



INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL
ISSUES IN WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

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Abstract

In this paper I review the literature on the antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict and family-supportive policies. The purpose of this paper is to review and confront two practically divorced literatures and point to the gaps in the literature on work-family conflict and work-family policies in order to recognize avenues for future research. First, I review the literature on work-family conflict, distinguishing theories, antecedents, consequences, typologies, and measures. Second, I focus on the literature of work-family policies. The analysis and comparison of the literatures described in the first and second part serve as sources for summarizing the weaknesses of these literatures and formulating recommendations for future research in the domain of work-family conflict and family-supportive policies. In a last section, I provide a number of broad categories with which to build a framework for research on the work-family interface.

Keywords: Work-family conflict, family-friendly policies.

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Introduction

The conflict between work and family is a widely researched topic in contemporary organizational behavior research. The origin of this research domain can be situated in the late seventies, with the seminal works of Renshaw (1976), Kanter (1977), and Pleck (1977). The key idea of this literature is the following: Both work and family claim time and energy; work is an important source of income, financial security, and status; and the family functions as a nucleus, where two partners find intimacy, support and raise children. To make a choice between work and family is very difficult. Work and family are not independent (Kanter, 1977) and, as a consequence, conflicts will arise.

Since the pioneering work of Pleck (1977) there has been a general consensus that work and family influence each other in both a positive and a negative way: time, tasks, attitudes, stress, emotions and behavior spill over between work and family (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). A distinction has been made between the work-family interface (work influencing family) and the family-work interface (family influencing work) (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992; Greenhaus, 1988; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Gutek, Searle & Klepa, 1991). It has been found that the interface is asymmetric: work influences family more than vice versa (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992; Gutek, Searle & Klepa, 1991; Hall & Richter, 1988; Wiley, 1987). In this paper I will describe two literatures that have been focusing on the work-family interface. One looks at the micro-level of analysis, studying the individual experience of work-family conflict. The other concentrates on the meso-level, investigating policies and measures taken in organizations to reduce work-family conflict, with the purpose of improving individual and organizational wellbeing and performance.

The purpose of this paper is to review and confront these two practically divorced literatures and point to the gaps in the literature on work-family conflict and policies in order to recognize avenues for future research. First, I will review the literature on work-family conflict, distinguishing theories, antecedents, consequences, typologies, and measures. Second, I will focus on the literature of work-family policies. Again I will discuss antecedents and consequences. The analysis and comparison of the literatures will serve as a source for summarizing the weaknesses of these literatures and formulating recommendations for future research in the domain of work-family conflict and family-supportive policies. In a last section, I provide a number of broad categories that can be used to build a framework for research on the work-family interface.

Literature on individual work-family conflict

Theories

Since its early development, theoretical discourse in the field of work-family conflict has been confined to a few dominant theories. Only recently have alternatives been propounded and tested. It is through the collision of alternative explanations, though, that a research field evolves. I will briefly re-examine some of the theories that have guided research in the field and point out their shortcomings.

One of the noticeable characteristics of the work-family field is its theoretical weakness. Predictions have not been grounded on strong conceptual frameworks (Hobfoll, 1989; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). It seems that most researchers follow the rationale of the one dominant theory in the field, i.e. role theory, which was derived from the seminal Michigan study of organizational stress conducted 37 years ago (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Many published studies introduce and test a theoretical model that links a number of antecedents, moderators and consequences without referring too much to underlying theory (Bedeian, Burke & Moffet, 1988; Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992; Gutek, Searle & Klepa; 1991; Judge, Boudreau & Bretz, 1994; Kelly & Voydanoff, 1985; Kopelman *et al.*, 1993; Lobel, 1997). Frone, Yardley & Markel (1997) claim to offer a general, integrative framework of the work-family interface that deals with many critiques on previous models. A structural equations analysis supports their model. It integrates social support, time commitment and overload, both at work and in the family, as antecedents; work-family conflict and family-work conflict as core variables; and distress, dissatisfaction and performance as outcomes.

According to role theory, conflicting expectations associated with different roles have detrimental effects on wellbeing. This rationale basically fits the logic of the stressor-strain model that most stress theories propose (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Karasek & Theorell, 1990), with work-family conflict as a stressor. Several studies elaborate the causal link between stressors and wellbeing, adding moderators like social support. Another, slightly more sophisticated influential theory is spillover theory (Piotrkowski, 1979; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990), which assumes that time, strain and behavior spill over from one domain to the other. Although some support exists for both role theory and spillover theory, they have not been integrated into one comprehensive theory capable of guiding work-family research (Kelly & Streeter, 1992; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). Only a few studies proffer theories that challenge or integrate the basic claims of role theory and spillover theory. Examples are Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources theory (COR) (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Rosenbaum & Cohen, 1999), Higgins, Bond, Klein, & Strauman's (1986) self-discrepancy theory (Polasky & Holahan, 1998), and Tajfel & Turner's (1985) social identity theory (Lobel, 1997). I will now briefly review the dominant and the alternative theories and point out their respective limitations.

a. Role theory

Role theory predicts that multiple roles lead to role stress (role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload), which in turn results in strain (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). The expectations associated with work and family roles can induce physical and psychological strain in several ways. First, contradictory expectations within a role can provoke intra-role conflict or role ambiguity. Second, the expectations can create inter-role conflict when pressures in one role dominate or interfere with pressures in the other role (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Third, the accumulation of expectations from several roles can induce feelings of overload in one or both domains (Hall & Hall, 1982; Szalai, 1972).

There are several problems with role theory. The most troublesome is probably that several studies have found that multiple roles are not detrimental but salutary (Thoits, 1983; Verbrugge, 1983; Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Crosby, 1984; Kirchmeyer, 1992). These studies support the expansion model (Marks, 1977) and undermine the scarcity model that underlies role theory. They challenge the assumption that multiple roles by definition result in conflict and raise the question in what circumstances multiple roles conflict, support or even reinforce each other. A second critique is that role theory pays less attention to family roles (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). A third one is that it does not directly specify moderating variables that might buffer the relationships between work and family stressors and stress outcomes (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Fourth, we can question the idea that work-family conflict is a stressor, which is the implicit assumption when role theory is applied to the work-family domain. Several studies have shown that work-family conflict is a consequence of work stressors and work conflict (e.g. Burke, 1988; Greenglass, Pantony & Burke, 1988; Higgins, Duxbury, and Irving, 1992) as well as a cause of strain (e.g. Frone, Barnes & Farrell, 1994; Hughes & Galinsky, 1994; Klitzman, House, Israel & Mero, 1990; MacEwen & Barling, 1994; Parasuraman, Greenhaus & Granrose, 1992). This seems to suggest that work-family conflict may operate as a moderator or mediator of the stressor-strain relationship.

b. Interface theories

A second set of theories focuses on the interface between work and family, such as spillover theory (Zedeck & Mosier, 1990). Spillover theory is based on Pleck's (1977) early notion of asymmetrically permeable boundaries between the life domains of work and family. This notion has led to a general consensus that work and family influence each other in both positive and negative ways: time, tasks, attitudes, stress, emotions and behaviors spill over between work and family (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Evans & Bartolomé (1980, 1984) distinguished several relationships between work and family: spillover, independence, conflict, instrumentality, and compensation. According to these authors these five interfaces are not exhaustive. A lot of combinations are possible, as well as an "integrated pattern" in which work and family are one and cannot be separated. These five typical relationships offer the opportunity to study the evolution of the work-family interface through different life cycles, as the concern with work and family fluctuates.

With the two possible directions of spillover, a distinction has been drawn between work-to-family conflict (work interfering with family) and family-to-work conflict (family interfering with work) (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992; Greenhaus, 1988; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Gutek, Searle & Klepa, 1991). Several scholars have concluded that these two types of conflict are conceptually and empirically distinct constructs (Duxbury, Higgins & Lee, 1994; Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992; O'Driscoll, Ilgen & Hildreth, 1992; Wiley, 1987).

Interface theories add some sophistication to theory explaining the relationship between work and family. Conflict as the sole possibility –as theorised by role theory– is discarded. Different types of relationships and interactions between the two domains are proposed and a distinction is made between work-family and family-work conflict. The theory also provides a basis for crossover effects that have been observed in many studies (e.g. Greenhaus *et al.*, 1989; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1989; Westman & Etzion, 1995; Hammer, Allen & Grigsby, 1997). Still, even these interface theories have some important limitations. First, although a broader set of possibilities of relationships between work and family is described, it is not explained when and why different individuals in different situations experience work and family as conflicting or independent domains. Second, it does not link different interface types with different antecedents and outcomes. Third, although it is now clear that the paths of

work-to-family and family-to-work spillover are distinct, different explanations have been suggested (Duxbury, Higgins & Lee, 1994; Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992; O'Driscoll, Ilgen & Hildreth, 1992). Fourth, the focus remains on the domains and the consequences while the question of how individuals actually deal with conflict is generally ignored.

c. Conservation of resources (COR) theory

The conservation of resources (COR) theory encompasses several stress theories (Hobfoll, 1989). The COR model's basic postulate is that individuals strive to acquire and maintain resources. Resources include objects, conditions (e.g. married status, tenure), personal characteristics (e.g. self-esteem), and energies (e.g. time, money, knowledge). The threat of losing or the actual loss of these resources may lead to a "negative state of being", i.e. the experience of stress, job dissatisfaction, depression, or tension. If behavior to protect or replace these resources is not initiated (e.g. leaving the job), the resources may be so depleted that burnout ensues (Hobfoll & Shirom, 1993; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

