants often encounter language and ethnicity barriers, leading to feelings of isolation and stress (Perreira, Harris, & Lee, 2006). These barriers may make it more difficult for immigrants to access or even have knowledge of work–family resources available in their organization including health care benefits (Grahame, 2003; Perreira et al., 2006). These work challenges directly impact how work and family are managed, and may also indirectly impact the work–family interface by inhibiting career development. Immigrant workers often take low-wage manufacturing and construction jobs that are dangerous and have limited advancement opportunities (Grzywacz et al., 2007; Menjivar, 1999). Such positions also provide limited financial support and place increased stress and emotional burden on family members.

In addition to adverse job conditions, immigrant workers experience a great deal of stress and conflict at home, which may increase the difficulty of managing work and family responsibilities. Leaving family, children, friends, and community members behind is often highly stressful and mentally taxing (Grzywacz, Quandt, Arcury, & Marin, 2005), and represents a family demand not often studied. The absence of family members also means lacking a vital source of support. Furthermore, some immigrants develop new families in their destination country, yet still have responsibility for their former families in their country of origin, creating financial demands from multiple families (Menjivar, 1999).

Coming to a new country also involves encountering and attempting to acculturate to a new set of cultural norms, which are often quite different and result in changing family dynamics and roles, as well as work roles, that may conflict with native cultural norms (Chein-Juh, 2009; Perreira et al., 2006). For example, because immigrant jobs are typically low wage, women often need to work in order to take care of the family. Although this is consistent with current gender norms in U.S. culture, it is against cultural norms for immigrants from many cultures and therefore generates family tension (Grzywacz et al., 2005). Acculturation issues, including the additional responsibilities placed on children of immigrants, the fact that children often acculturate more quickly than parents, and the dissonance created for immigrant women who typically do not want to join the workforce but feel conflicted between their home culture and beliefs and what they must do to take care of their family (Chein-Juh, 2009), lead to unique levels of certain family challenges including ruptured family ties, loss of parental authority, parent–child role reversal, and disengagement in family relationships (Perreira et al., 2006).

Finally, government work–family policies offer limited assistance to immigrant workers (Grahame, 2003). In addition to adding work mandates as a condition of aid, the Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Opportunity Act of 1996 allowed states the option to deny welfare services to immigrants. Furthermore, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 put restraints on government support for immigrants without legal documentation. Such policies deny access to welfare for immigrants and emphasize self-sufficiency, yet provide no social support for these individuals to help them find jobs or balance family demands despite intense working demands (Grahame, 2003). Current policies therefore consider only a narrow view of the needs created by the work and family interface, little of which addresses the challenges faced by undocumented immigrant workers. The limited applicability of policy is exacerbated by immigrants' negative perceptions of government intervention; they are often reluctant to use government policies due to lack of trust, high costs, inconvenient hours, and transportation issues (Thein, Austen, Currie, & Lewin, 2010).

In addition to unique barriers created by government policy, undocumented immigrants experience an even greater impact than documented immigrants when facing many of the previously discussed challenges. To begin, work and family challenges are more stressful for undocumented populations because they have legal restrictions that prevent them from using possible services (e.g., Arbona et al., 2010; Belliveau, 2011; Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). These intense challenges are related to personal well-being including loneliness,
p. 365 isolation, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and ↳ unemployment, which serve to undermine the ability to manage the work–family interface (e.g., Arbona et al., 2010; Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). Due to their illegal status, unauthorized immigrants are less likely than documented workers to speak out against unjust or illegal practices including low pay, unsafe working conditions, and exploitation due to fear of losing their job and being deported (e.g., Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). Concerns about deportation also discourage immigrants from seeking assistance, including government help, and foster persistent fear (Arbona et al., 2010).

