Immigration and Work-Family Concerns (2009)

Author: Chien-Juh Gu, Western Michigan University

Date: January 6, 2009

Basic Concepts and Definitions

An important consideration in understanding issues of immigration, and their linkages with work-family concerns, relates to how immigration is defined, how subgroups of immigrants are classified, and key social policies that are oftentimes referenced when discussing issues relating to immigration. I provide a brief overview of these conceptual concerns below.

**Emigrants**

Individuals who leave their country and then reside in another country for more than 3 months are emigrants from the perspective of the country of origin (Brochmann, 1999).

**Immigrants**

*Legal definition:* According to the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), the legal definition of an immigrant refers to a legal permanent resident (LPR) or “green card” recipient who has been granted lawful permanent residence in the U.S. They are sometimes referred to as “legal immigrants” or “documented immigrants.” LPRs are authorized to live and to work permanently anywhere in the U.S., to own property, and to attend public schools, colleges, and universities. They may apply to become U.S. citizens after meeting certain eligibility requirements according to the INA and its amendments.

*Definition and usage in scholarly work:* The term “immigrant” in scholarly work is used more loosely than its legal definition. For instance, Brochmann (1999) defines both emigrants and immigrants as those who live in a foreign country for more than 3 months. In many other studies, “immigrants” is often used to refer to non-tourist foreigners in a broad sense. Most commonly, the term “immigrant” is considered self-evident and left undefined. Immigrant subjects in social research range from legal and temporary migrant workers to undocumented immigrants and transnational immigrants. Despite variations in legal status and migration purposes, the term “immigrant” is broadly used to describe these groups. “Immigrants” in scholarly work thus refers to all foreign-born residents.

**Illegal or Undocumented Immigrants**

Individuals who enter a foreign country without permission or legal documents (i.e., entry without inspection, or EWI), who have overstayed a legal period (i.e., visa abusers), or who work without
permission from the government of the receiving country are considered illegal or undocumented immigrants.

**Non-Immigrant Aliens**

A non-immigrant alien has temporary status as a visitor or short-term resident to the U.S. for a specific purpose. Non-immigrant alien activities, such as employment, study, travel, and business, are described by their classes of admission. For example, foreign government officials, academic and vocational students, temporary workers, exchange scholars, athletes, entertainers, and family members of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents (LPRs) may be permitted to enter and reside the U.S. under different classes of admission. Different types of visas are issued based on the class of admission, which also determines the maximum duration of stay for non-immigrants. Below are some examples.

*H1B visa:* H1B visas are granted to temporary foreign workers who are in specialty occupations. Spouses and children on H4 visas may also live in the U.S. during an authorized period of stay. Non-immigrant professionals are usually categorized under this class of admission. They can apply for visa renewals to extend their stay or apply for permanent residency to become LPRs.

*H2A visa:* H2A visas are granted for seasonal agricultural workers from other countries.

**Ethnic Enclaves**

An ethnic enclave is an area of concentrated immigrant entrepreneurship. In many metropolitan areas, ethnic enclaves such as Chinatown, Little Italy, Little Tokyo, Little India, Irishtown, and Germantown are fairly visible and have become tourist attractions. Ethnic restaurants, gift shops, and grocery stores can be found in these areas. Many immigrants, especially newcomers and laborers, reside in neighborhoods where fellow immigrants have settled. Living in an ethnic enclave helps immigrants adapt to the host society, obtain access to jobs in ethnic industries, and establish social networks in ethnic communities.

**The 1965 Immigration Act**

The 1965 Immigration Act abolished the national-origin quota system that had been executed in the U.S. since the Immigration Act of 1924. From 1924 to 1965, the U.S. government limited the number of immigrants who could be admitted from any country to 2% of the number of people from that country who were already living in the U.S. in 1890. The Immigration Act of 1924 prohibited immigration from Asia, especially for East Asians and Asian Indians; it also restricted the numbers of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. As a result, immigrants during this period were mainly Europeans from countries such as Ireland, England, and Germany (Lee, 2006).

**Assimilation**

Assimilation is the process by which immigrant groups abandon their old ways of life to meld into the mainstream society of their adopted country. Various aspects of assimilation include socioeconomic
status, geographic distribution, second language attainment, intermarriage, and cultural beliefs and behavior.

**Acculturation**

Acculturation, which is sometimes called “cultural assimilation,” is a process through which members of one cultural group adopt the beliefs and behaviors of another group. For instance, individuals may adopt another culture’s language, food, clothing, gender roles, family practice, and social attitudes. Although acculturation usually describes how an immigrant group adopts the culture of the native group, acculturation can be reciprocal; that is, the native group can also adopt cultural habits that are typical of the immigrant group.

**Overview of Immigration to the United States**

The United States has historically been a country of immigrants. The ethnic makeup of the U.S. population has been transformed as a result of the immigration inflows from various origins. While immigrants in the early 20th century were primarily European and White, most immigrants in contemporary America are non-White and largely come from Third World countries, especially Latin America and Asia. In 2000, 31.1 million of the U.S. population were foreign-born; by 2007, this had grown to 38 million (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003, 2007). While the immigrants a century ago were by no means homogeneous (i.e., Italian, Irish, Jewish, Greek, and Polish), contemporary immigrants are much more diverse. The variety of today’s immigrants in terms of their countries of origin, social and economic backgrounds, and motives for immigration is remarkable in American history.