One of the differences with respect to role theory is that an extra role can be considered as a resource, and not simply as a cause of role conflict. Hence, the COR theory can deal with the finding that multiple roles can be beneficial. It can also offer an explanation of the different types of interfaces suggested by Evans & Bartolomé as different ways to protect or maintain resources. The COR theory is a decisive step forward in theorizing on work-family conflict because it elucidates why people act when confronted with a conflict and not just when they experience strain. The theory seems to provide some answers where role theory and the interface theories remain silent. Still, it does not specify when a certain set of resources is perceived as insufficient and when people are induced to act. The theory clearly subsumes the idea that an individual strives for an "equilibrium" or a state of "homeostasis" (Canon, 1954). But this is a very lean criterion that can be used to explain anything. The theory cannot predict when an individual will actually decide to refuse a promotion, quit his or her job, or withdraw from his or her partner relationship to reestablish the "equilibrium". It does not offer a clarification of the observed fact that some people can deal with extended periods of work-family conflict and stress, while others cannot. People differ in the priorities they assign to work or family, and the sacrifices they are willing to make. The COR theory would argue that this is due to differences in resources. But that is as far as the argument goes. Lastly, the COR theory does not address interactions within couples and continues to center on the individual as the unit of analysis.

d. Self-discrepancy theory

Self-discrepancy theory (Higgins *et al.*, 1985) is rooted in cognitive and social psychology and is based on the concepts of self-concept and self-schema (Burke, 1980, Markus & Wurf, 1987). Central is the derivation of self-identity from the individual's relationships with others (Markus & Cross, 1990). Self-conflicts or self-inconsistencies are likely to relate to emotional problems (e.g. Allport, 1955; Rogers, 1951). More specifically, self-discrepancy theory assumes that discrepancies between the perceived actual self and the ideal self (as imposed by oneself) result in affective responses such as depression and shame. Discrepancies between the perceived actual self and the *ought* self (as imposed by the social group) result in guilt and anxiety. Social pressure, social support, and gender role expectations can buffer or intensify these intra-personal conflicts. Frone, Russell & Cooper (1992) used self-discrepancy theory to explain differences between the influence of work on family and the influence of family on work. According to the authors, the latter is

experienced as a threat to the maintenance of the desirable (job-related) self-image, with consequences for the general wellbeing of the employee.

Self-discrepancy theory adds some interesting ideas to theory on work-family conflict. It goes beyond conflicting expectations coming from different domains and points to conflicts that arise when an individual processes what he/she is in comparison with some standard imposed by oneself and by a social norm. It shifts the attention from the social to the psychological, emphasising both internal cognitive processes and external social processes and thus adding sophistication to theory. This is an important contribution, because it forces us to consider not just social phenomena but also immanent actions like internal dialogues, decision making and cognitive adaptations that have profound effects on how we perceive and deal with the world. It adheres to a fundamentally different model of man. It replaces a purely sociological model of man determined by his environment with a psycho-sociological model of man not just determined by his environment but also capable of thinking. If we follow cognitive theory, the discrepancies an individual experiences are subject to cognitive bias. Moreover, the theory adds an ethical layer to theory in work-family conflict by introducing the self-imposed *ought* and the *ought* imposed by others.

Still, although it offers a fundamentally different and fertile theoretical perspective, this theory does not go so far as to conceive a person as a responsible actor who makes conscious decisions. It spells out behavior in terms of discrepancy-reduction, and like the COR theory it assumes that people strive for some fit between real, ideal, and *ought* selves, suggesting a deep social determination of a person. It does not clarify why some people actually consciously create a lack of fit and are able to support big discrepancies. As in the other theories we mentioned above, the theory is built around the individual as a unit of analysis and reduces relevant social factors in the environment of this individual to expectations or the *ought* self, depriving them of conscious interaction.

e. Social identity theory

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) is again based on cognitive and social psychology. According to this theory, individuals classify themselves as members of social groups. Individuals have multiple identities that derive from their interactions with others (James, 1890). The extent of identification with each role varies with the person and goals shared with others (Turner, 1984). Ashford & Mael (1989) reviewed a series of behaviours and attitudes associated with group identification. Examples are the selection of activities congruent with the salient social identity, loyalty to the group despite negative attributes, conformity to group norms and attribution of prototypical characteristics to oneself, and the reinforcement of the group's prestige, values, and practices. Different situations "switch on" different social identities. The likelihood of being switched on –coined as the salience of the identity– depends on accessibility (function of motives and past experience) and fit between stimuli and category specifications. Accessibility is a function of the relative centrality of a particular social identity to an individual's self-definition (Boyanowski & Allen, 1973). Salience is associated with investment in the role.

Applied to the work-family context, a person may achieve work-family balance by (a) ensuring that conflicting identities (e.g. control and power in manager role versus interdependence and nurturance in parent role) are separated, or (b) by applying consistent personal values across identities (Allen *et al.*, 1983). Hence, in contrast with utilitarian approaches that state that investment in one role is by definition damaging for the other role, social identity theory proposes that people can invest in several roles and feel satisfied, as long as one of the two aforementioned conditions is met (Lobel, 1991).

Like self-discrepancy theory, social identity theory assigns importance to consistency in behavior, but not between real behavior and self-imposed or other-imposed standards, but between values between roles. This adds an interesting insight to the theorizing about work-family conflict. It offers a rationale for one of the types proposed by Evans & Bartolomé, namely separation, as a technique to cope with inconsistencies between behavior in different roles. Whereas self-discrepancy theory describes predominantly intra-individual conflicts, social identity theory points to group dynamics of conformity and loyalty to groups which include processes of inclusion and exclusion. It can address the observation that some people are capable of enduring long periods of work-family conflict. The theory would explain this in terms of conforming to social norms in the environment that go against, for instance, resigning from work or divorce. Another strength of the theory is that it can construe why people give priority to work or to family, or even both. It comprises the concept of values, linking them with past experience and identification with certain groups. This concept has been generally neglected in other theories. So social identity theory has a lot of promise as a work-family theory. For instance, Lobel & St. Clair's (1992) study of career identity salience based on social identity theory was able to explain performance outcomes. Still, like most of the aforementioned theories, it fails to explain actual behavior and decision making in individuals beyond the social determination of salient in-groups. Like social identity theory, social exchange theory indicates the importance of interactions with multiple others, but it goes beyond pure determinative processes of identification, introducing more rational (cost/benefit analysis and comparison) and emotional (relationships) components.

f. Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory (Homans, 1958, 1974; Blau 1964; Coleman, 1972; Emerson, 1976; Gouldner, 1960) puts more emphasis on the interaction between people. According to this theory, social interactions depend on the rewards and costs involved in the exchange. Social behavior is conceived as an exchange, a give-and-take relationship. Homans added the idea of distributive justice to the theory, i.e. the belief that rewards should be proportional to investments. Blau (1964) made the distinction between economic and social exchange. To Blau, economic exchange can be situated within strict contracts or agreements. Social exchange exists outside strict contracts. Economic exchange behavior can be described as pure instrumentalization, i.e. when a person is only interested in the other person as an instrument for his or her own purposes. A social exchange relationship is of a different nature. It goes beyond enforceable, mostly tangible or quantifiable rewards to include exchanges of socially relevant rewards. Examples are social status and recognition in exchange for loyalty, commitment, and involvement. Moreover, it goes beyond rewards. This time the basic motivation of the person is a social bond, which can only be achieved through repeated interactions and the creation of mutual trust. Underlying this type of relationship is the feeling of one or both parties that they will learn or develop through the relationship.

Thibaut & Kelley's theory of interdependence (1959) further developed social exchange theory, emphasizing the dynamic aspects of dyadic interaction and pointing out the need to maximize the satisfaction of both participants to ensure the maintenance of the interaction process. Thibaut & Kelley also introduced the idea of participants comparing the benefits of any given interaction with the benefits of alternative interactions. This is an essential step, because it breaks the dyad open and makes it possible to include the satisfaction experienced and information gathered in other, multiple dyads while making assessments.

An example of how social exchange theory can be applied to the broader context of work and family can be found in a recent study by Lambert (2000). She links work-life

benefits and organizational citizenship behavior, conceptualizing them as intangible currencies in an employer-employee exchange. According to Lambert, social exchange theory supports the possibility that, with work-family benefits, workers may feel obligated to exert “extra” effort in return for “extra” benefits.

Social exchange theory and the theory of interdependence may offer a more complete explanation than the theories introduced previously. First, it offers a rationale to understand different types of relationships, i.e. economic exchanges and social exchanges. Second, it gives the possibility to consider not just exchanges within the work context, but also in non-work contexts. Third, it offers a framework to think about interactions within couples. Fourth, it allows considering multiple dyads simultaneously, which is very relevant for work-family conflict, because work-family dilemmas often concern the simultaneous consideration of competing exchange outcomes in work and family. But the explanation of behavior purely in terms of social exchange is problematic. It does not explain behavior—especially in the family domain—that escapes the logic of any transaction or exchange, i.e. behaviors that are basically unidirectional in terms of giving beyond taking.

Antecedents

A first set of antecedents we should immediately call to mind when thinking of conflict at the work-family interface are basically socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender, number of children, age of children, having a (working) partner, and educational level (Sanik, 1993). Simply to review the studies looking at gender differences would require a separate paper (Barnett & Brennan, 1997; Chusmir, 1985; Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Eagle, Miles & Icenogle, 1997; Elchardus & Glorieux, 1994; Freedman & Phillips, 1989; Greenglass, Pantony, & Burke, 1988; Gutek, Searle & Klepa, 1991; Hughes & Galinsky, 1994; Lobel & St.Clair, 1992; Scandura & Lankau, 1997). Good illustrations of studies linking socio-demographic characteristics with work-family conflict are those by Eagle, Icenogle, Maes & Miles (1998) and Kinnunen & Mauno (1998). Kinnunen & Mauno (1998) found that in Finland family-work conflict is best explained by what they call family-domain variables (e.g. number of children living at home) for both sexes. Work-family conflict, on the other hand, is best explained by work domain variables for women (e.g. having a full-time job) and by personal (e.g. high education) and family-domain variables for men (e.g. high number of children living at home).

