The Meanings of Work-Life Balance

Suzan Lewis
T. Alexandra Beauregard

Please cite as:

Lewis, S., & Beauregard, T. A. (2018). The meanings of work-life balance: A cultural perspective. In R. Johnson, W. Shen, & K. M. Shockley (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of the global work-family interface* (pp. 720-732). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Introduction

The popularity of the term "work-life balance" (WLB) belies its lack of an established definition in the research literature. WLB is both a social construct (i.e., a notion that is 'constructed' through social practice and which may or may not represent objective reality) and a discourse. It tends to be either a) defined as an individual experience or aspiration, with particular focus on time-squeezed white collar workers, or b) used as an adjective to describe workplace policies or practices (e.g., flexible work arrangements) or public policies (e.g., parental leave) that purport to enhance these individual experiences (i.e., WLB policies, practices, or supports).

Both these uses of the WLB term tend to underemphasize diverse understandings of the components of work, life, and balance. They also position WLB as a matter of individual choice and responsibility with regard to establishing priorities and organizing schedules. This neglects structural, cultural, and practical constraints on individuals' agency (Caproni, 2004; Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007), which impact individuals' sense of entitlement and capability to achieve some form of "balance" in practice (Hobson, 2014). In this chapter, entitlement is defined not in the negative way in which it is used in the managerialist academic literature to refer to unreasonable expectations (see Chatrakul Na Ayudhya & Smithson, 2016), but rather as a set of beliefs and feelings about what supportive practices it is fair and

reasonable to expect from employers (and governments) (Chatrakul Na Ayudhya & Smithson, 2016; Herman & Lewis, 2012; Lewis & Smithson, 2001). These expectations, which are influenced by perceptions of what is normative, feasible, and socially acceptable, are highly context dependent and may influence understandings of "balance" in relation to work and the rest of life.

Although WLB is increasingly used in research in diverse contexts, given that WLB is a social construct that originated in the industrialized West, the relevance of the WLB discourse within broader social and cultural contexts has been questioned (Lewis et al., 2007; Rajan-Rankin, 2016). It is not clear whether and how the interpretation of WLB and use of WLB practices vary across time and place, within and across countries, nor how this can be assessed in culture-sensitive ways. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the often contested meanings and understandings of WLB in a range of contexts, drawing on and integrating two streams of literature: work-family interface research and critical management and organizational studies. First, we provide an overview of the term 'work-life balance' and its contested definitions in the two literatures. We then theorize understandings of WLB as shaped by intersecting layers of context: global, national (noting diversity within as well as across national contexts), organizational, and temporal. Finally, we address gaps and limitations in extant research, and speak to questions about the future of work-life balance in an increasingly connected and globalized world.

What is Work-Life Balance?

There is no single understanding or use of the term WLB. Rather, multiple and overlapping WLB discourses within organizations and among academic researchers are dynamic and shift across time and place (Lewis et al., 2007; Lewis, Anderson, Lyonette, Payne, & Wood, 2016a; Lewis, Anderson, Lyonette, Payne, & Wood,

2016b). Work-family interface scholars tend to define WLB at an individual level. Some explicitly focus on work-*family* balance. For example, Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) discuss the "accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his/her role-related partners in the work and family domains" (p. 458). Other scholars define the "life" domain more broadly (Lewis et al., 2016a; Lewis et al., 2016b). For instance, Haar, Russo, Suñe, and Ollier-Malaterre (2014) characterize WLB as an individual's assessment of how well multiple life roles are balanced. Nevertheless, the majority of the work-life interface literature treats, at least implicitly, the "life" domain as being interchangeable with that of "family," particularly as represented by caregiving responsibilities for dependent children (Özbilgin, Beauregard, Tatli, & Bell, 2011).

The concept of balance is itself problematic. The term was initially understood by researchers as signifying low levels of conflict between work and non-work demands (see Wayne, Butts, Casper, & Allen, 2016, for a review). However, the word "balance" implies a goal of equal participation in work and non-work activities and overlooks the diverse ways in which individuals manage occupancy of multiple roles, not all of which involve balance (Clark, 2000; Gambles et al., 2006; Hobson, 2014). For instance, Rajan-Rankin (2016) argues that the messy reality of family and community life and the blurring of boundaries she found in her research on Indian call centers cannot be accounted for by Western discourses of WLB idealized as tidy, segmented lives. A growing critical literature argues that these definitions imply a false dichotomy, as work (paid and unpaid) is part of life rather than a separate element to be balanced with life (Bloom, 2016; Fleetwood, 2007; Gambles et al., 2006; Lewis et al, 2007).