Both the liberalized provisions of the 1965 Immigration Act and the growing American economy have shaped the immigration flows to the U.S. The 1965 Immigration Act brought both quantitative and qualitative changes to the immigrant population. First, it abolished the national-origin quota system and the exclusion of Asian immigrants, which had taken place since the Immigration Act of 1924. The 1965 Immigration Act also created a new set of preference categories that prioritized two immigrant groups: those who came for family reunification and those who had professional skills. In contrast to earlier immigrants, who were primarily male, post-1965 immigrants arrived with their families; thus, the gender ratio changed considerably. In 2007, family-sponsored immigrants constituted the majority of new legal permanent residents (LPRs) in the U.S.; women accounted for 55% (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2008). Post-1965 immigrants are often called “new immigrants” or “new Americans.” Their presence in the U.S. has increased the diversity of population and the complexity of immigration-related issues.

Since the 1960s, the growth of labor-intensive industries in the U.S. such as health care, service, microelectronics, and apparel manufacturing has attracted numerous immigrant laborers, especially women. This economic restructuring has produced a female-dominated immigration flow. A large number of immigrant women are employed in garment shops and microelectronics factories, where they work long
hours with little pay and limited benefits. Moreover, the need for immigrant domestic workers has emerged due to increasing employment among American women. 4 Millions of immigrant women from non-Western countries have come to the U.S. to work as domestic laborers, enabling their American employers to participate in the labor market of the formal economy (Cheever, 2002; Zarembka, 2002). Without the services of foreign-born workers, many American women (as well as those in other advanced economies) would have to forgo work in the paid labor market.

**Use of Human Capital to Predict Immigrant Experiences**

Portes and Rumbaut (2006) use human capital as a major criterion for categorizing immigrants. 5 They classify immigrants into three categories: unskilled and semi-skilled laborers, skilled workers and professionals, and entrepreneurs. These types of immigrants vary greatly in socioeconomic characteristics, immigration motives, major countries of origin, and adaptation experience. The following sections explain the background and characteristics of different types of immigrants.

**Unskilled or semiskilled laborers**

Immigrants who are unskilled or semiskilled laborers are often referred as “labor migrants.” Most labor migrants work in labor-intensive industries that require minimal skills such as the sugar-packing industry, seasonal agricultural fields, small electronic firms, garment contactors, and a wide gamut of urban services. Manual laborers usually have low wages, poor working conditions, and limited benefits, but the economy of many non-Western countries is worse than that of the U.S. Many immigrants thus seek employment overseas and work in labor-intensive industries. Immigrant workers are desirable to American employers because of their willingness to accept low wages and few benefits; many work with diligence and motivation despite their poor working conditions. As a result, manual labor immigration has continued, and many enterprises in the U.S. have greatly relied on and profited from this source of labor. Latin America, especially Mexico, is the major source of labor immigrants.

**Skilled workers and professionals**

Immigrants who are skilled workers and professionals are often called the “brain drain.” They are highly educated professionals and work in the white-collar workplace as computer programmers, medical professionals, engineers, or researchers. They often migrate through the preference category of the U.S. visa allocation system for “priority workers; professionals with advanced degrees, or aliens of exceptional ability.” Professional immigrants tend to settle in the U.S. to pursue career enhancement and better life chances rather than to escape poverty. With their high education, professional skills, and high income status, immigrant professionals assimilate easily into middle-class America and seldom reside in visible ethnic communities. Asia, especially India and the Philippines, is the major source of professional immigration.
Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurial immigrants, sometimes called “self-employed immigrants,” are those with their own businesses. Immigrant-owned businesses are widespread throughout the U.S. and are fairly visible in ethnic enclaves in metropolitan areas such as Koreatown in Los Angeles, Chinatown in New York City, and Little Italy in Boston. Immigrant entrepreneurs tend to hire their fellow immigrants, many who are family members. Immigrant employees’ willingness to accept underpaid, long-hour jobs has become a key to success in many small ethnic businesses. Some immigrant entrepreneurs also rely on transnational ties with their home countries for receiving capital and labor support. Korean, Chinese, and Cuban immigrants are well known for their ethnic entrepreneurship.

Importance of Topic to Work-Family Studies

Immigration is essentially a work-family issue, and yet this issue has rarely been discussed within the work-family literature (Grzywacz, Quandt, Arcury, & Marin, 2005). In order to secure a brighter future for their families, immigrant workers cross national borders to find jobs in the U.S., often leaving their families behind. In many families, only the husbands migrate overseas for work, leaving their wives and children to remain in the sending society; in other families, only the wives migrate. Some female workers entrust their children to relatives in the sending society, while they take care of others’ children in the host society. In other cases, only the children are sent overseas for education, while the parents remain in the sending society. The social action of international migration creates unique work-family contexts that deeply impact every individual in the immigrant family. Even within families who migrate together or reunite after initial migration, immigrants may experience substantial changes such as losing social networks and becoming a minority group. Children of immigrants who grow up in a new land also face challenges resulting from their minority status and the need to adapt to both the sending and the receiving societies. Due to international migration, immigrants and their children encounter profound disruptions such as family separation, family relocation, men’s downward occupational movement, women’s new entry into the labor force, and second-generation immigrant identity struggles. Immigrants’ work-family lives are indeed a complex phenomenon that warrants careful examination.