Single Parents

Other than dual-earner status and parental status, the consideration of family structure as a meaningful work–family construct has been rather limited in research, and most commonly appears as a control variable. Although this is perhaps indicative of the entrenched definition of the term "family" (Powell, Bolzendahl, Giest, & Steelman, 2010), one result has been that single-parent families are underrepresented in the work–family literature (Casper et al., 2007). This is particularly regrettable, as members of single-parent households often face extreme challenges in acquiring resources and support (Anderson, 2003), experience higher levels of work–family conflict and role overload than parents in dual-parent families (Colberg & Burgos, 1988; Forma, 2009), and report lower levels of overall family functioning (Freistadt & Strohschein, 2013). Children in single-parent households may also require more time and attention, as they are at greater risk for delinquency due to economic conditions and stress (Hill, Yeung, & Duncan, 2001) and reduced well-being (Brown, 2010). Employer attitudes may also present obstacles. A laboratory study examining student perceptions of single parents found that participants were less likely to offer a job to single parents when that job required moving and perceived single parents to be less resilient to the challenges created by moving (Eby, Allen, Noble, & Lockwood, 2004).

Single parents are typically the sole breadwinners and primary caregivers within a family. It is not surprising, therefore, that much of the research on the familial and work-related challenges faced by single parents has focused on resources and support. For single parents, social capital (e.g., support from friends, family, neighbors) is frequently identified as a critical resource (Freistadt & Strohschein, 2013). Additionally, stable employment may have a powerfully mitigating effect on the material hardships faced by single-parent homes (Eamon & Wu, 2011). Organizational research also shows several work design and policy resources that help single parents manage work and family. Schedule flexibility (Bakker & Karsten, 2013; Jang, Zippay, & Park, 2012) and work hour control (Minnotte, 2012) have been identified as key resources for single parents in managing their work and family demands. Despite these promising findings, some research shows that single parents are less approving of their organization's work–family culture than single adults without children (de Janasz, Forret, Haack, & Jonsen, 2013), suggesting that single parents see the efforts as less valuable than their nonparent co-workers.

The attention given to resources can be attributed in part to the fact that single parents are often facing economic challenges (Keating-Lefler, Hudson, Campbell-Grossman, Fleck, & Westfall, 2004). Therefore many of the obstacles faced by low-income workers are endured by single parents as well, especially single moms. Due to limited financial resources, many single mothers are on some form of federal aid or government support (Heflin, 2006). Although these programs provide needed resources, the eligibility requirements can be problematic. In a qualitative review of the impact of welfare-to-work programs in Australia, Cook (2012) found that single mothers participating in welfare-to-work programs experienced reduced health outcomes, compromised personal and family safety, and reduced social resources. The shift from government to personal and social support, the author argues, results in reduced and often insufficient support. Similarly, Grahame and Marston (2012) found that single mothers in welfare-to-work programs experience stigma, identity loss, and general demoralization as a result of reduced relational autonomy.

In considering single-parent workers, specific attention must also be paid to parent gender. Single fathers' parenting styles and involvement are typically different than that of single mothers (Bronte-Tinkew, Scott, & Lilja, 2010). The majority of research on single parents, however, has neglected fathers. Within the work–family field, gender differences associated with the distribution of household responsibilities and paid work (Craig & Mullan, 2010) suggest that the challenges faced by men and women may also be different. For example, Minnotte (2012) found that compared to all other parents (i.e., single mothers, married mothers and fathers) single fathers reported the lowest ↳ levels of work-to-family conflict. In a study using the National Study of the Changing Workforce, Nomaguchi (2012) found that single mothers experienced

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greater home-to-work conflict than single fathers, and that child age was related to experienced conflict for single fathers, but not mothers. Finally, in a study of postseparation households, Bakker and Karsten (2013) found that single mothers all identified as mothers first, and faced greater limitations compared to co-parents in balancing responsibilities.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Individuals

The experiences of LGBT workers have more recently received attention in the organizational studies literature, though quantitative research remains limited (King, Huffman, & Peddie, 2013). As a significant and growing part of the workforce, however, LGBT parents must be more meaningfully considered in work and family scholarship. This is particularly true given that there are a number of challenges related to being a member of the LGBT community that pertain to the family and work domains.

First among the obstacles faced by LGBT workers in managing work and family responsibilities are established legal and social structures, which challenge the legitimacy of LGBT identity. Despite recent progress in some states, employment discrimination based on LGBT status remains legal in many areas of the country (Knauer, 2012). As a social parallel, well-established definitions of "family" are highly inconsistent and inappropriate for LGBT families, yet these definitions drive decisions around policies and practices (Peterson, 2013), such as policies that give women more time off than men for family leave. As a result of these legal and social realities, LGBT workers have limited voice, more barriers, and fewer formal resources available for addressing work and family responsibilities.