Given the difficulties in determining the meaning of WLB as an individual experience, the use of the term to describe workplace policies or practices is also highly problematic. Specifically, it is often unclear what such policies are designed to achieve. These WLB policies and practices are also often labelled as "family-friendly." However, this labelling within the WLB discourse has been criticized for implying gender neutrality when considerable research has established that women remain disproportionately responsible for caregiving in addition to the demands of paid work (Lewis et al., 2007; Smithson & Stokoe, 2005). Women are more likely than men to use WLB practices and to have a low sense of entitlement to advance in their careers if they do so (Herman & Lewis, 2012).

Critics also argue that referring to workplace policies as "WLB" implies an employee-led focus, or "favors" granted to employees, which can mask the employer benefits of such policies and practices (Fleetwood, 2007; Gatrell & Cooper, 2008; Lewis et al., 2007; Lewis et al., 2016a; Özbilgin et al., 2011; Smithson & Stokoe, 2005). The emphasis on individual choices and outcomes in understandings of WLB has also been criticized for camouflaging the general shift in responsibility for well-being from state to individual effected by neoliberalism, a form of capitalism in which state-provided services (e.g., state-funded childcare centers) are replaced with market-based alternatives (e.g., organizational voucher schemes through which parents are offered some financial support for their choice of privately-operated daycare) (Fleetwood, 2007). While purporting to empower individual workers, neoliberalism is acknowledged by scholars as increasing the power of business and corporations to determine public policies and setting regulatory frameworks that are advantageous to themselves rather than to workers (Fleetwood, 2007; Harvey, 2005).

According to Fleetwood (2007), Western WLB discourses have increased in recent years because they help to legitimize employer-driven flexible working practices that are presented as offering employees greater choice and freedom, but which often manifest themselves in employee-unfriendly ways. For example, research has found that access to available practices can be inconsistent within organizations and fuel employee perceptions of unfairness (Beauregard, 2014). Additionally, managers and professionals using flexible working practices often experience work intensification in the form of longer hours and greater work effort, professional isolation and fewer networking opportunities, a reputation among peers and superiors for being less committed to the organization, increased work-family conflict, and reduced prospects for career advancement (Allen, Johnson, Kiburz, & Shockley, 2015; Beauregard, 2011; Leslie, Manchester, Park, & Mehng, 2012; Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). As such, so-called WLB policies can actually obstruct the achievement of individual experiences of work-life balance rather than facilitate it.

The reason why many WLB policies may fail to lead actual experiences of WLB on the part of workers may be because these policies are rarely accompanied by changes to workplace structures, cultures, and practices, which continue to be based on outdated assumptions about ideal workers and the way that work should be carried out (Lewis et al., 2007). Specifically, employers continue to view those individuals who value work above all else and have fewer non-work obligations as the ideal worker (Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015). Thus, the attainment of WLB has thus been depicted by critical management scholars as "an eternally unfinished journey of self-discovery" (Bloom, 2016, p. 596), in which individuals' modern-day identity is structured by the simultaneous desire and inability to achieve equilibrium between work and non-work roles.

Comparative Research on Work-Life Balance

These definitional problems may be one factor explaining why WLB is one of the least frequently studied concepts in the work-life interface literature (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011), and why there are fewer cross-cultural studies on work-life balance compared to those on conflict and enrichment (Ollier-Malaterre, 2014; Ollier-Malaterre & Foucreault, 2016). There is some evidence suggesting that WLB is valued by employees across many national contexts (Hill, Yang, Hawkins, & Ferris, 2004; Kossek, Valcour, & Lirio, 2014). However, the value of WLB may be moderated by national culture—highlighting the need to include cultural dimensions in research using cross-national designs (Haar et al., 2014).

Some limited comparative research has examined differences in the provision of so-called policies and practices to support WLB (Chandra, 2012). However, WLB is a Western construct and although it is increasingly emerging in a wider range of national contexts in employee and employer discourses as well as in organizational research (e.g., Abubaker & Bagley, 2016; Atsumi, 2007; Chandra, 2012), the majority of the WLB research literature remains focused on Western contexts and largely neglects the contested and culture-sensitive nature of the WLB concept. There are issues relating to both interpretation of WLB in diverse contexts and also how to take account of intersections between layers of contexts that shape these interpretations. Surveys assessing individual experiences of WLB include items such as, "I manage to balance the demands of my work and personal life/family well" (Haar et al., 2014). Interpretations of balance and judgments about doing this "well" are highly subjective, and we cannot rule out the possibility that these are related to contextual social expectations, norms, and comparisons that impact personal expectations and sense of entitlement to invest differently in work and family or personal life.