Immigration is also a gender issue. Men and women do not enter the migration process equally; consequently, they experience migration differently (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Pedraza, 1991). For instance, whether the man or the woman in the family migrates first depends on the economic pulling factor in the host society as well as gender relations. Even when the whole family migrates together, a couple’s post-migration employment can reconfigure their gender relations as they adapt to their new socioeconomic status in the host society. For example, many male immigrants’ authority in the family is undermined due to their downward occupational movement and their new minority status in the host society. On the other hand, women’s entry into the labor market enhances their power at home. During
the process from emigration to settlement, gender relations undergo continual negotiation as men and women rebuild their lives in the host society (Espiritu, 2002; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Immigration is thus a critical site for uncovering the mutability of gender relations (Curran, Shafer, Donato, & Garip, 2006).

International migration produces a unique gendered work-family context. Changes in power and status are central to the reconfiguration of gender relations and the consequent reshaping of gender identities. Thus, the interconnections among immigration, work-family, and gender must be examined. The following section reviews the literature on various work-family contexts that are created by immigration and examines how these work-family contexts affect immigrants’ gender relations and gender identities.

**State of the Body of Knowledge**

Because immigrants are by no means homogeneous, their work-family lives differ to a large extent. As Espiritu (1999) points out, immigrants’ socioeconomic heterogeneity fundamentally affects gender dynamics at home. Portes and Rumbaut (2006) also highlight the different socioeconomic characteristics of laborer, professional, entrepreneurial, and refugee immigrants. This section focuses on wage laborers, salaried professionals, and self-employed entrepreneurs. For each category, the interplay of work and family resulting from immigration and how it affects male and female immigrants is discussed. A brief review on how immigration affects parent-child relationships in laborer and professional immigrant families is also provided in the discussion.9

**Wage Laborers**

Since the late 1960s, the growth of female-intensive industries in the U.S. has recruited a significant number of female immigrant workers, especially in the service, health-care, garment, microelectronics, and apparel-manufacturing industries (Clement & Myles, 1994; Espiritu, 1999). For instance, in a study of Silicon Valley’s semiconductor manufacturing industry, Hossfeld (1994) reports that Third World immigrants constituted more than 80% of workers, the majority of whom were women, in the subcontracting firms that specialize in unskilled and semiskilled assembly work. To explain why labor-intensive industries hire substantial immigrant women workers, both Hossfeld (1994) and Espiritu (1999) observe that employers in these industries believe that immigrant women can afford to work for less, do not mind dead-end jobs, and are more suited psychologically to routine work. As a result, immigrant women find jobs in these industries more easily than their male counterparts. Large numbers of female Korean service workers in Hawaii and female Dominican garment workers in New York exemplify such gendered employability for immigrant laborers (Chai, 1987; Pessar, 1984; Ui, 1991).

Gendered employability for immigrant laborers greatly affects gender relations in immigrant families. Since immigrant women have greater access to jobs than do their husbands, their economic role increases. In fact, the wives’ financial contributions to the family often equal or exceed that of their husbands. As a result, the wives become the primary or co-breadwinners in the receiving society.
Such gender role reversals have helped some immigrant women to gain greater equity and bargaining power in their families (Kibria, 1993; Mahler, 1995; Min, 2001; Pessar, 1984). In her study of Dominican women in New York’s garment industry, for instance, Pessar (1984) reports that waged employment improves women’s status in domestic social relations. Due to their participation in the paid labor force, Dominican women gain greater power over budgets as well as domestic labor and hold more egalitarian beliefs of household authority.

Women’s greater power over economic and social resources, however, does not guarantee egalitarian gender relations in the family. Many studies have reported negative impacts of such changing gender roles. Losing their power and status in both society and the domestic sphere, immigrant men experience severe insecurity and anxiety, which often leads to marital conflicts, domestic violence, or marriage dissolution (Donnelly, 1994; Min, 2001). Patriarchal relations are often sustained in working-class immigrant families. Gender ideology plays an important role in sustaining a male-dominant system in immigrant families. Neither the increased economic role of immigrant wives nor the exposure to egalitarianism in U.S. society leads to significant changes in the gender-role attitudes of immigrant husbands (Gold, 1989, 1995; Kibria, 1990, 1993; Lim, 1997; Mahler, 1995; Min, 1998, 2001; Park, 1997; Pessar, 1995). Many immigrant wives continue to preserve traditional gender ideology and family values despite their enhanced social and economic status (Baker, 2004; Gu, 2006; Kibria, 1990, 1993).

