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Basic Concepts and Definitions

The ability to balance work and family life has been shaped by changes in demographic realities across the United States (U.S.). These changes include the large increase in married women with young children who have entered the workforce and the increase in dual-career families, single-parent families, and families who have to take care of an older relative (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). The following will discuss three key work-family concepts presented in the literature, first in general terms and then as they relate to the experience of Latinas: gender roles, unemployment, and self-employment.

Preliminary to a review of work-family issues among Latinas is discussion about the complexities associated with what is meant by the word Latina in the U.S. today. The terms Latino and Hispanic refer to an individual whose "place of origin (by birth or through inherited culture) is a Latin American country or Spain" (Javier & Camacho-Gingerich, 2004, p. 67). Latino refers to Latin American countries in South America, Central America, and the Dominican Republic. Latina refers to the woman within the culture. The word Latina is often used as a blanket term without taking into account within group differences and similarities.

Individual differences can occur between countries or within the same country (Javier & Camacho-Gingerich, 2004). One example is the indigenous woman who was born and grew up in Mexico in contrast to the Mexican woman whose Jewish parents emigrated from Italy to escape the political oppression targeted at Italian Jews. A consideration of within group differences takes into account "historical, geographical, racial, socioeconomic, educational, linguistic, religious, and cultural factors" (Javier & Camacho-Gingerich, 2004, p.67).

On the other hand, a discussion of Latinas must also consider the commonalities that are shared by
individuals from Spanish-speaking countries. These similarities shape cultural values, world view, the individual’s emotional make-up, and relationships with others. They include, first and foremost, a love of Spanish as a romance language, the influence of Catholicism on the individual and society, a focus on family, and the ways in which the Latina shapes her relationships with her spouse, children, parents, extended family, and societal institutions in general (Javier & Camacho-Gingerich, 2004).

The Latino population is growing exponentially. As of July 2003, the estimated U.S. Latino population was 39.9 million (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2004). The population has doubled between 1980 and 2000 and currently makes up the nation’s largest diverse racial/ethnic group. Currently the three largest subgroups in the U.S. are Mexicans (22.4 million), Puerto Ricans (2.7 million), and Cubans (1 million). The projected Latino population for July 2050 is 102.6 million (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2004).

In the work force, Latinas continue to lag behind other women in terms of representation at the corporate governance level. Women currently comprise 46.6 percent of the U.S. labor force. Of these 57.8 million women in the workforce, 7 percent are Latina (Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, n.d.). With regard to the 11,500 Fortune 1000 board seats in 2002, women held only 13.7 percent, or 986 seats. Of the 13.7 percent of seats held by women, 18.1 percent are held by women of color. The break down of this percentage is 74 percent (of the 18.1 percent) of seats held by African American women, 17 percent by Latinas, and 8.4 percent by Asian American women. A Corporate Governance Study released by the Hispanic Association of Corporate Responsibility (HACR) found that Latinas only hold .3 percent of all board seats in Fortune 1000 companies. Of the 141 Latinos who are U.S. board members, only 21 are women (Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, n.d.).

This background will help shape understanding of three work-family areas that extend research conducted with Latinas in the work-family literature.

*Gender roles*

If one takes the gender role perspective gender is seen as influencing perceptions of work-family conflict. Despite changes for women over the past decades, for instance, the gender role perspective contends that family tradition and maintaining the home continue to be women’s work (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991).

Gender roles influence men’s and women’s perceptions of family interference with work (FIW) and work interference with family (WIF). Specifically, women report more WIF than men even though they spend
the same number of hours in paid work as their male counterparts. Despite the fact that women spend more time doing family work than men, men and women report the same amount of FIW (Gutek, et al., 1991). This research suggests that for many women, spending substantial time at work interferes with time spent with family. The question of the application of gender roles to the experience of work-family balance for Latinas concerns whether there would be more or less strain among this group. Given traditional gender roles in the culture, one hypothesis is that spending time at work does interfere with family life among this group. An alternative hypothesis is that some Latinas work out of necessity and view their employment as part of their motherly role.