6

It is important for research to reflect on and take into account the possibilities of diverse interpretations of WLB and the layers of context in which they are rooted. Both quantitative and qualitative research have a role in providing more nuanced accounts of meanings and experiences of WLB. In relation to mostly quantitative research, Ollier-Malaterre and Foucreault (2016) argue that the inclusion of "more structural and cultural factors (is) a step towards capturing the polycontextuality (Von Glinow, Shapiro, & Brett, 2004) of country-level contexts - that is, the interactions of multiple layers of context" (p. 4). Qualitative researchers argue for more in-depth qualitative case studies to draw out intersections of multiple layers of context in comparative cross-national research (Nilsen, Brannen, & Lewis, 2013). Case studies are particularly useful for understanding processes whereby conceptual understandings of constructs such as WLB shift across time as well as place (Lewis et al., 2016a; Tatli, Vassilopoulou, Al Ariss, & Özbilgin, 2012). Below, we discuss some of the intersecting layers of context that can shape diverse understandings of the construct of WLB.

Contexts Shaping the Meanings of Work-Life Balance

Global context

At the broadest layer of context, it has been argued that understandings of WLB are influenced by the spread of neo-liberal values that prioritize profit over personal lives (Fleetwood, 2007; Gambles et al., 2006). These understandings are also influenced by directives, such as those set by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and European Union (EU), which increasingly use the WLB terminology to replace family-friendly discourses, and by the responses of for-profit organizations, especially multinational companies. This may contribute to or be a consequence of

international recognition of the term WLB, but it assumes common understandings of its meanings.

Global processes intersect with national contexts, influencing the ways in which WLB is interpreted and used at different times (Lewis et al., 2016a). Taking India as an example, a qualitative study by Gambles et al. (2006) noted that the opening of the economy in India in 1991 brought more exposure to global competitiveness and opportunities for economic growth, coupled with increasingly demanding workloads and long working hours for 'new economy' workers (Lewis et al., 2007, p. 363). The term WLB entered the Indian vocabulary when used by global corporations in their multinational staff surveys (Lewis et al., 2007). It resonated with their workers, but was not used by the majority of the Indian population whose work and family struggles were of a different nature; some just strove to earn a livelihood and others were concerned with the societal costs of the developing economy and the impact of Westernized work practices on cultural values (e.g., time spent with one's extended family and caring for one's parents in their old age).

More recent research from India highlights the complexity of the WLB discourse in global call centers, where global processes intersect with Indian culture. For example, male IT workers offered the opportunity to work from home abandoned this practice within two weeks, citing the mockery of neighbors and the shame of their wives in having a husband who did not spend his days in an office and was, therefore, assumed to be unemployed (Rajan-Rankin, 2016). In contrast, the WLB discourse became familiar much earlier in the United Kingdom. It was introduced in policy discourses in the 1990s and was widely discussed in the media, although this did not guarantee consensus or stability of interpretation (Gambles et al., 2006; Lewis et al., 2016a).

National context

Following calls over many years for more attention to context in the work and family literature (e.g., Lewis, Izraeli, & Hootsman, 1992), increasing attention has been paid to the national layer of context in work-family and work-life research, although exploration of layers of contextual influences and their intersections remains relatively limited (Lewis, Brannen, & Nilsen, 2009; Nilsen et al., 2013). National contexts are usually compared in terms of structural differences (e.g., public policy support and laws) or cultural factors (e.g., values and norms). The latter are usually examined in terms of dimensions such as individualism-collectivism or gender egalitarianism, based on those identified by Hofstede (1980), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), and Project GLOBE (House, Javidan, & Dorfman, 2001). More rarely, both structural and cultural variables are examined (Ollier-Materre & Foucreault, 2016), which is important as these are likely related. For example, countries higher in gender egalitarianism are more likely to introduce policies to support working families than those lower in gender egalitarianism (Brandth & Kvande, 2015; Haas & Hwang, 2008).

