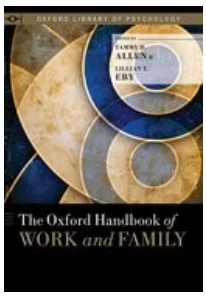

The Oxford Handbook of Work and Family

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CHAPTER

1 Introduction

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Abstract

Multiple factors such as changes in family structure and labor patterns have contributed to interest in work–family scholarship and practice over the past several decades. The global economy and rapidly evolving technology have introduced new challenges to how individuals structure and manage their work and family responsibilities. This chapter sets the stage for the rest of the volume. It includes an overview of the seven sections of the book and brief highlights of the chapters that comprise the total volume.

Keywords: work–family, changing demographics, technology global workforce, work–family practice, technology

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Introduction

Work–family scholarship has grown rapidly over the past several decades, not only in the United States but across the globe (Poelmans, Greenhaus, & Maestro, 2013). A PsycINFO search conducted on June 15, 2015 using the term "work–family" produced 5,382 hits. A total of 1,895 of those hits were from 2010 and later alone. This is no surprise in that the harmonization of work and family roles is an issue that resonates with many adults (Galinsky, Aumann, & Bond, 2009). Moreover, work–family issues are a major human resource concern to organizations (Society for Human Resource Management Workplace, 2013). In this introductory chapter we identify some of the factors responsible for growth in the field and provide an overview of the volume.

Growth in the Work–Family Field

Interest in the topic has been fueled by multiple factors. A major driver has been a panoply of changes in family structure and paid labor participation patterns that have increased the likelihood that individuals face simultaneous work and family demands and that these demands occur across the life course. For example, the percentage of women in the paid labor force has increased over the past several decades whereas the percentage of men has decreased. Specifically, in 1972 43.9% of women were participating in the paid labor force compared to 57.7% in 2012 (United States Department of Labor, undated); in 1972 78.9% of men were participating in the labor force compared to 70.2% in 2012. Labor force participation by mothers with children under the age of 18 years has also continued to increase. In 1976 48.8% of mothers with children under age 18 years participated in the paid labor force. The percentage increased to 70.9 in 2012. The percentages are even higher if limited to children aged 6–17 years (none younger); they were 56.2% in 1976 and at 76.0% in 2012 (United States Department of Labor, undated).

Labor patterns also show a shift in the pattern of work among married couples. In 1967 43.6% of married

couple families involved households in which both the husband and the wife worked. This ↳ grew to 52.8% in 2011 (United States Department of Labor, 2014a). During the same time period married couple families in which only the husband works have decreased (in 1967 it was 35.6% and in 2011 it was 19.1%) whereas married couple families in which only the women works have increased (in 1967 it was 1.7% and in 2011 it was 6.8%). Women are also contributing a greater percentage of the total family income. In 1970, wives' earnings as a percentage of family income was 26.6%. In 2011 it grew to 37.0% (United States Department of Labor, 2014a).

The population is also aging at a rapid rate. The population of individuals aged 65 years and older increased 10-fold from 1900 to 2000, from 3.1 million in 1900 to 35.0 million in 2000. Importantly, this increase occurred in years in which there was only a 2-fold increase in the total population (Hobbs & Stoops, 2002). Given these trends, it comes as no surprise that eldercare responsibilities have further contributed to the need to better understand the work–family interface (Family Caregiver Alliance, 2012). Estimates indicate that more than one in six Americans who are working full or part time are also assisting with the care of an elderly or disabled family member, relative, or friend. Moreover, 70% of working caregivers report that they suffer work-related difficulties due to their caregiving responsibilities (Family Caregiver Alliance, 2012). The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the population of individuals aged 65 years and older will more than double between 2012 and 2060, from 43.1 million to 92.0 million, with just over one in five individuals in this age group. Individuals aged 85 years and older are also projected to triple from 5.9 million to 18.2 million during this same time period (http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb12-243.html). These projections indicate that eldercare will continue to be a pressing work–family issue in the decades to come.

Life-span issues are also relevant given that more individuals have dependent care responsibilities at later stages of life than in the past. Birth patterns have changed over the past several decades. In 1970 the average age of women at first birth was 21.4 years whereas in 2000 it was almost 25 years (Mathews & Hamilton, 2002). In 2013 it reached a high of 26 years (Martin, Hamilton, Osterman, Curtain, & Mathews, 2015). In addition, the number of women in their forties giving birth has been climbing. In 1970, 1% of first children were born to women aged 35 years and older. The percentage rose to 15% in 2012 (Shah, 2014). Moreover, although the number of births to women aged 50 years and over is small (there were a total of 677 in 2013), it has been steadily increasing (Martin et al., 2015).

Technology and the global economy have also impacted the way in which individuals manage their work and family lives. Technological advancements continue to change the way work is done as well as where it can be done, blurring the boundary between work and home. Large percentages of employees telecommute (Allen,

Golden, Shockley, 2015). In addition, more individuals are working within what has been referred to as the "on-demand" economy, taking on tasks at a moments notice (Wladawsky-Berger, 2015). Indeed, work is no longer solely linked to a discrete physical location (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). Similarly, the globalization of work, aided by technology, has contributed to a "round-the-clock" work culture, in which workers are expected to be available 24/7 (Miller, 2015).