Unemployment

Unemployment has emerged in work-family literature as a critical problem among U.S. families (Romero, Castro, & Cervantes, 1988). Unemployment became particularly salient in the 1980s when organizations restructured to increase revenue and many lost their jobs. Unemployment can also lead to unforeseen circumstances. Romero et al. (1988) discuss the "ripple effect" of an uncontrollable loss of employment that exacerbates "daily hassles" that result from a major stressor.

Despite the fact that women tend to have higher unemployment rates than their male counterparts, little research examines what the author will call the loss-of-work- family balance among women. Some research has concluded that unemployment has a less negative effect on the mental health status of women than it does for men (Jahoda, 1982). Romero et al. (1988) contend that this notion is based on the assumption that a woman’s financial contribution is optional and not needed to maintain the home. Another assumption associated with the less stress hypothesis is that women don’t care as much about becoming unemployed because they rely on the identities they get from the roles of wife and mother.

These views may relate to Latinas in a number of ways. On the one hand is the hypothesis that job loss would not be stressful for a Latina mother as it would allow her to fulfill the traditional role of wife and mother. On the other, given the economic situation of the family, the unemployment of the mother may initiate a substantial economic crisis and great stress for the Latina individual.

Self-employment

Self-employment is another basic work-family concept relevant to the experience of women. The notion of self-employment has largely focused on the assumption that self-employed women have more time to spend with their families in comparison to those in salaried positions. Certainly the workforce has
witnessed an exponential leap in the number of women who are self-employed. In 1975, women accounted for 25 percent of laborers who worked for themselves. This percentage increased to more than 30 percent by 1990 (Taniguchi, 2002). Comparisons in increases in self-employment between men and women during that time indicated that women far outnumbered men with a percentage increase of 63 percent vs. 24 percent, respectively (Taniguchi, 2002).

Taniguchi (2002) challenges the notion that self-employed women are better equipped to meet the needs of their families, suggesting that cross-sectional research designs may not adequately address this issue. As a result, work-family researchers do not fully understand those variables that influence a woman’s decision to choose the self-employment path. There is even less research about why women from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds are underrepresented in the self-employment sphere. Considerations about how this concept might relate to Latinas (and other groups of women) include labor market disadvantage and marital resources that support wives in entrepreneurial activities (Taniguchi, 2002).

A limitation of work-family research is its lack of focus on cultural differences. Research samples often do not specify the racial/ethnic background of participants nor do studies examine the relationship between race/ethnicity and work-family issues. Just as the work-family literature grew out of the need to respond to women joining the world of work, it is critical to consider contemporary work-family issues in the context of racial/cultural demographic changes occurring across the country. One area to explore is how Latinas experience work-family conflict in the U.S.

**Importance of Topic to Work-Family Studies**

The U.S. workforce has seen an increase in dual earner couples. Research has shown that these couples are more likely to experience greater work-family conflict than their single earner counterparts (Duxbury, Higgins, & Lee, 1994). The U.S. population, and thus its workforce, is also becoming more diverse. In the year 2000, approximately 30 percent of the U.S. populations were non-White. By the year 2050, it is expected that the Latino population will increase to an estimated 24 percent of the overall population (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1996; Clauss-Ehlers, 2003).

The concept of work-family balance versus conflict among Latinas is critical as it asks the question: “How do ‘variations in conceptualizations, stereotypes and perceptions among people from various ethnic groups living in the United States’ play out when work-family studies are examined in different cultural contexts?” (Franco, Sabattini, & Crosby, 2004, p. 756). How is work-family balance shaped by different perceptions? How do differing values, attitudes, and behaviors among women from different ethnic
groups experience work-family issues in different ways? How do differing gender roles and expectations influence work-family issues for different groups?

McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson (2000) found that although Latino husbands report less egalitarian attitudes, they engage in more “maternal” activities like childcare and cooking than their White male counterparts. These authors conclude that there may be less association between attitudes and behavior among Latinos in comparison to Whites when work-family issues are concerned.

In another study, family and economic stress was assessed among Latinas who lost their jobs. After 18 months, 75 percent of the women were still unemployed. Financial stress was particularly relevant for their families. The authors conclude such findings challenge the myth of “benign stress” associated with women losing their employment (Romero et al., 1988).

It is critical to examine how Latinas experience work-family conflict and balance so that employers, researchers, and clinicians can better respond to the unique needs of this group. Perhaps one of the biggest differences that would grow out of an increased understanding is a better sense of the support structure Latinas need at work. For instance, Romero et al. (1988) found that being unemployed was stressful for Latinas, not only because they lost a paycheck, but also because they lost a social network of friends from work. As this finding relates to employers, it has implications for understanding the needs of Latinas who have lost their jobs, both in terms of prevention and job placement. A structured research program focused on Latinas and work-family issues can influence discussion about how corporations and government agencies can meet the needs of this group.

Finally, a difference that might grow out of increased understanding among clinicians is greater awareness about how to provide culturally appropriate interventions when working with Latinas who struggle with work-family issues. For the Latina who has lost her friendship network when she became unemployed, having an awareness of this loss can help mental health practitioners intervene in ways that can work to promote a sense of social support and connection with a larger community. Additionally, clinicians can support the Latina woman’s job search by encouraging her to identify potential work environments that are culturally syntonic with her values.

**State of the Body of Knowledge**

Research that explores how work-family conflict and balance varies by race and culture is sparse. As Latinas increasingly join the workforce, it is important to consider that Latinas may present a very different perspective as they approach the world of work. This point of view is influenced by gender-role
ideologies, income, educational attainment, acculturation, and the values placed on work, marriage, and parenting (Franco, et al., 2004). Acculturation is another area that expands the discussion of work-

The following review of the state of the body of knowledge on the relationship of work-family concepts to Latinas will focus on two general areas: 1) how three general work-family concepts play out in the Latina context; and 2) consideration of specific cultural dynamics that influence work-family issues. The first part of the review focuses on gender roles, unemployment, and self-employment. The latter part of the discussion includes two general foci: acculturation/acculturative stress and cultural values (i.e., the differences between collectivist and individualistic societies). It is important to note that some studies overlap in their approach, i.e., they incorporate a more than one of the perspectives mentioned above in their research inquiry. Studies that examined the moderating effects of both gender roles and acculturation are one such example.

**Extension of Work-Family Concepts to the Latina Experience**

**Gender-role attitudes and their relevance to work-family issues**

The gender role perspective is the most researched line of investigation when compared to unemployment and self-employment (Barnett, Del Campo, Del Campo, & Steiner, 2003; Franco, et al., 2004; Roehling, Jarvis, & Swope, 2005). Barnett et al. (2003) conducted a study on work-family balance with a Mexican American sample. These researchers found that gender had moderating effects on some variables. The Mexican American working women in the sample had a lower perception of the quality of life than their male counterparts.

The authors argue that while the findings of the study are similar to those for White Americans, the reasons for their findings are quite different. Barnett et al. (2003) suggest that differences in perception about quality of life relates to traditional values. The men are expected to be the primary wage earners while the women are expected to be in charge of the family despite the fact that they are working. As a result, “the women [suffer] from more role strain, which [can lead] to more dissatisfaction with the quality of their family lives” (p. 362).

Roehling et al. (2005) also examine work-family balance among Latinas from a gender role perspective. These researchers compared the experience of spillover among White, Black, and Latino American men and women. They found that Latinos had the greatest disparity between men and women on negative work-to-family spillover and negative family-to-work spillover. The largest and most consistent gender difference on work-family spillover occurred for Latinos. Latinas reported significantly
more spillover than Latino males. Additionally, while women across the three racial/ethnic groups experienced more negative family-to-work spillover when children were at home, this finding was especially relevant for Latinas.