Cultural differences between and within national contexts can impact interpretations of WLB. For example, individuals in many Asian societies are defined by their relationship to family members, and extended families are strong institutions maintained by obligations such as regular visits, financial support, and caregiving (Joplin, Francesco, Shaffer, & Lau, 2003; Tingvold, Middelthon, Allen, & Hauff, 2012; Zhan & Montgomery, 2003). In collectivistic cultures such as these, work tends to be viewed as a way of supporting and advancing the family; conflict between these two domains is perceived as an unavoidable byproduct of promoting the family's financial stability, and is thus experienced by individuals as being less harmful (Lu et

al., 2010; Spector et al., 2007). Hence the notion of WLB may less meaningful, except perhaps for workers employed by multinational corporations (Hill et al., 2004) or in countries such as Japan, where the term is used in government policies aimed at increasing the low birthrate (Atsumi, 2007; Gambles et al., 2006; Lewis et al., 2007).

In contrast, studies of managers and professionals in the United States indicate that extended kin ties are relatively weak, and parents' jobs and children's activities are prioritized over contact with extended family members (Gerstel, 2011; Lareau, 2011). In the individualistic cultures present in many Western nations, work is more often viewed as an achievement by and for the individual that is irreconcilable with family responsibilities (Spector et al., 2007). Thus, although research has shown that individuals across the world express a desire for WLB (Hill et al., 2004) and WLB has significant implications for individuals' well-being and work productivity (Lyness & Judiesch, 2014), the experience of WLB differs among cultural contexts according to the way in which work and family are positioned relative to one another. As an example, a cross-cultural study by Haar et al. (2014) found that higher levels of WLB were more strongly and positively associated with job and life satisfaction for individuals in individualistic cultures, where engagement in work is more often viewed as being primarily for personal achievement and advancement, compared to those in collectivistic cultures, where the purpose of working is more frequently conceptualized as being for the promotion of the family.

Most of the extant cross-cultural research on the work-life interface can be more accurately termed cross-national; little of it takes into account the diversity of cultures, both geographic and ethnic, that exists within many countries. The experience or meaning of WLB may be different for ethnic minorities whose cultural values related to family are at odds with the mainstream cultural norms surrounding

work. This mismatch may produce increased difficulties in combining work and family roles, and thereby in achieving "balance." For example, ethnic Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in the United Kingdom are expected to undertake considerable household duties and caregiving responsibilities for both immediate and extended family members, while simultaneously fulfilling work demands and career ambitions (Dale, 2005; Kamenou, 2008; Khoker & Beauregard, 2014). This tension between collectivistic family values and individualistic work expectations creates a sense of WLB as being unattainable, compared to individuals whose caregiving commitments do not extend beyond the nuclear family unit. Similarly, a comparative qualitative study of work and family in five European states found fundamental social class differences in experiences of and sense of entitlement to policies and practices that support WLB (Nilsen et al., 2013).

Organizational context

Workplaces constitute another important context that intersects with other layers of context, contributing to within- and between-country differences in interpretations of WLB. Most research on WLB focuses on middle-class, relatively privileged, knowledge workers, who are mostly employed in large organizations and struggle to make time for non-work activities in the face of demanding workloads. Research suggests that knowledge workers in the global economy or in the same multinational company understand and experience WLB in similar ways cross-nationally (Hill et al., 2004). This raises the possibility that the concept of WLB as a personal experience may be more similar cross-nationally for workers with similar backgrounds or life circumstances than it is across diverse workers within countries.

More research is needed to explore the ways in which WLB is interpreted by diverse groups in a wider range of workplace contexts, including self-employed

(Annink, den Dulk, & Steijn, 2015), working class, and blue collar workers (Warren, 2016). We especially encourage research on those in precarious low-paid work (e.g., workers on the zero-hours contracts common in the accommodation and food service sectors, retail, and residential care). The assumption underpinning research on workers in high-status jobs is that experiences of WLB relate primarily to having too much work or work that spills over into personal time, creating the need to balance this with other activities. However, in many circumstances it is not just the time squeeze that is the problem, but genuine financial hardship because of too little work and/or inadequate pay (Warren, 2016). WLB may take on a very different meaning in such circumstances.

At the organizational layer, discourses of WLB can vary within and between organizations. Managers and workers may understand WLB differently. For instance, Mescher, Benschop, and Doorewaard's (2010) analyses of company websites showed that there is often a mismatch between explicit employer statements of support for WLB and more implicit messages framing WLB arrangements as a privilege.