Growth in work–family scholarship has also been fueled by interest in the topic outside of academia. Columns on work–family are regular features in periodicals such as the *Wall Street Journal*. Popular press articles with titles such as "*Why Women Still Can't Have It All*" generate heated discussion (Slaughter, 2012). Females appointed to high-level, high-profile positions combined with motherhood face intense scrutiny and ignite debate (Allen, French, & Barnett, in press). Men are not immune from public work–family debates. Daniel Murphy, a second baseman for the New York Mets, faced criticism for his decision to skip a few games after the birth of his first child (Pearlman, 2014). The White House has also weighed in on work–family issues, holding a *White House Summit on Working Families* in 2014 (United Sates Department of Labor, 2014b). In early 2015, President Obama proposed a set of policies such as expanded paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave intended to address "the challenge of balancing work and family" (The White House, 2015). In sum, the subject of balancing work and family is a popular one among scholars, practitioners, and the public at large.

Organization and Overview of the Volume

This volume is composed of 35 chapters that comprehensively examine work–family issues from a variety of perspectives. Chapters are contributed by leading scholars and students of the field who come from
p. 5 different disciplines and from different ↳ countries and who represent both science and practice. Laser sharp reviews of long-standing topics of interest as well as emerging bodies of literature are included. The volume is organized into seven sections: (1) Introduction and Overview, (2) The Worker, (3) The Family, (4) Organizational Practice, (5) Local, National, and International Context, (6) Special Topics, and (7) Integration and Future Directions. We provide a brief preview of each below.

Introduction and Overview

Following this introductory chapter, the first section includes a history of the field and reviews of theory and methodological approaches. French and Johnson chart the history and evolution of the work–family field. Leading figures in the development of the field from multiple disciplines including Lotte Bailyn, Rosalind Barnett, Anne Crouter, Kathleen Gerson, Jeffrey Greenhaus, Shelley MacDermid-Wadsworth, Phyllis Moen, Joseph Pleck, Maureen Perry-Jenkins, and Sheldon Zedeck share their insights with regard to where the field has been and where it is heading. The next chapter focuses on work–family theory. Rather than tread traditional ground by focusing on a review of established theories, Matthews, Wayne, and McKersie propose five theories that have yet to be fully leveraged by work–family scholars that they believe can help propel the work–family field forward. Lapierre and McMullan review methodological and measurement approaches to the study of work and family. An important feature of this chapter is that it provides an update of the review of research methods used in work–family research in a select group of industrial and organizational/organizational behavior (I-O/OB) journals conducted by Casper, Eby, Bordeaux, Lockwood, and Lambert (2007).

The Worker

The second section of the volume includes five chapters that focus on characteristics associated with the worker that make a difference in work–family experiences.

The section begins with a chapter authored by Leslie, Manchester, and Kim. Leslie et al. review the literature on sex and gender roles, a topic that has historically played a prominent role in work–family research. Next, Wayne, Michel, and Matthews review the growing literature that links worker personality and values with work–family experiences. This chapter is an important inclusion in that role of individual differences has taken a more prominent place in work–family research in recent years. Moving to issues with regard to affect, Grandey and Krannitz integrate the literatures on emotion regulation with that of the work–family interface, opening up interesting avenues for future research. Next Sonnentag, Unger, and Rothe review the relationship between work–family experiences and recovery experiences such as relaxation, mastery, control, and psychological detachment from work. The final chapter in this section provides a review of boundary management by Rothbard and Ollier-Malaterre. They trace the relationship between work and nonwork from the industrial revolution through to today.

The Family

This section includes five chapters that examine work–family issues that take into consideration family members and what family means. Although much of the research that covers worker perspectives on work–family is generated in the I-O/OB literatures, studies that takes into account couple and child issues bring together research from a variety of disciplines. These are topics especially ripe for multidisciplinary collaborations. Two chapters in this section focus on the couple. Shockley and Shen cover the literature concerning the division of labor among couples whereas Westman reviews the research to date that examines crossover processes among couples. Both of these chapters provide unique insights into the couple dynamics that are so important to understanding work–family experiences. The next two chapters place the spotlight on children. Cho and Ciancetta examine child outcomes that are associated with parental work–family experiences. Brennan, Rosenzweig, Jivanjee, and Stewart bring a unique perspective to the volume, reviewing the issues that face working parents with children who have disabilities. The final chapter in this section by Casper, Marquardt, Roberto, and Buss represents a departure from the way in which work–family research is typically viewed. Casper and colleagues review the literature from the perspective of single workers without dependent children, making the case for increased attention focused on the family issues of such workers.