Roehling et al. (2005) conclude that Latinas experience greater negative spillover because they are from more traditional cultures. They state that traditional gender role attitudes like marianismo and machismo relate to the experience of work family spillover. They define machismo as “the traditional gender-role attitude that males are to be providers and strong protectors of the family” (Roehling et al., 2005, p. 843). In contrast, marianismo is the traditional gender role for Latinas. Here the woman is to be self-sacrificing and put the needs of children and spouse before her own (Vazquez & Clauss-Ehlers, 2005). The role of mother is highly valued and the home is the woman’s responsibility. In this context, Latinas may enter the workforce out of economic necessity and in conflict with these traditional values.

A second explanation for these findings concerns the different work histories among different racial/ethnic groups of women (Roehling et al., 2005). As a group, many Latinas are newer to the U.S. and do not have what Roehling et al. (2005) refer to as a “cultural template” for managing work and family in dual earning partnerships. Latinas who have recently immigrated to the U.S. may feel at a crossroads with regard to the traditional values of motherhood/household versus employment opportunity/economic pressure. Many Latinas who come to the United States, for instance, may be confronted by opportunities available to working women along with different norms about women’s work (Vazquez & Clauss-Ehlers, 2005). These arguments, however, are in direct conflict with findings on the role of work-family balance for Latinas when unemployment and migration status are studied (Segura, 1994; See unemployment below).

Unemployment

Unemployment relates to the concept of work-family balance among Latinas and raises the question, “What is the relative impact of unemployment among this group?” The traditional view that women work for “pin money” implies it isn’t economically or emotionally important when a woman loses a job—her income wasn’t needed for the household and she will become fulfilled through her roles of wife and mother. There is existing literature, however, that challenges this notion. Unemployment is not always an option for Latinas (as well as other women) and there are definite negative consequences that result from job loss.

In a study conducted in the 1980s, Romero et al. (1988) explore how Latinas may be more negatively affected by unemployment. At the time of their writing, 25 percent of Latinas were laborers,
unemployment was high among this group, and levels of unemployment among Latinas were closer to those of Latinos than those of White women. Romero et al.'s (1988) findings indicate that over 50 percent of the study participants experienced stress in familial, occupational, and economic arenas. Some Latinas reported stress in relationships with spouses and children following job loss. Perhaps most interesting was the finding that number of years in the U.S. directly related to stress following unemployment. In contrast, number of years working at the factory was inversely related to stress. The authors concluded that this finding reflects Latinas’ greater involvement in the U.S. economic system which led to greater economic commitments, hence greater stress with more years in the U.S.

This type of research highlights how a broad work-family concept like unemployment may play out differently among Latinas. Here work-family stress was not due to lack of sufficient time with family, but rather, feeling overwhelmed by not having a job to support the family economically. The implication is that work-family conflict may be less intense for Latinas who view their work as contributing to the members of their family. It suggests that for this group, the domains of family versus work may be less dichotomous in that one avenue of family support is to work to provide financial resources. Looking at work-family balance versus conflict in this way means there may be greater synergy between work and family among some groups of Latinas.

A study conducted by Segura (1994) further illustrates this notion of how public versus private, work versus family, is constructed by women and their families. Segura’s (1994) contention is that “motherhood is a culturally formed structure whose meanings can vary and are subject to change” (p. 211). Her contention is that work-family issues must be understood within the context of how the role of motherhood is perceived in the family and within the larger culture. Part of these different perceptions stem from the idea that a private-public dichotomy has developed from the experience of White women who do not have to work and is less relevant to women with less privilege (i.e., immigrant women, women of color) who are important economic contributors to their families.