Understandings of WLB as an adjective to describe policies or practices also vary across intersecting national and organizational contexts. For example, Chandra's (2012) comparison of Eastern and Western perspectives on WLB found that among multinational firms, American companies focused on flexible working practices, while Indian companies focused on employee assistance programs (EAPs) offering a range of cultural, recreational, health, and educational services (e.g., fitness centers, flower arrangement workshops, and yoga classes). In a more context-specific study of WLB in transnational call centers located in India, Rajan-Rankin (2016) argues that "while the language, discourses and messages of WLB are outsourced along with the work, their meanings and implications for call centre workers can be quite different

from the flexible working messages being imparted in the Western outsourcing country" (p. 237). In this setting, WLB discourses and practices served as a symbol of modernity and neoliberalism, but were located in a context characterized by paternalistic leadership styles commonly attributed to collectivistic societies.

Qualitative case studies also demonstrate how different meanings of WLB can exist within workplaces in otherwise very similar contexts. For example, Herman and Lewis (2012) found that four-day work weeks were offered as a form of WLB support in the French headquarters of two multinational companies in the same sector, but in one organization WLB was constructed in terms of flexibility for employed mothers while in the other it was understood to be more gender neutral, with both men and women taking up this practice. The difference was explained by the fact that one company was unionized and had negotiated a collective agreement that included better conditions (including little income reduction) for the four-day week, which encouraged men as well as women to make use of this option. Employment relations thus emerge as a further layer of context in which the meaning of WLB may be rooted.

Temporal context

Finally, context is not just about place but also time. Management discourses such as equal opportunities, diversity, and WLB are dynamic and change to reflect shifting contexts (Fleetwood, 2007; Lewis et al., 2016a; Tatli et al., 2012). Thus meanings of WLB can shift over time in response to specific events in specific places (Fleetwood, 2007; Gambles et al., 2006; Lewis et al., 2007, 2016a). This is illustrated by a recent study of HR professionals' accounts of WLB practices in the United Kingdom public sector at a time of stringent government cuts in public funding following the 2008 global recession. Evidence emerged of a shift in the

understandings and use of the term WLB from an earlier focus on offering "choices" through flexible work arrangements of mutual benefit to employer and employees, toward a reconstruction of WLB as an organizational tool for saving money. New policies such as non-voluntary remote working were therefore branded as WLB polices, masking the cost-saving motivations to support cash-strapped organizations (Lewis et al., 2016a).

Building on the discursive processes literature that explains how the meanings of management constructs develop (Lombardo, Meier, & Verloo, 2009, 2010; Tatli et al., 2012), Lewis et al. (2016a) describe a process whereby the WLB discourse had first become fixed and embedded in organizations in terms of a mutual benefits argument following a high profile United Kingdom government WLB campaign during the 1990s, but in a later context of financial challenges, the meaning of WLB became strategically stretched to include new practices, shrunk to exclude notions of employee choice once constructed as central to WLB policies (Eikhof, Warhurst, & Haunschild, 2007; Gregory & Milner, 2009; Smithson & Stokoe, 2005), and bent to incorporate the additional goal of explicit cost-savings. Thus WLB discourses were adapted and reconstructed by specific actors (i.e., HR professionals) in a specific time and place. HR professionals in this study acknowledged some employee resistance to changing practices (e.g., non-voluntary home-based work), but further research is needed to examine whether employees accept or resist new definitions of WLB within specific contexts.

The Future

This chapter has discussed the problematic nature of meanings of WLB. As the language used to describe a particular concept influences the ways in which individuals and organizational actors think about and respond to it (Lewis et al.,

2007), this is not a trivial issue. The ways in which individual workers understand "balance" in relation to work and personal life in diverse contexts influence whether they see balance as feasible and attainable, the supports that they expect or would like, and the "choices" they can make.

Similarly, understandings of WLB vary within and across organizations. For example, if WLB is conceptualized as a health issue with implications for employee well-being and performance, then it may help to challenge practices that encourage work to spillover into non-work time. In contrast, if WLB is conceptualized as a luxury and support for WLB as a favor, then WLB-supportive policies and practices will be vulnerable, especially in more difficult economic circumstances.