One of the most widely studied and best-established antecedents of work-family conflict is work stress. Several studies have documented the spillover of work stress to the family (Barling & Rosenbaum, 1986; Beehr, Johnson, Nieva & Hurrell, 1995; Burke, 1982, 1986; Jackson & Maslach, 1982; Jackson, Zedeck & Summers, 1985; Jones & Fletcher, 1993; Matsui, Ohsawa & Onglatco, 1995; Parasuraman, Greenhaus & Granrose, 1992; Repetti, 1989; Westman & Etzion, 1995). In several models, work conflict (Kopelman *et al.*, 1983) or work stress is proposed as an antecedent of work-family conflict (Burke, 1988; Greenglass, Pantony & Burke, 1988). Higgins, Duxbury, & Irving (1992) found that work conflict is the most important predictor for family conflict and work-family conflict. The word “predictor” is used because there is no straight and simple causal relationship between work conflict and family conflict. Atkinson, Liem & Liem (1986) and Dew, Bromet & Shulberg (1987) found that work conflict influences the wellbeing and thus the functioning of the employee in his/her partner- or parental relationship. Barling & Macewen (1992) tested a 4-step model in which role ambiguity, role conflict, job insecurity and job dissatisfaction influence marital functioning. There was no direct relationship, but negative experiences at work turned out to cause personal strain in the individual, which influenced marital

functioning. Repetti (1989) reports different studies that have demonstrated a significant association between repeated exposure to job stressors and generally less satisfying family relations. Expressions of the latter are the employed person's decreased availability to and involvement with family members, and increased signs of anger and aggression in the family (Barling & Rosenbaum, 1986; Burke, 1982; Jackson & Maslach, 1982; Piotrkowski & Crits-Christoph, 1982; Repetti, 1987).

Doby & Caplan (1995) suggested that we should distinguish different job stressors, because some of them will affect the family more than others. They found that high-threat stressors, in terms of threatening the employee's reputation with the supervisor, are more likely to spill over from work to family, as they represent a threat of some basic needs of the employee, such as the need for self-esteem. Identifying the specific job stressors that are related to work-family conflict can help us to understand the subtleties of how job stress spills over to the family. This, in turn, can be important in the prevention of a negative impact of work on the family.

Another antecedent that has been associated with work-family conflict is involvement, more specifically, daily involvement in family roles (Williams & Alliger, 1994) and job involvement (Adams, King & King, 1996; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Higgins, Duxbury & Irving, 1992). Frone, Russell & Cooper (1992) proposed and tested a model that included both family and job involvement. They found that job involvement is not significantly related with work-family conflict (contrary to their predictions) and is significantly related with job distress (in line with their predictions), whereas family involvement is significantly related with family-work conflict and family distress (both in line with their hypothesis).

A particularly intriguing role is played by the "social support" variable. Several authors have found that social support from the supervisor (Goff, Mount & Jamison, 1990; Thomas & Ganster, 1995) and the partner (Bedeian, Mossholder & Touliatos, 1987) is of great importance in reducing work-family conflict. So social support seems to function as an antecedent or moderator of work-family conflict. On the other hand, social support has also been described as a dependent variable in relation with work-family conflict, and as an independent variable in relation with family-work conflict. Adams, King & King (1996) point out that the more work interferes with family, the lower the emotional and instrumental support from family. Conversely, higher levels of family support are associated with less interference of family with work. Burley (1995) found that social support serves as a mediator of that negative relationship between work-family conflict and marital adjustment for both men and women. A recent study by Carlson & Perrewé (1999) compares several possible models linking social support with work-family conflict and stressors, to clarify the exact relationships. They find that social support may reduce perceived role stressors (conflict and ambiguity) and time demands, and thus indirectly decrease work-family conflict.

Consequences

The negative effects of work-family conflict have been extensively documented. Examples are: greater health risks for working parents, lowered performance in the parental role, lowered productivity at work, less life satisfaction, anxiety, work stress and reduced marital satisfaction of spouse (Kelly & Voydanoff, 1985; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Voydanoff, 1987; Pleck, 1985; Small & Riley, 1990). The most studied dependent variable is undoubtedly the strain or the mental health experienced by the person. Occupying multiple roles has been associated with role strain, psychological distress, and somatic complaints

(Cooke & Rousseau, 1984; Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1991, 1992a; Menaghan & Parcel, 1990). Other authors have explicitly described work-family conflict as an antecedent of job stress (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992; Judge, Boudreau & Bretz, 1994; O'Driscoll, Ilgen & Hildreth, 1992; Parasuraman, Greenhouse & Granrose, 1992). Burke (1988) tested a model in which work-family conflict leads to psychosomatic symptoms and negative feeling states. Greenglass (1985) found that interferences between job and family life are related to depression, irritation and anxiety in married female managers. Grant-Vallone & Ensher (1998) found that expatriates who find that their work interferes with their personal life report reduced vitality and depression. Boles, Johnston & Hair (1997) found that work-family conflict is related with emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction in salespersons, and that precisely these two consequences are related with the propensity to leave one's job.

A second type of consequences can be grouped under the common denominator "consequences for the family". A whole range of studies has shown that work has an indirect but clear impact on the family. Work stressors such as long working hours cause strain in the employee, who takes the strain home, where it is the source of many problems: physical (e.g. fatigue, headache, tension) or mental (e.g.: absentmindedness, worries, irritation). Thus, the impact is indirect and goes via the employee who feels strained and consequently performs less well in a partner- or parent-role (Atkinson, Liem & Liem, 1986, Dew, Bromet & Shulberg, 1987). This spillover hypothesis is confirmed by empirical studies (Higgins, Duxbury & Irving, 1992). A good illustration is the study by Barling & Macewen (1992) mentioned earlier. Barling & Rosenbaum (1986) found that overall work experiences are associated significantly with wife abuse. Greenglass, Pantony & Burke (1988) found a clear association between role conflict and marital dissatisfaction, in both men and women. According to Kingston & Nock (1987) the time that couples spend together is determined by the number of hours they work, whereas socio-cultural and life cycle variables have little influence. This is important because the researchers also found a clear relationship between hours together and marital satisfaction. Burley (1995) states that social support from the partner and an equal distribution of domestic tasks between partners play a important mediating role in the relationship between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction in men and women. Stressors at home and at work and evening mood are clearly correlated in dual-earner men and women (Jones & Fletcher, 1996). There are also consequences for children. Goldberg, Greenberger & Nagel (1996) studied the influence of the number of working hours and work involvement of the mother on the development and school performance of the child. A higher number of working hours per week was related with weaker teachers' evaluations of school performance, work habits, and performance-related personality traits, but better school performance in girls, and weaker school performance, work habits and self-control in boys. A higher work motivation in the mother was associated with more support from the mother for the performance of the child and a stronger motivation in girls. Crouter, Bumpus, Maguire & McHale (1999) found that the effects of work pressure on adolescent well-being were mediated by parental role overload and parent-adolescent conflict.

Rice, Frone & McFarlin (1992) have shown that a conflict between work and non-work has important, indirect consequences for life satisfaction. Work conflicts and non-work conflicts were found to be related with work satisfaction and non-work satisfaction, respectively. These, in turn, were related with overall life satisfaction. Work-family conflict is associated with a decrease in life satisfaction (Ahmad, 1996; Bedeian, Burke & Moffet, 1988; Judge, Boudreau & Bretz, 1994; Parasuraman, Greenhaus & Granrose, 1992) and family-work conflict with job satisfaction (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Judge, Boudreau & Bretz, 1994; Kopelman, Greenhaus & Connolly, 1983;). Adams, King & King (1996) and Ahmad (1996)

also found that work-family conflict is associated with job dissatisfaction. Kossek & Ozeki's (1998) meta-analytic results show that regardless of the type of measure used, a consistent negative relationship exists among all forms of work-family conflict and job-life satisfaction.

A study that deserves extra attention is Frone, Russell & Cooper's (1997) longitudinal study of employed parents. It is one of the scarce longitudinal studies of the effects of work-family conflict, and thus one of the few studies entitled to posit causal relationships between variables. They found that family-work conflict is related to elevated levels of depression and poor physical health, and to the incidence of hypertension. In contrast, work-family conflict is related to elevated levels of heavy alcohol consumption.

If we combine several of the above-reported findings, we see that work-family conflict does not only have a negative effect on job and life satisfaction, but is also related with less emotional and instrumental support from the family. In an earlier study (Buelens & Poelmans, 1996) we found that social support from the spouse is associated more with family satisfaction, and support from the supervisor more with job satisfaction. This means that the negative impact of work-family conflict is twofold and self-reinforcing. Not only does it have a direct impact on satisfaction, it also increases the levels of stress by undermining social support from the family. For work-family conflict also decreases the most important buffer against stress, social support. Several studies have shown that social support from the family, and especially from the spouse, is an essential buffer against the depressive effects of major and minor stressors, including job stressors (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Vanfossen, 1981; for a review cfr. Buunk & Peeters, 1994).

Typologies

Another way of studying work-family conflict is to identify (clusters of) individual differences that increase the probability of developing conflict. For instance, Higgins & Duxbury (1992) examined differences between traditional-career and dual-career men. The latter experience a significant, negative spill-over from their work domain, due to a lack of structural flexibility in the workplace, outdated organizational policies that operate on the myth of separate worlds, and a lack of social support for the male dual-career role which contradicts societal norms. Strickland (1992) identified different career wife roles. Schmeer & Reitman (1993) combined three characteristics –being married, having a working partner, and having children– and differentiated five family structures (S = Unmarried or single; M1 = Married, no children, single-earner; M2 = Married, no children, dual-earner; MC1 = Married, children, single-earner; MC2 = Married, children, dual-earner). They compared income and job satisfaction in these different types and concluded that men in traditional families (M1, MC1) earn more than men in post-traditional families (S, M2, MC2). There were no differences between other groups. The authors proposed alternative explanations for these differences. A first one is the human capital theory, which states that single earners can invest more time and energy in their career. The second is the societal stereotype theory, which offers as an explanation that single-earners experience a greater fit between their family structure and the societal ideal. And a last is the spousal support theory, which assumes that single-earners experience more social support from their partner as dedicated mother / partner. On the other hand, dual-earners seem to be more satisfied with their careers. The explanation here is the “post-traditional family track”, which implies that dual-earners have different careers, as parent, partner, provider of income, and thus are more balanced and satisfied.