Another important aspect of the Segura (1994) study is that she deconstructs the overarching term “Hispanic” to examine within-group differences as she compares the relative experiences of Chicanas and Mexicana immigrants. Through qualitative interviews, Segura (1994) found that Mexicana immigrants who were brought up in households with a blending of domestic and economic, private and public, saw employment as “one workable domain of motherhood” (p. 212). As a result, the more recently this group of women had immigrated to the U.S., the less ambivalence they expressed about working.

In contrast, Segura (1994) found that Chicanas raised in a society like the U.S. “that celebrates the expressive functions of the family and obscures its productive economic functions, express higher
adherence to the ideology of stay-at-home motherhood, and correspondingly more ambivalence toward full-time employment - even when they work” (p. 212). These findings are in direct contrast with those presented by Roehling et al. (2005) and speak to the need to conduct research on within-group differences among Latinas with acculturation and immigration being key study variables (See acculturation section below).

Self-employment

Looking at the intersection of work and family life and how they influence the decision to be self-employed also has cultural implications for Latinas. Taniguchi (2002) explored differences in the process of being employed among Latina, African American, and White women. Taniguchi (2002) found that only among White women did professional background significantly increase rates of self-employment.

In contrast, having been a service worker increased possible self-employment among Latinas and African American women. Being in sales only increased the likelihood of being self-employed among Latinas. While having young children had no effect on becoming self-employed among African American and White women, it decreased rates of self-employment among Latinas. Only among White women did having young children effect self-employment rates, although this finding was not significant.

Taniguchi (2002) also found that cumulative work experience and marriage were characteristics that led to self-employment. However, this study found that fewer work experiences among African American and Latinas on average led to significantly less likelihood of being self-employed. Moreover, having small children did not increase the move towards self-employment- thus challenging the notion that self-employment leads to better work-family balance.

Cultural dynamics that influence work-family conflict vs. balance

Acculturation refers to the extent to which the individual has adapted to the new culture. Variables that influence acculturation include length of time in the United States, speaking English, having family in the U.S. prior to arrival, and educational attainment. Acculturation by its very nature implies something about the relationship to the new host culture while also negotiating one’s relationship with the culture of origin. As it applies to work-family balance, level of acculturation or being in a position where the family acculturates faster than desired is thought to influence the experience of work-family balance for Latinas. For instance, if a husband is unable to find work and his partner can, this then shifts the gender balance of power. This may be particularly stressful for a family that prescribes to more traditional gender roles.
The idea that length of time in the U.S. influences the experience of work-family balance among Latinas leads to the second line of investigation— the role of acculturation and acculturative stress. Acculturation stress is a stress response to events that relate to acculturation (Berry & Sam, 1997). Examples of acculturative stress include uncertainty about the new culture, fear about how to adapt to the new culture, concerns about learning a new language and losing one’s language of origin, and managing the dominant values of the new culture.

Kossek, Meece, Barratt, and Prince (2005) address the variables of acculturation and acculturative stress in their study. These investigators conducted in-person interviews in Spanish with 79 low-income working Latina migrant mothers. Each mother had at least one infant. Interviews were conducted in Spanish. The mothers in this study used the Migrant Head Start Center in their migrant camp as the primary vehicle for childcare. The childcare program was free of charge and provided developmental services for children from 2 weeks to 5 years of age. The Center operated according to the harvest schedule and was open twelve hours a day, 6 to 7 days a week.

Here work-family balance for Latinas must be conceptualized in the context of migrant farm work that can be demanding and dangerous. Mothers who participated in the study discussed family time “which [they experienced] as a cultural loss associated with migrant work” (Kossek, et al., 2005, p. 56). Working fifty to sixty hours a week, for instance, interfered with seeing much of their children.

The more positively the family felt about the childcare they received, the better they felt about the balance between work and family in their lives. 86 percent of migrant mothers thought their family was fulfilling responsibility. 83 percent felt their identities were equally attached to work and family roles. The researchers concluded that positive attitudes about childcare, family values, and having a two parent household acted as buffers against the hardships faced by the mothers that, in turn, promoted their resilience.