Evidence suggests that WLB may be regarded as a luxury or favor in contexts where there is a long hours culture, particularly in professional and managerial work (e.g., Moen, Lam, Ammons, & Kelly, 2013). Interestingly, WLB is also likely to be regarded as a luxury in smaller businesses with limited resources, which may be struggling to compete for survival, and in developing country contexts and subsistence economies. As most WLB research takes place in large organizations and in industrialized countries, more research is needed to understand whether and how WLB is interpreted in such contexts. Moreover, most research focuses on high status, middle class workers. More needs to be known about the meanings and usefulness of the WLB concept to those working in low paid and insecure work, for whom the main priority is simply earning enough to get by (Warren, 2016).

Moreover, the concept of WLB is not static. Evidence that meanings of WLB can change over time within a given context, as discussed in this chapter, suggests, that future scholarship in this vein is likely to be fruitful. To expand our knowledge of how individuals in a particular place and time understand WLB, more research is

needed into how these meanings develop, and how they impact individuals' sense of entitlement to use WLB provisions, such as flexible or reduced working hours (Herman & Lewis, 2012; Lewis & Smithson, 2001), and their capability for accessing WLB supports (Hobson, Fahlén, & Takács, 2014) to achieve WLB according to their perception of this concept.

Theory-building in this regard would have practical benefits. For instance, HR practitioners could guide the processes of change in meaning of WLB in a more conscious manner, taking account of employee perspectives, and thereby ensure greater and more effective employee take-up of WLB practices. Individuals could examine their understanding of WLB more closely and perhaps challenge employers whose mixed messages regarding WLB contribute to the maintenance of standard ways of working and thereby generate little or no improvement in employee experiences of WLB.

More broadly, the dearth of research investigating the meanings attached to WLB in cultures outside the Western sphere means that it is reasonable to ask how and why these meanings might vary cross-culturally. Looking forward, we might also ask whether cultural differences in the meaning of work and life will gradually attenuate with increasing globalization and industrialization. With distinctions between 'work' and 'life' domains already perceived as artificial in some cultural contexts (Rajan-Rankin, 2016), an important question for both scholarship and practice is whether WLB remains a useful term or whether the WLB discourse that has helped to raise awareness about some paid work and personal life issues now constitutes a barrier to thinking more widely about the diversity of experiences and how these might change in the future.

References

Abubaker, M., & Bagley, C. (2016). Work-life balance and the needs of female employees in the telecommunications industry in a developing country: A critical realist approach to issues in industrial and organizational social psychology. *Comprehensive Psychology*, *5*, 1-12.

Allen, T. D., Johnson, R. C., Kiburz, K. M., & Shockley, K. M. (2013). Work–family conflict and flexible work arrangements: Deconstructing flexibility. *Personnel Psychology*, *66*(2), 345-376.

Annink, A., den Dulk, L., & Steijn, B. (2015). Work-family state support for the self-employed across Europe. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, *4*(2), 187-208.

Atsumi, N. (2007). Work-life balance strategies for advanced companies. *Japan Labor Review*, *4*(4), 37-58.

Beauregard, T. A. (2014). Fairness perceptions of work-life balance initiatives: Effects on counterproductive work behaviour. *British Journal of Management*, *25*(4), 772-789.

Beauregard, T. A. (2011). Corporate work-life balance initiatives: Use and effectiveness. In S. Kaiser, M. Ringlstetter, M. Pina e Cunha, & D. R. Eikhof (Eds.), *Creating balance? International perspectives on the work-life integration of professionals* (pp. 193-208). Berlin: Springer.

Bloom, P. (2016). Work as the contemporary limit of life: Capitalism, the death drive, and the lethal fantasy of 'work–life balance'. *Organization*, *23*(4), 588-606.

Brandth, B., & Kvande, E. (2015). Parental leave and classed fathering practices in Norway. In Eydal, G. B., & Rostgaard, T. (Eds.), *Fatherhood in the Nordic*

welfare states: Comparing care policies and practices (pp. 121-140). Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Caproni, P. J. (2004). Work/life balance: You can't get there from here. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *40*(2), 208-218.

Chandra, V. (2012). Work–life balance: Eastern and western perspectives. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *23*(5), 1040-1056.

Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, U., & Smithson, J. (2016). Entitled or misunderstood? Towards the repositioning of the sense of entitlement concept in the generational difference debate. *Community, Work & Family*, *19*(2), 213-226.

Clark, S. C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, *53*(6), 747-770.

Dale, A. (2005). Combining family and employment: Evidence from Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. In D. M. Houston (Ed.), *Work-life balance in the 21st century* (pp. 230-245). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dumas, T. L., & Sanchez-Burks, J. (2015). The professional, the personal, and the ideal worker: Pressures and objectives shaping the boundary between life domains. *The Academy of Management Annals*, *9*(1), 803-843.