Organizational Practice

p. 6 The study of organizational policies and practices has been a major topic of interest within the ↳ work–family literature. The six chapters in this section cover a variety of practice issues. The section begins with a contribution by Ellen Galinsky of the Families and Work Institute. The Families and Work Institute has been at the forefront of bringing work–family issues to the awareness of the public and has sponsored key research to inform public policy. Galinsky reviews and provides examples of the "research-to-action" approach they have used over their 25-year history. A number of scholars have noted the importance of the deinstitutionalization of existing work practices to better facilitate employee work–life balance (e.g., Bailyn, 2011). In the second chapter of the section, Wells uses an organizational change perspective in the study of workplace initiatives, providing the background and information needed to facilitate further scholarship and practice concerning the redesign of work to better accommodate working families. Massman, Kiburz, Gregory, McCance, and Biga discuss work–family practice within multinational organizations. Through the use of case studies that illustrate work–family practices within two Fortune 500 firms, they provide insight into work–life effectiveness within the current business environment. Supervisors play a key role in how individuals experience work and in their success in balancing work and family roles. Major and Litano provide a review and integration of leadership theory and research with work–family experiences. Flexibility has been the organizational practice most discussed by the public and has received the most research attention by scholars. Kossek and Thompson provide a balanced and nuanced review of workplace flexibility practices. Dependent care support has been another featured work–family practice. In the final chapter in this section, Rothausen reviews existing research and develops a need-based model of organizational dependent care support use.

Local, National, and International Context

Contextual issues are important to understanding work–family experiences. In this section, three chapters take into consideration the larger context within which work–family experiences occur. The section begins with a contribution by Minnotte who reviews the impact of community on the work–family interface. The following two chapters examine macrolevel issues. As is often recognized, nations differ considerably with regard to legislation, policies, and practices that support working families. den Dulk and Peper provide an overview of national policies and review their relationships with work–family outcomes. The section closes with a contribution by Ollier-Malaterre who reviews the findings from cross-national comparative work–family research.

Special Topics

In this section, we include nine chapters that cover what we believe to be underresearched, emerging, and/or novel topics to the work–family literature. As previously mentioned, technology is having a major impact on the intersection of work and family and we expect will continue to do so well into the future. Olson-Buchanan, Boswell, and Morgan provide a detailed review and summary of key finding from the literature on information communication technology and work–family issues. As technology continues to change the way we do work and the way in which we intersect with co-workers, this is sure to be a major topic of research well into the future. As documented by Hammer, Demsky, Kossek, and Bray, there is a surprising lack of intervention research within the work–family literature. These authors document existing research and provide a set of guidelines for future intervention research and practice. Agars and French make the case that the majority of work–family research is based on a narrow slice of the population. They focus on the case for expanding our typical research samples and provide specific populations in need of work–family research. In the next chapter, Lyness and Erkovan connect the careers literature with that of the work–family interface. As the authors note, career constructs are not well represented within the work–family literature. Much needed background and suggestions for better bridging of these two areas are provided. Grzywacz tackles the literature on work–family and employee health. He illustrates the complexities associated with the study of health and provides a roadmap for researchers interested in integrating work–family experiences and health outcomes. In the coverage of a topic largely unexplored to date, Poelmans and Stepanova masterfully inform readers of the ways by which research on neuroscience can inform work–family research. Eby, Mitchell, and Zimmerman bring a completely novel topic to the volume by discussing nonwork crises (e.g., death of a loved one, addiction) and how such unexpected events can affect the work–family interface across time. Pieper, Astrachan, and Neglia describe the unique work–family issues ↳ and dynamics associated with family-owned businesses. As noted by the authors, 60% of total employment within the United States is in family businesses, making this understudied topic an important area for future research. Although work–family issues continue to be framed as a women's issue in some circles, recent research and popular press coverage have increasingly recognized that work–family issues are important to men as well as to women. The final chapter is this section is contributed by Harrington, Humberd, and Van Deusen who focus on work–family issues for men, providing a much needed advancement in the work–family field.

Future Directions

The final section of the volume includes three chapters that focus on ideas for the future of work–family scholarship and practice. Biga, Church, Wade, Pratt, Kiburz, and Brown-Davis provide inspiration from the practice-side of the table. They bring their experience as behavioral scientists responsible for work–family programs across a variety of organizations to the development of questions that they believe are in need of research from scholars. The translation of our science into practice is often discussed as an important goal. Social media, blogs, and other nonacademic outlets have provided new platforms for communicating scholarship that can reach a large audience. Valcour and de Janasz provide an excellent primer for those interested in communicating work–family research to the public through technology-mediated communication. The volume concludes with a future research chapter by Allen and Eby. In this chapter they identify five future research themes that spanned chapters across the volume and provide additional suggestions for needed research directions based on those themes.

Conclusions

The audience for this volume includes a wide range of scholars who are conducting work–family research across national contexts and disciplines. Professionals engaged in the design and delivery of workplace work–family programs will also benefit from this handbook, as will policymakers who are interested in work–family issues. Our objective for the volume is that it will be a useful resource to all interested in the intersection between work and family and will serve as a guide for charting new directions in work–family research, theory, and practice.

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