As mentioned earlier, Segura (1994) found that Mexicana women who were from more traditional cultures had less ambivalence about full-time work than their more Americanized counterparts. This conclusion, like that of Kossek et al. (2005), demonstrates that acculturation is not simply a linear experience. Like the Kossek et al. (2005) finding where migrant mothers felt their families were fulfilling their responsibilities, Segura (1994) found that motherhood for the Mexicana women had an economic component. In both studies, the mothers considered being in the market economy part of the responsibility of motherhood.
Another perspective focuses the discussion of Latinas and work-family conflict and balance on cultural values. Spector et al. (2004) conducted a comparative study of work-family stressors, work hours, and well-being in three culturally different areas of the world: Anglo (Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand, and the United States [U.S.]), China (Hong Kong, People’s Republic of China, and Taiwan), and Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay). While this study looks at Latinas in Latin America, findings have definite implications for the experience of Latinas and work-family issues in the United States.

The primary hypothesis in the Spector et al. (2004) study was that individualism-collectivism (I-C) values predict different reactions to work hours between Western individualistic nations like the U.S. and collectivist nations like countries in China and Latin America. To date, the Spector et al. (2004) study is the only international comparative investigation of work-family issues that incorporates Latin America. The only other international comparative work-family study found by Spector et al. (2004) compared the experiences of Asia and the United States (Yang, Chen, Choi, & Zhou, 2000).

The I-C theoretical perspective examines work-family issues through a cross-cultural lens. The goal of this approach is to look at work-family issues from a perspective that extends beyond Anglo countries. Spector et al. (2004) contend that key differences between Anglo countries and other nations are that the former: 1) tend to be economically developed; 2) have people primarily living in nuclear families; and 3) have goals that are focused on the individual or the nuclear family. In comparison, in collectivist countries like those in Asia and Latin America people are more likely to: 1) live close to extended family (this may be due to less economic development as well as the focus on family); and 2) view themselves as part of a larger social network. Thus, in the collectivist culture the needs of the group or family often supercede those of the individual.

Similar to the findings in the Segura (1994) and Kossek et al. (2005) studies, Spector et al. (2004) found that longer work hours are not necessarily viewed as additional work or pressure for Latin American families. This finding contrasts with those for Anglo families who viewed longer work hours as taking away from family time. In the Anglo world, working longer hours was perceived as a burden given the relatively stronger economies. In contrast, with less stable economies, working more was considered a way to protect one’s income for Latin Americans.

**Implications for Research and Practice**

While still in its infancy, the literature that examines work-family issues among Latinas presents major implications for research and practice. First, existing studies clearly suggest that there are cultural differences in how Latinas manage the dual lives of work and family. These questions include: What
supports or buffers minimize work-family conflict for this group? What is the role of resilience in managing work-family conflict and achieving a balance between the two? What role does extended family play in reducing work-family stress?

Questions unique to Latinas include: What are within-group differences (i.e., socioeconomic status, acculturation) that have a differential impact on Latinas from different countries and cultures? How are problems like unemployment related to employment policies rather than “traditional” values (Segura, 1994)? How can understanding the intersection between policy, ideology, and family need result in better employment opportunities for Latinas (Segura, 1994)? How do Latinas develop resilience in light of household and work responsibilities? Early investigations in these areas may provide substantial inroads to understanding the nature of work-family issues for Latina communities.

Second, the research that does exist demonstrates fairly consistently that what we think we know when it comes to work-family concepts, may actually play out quite differently when applied to Latina populations. Unemployment is one such example. The myth that unemployment is a “benign stress” among woman is debunked by research that highlights the economic benefit and social network base that Latinas get through their work. This finding directly contrasts with the assumption that unemployment is not stressful for Latinas because not working allows them to go towards more traditional roles of wife and mother for fulfillment. We need additional research to determine how unemployment affects work-family balance among Latinas. The practice component that can result from such knowledge is that corporations and governments can better understand how to develop and implement supportive policies for Latina workers and their families.