Less structurally codified but also problematic is the potential experience of stigma associated with membership in the LGBT community. In response to concerns about perceived discrimination, many members of the LGBT workforce elect to conceal their identity or family status as a means of reducing stigma (Madera, King, & Hebl, 2012). Concealing your identity, however, may lead to reduced social support and an inability to take advantage of family-based programs that may reveal your suppressed identity (Clair, Beatty, & MacLean, 2005). As a result, sources of social support for work and family responsibilities, through leaders, co-workers, and friends, or program use, may seem inaccessible to LGBT parents. The fear of revealing a concealed stigmatized identity has also been linked to numerous career attitudes (e.g., commitment), psychological strain (e.g., work-related depression), and career outcomes (e.g., promotion; Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell, 2007). Stigma experienced by LGBT individuals may therefore compound and exacerbate the negative relationships between work–family conflict experiences and similar attitudinal, strain, and career outcomes.

The intersection of gender-based norms and LGBT identity also alters the traditional division of labor, as same-sex couples do not inherently fit established gender-based parental/family roles. Among same-sex couples, partners report egalitarian distribution of household and parenting responsibilities (Goldberg, Smith, & Perry-Jenkins, 2012; Perlesz et al., 2010). For same-sex couples, the distribution of work and family demands may be inconsistent with traditional gender expectations (e.g., many men in same-sex couples have greater family care responsibilities than men in opposite-sex relationships whereas women in same-sex couples are more likely to have breadwinner responsibilities). Consequently, services and support options provided in the workplace (e.g., maternity leave), which may emphasize traditional gender norms, may be insufficient or misaligned.

Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

Formerly incarcerated members of the workforce represent another population that warrants a closer examination by work and family scholars. Within the United States, there are currently over 2.2 million individuals incarcerated throughout local, state, and federal correctional institutions (International Centre for Prison Studies, 2014). Of those incarcerated in the United States, it is estimated that roughly 650,000 individuals will transition from correctional facilities to their areas of residency each year (Shivy et al., 2007). For many who are transitioning, their primary challenges are managing work and family responsibilities (Arditti, 2012). Despite this, we know very little about the work–family needs of formerly incarcerated individuals, and even less about possible solutions (Yocum & Nath, 2011).

The challenges for formerly incarcerated workers begin prior to release. This is particularly true for the
p. 367 incarcerated individual's family members ↳ and his or her family relationships. In a qualitative study of caregivers with an incarcerated partner, Arditti, Lambert-Shute, and Joset (2003) found several themes of difficulties created by incarceration including "… emotional stress, parenting strain, work–family conflict, and concerns about children" (p. 200). They note too that incarceration changes the relationship that children have with their parents because of reduced contact, negative emotions, or the presence of new parental figures in the household. These changes mean that, upon reentry, the family unit for formerly incarcerated individuals is likely to be fractured, conflict inducing, and lacking as a source of social support.

The immediate challenges faced by formerly incarcerated individuals when they return to the family often revolve around the work–family interface, and include finding reliable employment, securing safe residence, reestablishing family relationships, and redeveloping support networks. Particularly problematic is that formerly incarcerated individuals face extreme strains in their relationships with partners and children. At the very core, formerly incarcerated individuals return to a new definition of family that has been shaped by their period of incarceration (Arditti et al., 2003). For many, their role as "parent" has been taken by someone else (stepparent, grandparent). Upon release they have emotional challenges (guilt, anger, etc.) but not necessarily the resources to provide support (Mazza, 2004). Although these efforts to reestablish family are ongoing, formerly incarcerated individuals face an uncertain and often stigma-laden work environment (Tripodi, Kim, & Bender, 2010), making reliable employment difficult to find. Although family or work domain challenges are themselves substantial, it is the combination of facing extreme demands in each simultaneously while functioning in an environment largely void of support that creates a unique challenge at the work–family interface for the formerly incarcerated.