In her study of Vietnamese immigrant families, Kibria (1993) observes that Vietnamese women struggle to enhance their power in the family and to preserve Vietnamese patriarchal tradition; she describes this as “walking an ideological tightrope.” Vietnamese women value the traditional family system, which provides them with economic protection and authority over the younger generation. In Gu’s study (2006) of Taiwanese immigrants, working-class dual-income families are much more patriarchal than their middle-class counterparts. In these families, the wives are responsible for all domestic labor and have no decision-making power over family finances and family relocation. Although complaining about their husbands’ chauvinism, these women perceive their subordinate status in the family as the norm in Asian culture. Moreover, Lim (1997) reports that Korean wives are aware of their contributions to the family economy, and, in turn, became less obedient and held firmer beliefs that husbands should help with housework. Nevertheless, traditional Confucian patriarchal ideology continues to restrain these women’s gender practices at home; marital hierarchy remains unchanged in most families.

In addition to gender ideology, family well-being is another important factor that contributes to the perpetuation of traditional gender relations. For working-class immigrants, immigration often equalizes or reverses the economic resources of men and women. Nevertheless, women’s earnings are usually insufficient to sustain their economic independence from men. To support their families and provide better lives for their children, women continue to rely on men and perceive their subordination to their husbands as a means to protect family well-being. Baker (2004) reports that most Mexican immigrant women would prefer not to work in the paid labor force because they believe that women should remain in the domestic
sphere; however, these immigrant women choose to work outside of the home in order to improve the lives of their children. For working-class immigrant women, employment is an extension of their family obligations.\textsuperscript{10} Traditional patriarchal gender ideology and relations often persist in immigrant families, and participating in the paid labor force is perceived as what women should do in order to sustain family economy and to secure family well-being (Baker, 2004; Ferree, 1979; Grahame, 2003; Kibria, 1990, 1993; Kim & Hurh, 1988; Pedraza, 1991; Zhou, 1992).\textsuperscript{11}

Like many minorities, lower-class immigrants are in a disadvantaged position in the larger political-economic structure and in the racial hierarchy of U.S. society. As Glenn (1986) argues, traditional patriarchy serves as a foundation of resistance against race and class oppression. Family traditions also provide a set of social relations and material resources to resist external inequalities and oppression (Baca Zinn, 1987, 1990; Baker, 2004; Glenn, 1986; Kibria, 1993; Pessar, 2007). For instance, as Foner (1986) states, Jamaican immigrant women experience racial and class inequalities more acutely than inequalities based on gender. This injustice gives these women a basis for unity with Jamaican men. Perceiving the family as an important source of support for resisting against social inequalities, immigrant women are willing to accept their subordinate status in the family in order to secure this support. Male dominance thus remains in many immigrant families.

In addition to gender relations, immigrants’ socioeconomic status is associated with the degree of their acculturation.\textsuperscript{12} Immigrant laborers, whose jobs are located in the lower ladders of economic structure, lack opportunities to interact with the mainstream culture. Their acculturation progress is often slower than that of their U.S.-born and -raised children, a situation that Portes and Rumbaut (2001) call “dissonant acculturation.” In these families, immigrant parents tend to rely on their children’s proficiency in English to help them communicate with the outside world; they also rely on their children’s knowledge of the receiving society in making key family decisions. Parents’ authority is undermined when such role reversal occurs, and intergenerational conflicts often result (Gil & Vega, 1996; Zayas & Solari, 1994). Moreover, immigrant parents’ low degree of acculturation can have a negative impact on children’s development, adjustment, academic outcomes, and mental health (Dumka, Roosa, & Jackson, 1997; Park, 2003; Plunkett & Bámaca-Gómez, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rumbaut, 1996).

**Salaried Professionals**

Compared with their working-class counterparts, immigrant women who are salaried professionals gain more gender equality at home (Chen, 1992; Gu, 2006; Min, 1998). Professional immigrant women are able to negotiate a fair share of the household labor because of their high socioeconomic status. Their career demands equal or exceed those of their husbands, and, in many cases, the women are the primary breadwinners. These factors shape the egalitarian relations of middle-class immigrant couples (Espiritu, 1999).

Many scholars use gender division of domestic labor as an indicator to measure gendered power relations in immigrant families. For instance, Min (1998) reports that in the Korean immigrant community,
younger professional husbands undertake more housework than men in any other occupational
categories. In his study of Taiwanese immigrants in New York, Chen (1992) observes that white-collar
professional men do a lot more household work than both their working-class and small-business
counterparts. Pesquera (1993) also finds similar patterns among Chicano professional men whose wives
are white-collar professionals. Moreover, many Filipino immigrant women who are health professionals
work double or late-night shifts: their husbands therefore assume more child-care and household
responsibilities (Espiritu, 1995, 2002). Regardless of greater male involvement in the domestic labor of
these middle-class immigrant families, women continue to perform more of the housework than their
husbands on average (Chen, 1992; Gu, 2006; Min, 1998; Pesquera, 1993).

In addition to the gender division of domestic labor, more wives are solely in charge of their family
finances; this indicates their powerful status in the family (Gu, 2006). In contrast, husbands tend to hold
absolute power when arranging their families’ relocation. Many professional Taiwanese women follow
their husbands, and many Filipino women physicians change their career paths in order to accommodate
their husbands’ relocation decisions (Espiritu, 2002; Gu, 2006). As Pessar (1999) argues, gains made by
immigrant women within a specific arena (such as the family) are often accompanied by contradictions
and constraints. Professional immigrant women’s power does not apply to all aspects of their family lives.
Although middle-class Taiwanese women are highly acculturated, they remain deeply constrained by
traditional norms in the family (Gu, 2006).