Interesting is the study by Berger & Handy (1978), who developed a typology of couples. Based on the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule, managers and their partners were distinguished along the dimensions of Achievement/Dominance and Affiliation/Nurturance (cf. McClelland's Motivation Theory).

	AFFILIATION/ NURTURANCE	
ACHIEVEMENT/ DOMINANCE	High	Low
High	A – Involved	B – Trusting
Low	D – Caring	C – Existential

The most prevalent couples among managers were the BCs (trusting male, existential spouse), and second in line were BB, AD and AA. The B-types are the most successful managers because they are very ambitious, without being dependent on or sensitive to others. A and D need affiliation. In the latter group the investigators found mainly women, only a few managers. The C-group are loners, low in affiliation and achievement, but independent in determining their life goals and standards. Different types are characterised by different role definitions, coping behaviour, dominant action domains, relation patterns and stress. Traditional families are combinations of men in the upper quadrants and women in the lower quadrants (e.g. BC, BD). The post-traditional dual-earner families are mostly combinations of men and women in the upper quadrants. (e.g. AA- or BB-types). For more details we refer to Cooper (1979, pp.110-113). Interesting is that Cooper links this typology with stress and supports it with empirical data. The problem is that these data are outdated because the sample hardly contained full-time working women.

- Couples (e.g. AA) who are forced by circumstances (e.g. promotion, child) to change to another structure that does not really fit their personalities (e.g. BD) risk frustration and stress.
- Priorities and central values shift with time, life cycle or career path (e.g. a promotion demands immediate priority for work). If roles, perceptions or behaviour do not evolve likewise, there is a risk of stress.
- If there is a misfit between behaviour dictated by the job or the family role and the couple pattern suggested by the attitudes or personalities, then there is a greater probability of stress; e.g. a very responsible job combined with a couple pattern in which the man is in the lower quadrants.

A lot of conventional couples (BD) become unhappy because an extra child and/or promotion of the husband forces the spouse to adjust her style to become extremely caring. The authors suggest: “The least happy ... couples were where an integrated wife was married to a career-oriented husband – a BA marriage, when only 13% of the couples claimed to have very happy marriages compared to 50% for all other variations.” The relativity of this typology lies in the flexibility in changing styles to more adapted patterns.

Another interesting typology is offered by Evans & Bartolomé (1981). They propose five types of interfaces between professional and private life:

- Spill-over: Work influences family in both positive and negative ways, and vice versa.

- Independence: Work and family are two parallel, independent worlds.
- Conflict: Work and family clash and can hardly be reconciled.
- Instrumentality: Work is instrumental for obtaining family goals or vice versa.
- Compensation: Work is a way to compensate for shortcomings in family or vice versa.

According to the authors, these five interfaces certainly are not exhaustive. A lot of combinations are possible, as well as an “integrated pattern” in which work and family are one and cannot be separated. These five typical relationships offer the opportunity to study the evolution of the work-family interface through different life cycles, as the concern with work and family fluctuates:

- Phase 1 (25 to 35 years): Starting a professional career. The young adult searches for his/her professional identity; time and energy are mainly invested in work. They understand family is important, but full attention is being postponed (“mañana-syndrome”). In search of the ideal job-personality fit, a lot of spillover from work to family is admitted. Possible malfunctions can be the consequence of a misfit. The tensions of work –or, alternatively, high work satisfaction– dominate private life.
- Phase 2 (35 to 40 years): Back to family life. This is a new search for a meaningful and pleasant private life. Attention returns to family, the partner and leisure time. Only in crisis periods at work does the job become a priority. Here we see much more independence. In case of problems a midlife crisis can emerge.
- Phase 3 (40+): Integration of work and family. The midlife crisis can result in a new view of life (compensation) or acceptance of a fragmented life style (segmentation).

For more research on the interface between job or career and family, see Arthur, Hall & Lawrence (1989), Bird & Russell (1986), Herriot (1992), Kets De Vries & Miller (1987) and Zedeck (1992).

Crouter & Manke (1997) recently proposed a typology of dual-earner families. They distinguish high-status, low-stress and main-secondary provider dual-earner families, and found that group membership is not only related to demographic variables, but also to marital quality, family roles, and parental monitoring of children’s activities. For instance, the first group was defined by high-status occupations for both partners, accompanied by high levels of involvement and absorption in those jobs. These adults were better educated and had higher income than spouses in the other two groups. The division of domestic work was more evenly divided between partners, reflecting the spouses’ more liberal sex role attitudes. But the cost was higher role overload, greater marital conflict, lower levels of love, and lower marital satisfaction on the part of both partners. Interestingly, these stressors were not reflected in children’s evaluations of their relationships with their parents.

Measures

Throughout the history of work-family research different measures for work-family conflict have been developed and used. But serious efforts to evaluate and validate these measures using psychometric techniques and criteria have been generally lacking. Researchers have been concerned mainly with constructing models, linking antecedents and consequences of work-family conflict. They have been less worried about the measures used

and have not subjected them to a rigorous psychometric process. By this I mean cautiously defining the underlying constructs, systematically generating, evaluating and selecting items that reflect these constructs, factor-analyzing these items to compare the factors with the presupposed constructs, purifying and validating the measures both in terms of internal consistency, discriminant, and external validity. Most researchers confine themselves to using popular measures and reporting the internal consistency of the measures. Some researchers do some factor analysis to show the relevance of the subscales used. But in general they assume that the measure used reflects the construct they want to measure. The measures of the work-family conflict I found were:

1. Pleck (1979) and Pleck, Staines & Lang (1980), 8-item scale to measure work-family conflict based on indicators such as excessive time spent at work, schedule conflicts, fatigue or irritability. This measure was used by Ahmad (1996), Duxbury & Higgins (1991), and Higgins & Duxbury (1992).
2. Burke, Weir & DuWors (1980), 8-item scale to measure perceived effects of current job demands on mental and physical states at home, participation in home duties, vacations, and social activities, and the respondent's relationship with his/her spouse. This measure was used by Bedeian, Burke & Moffett (1988), Wiley (1987), and Parasuraman, Greenhaus, Rabonowitz, Bedeian & Mossholder (1989).
3. Bohlen & Viveros-Long (1981), 14-item "Job-Family Role-Strain scale", measuring ambiguity about norms, socially structured insufficiency of resources for role fulfillment, low rewards for role conformity, conflict between normative phenomena, and overload of role obligations. This measure was used by Duxbury & Higgins (1991), Higgins & Duxbury (1992), and Higgins, Duxbury & Irving (1992).
4. Kopelman, Greenhaus & Connolly (1983), 4-item scale for measuring work-family conflict. This measure was used by Adams, King & King (1996), Aryee & Luk (1996), Burley (1995), Goff, Mount & Jamison (1990), Greenhaus, Parasuraman, Granrose, Rabinowitz & Beutell (1989), Gutek, Searle & Klepa (1991), and Thomas & Ganster (1995).
5. Burley (1989), 4-item scale for measuring family-work conflict. This measure was used by Adams, King & King (1996) and Gutek, Searle & Klepa (1991).
6. Gutek, Searle & Klepa (1991), 8-item scale with subscales for WFC and FWC, based on Kopelman, Greenhaus & Connolly (1983) and Burley (1989). This measure was used by Judge, Boudreau & Bretz (1994), and Williams & Alliger (1994).
7. Frone, M.R., Russell, M. & Cooper, M.L. (1992), 4-item scale with subscales for WFC and FWC.
8. Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrian (1996), 10-item scale for WFC and FWC. This measure was used by Aryee, Luk, Leung & Lo (1998).

In Table 1 I give an overview of measures used in the different studies, the items used in these different measures and the properties (mostly internal consistency expressed by alpha-coefficients) of the measures.

Table 1: Measures of work-family conflict

Reference	Cited measure of work-family conflict	Properties of the measure	Used items
1. Adams, G.A., King, L.A. & King, D.W. (1996). Relationships between job and family involvement, family social support, and work-family conflict with job and life satisfaction. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> , 81, 4, 411-420.	- WIF: adapted from Kopelman, Greenhaus & Connely (1983), 4 items - FIW: adapted from Burley (1989), 4 items	Alpha = 0.72 Alpha = 0.66	- My work takes up time that I would like to spend with my family. - I am preoccupied with my work while I am at home. - I am too often too tired at work because of things I do at home. - I am preoccupied with my personal life while at work.
2. Ahmad, A. (1996). Work-family conflict among married professional women in Malaysia. <i>The Journal of Social Psychology</i> , 136, 5, 663-665.	- WFC: Pleck, Staines & Lang (1980), 8-item scale	Alpha = 0.90	Conflict based on indicators such as excessive time spent at work, schedule conflicts, fatigue or irritability.
3. Aryee, S., Luk, V., Leung, A. & Lo, S. (1998). Role stressors, work-family conflict and well-being: an examination of the effects of spouse support and coping behaviors among employed parents in Hong-Kong. <i>Academy of Management Proceedings 1998</i> , San Diego.	- WFC and FWC: Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrin (1996), 10-item scale, 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree".	Alpha not mentioned	Cfr. annex
4. Bedeian, A.G., Burke, B.G. & Moffett, R.G. (1988). Outcomes of work-family conflict among married male and female professionals. <i>Journal of Management</i> , 14, 3, pp. 475-491.	- WFC: adapted from Burke, Weir & DuWors (1980), 8-item scale, 1 "strong negative impact" to 5 "strong positive impact"	Alpha = 0.92	Perceived effects of current job demands on mental and physical states at home, participation in home duties, vacations, and social activities, and the respondent's relationship with his/her spouse.
5. Burke, R.J. (1988). Some antecedents and consequences of work-family conflict. <i>Journal of Social Behavior and Personality</i> , 3, 4, 287-302.	Article not yet received		
6. Burley, K.A. (1995). Family variables as mediators of the relationship between work-family conflict and marital adjustment among dual career men and women. <i>The Journal of Social Psychology</i> , 135, 4, 483-497.	- WFC: Kopelman, Greenhaus & Connely (1983), 4 items, 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree"	Alpha = 0.82	Work-family conflict originating from work: - After work I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do. - My friends/family dislike how often I am preoccupied with my work while I'm at home.