Although the greatest challenge for the formerly incarcerated is often reestablishing their family (Arditti, 2012), employment is most critical in reducing the likelihood of and time to recidivism (Tripodi et al., 2010). Maintaining reliable employment is necessary, yet family relationships are at their most demanding. In the context of knowing that major obstacles to not committing a new crime are financial problems and employment problems (Visher, Winterfield, & Coggeshall, 2005), supportive policies and reliable employment may be the most critical tool to keeping formerly incarcerated parents from returning to incarceration.

Finally, a major challenge for formerly incarcerated individuals is stigma. Formerly incarcerated individuals experience stigma against their group both in and outside of the workplace (LeBel, 2012). The stigma of formally incarcerated individuals means fewer employment opportunities and potential discrimination within the workplace (Tripodi et al., 2010). It may also mean that formerly incarcerated workers feel less free to use flexibility or other work and family programs for fear of being perceived of as less serious, reliable, or committed.

Methodological and Pragmatic Challenges

Moving beyond the examination of population characteristics, we must also examine methodological and pragmatic challenges that are in part responsible for the limited research on underrepresented populations within work–family research. We categorize these challenges into three groups: accessibility challenges, eligibility challenges, and measurement challenges.

Accessibility Challenges

First, researchers may not have easy access to sampling pools of underrepresented individuals. Many work–family scholars are academics, applied researchers, or consultants. It is therefore not surprising that the current literature is dominated by well-educated samples, typically consisting of students, managers, or professionals (Casper et al., 2007; Chang et al., 2010), as they are presumably readily accessible within existing professional networks. In addition, such populations are likely to have regular access to the internet, computers, tablets, and smart phones, which are typical vehicles used by work–family researchers to collect data.

Fortunately, sample convenience is an issue that can be, and for many researchers has been, easily addressed. Researchers and practitioners in many disciplines such as economics, gender studies, sociology, social work, anthropology, and developmental psychology routinely work with the underrepresented populations reviewed in this chapter. We encourage work–family researchers to reach out to relevant discipline, university, and community leaders to gain knowledge and access. Additionally, creative thinking is necessary in terms of data collection sites and methods. Excursions to sites frequented by the target population, in-person interviews or survey administration, and translated materials may all be necessary steps to gain access.

p. 368 Second, the population may be hidden and/or challenging to find due to low base rates (e.g., undocumented immigrants). In such cases, researchers would need to specifically target underrepresented workers in their recruitment strategy. This can be seen in several exemplary contributions to the work–family literature. Goldberg et al. (2012) targeted new lesbian mothers by giving study recruitment information to adoption agencies to distribute to new parents waiting to adopt their first child. Griggs et al. (2013) recruited low-income participants by working with a local activist group and placing fliers at 32 community locations likely to be frequented by a low-income demographic. Using participants' social networks through snowball sampling may also be an effective strategy for gaining access, albeit one that may have limited generalizability. Finally, some researchers have successfully used large-scale national databases containing a fairly substantial proportion of minority individuals that allow majority versus minority group comparisons (e.g., Brodish et al., 2011).

Eligibility Challenges

To be eligible for a study on work–family issues, participants typically must have work responsibilities and family responsibilities. Without participation in one or both of these roles, conceptually individuals would not experience any role interaction or outcomes stemming from work and family management. However, to determine whether participants have work and family responsibilities, researchers typically limit samples to participants who are working a minimum number of paid hours per week and are married and/or have a dependent child (e.g., Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003). Using these criteria to determine eligibility directly and indirectly excludes segments of the population, (e.g., single parents, LGBT couples, individuals providing elder care), limiting the diversity of extant studies (Chang et al., 2010; Rothausen, 1999). For example, providing care to family members does not necessarily require living with family members or having a spouse and/or children. In fact, reports from the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia show that caregivers for elderly or disabled family members often do not reside in the same home as the care recipient (De Vaus, 2004; Macrory, 2012; National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, 2009). Similarly, low-income individuals and racial minorities are more likely to live in multigenerational households compared to their higher-income, white counterparts (Cohen & Casper, 2002). Such family and household structures may be excluded using typical family responsibility criteria (i.e., married or cohabiting, and/or parental status), despite the possibility that individuals in those structures have sufficient family responsibility to experience work and family domain interactions. Requiring a specific number of work hours might also be problematic, as individuals occupying low-wage positions tend to have shiftwork arrangements, which may include variable hours, as well as multiple jobs (Presser, 1994). Focusing on only one paid position or those requiring full time working hours may miss the full picture of the individual's work situation or directly exclude low-wage workers.