Like their working-class counterparts, salaried professional immigrants often experience racism in the
workplace. As Espiritu (1999) points out, immigrant professionals’ income is lower than that of their White
counterparts, despite their equal levels of education. Furthermore, they are more likely to encounter a
glass ceiling at work, to remain marginalized in work relations, and to be underemployed (Gu, 2006; Ong
& Hee, 1994; Yamanaka & McClelland, 1994). Immigrant women’s non-White and non-male status places
them in a more vulnerable position than men. Many experience harassment and hostile environments at
work (Cho, 1997). The family therefore becomes an important source of support. Many middle-class
immigrant women desire a strong family, even at the cost of accepting certain components of the
traditional patriarchal system (Espiritu, 2002). Because most middle-class immigrants reside in suburban
White areas, spatial isolation from ethnic peers tends to solidify family bonds (Kurien, 2003).

In contrast to laborers, professional immigrants have higher levels of human capital and thus higher
degrees of acculturation. They are able to provide their children with appropriate guidance to confront
structural barriers in American society and therefore are less likely to have conflict with their children at
home (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rumbaut & Portes 2001; Stepick, Stepick, Eugene, Teed, & Labissiere,
2001). Nevertheless, recent studies show that the difficulty of balancing two cultural systems in the
homes is central to professional immigrants’ parenting and parent-child relationships (Chen, 2006; Gu,
2006). Immigrant parents who are highly acculturated struggle with maintaining both the parental
authority supported by their culture of origin and the liberal parenting attitudes acculturated in the host society (Chen, 2006; Gu, 2006).

**Self-Employed Entrepreneurs**

In the early part of the century, Jews and the Chinese were two important immigrant groups whose occupations were concentrated in ethnic enterprises. Today, Koreans are one of the immigrant groups who present a significantly high proportion of self-employed entrepreneurs (Min, 2007). These family-owned small businesses greatly rely on women, who usually work long hours as unpaid employees. They also tend to hire co-ethnics who are willing to endure low wages, long hours, and lack of benefits. Both unpaid wives and underpaid immigrant employees contribute to the success of many small immigrant businesses (Phizacklea, 1983).

Many immigrant women choose to develop family businesses as a means to resist the racist and sexist labor markets. In a survey of Korean immigrants in New York City, nearly half of all Korean working women are self-employed in small businesses such as grocery stores, nail salons, dry cleaning stores, or small restaurants (Min, 2001). Unpaid female labor enables many family stores to stay open long hours and on weekends without having to hire additional workers outside of the family. Although wives are a valuable commodity to family-owned businesses, they gain little economic independence as a result of their work. It also does little to enhance equity in gender relations. According to Min (1998), the husband is the legal owner in nearly all Korean family businesses, even when the wife plays a dominant role in operating the business. Similar to their working-class counterparts, wives in immigrant family businesses perceive their unpaid and often unrecognized labor as an extension of their domestic obligation. They tend to tolerate their husbands’ dominance in the family and in the workplace. Gender hierarchy is therefore sustained in entrepreneurial immigrant families.

For immigrants who are self-employed entrepreneurs, the blurred distinction between work and family signifies their everyday life. In contrast to wage laborers and salaried professionals, whose homes are separate from work, self-employed immigrants experience a large part of family life at their workplace. In most cases, the couple works side by side every day, so their work relations and family relations overlap. No clear boundaries exist between work and family. Working long hours together creates marital conflicts and is more stressful to the wives (Min, 2001). Immigrants’ family businesses increase women’s financial and social dependence, as they create an isolated working and living environment. Both men and women are rarely exposed to the more flexible gender roles of U.S. middle-class couples. As a result, self-employed immigrants tend to be slower in changing patriarchal gender-role divisions than their counterparts in other occupations (Kim & Hurh, 1988; Min, 2001).

**Implications for Research**

It was not until the mid-1990s that gender became a focus of research in immigration studies (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994, 2003). As a result, immigrants’ gender relations remain underexplored.
Nevertheless, gender is and should be considered as a constitutive feature that structures immigration, despite its large omission in the literature (Curran et al., 2006; Foner, 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Pessar, 1999, 2003). The gendered nature of immigration is central to creating the unique work-family contexts that immigrants encounter in everyday life. Exploring the interplay of immigration, gender, and work-family is therefore critical for obtaining an in-depth understanding of immigrants’ lives and their work-family concerns.

In international migration research, a large proportion of empirical studies focus on working-class immigrants. As a result, current knowledge of the connections between work and home life among immigrants is fairly skewed. Significantly more scholarly understanding has been accumulated in the literature about wage laborers than about salaried professionals and self-employed entrepreneurs. Although salaried professional immigrants have been well documented and immigrants' ethnic economy is an important subject in international migration studies, the work-family linkages of these two populations remain understudied (Espiritu, 2002; Pedraza, 1991). More research about professional and entrepreneurial immigrants is needed to fill this gap.