Table 1 (continued)

<p>7. Carlson, D.S. Kaemar, K.M. & Williams, L.J. (1998). The development and validation of a multidimensional measure of work-family conflict. <i>Academy of Management Proceedings</i> 1998, San Diego.</p>	<p>Six dimensions, 18 items, 3 per dimension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TWIF: Time based work interference with family - SWIF: Strain based work interference with family - BWIF Behavior based work interference with family - TFIW: Time based family interference with work - SFIW: Strain based family interference with work - BFIW: Behavior based family interference with work 	<p>Alpha = 0.80</p> <p>Alpha = 0.84</p> <p>Alpha = 0.80</p> <p>Alpha = 0.76</p> <p>Alpha = 0.89</p> <p>Alpha = 0.87</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like. - The time I must devote to my job keeps me from participating equally in household responsibilities and activities. - I have to miss family activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities. - When I get home from work I am often too frazzled to participate in family activities/responsibilities. - I am often so emotionally drained when I get home from work that it prevents me from contributing to my family. - Due to all the pressures at work, sometimes when I come home I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy. - The problem-solving behaviors I use in my job are not effective in resolving problems at home. - Behavior that is effective and necessary for me at work would be counterproductive at home. - The behaviors I perform that make me effective at work do not help me to be a better parent and spouse. - The time I spend on family responsibilities often interferes with my work responsibilities. - The time I spend with my family often causes me to not spend time in activities at work that could be helpful to my career. - I have to miss work activities due to the amount of time I must spend on family responsibilities. - Due to stress at home, I am often preoccupied with family matters at work. - Because I am often stressed from family responsibilities, I have a hard time concentrating on my work. - Tension and anxiety from my family life often weakens my ability to do my job. - The behaviors that work for me at home do not seem to be effective at work. - Behavior that is effective and necessary for me at home would be counterproductive at work. - The problem solving behavior that works for me at home does not seem to be as useful at work.
<p>8. Duxbury, L.E. & Higgins, C.A. (1991). Gender differences in work-family conflict. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>, 76, 1, 60-74.</p> <p>9. Higgins, C.A. & Duxbury, L.E. (1992). Work-family conflict: a comparison of dual-career and traditional career men. <i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>, 13, 4, 389-411.</p>	<p>WFC, one scale, consisting of items drawn from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bohlen & Viveros-Long (1981) Job-Family Role-Strain scale, 14 items PLUS - Pleck (1979), 5 items 	<p>Alpha = 0.88 (m) and 0.90 (f) and good discriminant validity</p> <p>Alpha = 0.88 and 0.89 (resp. dual-career and traditional career samples)</p>	<p>Job-Family Role-Strain scale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > ambiguity about norms, socially structured insufficiency of resources for role fulfillment, low rewards for role conformity, conflict between normative phenomena, overload of role obligations. - My job keeps me away from my family too much. - I feel I have more to do than I can comfortably handle. - I have a good balance between my job and my family time. - I wish I had more time to do things for the family. - I feel physically drained when I get home from work. - I feel emotionally drained when I get home from work. - I feel I have to rush to get everything done each day. - My time off work does not match other family members' schedule well. - I feel I don't have enough time for myself. - I worry about whether I should work less and spend more time with my children. - I find enough time for the children. - I worry about my children while I'm working. - I have as much patience with my children as I would like. - Work makes me too tired or irritable to participate in or enjoy family life. - The uncertainty of my work schedule interferes with my family life. - My preoccupation with my job affects my family life. - The amount of travel required by my job interferes with my family life. - Family life interferes with work.

Table 1 (continued)

<p>10. Frone, M.R., Russell, M. & Cooper, M.L. (1992). Prevalence of work-family conflict: are work and family boundaries asymmetrically permeable? <i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>, 13, 7, 723-729.</p> <p>11. Frone, M.R., Russell, M. & Cooper, M.L. (1992). Antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict: testing a model of the work-family interface. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>, 1992, 77, 1, 65-78.</p>	<p>Own scale, 4 items: - work interfering with family life, 2 items 1 "almost never" to 5 "almost always" - family interfering with work, 2 items</p>	<p>Two distinct factors Alpha = 0.76 Alpha = 0.56</p>	<p>- How often does your job or career interfere with your responsibilities at home, such as yard work, cooking, cleaning, repairs, shopping, paying the bills, or child care? - How often does your job or career keep you from spending the amount of time you would like to spend with your family? - How often does your home life interfere with your responsibilities at work, such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, or working overtime? - How often does your homelife keep you from spending the amount of time you would like to spend on job or career-related activities?</p>
<p>12. Goff, S.J., Mount, M.K., & Jamison, R.L. (1990). Employer supported child care, work-family conflict and absenteeism: a field study. <i>Persomnel Psychology</i>, 43, 793-809.</p>	<p>Scale consisting of 16 items, drawn from: - WFC: Kopelman, Greenhaus & Connely (1983), 8 items. - FWC: adaptation by changing wording of Kopelman, Greenhaus & Connely (1985), 8 items. 1 "Strongly agree" to 5 "strongly disagree"</p>	<p>Alpha = 0.88</p>	<p>- Because my work is demanding, at times I am irritable at home; - After work I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do. - Because my family responsibilities are so demanding, I am sometimes ineffective at work. - My family responsibilities take up time I would like to spend at work.</p>
<p>13. Gutek, B.A., Searle, S. & Klepa, L. (1991). Rational versus gender role explanations for Work-family conflict. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>, 1991, 76, 4, 560-568.</p>	<p>- WIF: Kopelman, Greenhaus & Connely (1983), 4 items. - FIW: Burley (1989), 4 items 1 "Strongly agree" to 5 "strongly disagree"</p>	<p>Alpha = 0.81 and 0.83 Alpha = 0.79 and 0.83 (two studies)</p>	<p>- After work I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do. - On the job I have so much work to do that it takes away from my personal interests. - My friends/family dislike how often I am preoccupied with my work while I'm at home. - My work takes up time that I would like to spend with my family. - I am too often too tired at work because of things I do at home. - My personal demands are so great that it takes away from my work. - My superiors and peers dislike how often I am preoccupied with my personal life while at work. - My personal life takes up time that I would like to spend at work.</p>
<p>14. Jackson, S.E., Zedeck, S. & Summers, E. (1985). Family life disruptions: effects of job-induced structural and emotional interference. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i>, 28, 3, pp. 574-586.</p>	<p>- Structural interference, 6 items - Emotional interference, 3 categories: (1) physical health: 1 general item and 3 subscales, resp. 8, 6, 4 items (2) psychological mood: 36 items (3) Behavioral adjustment: 3 subscales, resp. 4, 7, 6 items</p>	<p>Alphas = (1) °, 0.86, 0.79, 0.79 (2) 0.93 (3) 0.71, 0.73, 0.69</p>	<p>(1) No. children 18 or younger, (2) working partner, (3) dissimilarities with schedule partner, (4) time spent commuting, (5) work schedule accommodating community recreational activities, (6) average no. overtime hours/week (1) physical health: general, digestion, muscle pain and heart problems (2) psychological mood: enthusiasm, tension, tiredness, irascibility (3) Behavioral adjustment: eating, sleeping, alcohol use</p>
<p>15. Judge, T.A., Boudreau, J.W. & Bretz, R.D.Jr. (1994). Job and life attitudes of male executives. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>, 79, 5, pp. 767-782.</p>	<p>WFC and FWC: Gutek, Searle & Klepa (1991). - WFC - FWC</p>	<p>Alpha = 0.82 Alpha = 0.76</p>	<p>- My working outside the home in daytime tends to make my domestic chores rough - My work limits the time I can spend with my family at home. - My work results in a lot of domestic chores left undone. - I do not have enough energy to engage in domestic duties after work. - I do not want to deal with troublesome matters at home after work. - My domestic duties prevent me from engaging in overtime work. - Sometimes I am late or absent because of my domestic duties. - I cannot work hard because of the fatigue from domestic chores. - The preoccupation with family-related matters prevents me from concentrating on work. Sometimes I do not feel like going to work due to the fatigue from the domestic duties.</p>
<p>16. Matsui, T., Ohsawa, T. & Onglatco, M. (1995). Work-family conflict and the stress-buffering effects of husband support and coping behavior among Japanese married women. <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i>, 47, 178-192.</p>	<p>WF spill-over conflict, 5 descriptions: 5 point scale, 1 "not at all applicable" to 5 "highly applicable" FW spill-over conflict, 5 descriptions - time based and strain-based</p>	<p>FA: 2 factors Alpha = 0.85 Alpha = 0.83</p>	<p>- My working outside the home in daytime tends to make my domestic chores rough - My work limits the time I can spend with my family at home. - My work results in a lot of domestic chores left undone. - I do not have enough energy to engage in domestic duties after work. - I do not want to deal with troublesome matters at home after work. - My domestic duties prevent me from engaging in overtime work. - Sometimes I am late or absent because of my domestic duties. - I cannot work hard because of the fatigue from domestic chores. - The preoccupation with family-related matters prevents me from concentrating on work. Sometimes I do not feel like going to work due to the fatigue from the domestic duties.</p>

Table 1 (continued)

