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## Book Review

**Maura J. Mills (ed.) (2015) *Gender and the Work-Family Experience: An Intersection of Two Domains*. New York: Springer International Publishing. 358 pages.**

Work-family interrelation is a persistent issue keeping social research increasingly interested in it despite the wide range of research already conducted in this field. Balancing the work-family domains is a challenging issue for employees. The landscape of work-family conflict is changing as work becomes more complex and boundaries between work and home become more blurred than ever (Hochschild, 2001). Not surprisingly, this issue is followed with great attention in general societal awareness and by the popular media, too.

There is a growing intention within mainstream work-family research to explore work-family experiences in relation with employee's gender and gendered occupations/organizations. The book edited by Maura J. Mills definitely contributes to the debate on these intersecting relations. Generally, the chapters focus geographically on the United States, although there are some exceptions applying an international outlook (e.g., comparing occupational inequality in the US and Sweden in Chapter 17). The book uses an interdisciplinary approach, which seems adequate, however a slightly stronger psychological focus can be observed. On one hand, this book provides an overview of the current perspectives in the field of work-life balance and covers well-known issues; such as returning to work following childbirth or the issue of overwork. On the other hand, various new conceptualizations are introduced on the incorporation of gender into research on work-family issues. See for instance the comparative perspective between gender and poverty in relation to work-family issues in Chapter 3 and the perspective on the intersections between gender, race, and class in Chapter 4.

Several chapters focus on shifting gender roles and the changing family structures, hence strengthening our view that gender-related expectations change on how men and women should respond to work-life conflicts. In line with this, it is discussed in several chapters that work-family relation has become a serious issue for male employees as well; therefore, a scientific need is emphasized to call our attention toward more research on men and masculinity in workplaces.

The book contains three main parts, organized along the line of the macro level of societal influences, the domain of private sphere, and the framework of organization and career; or to put it differently the book explores the work-family issue through the lenses of intersecting macro level domains (Part 1), from the perspective of home (Part 2), and from the perspective of the workplace (Part 3). In a traditional sense, this edited book is a textbook. It seems that the organizing concept behind the book is to review previous research results and then link them together with a variety of rather understudied or newly emerging issues.

The first part of the book addresses the importance of intersectionality, as broadening the scope of potential research directions on gendered work-family

discussions by integrating new viewpoints - such as age, ethnicity, or sexual orientation - into the research. Lucas-Thomson and Goldberg (Chapter 1) focus on generational patterns of the insights on work-family balance, arguing that despite the emerging adults' ideas on gender roles showing an egalitarian picture, their actual behavior remains inconsistent with this.

Munn and Greer in Chapter 2 argue that traditionally men fit well into the stereotypical role of an 'ideal worker', however in contemporary relations - increasingly - this is not the case in practice: with the growing phenomenon of men being active at home and committed to caretaking roles as well, they often seriously struggle with work-family conflicts. Odle-Dusseau, McFadden, and Britt (Chapter 3) address a rather under-researched aspect by examining how poverty can cause gender specific discrepancies in work-family relations. They argue that the studies on work-family conflicts are mainly reflecting on the middle-class conditions neglecting the viewpoint of groups at or under the poverty line. Albeit as a result of 'feminization of poverty' women are more likely to be employed in lower-wage positions. These jobs are characterized by more demands and fewer resources, and consequently this situation leads to emerging difficulties of managing family life and it has a considerable negative effect on women's well-being and general health as well.

Following the thread, Frevert, Culbertson and Huffmann (Chapter 4) integrate race and ethnic minority issues into the study of work-family and gender relations. Their argument is based on the perception that work-family research applying a gender centered approach, are mainly focusing on 'professional white women'. Minority women have much less chance to access those occupational positions and structures that provide support for work-family balance.

Chapter 5 sheds light on how heteronormativity in using the current tools of measuring work-life conflicts restrict the horizons of researching work-family conflicts due to the non-applicability of these tools for describing the actual relations forming an LGB perspective. The authors highlight that work-family conflict studies should lay a greater emphasis on identity-based conflicts in future research.

Rajadhyaksha, Korabik, and Aycan (Chapter 6) formulate a demand for cross-cultural analysis for a potentially deeper understanding of the interface of work-family and gender domains. They argue that micro level variables such as gender and perceptions of gender role ideology should be supplemented and examined in connection with macro level variables like cultural norms and values in relation to gender equality.

The second part of the book 'Considerations from the Homefront' addresses work-life conflicts from the perspective of the home domain. Studies in this section are mainly reflecting on the effects of perceived work-family conflicts on the various groups and individuals. It starts with the issue of negative affective spillover from work to family (Chapter 7). The authors, Mitchell and her colleagues, emphasized the importance of the emotional processes in the unfolding mechanisms of work-family spillover and presented a theoretical base for examining the transmission of negative affect from work to family. They argue that gender is an important variable in shaping the emotional processes, thus the authors offer a conceptual work on the intersection of gender, emotion processes and affective spillover from work to family.