Eikhof, D. R., Warhurst, C., & Haunschild, A. (2007). Introduction: What work? What life? What balance? Critical reflections on the work-life balance debate. *Employee Relations*, *29*(4), 325-333.

Fleetwood, S. (2007). Why work–life balance now? *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *18*(3), 387-400.

Gambles, R., Lewis, S., & Rapoport, R. (2006). *The myth of work-life balance: The challenge of our time for men, women and societies*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Gatrell, C. J., & Cooper, C. L. (2008). Work-life balance: Working for whom? *European Journal of International Management*, *2*(1), 71-86.

Gerstel, N. (2011). Rethinking families and community: The color, class, and centrality of extended kin ties. *Sociological Forum*, *26*(1), 1-20.

Greenhaus, J., & Allen, T. D. (2011). Work-family balance: A review and extension of the literature. In J. C. Quick and L. E. Tetrick (Eds.), *Handbook of occupational health psychology* (2nd edition) (pp. 165-183). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Gregory, A., & Milner, S. (2009). Editorial: Work–life balance: A matter of choice? *Gender, Work & Organization*, *16*(1), 1-13.

Grzywacz, J. G., & Carlson, D. S. (2007). Conceptualizing work-family balance: Implications for practice and research. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *9*(4), 455-471.

Haar, J. M., Russo, M., Suñe, A., & Ollier-Malaterre, A. (2014). Outcomes of work–life balance on job satisfaction, life satisfaction and mental health: A study across seven cultures. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *85*(3), 361-373.

Haas, L., & Hwang, C. P. (2008). The impact of taking parental leave on fathers' participation in childcare and relationships with children: Lessons from Sweden. *Community, Work and Family*, *11*(1), 85-104.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Herman, C., & Lewis, S. (2012). Entitled to a sustainable career? Motherhood in science, engineering, and technology. *Journal of Social Issues*, *68*(4), 767-789.

Hill, E., Yang, C., Hawkins, A., & Ferris, M. (2004). A cross-cultural test of the work-family interface in 48 countries. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *66*(5), 1300–1316.

Hobson, B. (Ed.). (2014). *Worklife balance: The agency and capabilities gap*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Hobson, B., Fahlén, S., & Takács, J. (2014). A sense of entitlement? Agency and capabilities in Sweden and Hungary. In B. Hobson (Ed.), *Worklife balance: The agency and capabilities gap* (pp. 57-91). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Hofstede, G. (1980). Motivation, leadership, and organization: Do American theories apply abroad? *Organizational Dynamics*, *9*(1), 42-63.

House, R., Javidan, M., & Dorfman, P. (2001). Project GLOBE: An introduction. *Applied Psychology*, *50*(4), 489-505.

Joplin, J. R. W., Francesco, A. M., Shaffer, M., & Lau, T. (2003). The macro-environment and work-family conflict: Development of a cross-cultural comparative framework. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, *3*, 305-328.

Kamenou, N. (2008). Reconsidering work-life balance debates: Challenging limited understandings of the 'life' component in the context of ethnic minority women's experiences. *British Journal of Management, 19*, 99-109.

Kelliher, C., & Anderson, D. (2010). Doing more with less? Flexible working practices and the intensification of work. *Human Relations*, *63*(1), 83-106.

Khokher, S. Y., & Beauregard, T. A. (2014). Work-family attitudes and behaviours among newly immigrant Pakistani expatriates: The role of organizational family-friendly policies. *Community, Work & Family*, *17*(2), 142-162.

Kossek, E. E., Valcour, M., & Lirio, P. (2014). The sustainable workforce: Organizational strategies for promoting work-life balance and well-being. In C. Cooper & P. Chen (Eds.), *Work and wellbeing* (pp. 295–318). Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Leslie, L. M., Manchester, C. F., Park, T. Y., & Mehng, S. A. (2012). Flexible work practices: A source of career premiums or penalties? *Academy of Management Journal*, *55*(6), 1407-1428.

Lewis, S., Anderson, D., Lyonette, C., Payne, N., & Wood, S. (2016a). Public sector austerity cuts in the UK and the changing discourse of work–life balance. *Work, Employment and Society*. doi:10.1177/0950017016638994.