<p>17. Netemeyer, R.G., Boles, J.S. & McMurrain, R. (1996). Development and validation of work-family conflict and family-work conflict scales. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>, 81, 4, 400-410.</p>	<p>- WFC, 5 items Demands, time-based and strain-based items. - FWC, 5 items</p>	<p>- Internal consistency Alpha = 0.88 FWC Alpha = 0.86 FWC - Discrimin. validity - Construct validity</p>	<p>- The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life. - The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities. - Things I want to do at home do not get done because of demands my job puts on me. - My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties. - Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities. - The demands of my spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities - I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home. - Things I want to get done at work don't get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner. - My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime. - Family related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties.</p>
<p>18. Rice, R.W., Frone, M.R. & McFarlin, D.B. (1992). Work-nonwork conflict and the perceived quality of life. <i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>, 13, 2, 155-168.</p>	<p>WFC: 1 single item W-leisure C: 1 single item 1 "not at all" to 4 "A lot".</p>		<p>- How much do your job and family life interfere with each other. - How much do your job and free time activities interfere with each other.</p>
<p>19. Wiley, D.L. (1987). The relationship between work/nonwork role conflict and job-related outcomes: Some unanticipated findings. <i>Journal of Management</i>, 13, 467 - 472.</p>	<p>Work/nonwork conflict: 22 items selected and reworked from Burke, Weire & Duwors (1979): work role interfering with family and personal roles and vice versa.</p>	<p>Alphas not reported</p>	<p>FA: 4 factors: job/person conflict, role overload, job/family conflict, family/job conflict - When I am at home with my family I often find myself thinking of things at work. - When I am at work I often find myself thinking of things outside of work.</p>
<p>20. Williams, K. & Alliger, G.M. (1994). Role stressors, mood spill-over, and perceptions of work-family conflict in employed parents. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i>, 37, 4, pp. 837-868.</p>	<p>WFC: Gutek, Searle & Klepa (1991), two 3 item-scales: - WIF - FIW 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree".</p>	<p>Alpha = 0.71 Alpha = 0.81</p>	<p>- I came home from work today too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do. - I was too tired at work today because of things I had to do at home.</p>

We can see that some, but certainly not all researchers distinguish work-family conflict (WFC) –work interfering with family life (WIF)– and family-work conflict (FWC) –family interfering with work. I already mentioned above that the boundaries between work and family are asymmetrically permeable and of a different nature. Since the study of Frone, Russell & Cooper (1992), it has been generally accepted that the influence of work on family is completely different from the influence of family on work, and that these two concepts therefore need to be clearly separated. The same authors found different antecedents and consequences for the work-family interface and the family-work interface. We can see that the widely used measure introduced by Kopelman, Greenhaus & Connolly (1983) does not distinguish WFC and FWC, and as such is a one-sided measure of work-family conflict. Later authors understood that this measure could be complemented by using the FWC scale developed by Burley (1989) (Adams, King & King, 1996; Gutek, Searle & Klepa, 1991) or by reformulating Kopelman *et al.*'s items to reflect FWC (Goff, Mount & Jamison, 1990). Later authors used the measure developed by Gutek, Searle & Klepa (1991), which in fact is a refined sum of the items used in the measures of Kopelman *et al.* (1983) and Burley (1989). Other authors took the distinction between FWC and WFC into account when they developed their own instrument (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992; Matsui, Ohsawa & Onglatco, 1995; O'Driscoll, Ilgen & Hildreth, 1992). Still other researchers seem to have completely ignored the conceptual difference between FWC and WFC by combining them into one measure (Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Wiley, 1987).

An important danger in developing a measure lies in using too few or too many items. Some authors used only one item to measure work-family conflict, which can hardly be called a reliable measure (Rice, Frone & McFarlin, 1992; Voydanoff, 1988). Others used extensive measures with more than thirty items, which can have a negative impact on the attentiveness of the respondent (Burke, 1988; Burke, Weire & Duwors, 1979). However, the same authors later resolved the latter problem by using a shorter 8-item version (Burke, Weire & Duwors, 1980), which in turn was adopted by Bedeian, Burke & Moffett (1988), Parasuraman, Greenhaus, Rabonowitz, Bedeian & Mossholder (1989), and Wiley (1987). Another limitation is that some authors used items that refer to outcomes or symptoms of WFC/FWC, rather than to the constructs themselves (Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrian, 1996).

A problem in almost all measures is that no distinction is made between three types of work-conflict:

- 1) Time-based work-family conflict, or the competition for scarce time (e.g. working extra hours, working at home, arriving late at work);
- 2) Strain-based work-family conflict, or the spill-over of stress (e.g. being irritable, exhausted after work);
- 3) Behavior-based work-family conflict, resulting in unadapted behavior (e.g. using rational problem-solving which might be effective at work, but not at home).

Recently, several measures for the conflict between work and family were developed and validated with the objective of tackling some of the weaknesses of earlier measures, such as unidirectionality and uniformity (Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrian, 1996; Carlson, Kacmar & Williams, 1998; 2000). Especially the latter shows a lot of promise, as it anticipates most of the above-cited problems. Even more recently we have seen some first studies differentiating these types of WFC, and relating them with job satisfaction (Bruck & Allen, 2000).

Literature on work-family policies

All the studies mentioned in §1 have made it clear that there is a strong argument for preventing work-family conflict in the workplace. There is a lot of anecdotal evidence –mostly in the North American business press– of companies that have successfully developed and implemented family-friendly policies or practices, and that have reported some beneficial effects in terms of satisfaction or productivity. Surprisingly, there is very limited scientific research on the topic. Few scholars have reported rigorous studies testing the effectiveness of family-friendly policies in reducing work-family conflict in a leading journal. Apparently, there is also a problem with the transfer of scientific findings to practitioners. Or is it the indifference or hands-off mentality of the practitioners that is the real problem? Wheatley, Vogt & Murell (1991) found that human resource managers are hardly concerned about divorces among employees, although these can have serious consequences for productivity. They observe that HR managers do little to limit or reduce overtime and travelling and situate this in a general hands-off mentality when it comes to work-family problems.

Antecedents

One line of research has looked at the antecedents of work-family policies. They have studied the industry or company characteristics that are associated with the presence of work-family policies. Table 2 gives an overview of a few studies I found in this line. We can see some patterns in the data. There are some factors that have been identified by several authors as having a clear influence on the presence of family-friendly policies: the size of the firm or establishment and the relative importance of the female subgroup among the employees (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Osterman, 1995). According to Ingram & Simons (1995), it is the presence of female managers rather than female employees that seems to be important. Other factors that have been mentioned are the diffusion of work-family policies and low unemployment of female workers in the sector or industry (Goodstein, 1995; Ingram & Simons, 1995). More controversial factors that have been found by some authors, but rejected by others, are the perception of the policies being beneficial, knowledge about policies, and being a public sector organization (Goodstein, 1995; Ingram & Simons, 1995). Most interesting is Osterman's (1995) finding that especially firms that place high value on obtaining employee commitment and that have implemented high-commitment work systems, such as quality circles, also have developed and implemented family-friendly policies, probably as an extra means to assure employee loyalty.

Frone & Yardley (1996) studied the factors, more on a micro-level, that can predict the importance ratings by employees of work-family policies. They found that being female, having younger children, and experiencing family-to-work conflict is associated with higher importance ratings of family-supportive programs. Women attach more importance to job sharing and childcare, and parents with younger children especially appreciate flextime, compressed working week, childcare, work at home and reduced work hours.

Table 2. Antecedents of work-family policies

Frone & Yardley (1996) <i>Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology</i>	480 employees (i.e. 80%) of a Canadian mid-sized financial services company	IV: (H1) Gender, (H2) parenting demands, (H3) family-related tangible support, (H4) work-family conflict (WFC and FWC) DV: Family supportive programs (FSP's) Importance of flextime (FT), compressed work week (CWW), job sharing (JSH), child-care assistance (CC), work at home (WAH) and reduced work hours (RWH).	H1: Gender is related with importance ratings of only 2 measures: JSH and CC: women score higher. H2: Number of children is not, age of youngest child is negatively related with FT, CWW, CC, WAH, H3: No relationship H4: FWC is positively and WFC is not related with importance of FSP's.
Goodstein (1994) <i>Academy of Management Journal</i>	1239 private and public US (Washington State) organizations (i.e. 38% of a stratified random sample of 3225)	IV: Size of organization, % of female employees and parents, public vs. private sector, diffusion of benefits in sector, total organizations, perceived benefits and costs. CV: Knowledge, and female unemployment DV: Responsiveness to institutional pressures for employer involvement in work-family issues, i.e. adoption of child care and flexible work options.	Significant effects of: Size of organization, % of female employees, diffusion of benefits in sector, low perceived benefits, knowledge and unemployment.
Ingram & Simons (1995) <i>Academy of Management Journal</i>	727 of 1127 organizations (i.e. 64.5%) contacted through hyper-network sampling. (replication of Goodstein, 1994)	IV: Size of organization, % of female employees, female managers, public vs. private sector, diffusion of benefits in sector, total organizations, perceived benefits and costs, paying attention to other companies, and female unemployment. DV: Responsiveness to institutional pressures for employer involvement in work-family issues, i.e. offering dependent day care, flexible work options, and "cheap" benefits	Significant effects of (more responsiveness in case of): Larger organization, higher % of female managers (not employees), being a public sector organization, high diffusion of benefits in sector, high attention for other companies, low female unemployment.
Osterman (1995) <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>	A size-stratified sample of 875 (i.e. 65.5% response) of American private-sector establishments with n>50	IV: (H1) % of female employees, having problems with (absenteeism, tardiness, recruitment, and relocation); (H2) Presence of Internal Labor Markets (ILM) as signaled by job ladders, seniority systems, and a personnel department; (H3) Placing high value on obtaining employee commitment and implementing high-commitment work systems CV: Wages, benefits, size of establishment and firm. DV: Adoption of family-friendly policies, i.e. day care on-site and off-site, employer subsidies to pay for day care, donations to local day-care facilities in return for slots, full-time work/family staff, work/family workshops, day-care and eldercare referral systems, and flexible hours.	Size, % of female population, but most importantly, high-commitment firms are positively related with work-family programs.