Another myth debunked in the research is the notion that acculturation leads to less work-family conflict. Rather, as the above studies show, the opposite appears to be the case. Due to the synergy between work and motherhood, recent immigrant Mexicanas were less conflicted about their roles as working women- they considered it part of their job as mothers. As Segura (1994) states, this “suggests that employment problems (for example underemployment, unemployment) are related less to “traditional” cultural configurations than to labor market structure and employment policies. Understanding the intersections between employment policy, social ideology, and private need is a necessary step toward expanding possibilities for women in our society” (p. 227).

Here the implication for practice is that providing meaningful work experiences for Latina mothers that enhance their sense of contribution to their families can help maintain a good sense of work-family balance. Additional research is needed to identify specific aspects of work that make Latinas feel they can contribute. One such example is the Kossek et al. (2005) study that found mother’s identified high
quality childcare as a helpful part of maintaining a sense of work-family balance.

The finding that work hours influence work-family conflict in different cultures suggests that the experience of work-family conflict may not necessarily generalize to other regions of the world (Spector et al., 2004). This result has practical policy implications with regard to what is most helpful for people from different countries. Two such examples are flexible work options and dependent care supports (Spector et al., 2004). In non-Western countries, for instance, flexible work options may not actually reduce work-family conflict where working long hours is not associated with work-family pressure.

Similarly, dependent care benefits may be less beneficial in countries where extended families help with child rearing. Write Spector et al. (2004): “It appears that a collectivist orientation may indeed act as a buffer of WFC effects. For this [reason], solutions to the work-family dilemma, such as a mandatory 35 or 36 hour work week in Western Europe may fail to reduce work-family stressors when implemented in other parts of the world such as Asia or Latin America” (p. 139). Culturally relevant policies are needed to address the work-family challenges of an increasingly diverse workforce with different conceptualizations of what constitutes support for the household.

Finally, much of the existing literature examines between-group differences rather than within-group differences or differences that exist among those with a shared racial/ethnic background. The Roehling et al. (2005) study, for instance, attaches values such as machismo and marianismo to a specific ethnic group. This connection assumes that all Latinos ascribe or are influenced by these values. The Segura (1994) study provides a nice model and call for additional studies that explore within-group differences that capture the complexities associated with race/ethnicity and work-family issues. Write Roehling et al. (2005): “Within each group there is a broad diversity of thought and attitude. In the current study, we ignored these differences and combined people from divergent regions and socioeconomic backgrounds based solely on their ethnic identification. Future studies should look more closely at subgroups within broad ethnic classifications” (p. 861). More research is needed to look at how variables like years in the U.S., immigration status, and cultural values influence the experience of different Latina groups.

Given current demographic changes and the increasing diversity of the U.S. landscape, it is imperative that work-family scholars begin to consider how life at work and life at home are managed across cultures. A call to action for a research program that comprehensively addresses diverse work-family issues is needed. A comprehensive investigative approach on diverse work-family experiences can include the following: (a) diverse samples of research participants; (b) a focus on cultural aspects of the work-family experience such as acculturation, immigration, and national and transnational migration experiences; (c) the development and use of scales that reflect collectivist values; (d) construction of new
theories from findings on the experience of work-family conflict and balance for diverse racial/ethnic
groups; (e) exploration of basic work-family concepts and how they relate to Latinos in terms of gender
roles, unemployment, self-employment, and impact of employment on the child’s academic success; and
(f) exploration of within-group differences rather than assuming all members of a group share a similar
experience. Such differences can look at level of education, generational status, socioeconomic status,
and geographical context such as differences between the West and the South as well as the work-family
experience of Latinas who live in areas without a high concentration of Latinos in the workforce.

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**Other Recommended Readings**