'Work-Family Guilt', another effect of perceived work-family conflict, is the subject of Chapter 8 by Korbaik. The author argues that although women are more likely to feel work-life guilt than men worldwide, it should be important not to view W-F guilt as primarily woman's concern, accepting stereotypes as reality or miss the within-gender variability in research. By introducing a new viewpoint, Nomaguchi and Milkie (Chapter 9) discuss how partners' views on the amount and kinds of conflicts that an employee experiences may shape the quality of their relationships in the US. They demonstrate that more than half of couples either overestimate or underestimate their partners' work-family conflict. These findings indicate that expectations on partner's work-life conflict are filtered through gendered lenses.

In Chapter 10 Cleveland, Fisher, and Sawyer introduce the notion of 'work-life equality' reflecting on women's and men's different engagement to participate in paid work and housework. The authors argue that even though the genders' presence both in higher education and in the labor market is becoming more balanced, women still have more responsibilities in housework and family-related tasks. Similarly, a new notion is explored by Grotto in Chapter 11: the 'on demand jobs'. These jobs typically appear in executive, managerial, and professional positions, where the expected availability is no longer restricted to the working hours so they typically result in flexible work configurations and characterized with growing ICT usage. According to Grotto, these 'on demand job' models have a huge impact on work-family relations; therefore, the application of a gender-centered approach would be worthwhile.

Part III enhances our knowledge on work-family relations further by examining alternative work-family outcomes experienced by those groups that are either understudied or have specific experiences and greater conflicts in maintaining work and family. Sprung, Toumbeva, and Matthews (Chapter 12) for example examine how gender differences appear in the access to, and the outcome of using work-family policies. They conclude that family-friendly benefits show a mix of positive and negative outcomes; however women in general are more aware of work-family policies and have greater access to them.

Rosiello and Mills, in Chapter 13, examine the relatively understudied issue of shift work and consider its occupational and gendered context. By reviewing existing studies, they found a growing percentage of women and men working in nonstandard shifts. It is particularly emphasized that shift work has negative consequences on several aspects of employees' professional and family life including both physical and mental health problems and lowered social relationships in general.

In Chapters 14 and 15 work-family relations are discussed from the perspective of gendered occupations. Huffman, Culbertson, and Barbour (Chapter 14) provide a theoretically rich explanation on the notion of 'gendered occupation' and examine how employees working in a gendered occupation face a unique set of work-family expectations and norms. They examine the context of a military corps to illustrate that a highly gendered workplace makes it especially difficult for minority gender groups (women, LGBT individuals) to manage work-family conflict. Jean, Payne, and Thompson in Chapter 15 highlight that among the many factors creating a leaky pipeline for women in STEM jobs (i.e. Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or

Math related jobs), family-related challenges and the expectation of work-family conflicts for women professionals especially impact the recruitment and the retention of women in these occupations.

Increased work involvement is a widespread and growing tendency all over the world. Clark, Belier, and Zimmerman, in Chapter 16, try to understand the relationship between workaholism and work-family conflict through the unique experience of workaholic women in US. Finally, in the last Chapter (17), Stanfors calls our attention to the changing patterns in the relationship between education and fertility, which is quite a hot topic given that high level professional, career oriented women are associated with reduced family life and delayed childbearing. She uses comparative data from Sweden and the US to examine how postponed childbearing varies by gender and fast-track professions in the fields of law, medicine and academia. Data show smaller differences in Sweden than in the US, but it is clear that public support is not achievable equally across professions and genders. Stanfors argues that differences cannot be explained simply by income variations; it is rather that working conditions and career structure contribute to managing a professional career and children, and for some groups of professions it is easier to combine the two.

The book makes it clear that considering the gendered nature of work-family relations and conflicts, including individual's experiences and perceptions, is essential for a deeper understanding of this issue. A consistent usage of definitions for clarifying the basic concepts of 'gender', 'family', and 'work-family conflict' would have been helpful for a deeper understanding. It would also have been great, if the author had devoted a chapter in the beginning of the book to this very issue. Similarly, more chapters with empirical examination would have increased the value of present volume. In spite of the missing coherent terminology and the lack of its explicit presentation, a great advantage of the book is that most of the chapters offer recommendations and solutions on how to ease work-family conflicts and stress. Due to this intention to deepen both the scholarly and the practical understanding of the linkages between gender, work, and family, this book is potentially of interest not only to researchers but also to organizational persons and policymakers.

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## References

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