Consequences

The consequences of work-family conflict are not limited to individuals and their families. Companies too suffer the consequences of work-family conflicts. Work-family conflict has been associated with job dissatisfaction, lowered performance and commitment, and turnover. Table 3 gives an overview of some of the more recent, scarce studies reporting outcomes of work-family policies. It is clear that in general the implementation of family-friendly policies is associated with positive outcomes. Examples are the satisfaction with the work-family balance (Ezra & Deckman, 1996), less work-family conflict (Goff, Mount & Jamison, 1990), affective commitment (Grover & Crooker, 1995), reduced turnover intention (Grover & Crooker, 1995), reduced turnover and economic losses (Rodgers & Rodgers, 1989), employee retention and reduced related stress (Johnson, 1995).

Most studies focus on specific work-family policies. Of all family-friendly policies, flexible work schedules and childcare have received most empirical research attention. Research on flextime has shown that absenteeism and turnover are reduced, and job satisfaction is improved when flextime programs are implemented (Narayanan & Nath, 1982; Pierce & Newstrom, 1983). Flextime has been associated with increased productivity and morale, and reduced absenteeism, truancy and use of overtime (Dalton & Mesch, 1990; Guy, 1993; Mellor, 1986; Rubin, 1979; Swart, 1985). Other researchers found a relationship with lower levels of stress (Bohen & Viveros-Long, 1982), commitment (Grover & Crooker, 1995; Scandura & Lankau, 1997), and job satisfaction (Golembiewski, Hilles & Kagno, 1974; Orpen, 1981; Scandura & Lankau, 1997), without any negative effects on productivity or performance (Orpen, 1981; Schein, Maurer, & Novak, 1977).

Another, reasonably well-studied work-family policy is childcare. Milkovich & Gomez (1976) related enrollment in a day care center with lower absenteeism and turnover rates, but did not find a relationship with job performance. Youngblood & Chambers-Cook (1984) report a (statistically non-significant) drop in absence rates after the establishment of an on-site day care program. Other authors found increased commitment and satisfaction (Goldberg, Greenberg, Koch-Jones, O'Neill, & Hamill, 1989; Greenberger, Goldberg, Hamill, O'Neil & Payne, 1989; Kossek & Nichol, 1992; Youngblood & Chamber-Cook), 1984). Goff, Mount & Jamison (1990) conclude their literature review stating that empirical studies are inconclusive. In their own study they found that the use of a childcare center at work is not related with reduced work-family conflict. Satisfaction with childcare arrangements and supportive supervision, on the other hand, was found to be related with reduced work-family conflict and lower levels of absenteeism. Grover & Crooker (1995) report that childcare information can be sufficient. They found a relationship between childcare information and reduced turnover in general and commitment in parents with young children more specifically. Marquart (1991) and Dawson *et al.* (1984) found that users of on-site child facilities in the private sector work more overtime and report more job satisfaction. Johnson (1995) reports that in determining the costs of a failure to have family-friendly policies, studies have found that problems with dependent care arrangements affected productivity and job effectiveness for both men and women, and that benefits are measurable. Dependent care arrangements have been proven to increase staff availability.

Table 3. Consequences of work-family policies

Article	Sample used	Dependent and independent variables	Results
Ezra & Deckman (1996) <i>Public Administration Review</i>	Disproportionate random sampling of n=28,329 full-time, permanent, white-collar, US federal employees, collected by the Survey of Federal Employees. Of the total sample, 37% were parents of children at home under 13.	<p>IV: (Model 1, 2) Usage of flextime, compressed work schedules, and child care. (Model 3) Satisfaction with work-family balance, making use or not of abilities and skills, challenging job or not, understanding of contribution of work to agency goals.</p> <p>DV: (Model 1) Satisfaction with child care (CCS) (Model 2) Satisfaction with work-family balance (WFBS) (Model 3) Job satisfaction (JS)</p>	<p>Results</p> <p>(Model 1) More CCS in mothers who use child care, more CCS in fathers > mothers using flextime.</p> <p>(Model 2) In general more WFBS in fathers > mothers > mothers with young children; More WFBS in mothers</p> <p>(Model 3) WFBS most important predictor of JS in parents.</p>
Goff, Mount & Jamison (1990) <i>Persomnel Psychology</i>	253 employees (i.e. 26% of the 952 employees/parents with children of 5 years or younger) at a large American electronics and communications firm. Of the 253 employees, 24% were users of the on-site day care center and 36% were female.	<p>IV: Use of on-site center, number of children under 5 years, care for ill child, primary responsibility, satisfaction with child care, supervisor support, and pre-treatment absenteeism.</p> <p>DV: Work-family conflict and absenteeism</p>	<p>- Supervisor support and satisfaction with child care are negatively associated with work-family conflict.</p> <p>- Work-family conflict and supervisor support are positively associated with absenteeism.</p>
Grover & Crooker (1995) <i>Persomnel Psychology</i>	745 subjects, the employed part of 1517 subjects (i.e. 78%) who completed face-to-face interviews of 1950 randomly selected US workers of the 1991 General Social Survey.	<p>IV: Access to family-responsive human resource policies, i.e. maternity leave (ML), flexible schedules (FS), child care assistance (CCA) and child care information (CCI).</p> <p>CV: Having young children (under 6), number of children, planning to have children.</p> <p>DV: Affective commitment, turnover intention</p>	<p>Family-responsive benefits are associated both with affective commitment and turnover intention, regardless of the extent to which the people might personally benefit from the policies.</p> <p>More specifically ML and CCI are negatively associated with turnover, and FS positively with affective commitment. CCI had an effect on commitment of parents with young children, and no effect on subjects without children.</p>
Orpen (1981) <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	64 clerical, female employees of a large federal agency.	<p>IV: Participation in a 6 month flextime program</p> <p>DV: Job satisfaction, performance (ratings) and productivity (output)</p>	<p>Flextime is clearly positively related with job satisfaction, but not with performance or productivity.</p>
Scandura & Lankau (1997) <i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	A matched sample of n=160 male (n=80) and female (n=80) managers, selected from 275 subjects – i.e. 62% - who responded to mailing.	<p>IV: Perception of flexible work hours</p> <p>CV: Gender, family responsibilities (children under 18 living at home)</p> <p>DV: Organizational commitment, job satisfaction,</p>	<p>The perception of flexible work hours is positively associated with organizational commitment and job satisfaction, especially in women and subjects with family responsibilities.</p>

Discussion and recommendations for future research

Although the studies mentioned in the literature reviews above certainly have contributed to a more scientifically based understanding of the antecedents and consequences of work-family conflict and family-supportive policies, we still have a long road to travel to develop a complete and subtle view on the matter. I will point to some weaknesses of previous research on work-family policies, and suggest avenues for future research. I will focus on the limitations of micro-level studies on work-family conflict and of meso-level studies on family-supportive policies.

Research on work-family conflict

1. One of the striking characteristics of the work-family field is the lack of theory. Often work-family researchers have not based their predictions on strong conceptual frameworks (Hobfoll, 1989). The field has been dominated by role theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964), which is undoubtedly the most cited theory by work-family researchers, and spillover and segmentation theory (Piotrkowski, 1979; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990). But these theories offer a rationale for the consequences of work-family conflict, not for actual behavior, interaction between actors, or decision making or prioritizing in the event of work-family conflict. An important shortcoming of the aforementioned theories is that they do not offer an encompassing theory for both individuals and organizations.
2. One of the clear conclusions we can draw from the above studies is an over-emphasis on quantitative, cross-sectional studies, despite the fact that this type of studies is associated with methodological problems. Work-family conflict is a dynamic, complex phenomenon, evolving over time in the interaction between various actors. This can be contrasted with the limited amount of studies that take a microscopic, and/or longitudinal look at how work-family conflict originates in the described antecedents, develops, and results in the reported consequences (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1997; Jones & Fletcher, 1996; Repetti, 1989; Williams & Alliger, 1994). I therefore call for more qualitative and longitudinal research. I will return to this point in the last section.
3. It is surprising that only a minority of authors have considered studying couples instead of individuals. Several of the critical events that were described by the respondents in the qualitative study pointed to the fact that work-family conflict is basically a dynamic process between two individuals who are mutually interdependent and adaptive. To illustrate this, Hammer, Allen & Grigsby (1997) found important cross-over effects of work-family conflict between couples and concluded their study by suggesting that future research on work-family conflict use the couple as its unit of analysis. They follow a recent group of scholars in the work-family domain studying cross-over effects (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1989; Gupta & Jenkins, 1985; Jones & Fletcher, 1993; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1992; Westman & Etzion, 1995). Apart from cross-over effects one should take into account other interaction effects that can moderate or reinforce work-family conflicts, like for instance mutual understanding, intellectual and professional equivalence, mutual support, emotional dependence of one partner, or rivalry. Interesting in this regard are the studies by Buunk & Peeters (1994) and Repetti (1989). Buunk & Peeters (1994)

looked at the interplay between stress at work and social support, using an event-contingent recording approach. Repetti (1989) used surveys on three consecutive days to study the dynamic interaction between work demands, social withdrawal, expression of anger by one spouse in relation to social support from the other spouse.

