

# Organization Management Journal

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Volume 1 | Issue 1

Article 10

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5-1-2004

## Editors' Introduction

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### Recommended Citation

Mallon, Mary and Sleeth, Randy (2004) "Editors' Introduction," *Organization Management Journal*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.

Available at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/omj/vol1/iss1/10>

## Editors' Introduction

The realm of work-life concerns is our theme in this issue. Many workers are seeing paid work intensifying, hours required increasing, and stress levels rising; in response, governments are promoting and organizations are espousing the benefits of work-life balance. Yet, while everyone seemingly recommends balance, only some get it; and others, when offered balance, don't take it up. Some explanation may lie in the difficulty of establishing shared frames of reference about what a balanced work-life would look like, as balance likely constitutes a deeply personal and constantly shifting target throughout life. For researchers, then, any exploration of work-family or work-life issues necessitates a journey into a complex and varied terrain of theory and practice.

Each of our six bibliographic review articles brings to the topic insights from other areas of scholarly enquiry. The bibliographies were originally developed for the *Work-Family Encyclopedia*, a project of the Sloan Work and Family Research Network, which is available online at: [www.bc.edu/wfnetwork](http://www.bc.edu/wfnetwork). We are indebted to Marcie Pitt-Catsoupes of Boston College, and Ellen Kossek of Michigan State University, co-editors of the Encyclopedia, for their generosity in helping us bring these materials to *OMJ*.

In "Boundary/Border Theory and Work-Family Integration," Stephan Desrochers and Leisa D. Sargent suggest the blurring of work-family roles is a special case of boundary theory. In "Community as a Context for the Work-Family Interface," Patricia Voydanoff reminds us that understanding of the roles and effects of community remain important to the determination of government policy, which will normally focus at this level of aggregation. In "Gender: Work-Family Ideologies and Roles," Teresa Rothausen-Vange explores the need to address the persistence of the gendered nature of work-family. In "Identity Theory," Stephan Desrochers, Jeanine Andreassi, and Cynthia Thompson ask that we consider whether we or others determine who we are to ourselves and to others. In "The Psychological Contract and Work-Family," Janet Smithson and Suzan Lewis provide another mental model offering a method of negotiating expectations about work and family. In "Social Capital," Rosalind Edwards explains the need for developing understandings of evolving ways that new forms of social capital may operate in the context of emerging work and family relationships and social policies.

Each article begins with a discussion of basic concepts and definitions, relates them to work-family studies, explores a body of knowledge, and draws conclusions and implications for practice and research. Each article concludes with a focused list of the most pertinent references. We hasten to add that we approve of but do not require this approach for other writers.

Celebration of synergy is our intention as these authors provide, demonstrate, and guide readers through ways of connecting available research on work-life matters to reveal new thoughts and directions for expanding knowledge. We encourage potential authors to correspond with us to propose future topics that excite and intrigue, and are ripe for a bibliographical review. Please

see the Bibliography main page on the *OMJ* website ([www.omj-online.org](http://www.omj-online.org)) for details of the conventions for future submissions.

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