Moving forward, eligibility criteria used to ensure that participants have work and family responsibilities should be revised to consider variations in work and family structure. Rothausen's (1999) measure of family responsibility attempts to provide a solution for accurately measuring family responsibility. Her Responsibility for Dependents measure assigns weights to care responsibilities, including children of all ages and adults, both living and not living with the caregiving individual. Perceptual measures of family involvement or hours in home-based work may also serve as indicators for family responsibility that can take into account multiple family structures. We agree that work hours may be an appropriate indicator of involvement, but we urge researchers to carefully consider cutoffs and provide theoretical justification, rather than simply citing previous work as support for an arbitrary minimum number of hours. If work hours are used, researchers should also be careful to ensure that they are capturing the total number of job hours across all jobs, as some individuals may occupy multiple full-time and part-time positions.

Measurement Challenges

Measurement criticisms are not new to the work–family field. Measures of conflict and enrichment have been criticized for being double-barreled and ambiguous in terms of the time period referenced (Bellavia & Frone, 2005). Additionally, the use of agreement scales that is popular among measures cannot distinguish between the occurrence of conflict and its appraisal and is often ambiguous in meaning (González-Morales,
p. 369 Tetrick, & Ginter, 2012). Alternate scales use frequency anchors, which do not indicate the extent ↳ to which conflict is stressful (Bellavia & Frone, 2005). We recognize and echo these concerns, and further note that population factors may also change item comprehension, content relevancy and deficiency, or meaning.

Current measurement items are written by and validated using sample populations that are well-educated (e.g., Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). As a result, the items are written for individuals with at least a high school education. This could be problematic for

measuring work–family phenomena experienced by individuals with lower education levels, such as low-income workers or younger (i.e., adolescent) workers. To illustrate, we calculated the reading level for Netemeyer et al.'s (1996) measure of work–family conflict, Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams' (2000) measure of work–family conflict, and Carlson et al.'s (2006) measure of work–family enrichment. We used the Flesch–Kincaid formula, which is based on number of words and syllables, and the Dale–Chall index, which is based on percentage of words in a list of 3,000 words used by fourth graders (Schinka, 2012). All scales were estimated to have a seventh grade reading level. Although an eighth grade reading level is typical for the U.S. population, we can expect that individuals in less-educated populations (e.g., farm workers; Grzywacz et al., 2009), or from populations in which English is not the first language, may have difficulty understanding measurement items; therefore, items may need to be revised for reading comprehension.

The content of items may also change in terms of relevancy. Although the majority of items in work–family scales are general (e.g., "The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life"; Netemeyer et al., 1996), some are specific enough to be irrelevant for some. The item "my work keeps me from my family more than I would like" (Stephens & Sommer, 1996) would be confusing for individuals who worked with family or in a family business. A similar issue arises with enrichment, as items may assume that workers are employed in skilled positions (e.g., "my involvement in my work helps me acquire skills and this helps me to be a better family member"; Carlson et al., 2006). This is particularly apparent when we extend to look at support measures that assume individuals are in jobs that have career progressions (e.g. "the way to advance in this company is to keep nonwork matters out of the workplace"; Allen, 2001) or allow flexibility (e.g., "in my work organization employees who use flextime are less likely to advance their careers than those who do not use flextime"; Thompson, Beauvis, & Lyness, 1999).

Similarly, scales may be deficient in light of population characteristics. For example, both Carlson et al.'s (2006) enrichment measure and Hanson, Hammer, and Colton's (2006) measure of positive spillover tap into only a few resources identified in Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) model of enrichment, consequently leaving out resources that may be important to certain populations. For example, physical resources may be particularly important to consider for individuals who work in physically strenuous jobs, such as migrant farm workers (Arcury et al., 2012), whereas mental health resources may be critical for military workers who work in highly stressful environments (Coll, Weiss, & Yarvis, 2012).