Some areas of research that are not covered in this paper are also important for understanding the work-family issues that concern immigrants and their children. First, globalization has shaped new immigration patterns, new types of economies, and new family forms. The complexity of immigrants' work-family experience cannot be fully understood without careful examinations of the multifaceted aspects of immigrant lives. For example, transnational immigrants travel frequently back and forth between the sending and receiving countries for various reasons. The concept of “home” is no longer clear; the meaning of work and family cannot be taken for granted in this context. Moreover, many permanent immigrants and temporary migrant workers voluntarily or involuntarily retain their family ties across national borders. The work-family experience within these transnational families is very different from that in non-transnational immigrant families. Zontini’s Encyclopedia Entry (2007) provides a good direction for this area of study.

Second, a growing amount of international migration research centers on the second-generation experience (see Feliciano, 2005; Levitt & Waters, 2002; Portes, 1996; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Major topics include immigrant children’s educational attainment, assimilation, acculturation, identities, and mental health. This line of research is important to understand how immigration affects children’s development and adaptation in various aspects of their lives. With children of post-1965 immigrants now entering early adulthood, their work-family concerns may differ from those of their parents. Future investigation is warranted of the extent to which the second generation’s immigration background affects their work-family lives.

Finally, not all immigrant households are nuclear families. Many consist of large households, and some are divorced or separated. Their gender relations, work-family contexts, and child-care and elder-care arrangements therefore differ from those in nuclear immigrant families. For example, Mexican and
Chinese immigrants have high percentages of relatives and non-relatives who live in their households. However, non-conjugal relations and household economy in these immigrant families are rarely discussed in the literature. Furthermore, few researchers have attempted to examine divorced immigrants’ work-family lives. More research is needed in these areas.

In sum, this paper shows that more research on professional and entrepreneurial immigrants will strengthen current knowledge of the interplay among immigration, work-family, and gender. Moreover, in addition to the literature reviewed in this Encyclopedia Entry, studies of transnational immigrants, second-generation immigrants, and non-nuclear immigrant households will enhance scholarly understanding of immigration and work-family.

Endnotes

1. In 2005, immigrants in the U.S. came from more than 100 foreign countries (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2007).

2. The Immigration Act of 1924 was a U.S. federal law that limited the number of immigrants who could be admitted from each country. This act also prohibited immigration from Asia.

3. According to Gordon (2005), the number of female immigrants to the U.S. from 1992 to 2000 slightly exceeded the number of male immigrants.

4. A large number of foreign domestic workers are temporary and undocumented immigrants.

5. The other dimension used in this book is based on immigrants’ legal status as defined by the U.S. government, including unauthorized immigrants, legal and temporary immigrants, legal and permanent immigrants, and refugees and asylees (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). In social research, immigrants’ human capital is more often discussed than their legal status as a basis of classification, since it conveys important social, economic, and cultural characteristics.

6. In addition to these types, refugees and asylees are a unique immigrant group. They relocate to another country under the conditions of a well-founded fear of persecution or physical harm, regardless of the politics of their countries’ regimes. Because this group constitutes only a small proportion of the immigrant population, refugees and asylees are not included in this article.

7. Many family members are unpaid laborers in ethnic businesses.

8. Some mothers remain in a foreign country to stay with their children. Their family ties extend across national borders. These immigrants are called “transnational families.”

9. Few researchers have attempted to examine parent-child relations in entrepreneurial immigrant families.

10. In their studies of minority women, Collins (1994) and Glenn (2008) challenge the notion that work and family are separate for women of color. They argue that this work-family dualism, which is based
on the experiences of middle-class White women, does not apply to women of color. Following this perspective, Grahame (2003) argues that working-class Asian immigrant women also perceive paid work as an extension of their family responsibilities.

11. In Grahame’s study (2003) of Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong, most men work in the restaurant industry, where jobs do not provide benefits. Paid jobs that carry health-care benefits therefore contribute substantially to the family’s well-being.

12. Acculturation is not determined solely by socioeconomic status. Family composition, parenting strategies, and modes of incorporation also play a role.

13. Human capital refers to an individual’s education, language proficiency, economic resources, and exposure to the mainstream culture.

14. In 1990, 26.5% of Korean immigrants were self-employed. In 2000, this rate dropped to 23.4% due to the increase in the number of professionals. This rate remains one of the highest among all immigrants (Min, 2007). Cuban immigrants are also known for their ethnic entrepreneurship, especially in Miami. The self-employment rate of the Cuban-born population was 7% in 2000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003).

15. According to Ong and Hee (1994), 75% of Asian immigrant businesses do not hire any employees outside of the family.

16. According to the 2000 Census, 17.3% of Mexican household members are relatives and 10.6% are non-relatives. Chinese households contain 12.5% relatives and 5.3% non-relatives (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003).

References


Baker, P. L. (2004). "It is the only way I can survive": Gender paradox among recent Mexicana immigrants to Iowa. *Sociological Perspectives*, 47, 393-408.


**Locations in the Matrix of Information Domains of the Work-Family Area of Studies**

The Editorial Board of the Teaching Resources section of the Sloan Work and Family Research Network has prepared a Matrix as a way to locate important work-family topics in the broad area of work-family studies. (More about the Matrix ...).