Lewis, S., Anderson, D., Lyonette, C., Payne, N., & Wood, S. (2016b). *Work-life balance in times of recession, austerity and beyond*. New York: Routledge.

Lewis, S., Brannen, J., & Nilsen, A. (2009). *Work, families and organisations in transition: European perspectives*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Lewis, S., Gambles, R., & Rapoport, R. (2007). The constraints of a 'work–life balance' approach: An international perspective. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *18*(3), 360-373.

Lewis, S., Izraeli, D. N., & Hootsman, H. (1992). Towards balanced lives and gender equality. *Dual earner families: International perspectives*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Lombardo, E., Meier, P., & Verloo, M. (Eds.). (2009). *The discursive politics of gender equality: Stretching, bending and policy-making*. London: Routledge.

Lombardo, E., Meier, P., & Verloo, M. (2010). Discursive dynamics in gender equality politics: What about 'feminist taboos'? *European Journal of Women's Studies*, *17*(2), 105-123.

Lu, L., Cooper, C. L., Kao, S.-F., Chang, T.-T., Allen, T. D., Lapierre, L. M., O'Driscoll, M. P., Poelmans, S. A. Y., Sanchez, J. I., & Spector, P. E. (2010). Cross-cultural differences on work-to-family conflict and role satisfaction: A Taiwanese-British comparison. *Human Resource Management*, *49*(1), 67–85.

Lyness, K. S., & Judiesch, M. K. (2014). Gender egalitarianism and work–life balance for managers: Multisource perspectives in 36 countries. *Applied Psychology*, *63*(1), 96-129.

Mescher, S., Benschop, Y., & Doorewaard, H. (2010). Representations of work–life balance support. *Human Relations*, *63*(1), 21-39.

Moen, P., Lam, J., Ammons, S., & Kelly, E. L. (2013). Time work by overworked professionals: Strategies in response to the stress of higher status. *Work and Occupations*, *40*(2), 79-114.

Nilsen, A., Brannen, J., & Lewis, S. (2013). *Transitions to parenthood in Europe*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Ollier-Malaterre, A. (2016). Cross-national work-life research: A review at the individual level. In T. D. Allen, & L. E. Eby (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Work and Family* (Chapter 23). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Ollier-Malaterre, A., & Foucreault, A. (2016). Cross-national work-life research: Cultural and structural impacts for individuals and organizations. *Journal of Management*. doi: 10.1177/0149206316655873.

Özbilgin, M. F., Beauregard, T. A., Tatli, A., & Bell, M. P. (2011). Work–life, diversity and intersectionality: A critical review and research agenda. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *13*(2), 177-198.

Rajan-Rankin, S. (2016). Paternalism and the paradox of work–life balance: Discourse and practice. *Community, Work & Family*, *19*(2), 227-241.

Smithson, J., & Stokoe, E. H. (2005). Discourses of work–life balance: Negotiating 'genderblind' terms in organizations. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *12*(2), 147-168.

Spector, P. E., Allen, T. D., Poelmans, S. A. Y., Lapierre, L. M., Cooper, C. L., O'Driscoll, M., et al. (2007). Cross-national differences in relationships of work demands, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions with work–family conflict. *Personnel Psychology*, *60*(4), 805–835.

Tatli, A., Vassilopoulou, J., Al Ariss, A., & Özbilgin, M. F. (2012). The role of regulatory and temporal context in the construction of diversity discourses: The case of the UK, France and Germany. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, *18*(4), 293-308.

Tingvold, L., Middelthon, A. L., Allen, J., & Hauff, E. (2012). Parents and children only? Acculturation and the influence of extended family members among Vietnamese refugees. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *36*(2), 260-270.

Trompenaars, F., & Hampden-Turner, C. (1998). *Riding the waves of culture: Understanding diversity in global business*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Warren, T. (2016). Work–life balance and class: In search of working-class work-lives. In Lewis, S., Anderson, D., Lyonette, C., Payne, N., & Wood, S., *Work-*

life balance in times of recession, austerity and beyond (pp 112-131). New York: Routledge.

Wayne, J. H., Butts, M. M., Casper, W. J., & Allen, T. D. (2016). In search of balance: An empirical integration of multiple meanings of work-family balance. *Personnel Psychology*. doi: 10.1111/peps.12132.

Zhan, H. J., & Montgomery, R. J. V. (2003). Gender and elder care in China: The influence of filial piety and structural constraints. *Gender & Society*, *17*, 209-229.