Finally, scales may differ in meaning across populations either because the words themselves carry different meanings or because individuals interpret items differently. The former reason is a consideration frequently discussed in cross-cultural research (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001). The issue of item interpretation is more subtle and difficult to detect, because we often do not investigate what experiences or thoughts people draw upon when answering. We know that responses are based on a mental representation of the target construct (e.g., conflict or enrichment), which is affected by their judgment, affect, and proximal experiences (Schwarz, 1999). Mental representations of what constitutes different degrees of conflict may therefore vary not only within individuals depending on recent events or current mood, but also between individuals based on life experiences and perspectives. This raises issues of comparability.

Grzywacz and his colleagues suggest that this may be an issue in their 2007 study of work–family conflict in Latino poultry workers. Despite the objectively demanding nature of the job and qualitative reports of experiencing work–family conflict, their quantitative results showed that the workers reported infrequent work–family conflict (mean of 1.64 on a five-point frequency scale). The authors speculate that this low average may be due to the relative unimportance of work–family conflict in their lives or that work–family
p. 370 conflict concerns may be attenuated by a collectivist belief system ↳ (Grzywacz et al., 2007). In either case, it may be incorrect to interpret the low mean as an indication that this population infrequently experiences work–family conflict or to conclude that they experience work–family conflict less than other populations with higher means.

Accurate measurements that yield valid inferences are essential building blocks in research. Although current measurement tools have been and should continue to be valuable, we offer a few suggestions for improvement. First, both researchers and practitioners should be aware of the practical constraints on measurement, such as participant education level or language fluency, and we encourage both researchers and practitioners to calculate reading level and ensure clarity and comprehension if it is a concern for the population of interest. Future research could also more directly look at the extent to which different ages or populations of workers comprehend work–family measurement items.

We also strongly suggest that measures be tested and compared for invariance across populations. This is typically done in cross-cultural research (e.g., Spector et al., 2007), but insights would be gained by comparing subsets of workers, such as those in blue-collar and white-collar positions. By testing measurement invariance, we can empirically determine to what extent measurement tools generalize across populations. Similarly, revised or translated scales should be published to encourage consistent use of alternative versions and for ease of comparability of results. When items are omitted from a published scale to ensure applicability (e.g., Griggs et al., 2013), authors should indicate which items were removed and why.

Finally, future research should investigate further what experiences and perceptions are used to answer work–family construct items and how these references may differ across groups. The current "levels" approach to measuring work–family constructs may hide qualitative differences across populations (Maertz & Boyar, 2011). We instead argue that this would be best approached by using qualitative and experience sampling methods. Qualitative methods may be used to discuss reactions and responses to measurement items. Experience sampling methods may be used to isolate the kinds of events or experiences that most influence perceptions.

Summary and Next Steps

Our goals in presenting population-specific characteristics and methodological issues related to underrepresented populations in work and family scholarship are to raise awareness around these limitations, offer some ideas for helping advance the field beyond these challenges, and inspire creative thinking in others who might then execute more inclusive research and/or practice. We end this chapter with some final thoughts for achieving these goals.

There Are Themes

There exist a number of themes that cross over multiple populations. In our estimation, such overlap identifies the characteristics that are particularly important for us to attend to and should guide us in the development of more inclusive approaches. The first theme we see are the factors related to economic hardship. Although financial challenges are germane to the realities faced by low-income workers, similar issues emerge in the literature on immigrant workers, single-parent workers, and the formerly incarcerated. Although these are three distinct populations, workers in these roles share (in many cases) a lack of financial resources. As resources are critical to the management of work and family demands (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009), we must begin to more readily consider economic factors, such as family financial resources, debt, and costs of living, as well as their consequences, such as lack of reliable transportation and child care, and poorer health, in our models and research.

A second theme that emerged was the role of gender. Gender factors emerge in two clear ways. First, for certain populations, men and women experience fundamentally different realities. Single parents are far more likely to be moms than dads, whereas formerly incarcerated workers are far more likely to be dads than moms. Second, the gendered nature of work and family roles becomes a central factor for some worker

populations (e.g., LGBT parents, immigrants, and single parents). The thoughtful consideration of gender in our work and family models and research should really be a more common practice. We might achieve this by identifying relationships within which to examine worker gender as a moderator, such as illustrated by the finding that quality leader–member exchange (LMX) relationships are more important for women than for men in impacting work and family outcomes (Agars & Tortez, 2013), or by identifying contexts or questions for which expectations or perceptions around gender norms are integral.