Concepts related to adult development are relevant to all of the "Individual" domains in the Matrix of Information Domains of the Work-Family Area of Study. In addition, theories of adult development are relevant to Domain F: Theoretical Underpinnings.

Note: The domain areas most closely related to the entry's topic are presented in full color. Other domains, represented in gray, are provided for context.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain A: Antecedent Descriptives</th>
<th>Domain B: Work-Family Issues and Experiences</th>
<th>Domain C: Covariates</th>
<th>Domain D: Responses to W-F Issues and Experiences</th>
<th>Domain E: Outcomes and Impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Antecedents</td>
<td>Individual Experiences</td>
<td>Individual Covariates</td>
<td>Individual Decisions &amp; Responses</td>
<td>Individual Outcomes &amp; Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Antecedents</td>
<td>Family Experiences</td>
<td>Family Covariates</td>
<td>Family Decisions &amp; Responses</td>
<td>Family Outcomes &amp; Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Antecedents</td>
<td>Workplace Experiences</td>
<td>Workplace Covariates</td>
<td>Workplace Decisions &amp; Responses</td>
<td>Workplace Outcomes &amp; Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Antecedents</td>
<td>Community Experiences</td>
<td>Community Covariates</td>
<td>Community Decisions &amp; Responses</td>
<td>Community Outcomes &amp; Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal Antecedents</td>
<td>Societal Experiences</td>
<td>Societal Covariates</td>
<td>Societal Decisions &amp; Responses</td>
<td>Societal Outcomes &amp; Impacts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Domain F: Theoretical Underpinnings to All Domains**
About the Matrix

Sloan Work and Family Research Network

Resources for Teaching: Mapping the Work-Family Area of Studies

Introduction

It was appropriate that the members of the Founding Editorial Board of the Resources for Teaching began their work in 2000, for their project represented one of the turning points in the area of work and family studies. This group accepted the challenge of developing resources that could support the efforts of teaching faculty from different disciplines and professional schools to better integrate the work-family body of knowledge into their curricula. The Virtual Think Tank began its work with a vision, a spirit of determination, and sense of civic responsibility to the community of work-family scholars.

A fundamental challenge emerged early in the process. It became clear that before we could design resources that would support the teaching of those topics, we would first need to inventory topics and issues relevant to the work-family area of studies (and begin to distinguish the work-family aspect of these topics from "non work-family" aspects).

The members of the Virtual Think Tank were well aware that surveying the area of work and family studies would be a daunting undertaking. However, we really had no other choice. And so, we began to grapple with the mapping process.

Purpose

1. To develop a preliminary map of the body of knowledge relevant to the work-family area of study that reflects current, "across-the-disciplines" understanding of work-family phenomena.

2. To create a flexible framework (or map) that clarifies the conceptual relationships among the different information domains that comprise the work-family knowledge base.

It is important to understand that this mapping exercise was undertaken as a way to identify and organize the wide range of work-family topics. This project was not intended as a meta-analysis for determining the empirical relationships between specific variables. Therefore, our map of the workfamily area of study does not include any symbols that might suggest the relationships between specific factors or clusters of factors.
Process

The Virtual Think Tank used a 3-step process to create the map of the work-family area of studies.

1. Key Informants: The members of the Virtual Think Tank included academics from several different disciplines and professions who have taught and written about work-family studies for years. During the first stage of the mapping process, the Virtual Think Tank functioned as a panel of key informants.

Initially, the Panel engaged in a few brainstorming sessions to identify work-family topics that could be addressed in academic courses. The inductive brainstorming sessions initially resulted in the identification of nearly 50 topics.

Once the preliminary list of topics had been generated, members of the Virtual Think Tank pursued a deductive approach to the identification of work-family issues. Over the course of several conversations, the Virtual Think Tank created a conceptual map that focused on information domains (see Table 1 below).

The last stage of the mapping process undertaken by the Virtual Think Tank consisted of comparing and adjusting the results of the inductive and deductive processes. The preliminary, reconciled list was used as the first index for the Online Work and Family Encyclopedia.

2. Literature review: Members of the project team conducted literature searches to identify writings in which authors attempted to map the work-family area of study or specific domains of this area. The highlights of the literature review will be posted on February 1, 2002 when the First Edition of the Work-Family Encyclopedia will be published.

3. Peer review: On October 1, 2001, the Preliminary Mapping of the work-family area of study was posted on the website of the Sloan Work and Family Research Network. The members of the Virtual Think Tank invite work-family leaders to submit suggestions and comments about the Mapping and the List of Work-Family Topics. The Virtual Think Tank will consider the suggestions and, as indicated, will make adjustments in both of these products. Please send your comments to Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes at pittcats@bc.edu

Assumptions

Prior to identifying the different information domains relevant to the work-family area of study, members of the Virtual Think Tank adopted two premises:
1. Our use of the word "family" refers to both traditional and nontraditional families. Therefore, we consider the term "work-family" to be relevant to individuals who might reside by themselves. Many work-family leaders have noted the problematic dimensions of the term "work-family" (see Barnett, 1999). In particular, concern has been expressed that the word "family" continues to connote the married couple family with dependent children, despite the widespread recognition that family structures and relationships continue to be very diverse and often change over time. As a group, we understand the word "family" to refer to relationships characterized by deep caring and commitment that exist over time. We do not limit family relationships to those established by marriage, birth, blood, or shared residency.

2. It is important to examine and measure work-family issues and experiences at many different levels, including: individual, dyadic (e.g., couple relationships, parent-child relationships, caregiver caretaker relationships), family and other small groups, organizational, community, and societal. Much of the work-family discourse glosses over the fact that the work-family experiences of one person or stakeholder group may, in fact, be different from (and potentially in conflict with) those of another.

Outcomes

We will publish a Working Paper, "Mapping the Work-Family Area of Study," on the Sloan Work and Family Research Network in 2002. In this publication, we will acknowledge the comments and suggestions for improvement sent to us.

Limitations

It is important to understand that the members of the Virtual Think Tank viewed their efforts to map the work-family area of study as a "work in progress." We anticipate that we will periodically review and revise the map as this area of study evolves.

The members of the panel are also cognizant that other scholars may have different conceptualizations of the work-family area of study. We welcome your comments and look forward to public dialogue about this important topic.

Listing of the Information Domains Included in the Map

The members of the Virtual Think Tank wanted to focus their map of work-family issues around the experiences of five principal stakeholder groups:
1. individuals,
2. families,
3. workplaces,
4. communities, and
5. society-at-large.

Each of these stakeholder groups is represented by a row in the Table 1, Information Domain Matrix (below).

**Work-Family Experiences:** The discussions of the members of the Virtual Think Tank began with an identification of some of the salient needs & priorities/problems & concerns of the five principal stakeholder groups. These domains are represented by the cells in Column B of the Information Domain Matrix.

- Individuals' work-family needs & priorities
- Individuals' work-family problems & concerns
- Families' work-family need & priorities
- Families' work-family problems & concerns
- Needs & priorities of workplaces related to work-family issues
- Workplace problems & concerns related to work-family issues
- Needs & priorities of communities related to work-family issues
- Communities' problems & concerns related to work-family issues
- Needs and priorities of society related to work-family issues
- Societal problems & concerns related to work-family issues

**Antecedents:** Next, the Virtual Think Tank identified the primary roots causes and factors that might have either precipitated or affected the work-family experiences of the principal stakeholder groups. These domains are highlighted in Column A of the Information Domain Matrix.

- Individual Antecedents
- Family Antecedents
- Workplace Antecedents
- Community Antecedents
- Societal Antecedents

**Covariates:** The third set of information domains include factors that moderate the relationships between the antecedents and the work-family experiences of different stakeholder groups (see
Column C in Table 1).

- Individual Covariates
- Family Covariates
- Workplace Covariates
- Community Covariates
- Societal Covariates

**Decisions and Responses:** The responses of the stakeholder groups to different work-family experiences are highlighted in Column D.

- Individual Decision and Responses
- Family Decisions and Responses
- Workplace Decisions and Responses
- Community Decisions and Responses
- Public Sector Decisions and Responses

**Outcomes & Impacts:** The fifth set of information domains refer to the outcomes and impacts of different work-family issues and experiences on the principal stakeholder groups (see Column E).

- Outcomes & Impacts on Individuals
- Outcomes & Impacts on Families
- Outcomes & Impacts on Workplaces
- Outcomes & Impacts on Communities
- Outcomes & Impacts on Society

**Theoretical Foundations:** The Virtual Think Tank established a sixth information domain to designate the multi-disciplinary theoretical underpinnings to the work-family area of study (noted as Information Domain F).
Table 1: Matrix of Information Domains (9/30/01)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain A: Antecedent Descriptives</th>
<th>Domain B: Work-Family Issues and Experiences</th>
<th>Domain C: Covariates</th>
<th>Domain D: Responses to W-F Issues and Experiences</th>
<th>Domain E: Outcomes and Impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Antecedents</td>
<td>Individual Experiences: Needs &amp; Priorities; Problems &amp; Concerns</td>
<td>Individual Covariates</td>
<td>Individual Decisions &amp; Responses</td>
<td>Individual Outcomes &amp; Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Antecedents</td>
<td>Family Experiences: Needs &amp; Priorities; Problems &amp; Concerns</td>
<td>Family Covariates</td>
<td>Family Decisions &amp; Responses</td>
<td>Family Outcomes &amp; Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Antecedents</td>
<td>Workplace Experiences: Needs &amp; Priorities; Problems &amp; Concerns</td>
<td>Workplace Covariates</td>
<td>Workplace Decisions &amp; Responses</td>
<td>Workplace Outcomes &amp; Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Antecedents</td>
<td>Community Experiences: Needs &amp; Priorities; Problems &amp; Concerns</td>
<td>Community Covariates</td>
<td>Community Decisions &amp; Responses</td>
<td>Community Outcomes &amp; Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal Antecedents</td>
<td>Societal Experiences: Needs &amp; Priorities; Problems &amp; Concerns</td>
<td>Societal Covariates</td>
<td>Societal Decisions &amp; Responses</td>
<td>Societal Outcomes &amp; Impacts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Domain F: Theoretical Underpinnings to All Domains