p. 371 A third and final theme is the presence of stigma. That several of our underrepresented populations also face the reality of stigma as part of their group membership is doubly problematic. Stigma presents numerous work-related challenges for members of stigmatized groups including experienced discrimination and social exclusion (Gates & Mitchell, 2013), and may also make the management of work and family responsibilities more difficult by limiting access to necessary resources or by forcing individuals to hide their identity (Jones & King, 2014). In understanding the work and family experience for members of stigmatized groups, we must begin to consider how stigma may interact with or directly impact work and family experiences. Workers identifying as LGBT, for example, may be unwilling to access family programs for fear of having to reveal a concealed identity; therefore their experience of work and family conflict can only truly be understood in light of their felt stigma. Similarly, low-income workers may be less likely to meet critical family health needs for fear of missing work and being the labeled "lazy."

Many Challenges Are New to Work–Family But Are Not New

In moving forward to address voids in the work and family field within the aforementioned populations, we must also draw on research from related fields and topics for guidance. Although many of the challenges identified may be underexplored in work and family, there are few for which we are totally in the dark. Consequently, drawing from related fields and/or related disciplines offers a fruitful next step. A first approach to seeking out existing work that may inform our efforts is to identify other disciplines that deal with the same topics (or populations). For example, the changing definition of "family" is now being addressed in the family studies literature (Qiu, Schvaneveldt, & Sahin, 2013) and social work field (Gabrielson & Holston, 2014). Social work researchers are also far more advanced in studying the challenges of low-income, immigrant, and formerly incarcerated individuals, albeit from the service provider perspective. Sociological perspectives on the gendered workplace and inherent inequalities (Williams, Mueller, & Kilanski, 2012) may inform the identification and development of effective policies for single parents, LGBT parents, or immigrant workers for whom gender identity issues intersect with managing work and family.

Second, we must draw on research from related topic areas, which may overlap to varying degrees with your populations and questions of interest. Challenges with formerly incarcerated workers, for example, focus heavily on family adjustment and relationships with partners and children after a period of separation. Though not identical, military workers returning from a tour of duty, or expatriates returning to their home country, share some of these experiences. The acculturation issues experienced by expatriates and the embeddedness of the host culture (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010), for example, are likely similar to some of the challenges faced by individuals who have lived long periods of time within a prison culture. The research on identity management (Madera et al., 2012) may help understand employee decisions to use (or not) work and family policies by stigmatized groups. Finally, the research on the relationship between stigma and employee withdrawal (Volpone & Avery, 2013) may provide direction for examining the experience of work–family conflict and work (dis)engagement of workers from LGBT, immigrant, or formerly incarcerated populations.

We Must Broaden Our Methodological Scope

The limited consideration of many populations likely has less to do with a failure to recognize their importance but more with the methodological challenges they present. One of the greatest challenges in understanding the work and family interface among underrepresented populations is our dependence on traditional and established research methods (e.g., scales validated on white collar populations, recruitment through professional networks), with limited acknowledgment that these methods may be hampering our ability to access and identify study participants, and preventing us from capturing and studying the work and family interface for substantial groups of workers. Consequently, if this chapter is to inspire an advance in work and family scholarship, we must strongly emphasize the need for broadening our methodological approaches.

As discussed earlier, we see major methodological challenges involved in gaining access to underrepresented populations, the proxies we use to define study eligibility, which restrict inclusiveness, and the limited availability of appropriate measurement tools. Their impact is exacerbated by the need for most in academia to publish quickly and regularly, which is a path not easily afforded to someone who is
p. 372 trying to develop new methodologies or reach ↳ "hidden" populations. In an effort to address these challenges, we must partner with community agencies and in an effort to increase participation opportunities. For example, in our work to study the work and family experiences of the working poor, a difficult population to reach, we have partnered with community social services agencies that helped provide access to participants, we have developed translated versions of survey instruments in order to include recent immigrants and other non-English speakers, and we have developed a protocol that emphasizes safety and anonymity for members of stigmatized populations such as the formerly incarcerated or undocumented workers. Giving careful consideration to how our methods may be inhibiting access and identifying methodological changes that enhance access will go a long way to expanding work and family scholarship into traditionally understudied populations.

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