4. A specific group that deserves extra attention are managers and managerial couples, because we can expect, as I already pointed out earlier, that work-family conflict may be more acute in families where one or both members have managerial responsibilities. Especially female managers may be expected to experience high levels of stress and work-family conflict (Beatty, 1996). Still, the studies of work-family conflict in this specific group are scarce (Judge, Boudreau & Bretz, 1994; Lyness & Thompson, 1997). The same goes for entrepreneurs (Parasuraman, Purohit, Godschalk & Beutell, 1996), couples that are simultaneously business and marriage partners (Foley & Powell, 1997), and independent professionals such as doctors (Swanson, Power & Simpson, 1998). A last group that can be expected to experience elevated levels of work-family conflict are single mothers or fathers with children, who –as we noted in the introduction– are an increasingly significant group in the population. One could also focus on specific professional groups that can be expected to experience high levels of work-family conflict, such as nurses (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Conley, 1991) and air-traffic controllers (Repetti, 1989).
5. We already mentioned the importance of gender differences in work-family conflict research. Although I have not extensively reviewed gender issues in this paper, this does not mean they should be overlooked. Quite the contrary. One should by definition be suspicious of studies that do not distinguish between men and women, because they are probably ignoring the fact that the underlying mechanisms of work-family conflict are fundamentally different.
6. Scientists in general look for universal laws when studying phenomena. I assume the same goes for scholars studying work-family conflict. Still, only a few researchers have made an effort to test models and relationships on a cross-cultural level. Most studies I have found have been developed in Anglo-Saxon countries (The United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada) that have relatively comparable populations. Hence, it should not surprise us that models show signs of generalizability. But attempts to look at work-family conflict across cultures are generally lacking, with a few rare exceptions (Aryee, Fields & Luk, 1999; Yang, Chen, Choi & Zou, 2000).
7. One way of doing cross-cultural research is to collect data in a specific country or region and test or replicate existing (Anglo-Saxon) models. I have encountered several studies looking at work-family conflict in other cultures such as China (Yang, Chen & Zou, 2000), Japan (Matsui, Ohsawa & Onglatco, 1995), Finland (Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998), Hong Kong (Aryee, Luk, Leung & Lo, 1998, 1999), Spain (Poelmans, Cardona, Chinchilla, Spector & Cooper, 2000), and Malaysia (Ahmad, 1996). But again, only a few studies explicitly compared two cultures (Aryee, Fields & Luk, 1999; Yang, Chen & Zou, 2000). Moreover, we lack data from countries with cultures in which work-family conflict is especially relevant for some culture-specific reason. For instance, cultures in which the family as an institution is very strong (e.g. Eastern and Latin countries), or cultures in which female labor participation is on the rise

and we can therefore expect to find conflicts resulting from the transformation from traditional to dual-earner families.

8. An important factor is the impact of job content and the presence of job stressors on work-family conflict. At the same time it is clear that the family as a system, and stressors in the family, have a very different impact. Contrary to many models of work-family conflict which model the antecedents, processes and consequences of work-family conflict and family-work conflict in a symmetrical way, real cases show that the permeability (in terms of receptivity or resistance) and internal logic of work and family is largely different. This calls for a very different treatment of work-family conflict and family-work conflict.
9. Something that particularly strikes me is the distinction that some authors make between work and family stress. One could argue that people act according to stereotypes associated with roles and expectations (cf. role theory), and that the sources of stress can be situated at work (work stressors) and in the family (family stressors). But I would invite scholars to be cautious in believing that a respondent can distinguish between the resultant work and family strain. A person accumulates strain from sources at work, in the family and in other domains, resulting in a general level of strain. When the individual is asked to explain the general experience of strain in terms of work and family, we depend on the individual's interpretation (appraisal) of his strain to know to which role or source (work or family) he will attribute his strain. As we know from cognitive theories such as attribution theory, these appraisals are subject to bias and can be misleading. Since most studies rely on self-report measures, we should be cautious with making these distinctions or forcing a respondent to make them. It is probably more realistic to recognize that several sources of stress and support interact and counteract to result in an overall level of strain. I recommend scholars working in the work-family domain, first, to clearly distinguish between stressors and strains. Second, when studying strain, to be aware of possible biases in attributions to work and family. Third, to be cautious when relying on self-report data, personal interpretation and post-hoc sense-making.
10. Most WFC-measures do not go beyond a superficial measure of work pressure, family pressure and the resulting work-family conflict. Underlying motivations, values, or choices are generally ignored. But work-family conflicts will undoubtedly have different consequences for the satisfaction or health of the person, if the person consciously chooses to allow spill-over because she or he clearly gives priority to her/ his work or family. In other words, the appreciation of the effects of work and family pressures depends on the underlying motivational structure of the person. What are his/her needs and priorities? Nurturing a family? Making a career? Combining both? Is it possible that work-family conflict is basically an inter-motivational conflict or an ethical conflict? For instance, Lobel (1992) suggests that work-family conflicts stem from conflicting values of work- and family roles. She suggests that work as well as family should integrate instrumental and affective values. Most organizations lack affective values, few families know instrumental values. I recommend scholars studying work-family conflict to consider underlying motivations, values or choices while studying the relationship between WFC and possible consequences.

11. A variable that seems to be missing in most studies on work-family conflict is control or decision latitude. In terms of the demand-control-support theory (Karasek & Theorell, 1990), the fact of combining a family and a career may be a deliberate choice. Second, these conflicts may be well within control of the person, as he or she has the opportunity to work less or leave work earlier. As a consequence, work-family conflicts are within the person's decision latitude and may as such have less consequences in terms of stress or health. A very different case is a person who is forced to work in an unfavorable job, is under great pressure to work extra hours and is afraid to leave his or her job because of financial needs or family responsibilities. Here, work-family conflicts are not within the control of the person. Surprisingly, this variable is rarely taken into account when measuring work-family conflict.
12. Another variable I have already addressed is social support. Here I would like to signal that one should define social support very broadly. At least in Latin countries, one should take into account grandparents and other family members, neighbors, and nannies, who in some cases take on a major part of domestic tasks and the care and education of the children. By limiting social support to obvious sources such as the spouse and the supervisor, one risks missing out an important group that can make all the difference between a conflict-free and a conflict-ridden work-family interface.
13. A last point refers to studying differences between individuals and couples. Most of the authors who have developed a typology of couples did this in terms of socio-demographic differences. But very few have tried to find differences between couples in terms of conceiving and dealing with work-family conflict. This can be very valuable information, though, especially when we are looking for strategies to manage work-family conflict. The pedagogical value of such typologies can be very considerable, as they can serve as a basis to identify successful coping strategies.

Research on family-supportive policies

14. A striking observation is that in the majority of the studies focusing on family-friendly policies the variable that seems to be missing is paradoxically work-family conflict. Except for the study of Frone & Yardley (1996), none of the researchers have thought of what seems to be the most obvious antecedent of work-family policies: the prevalence of work-family conflict. And again except for one study (Goff, Mount & Jamison, 1990), nobody has looked at the most important, immediate objective of family-friendly policies, i.e. reducing work-family conflict. It seems obvious that family-friendly policies reduce work-family conflict. But another well established research finding might indicate the contrary. One of the most studied consequences of work-family policies, job satisfaction (for a review, cf. Kossek & Ozeki), can be expected to be related to longer working hours. Thus we can logically expect more time-based work-family conflict. This could be a perverse effect of work-family policies that has been overlooked because the overall effect is positive. For instance, it could well be that, on the one hand, flexible work arrangements reduce work-family conflicts. Take for instance a father who can leave earlier to pick up his children from school. On the other hand, they may also reduce the number of hours spent with the family. If we take the same example, once the father has

brought the children home, because of the generated job satisfaction and commitment, this same father works at home and spends less time with his children. Future research should not overlook what seems to be obvious and include work-family conflict as a variable. It should also look at subtle effects such as the hypothesized link between work-family policies, job satisfaction, commitment, longer working hours, and less family time.

15. With work-family conflict we mean both work-to-family (WFC) and family-to-work (FWC) conflict. It is probably no coincidence that Frone & Yardley (1996) are among the few authors to distinguish these two concepts. Frone is one of the authors who argued for this distinction in a previous study (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992). I already mentioned that the influence of work on family is completely different from the influence of family on work. Future studies on family-supportive policies should distinguish WFC and FWC and look at the different effects of work-family policies on WFC and FWC.
16. Another important distinction that should be made, and that is generally ignored, is the distinction between time-based, strain-based and behavior-based WFC or FWC (Carlson, Kacmar & Williams, 1998). Most work-family policies are directed at alleviating time-based conflict, by making work schedules more flexible and offering “extra hands” in the form of childcare to compensate for (long) working hours. But it is clear that most policies overlook strain-based work-family conflict. In other words, they do not try to alleviate directly work stress to avoid a spillover of stress to the family. This is particularly odd, because one of the most widely studied and best-established antecedents of work-family conflict is exactly work stress. One of the reasons why both academics and practitioners working in organizational settings seem to ignore strain-based conflicts is probably because they are less concerned with the negative consequences for the family. But they ignore (or do not understand) that strain is a general state that does not distinguish work or family settings (cf. point 9 above). While focusing and counteracting sources of stress in the family, they ignore the most important cause of work-family conflict: work stress. Future research on family-supportive programs should include work stress as both an independent variable (are companies characterized by high levels of work stress more inclined to implement work-family policies?) and dependent variable (do these policies alleviate work stress?). Another avenue for research is the effect of stress management policies on work-family conflict.
17. As already mentioned above, an antecedent that has been associated with work-family conflict is involvement, more specifically, daily involvement in family roles (Williams & Alliger, 1994) and job involvement (Adams, King & King, 1996; Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Higgins, Duxbury & Irving, 1992). This points to the importance of inter-individual differences while evaluating the development of work-family conflict, and consequently of the differential impact of work-family policies. Future studies should not just take into account the more obvious socio-demographic differences between individuals (e.g. gender, number and age of children), but also look at inter-individual differences in personality, values, motivations, and involvement.

18. Another important variable in work-family conflict research that is generally lacking in family-supportive policies research is social support. Except for the study by Goff, Mount & Jamison (1990), few studies have taken into account this meso-level factor. Academics studying the impact of family-responsive policies and practices should be aware that while focusing on formal policies, they ignore informal or cultural practices at the level of the direct supervisor that might play a much more important role in dealing with work-family conflicts. Exceptions are the work of Thomas & Ganster (1995) and Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness (1999), who point out the crucial importance of supervisor support and a family-friendly culture for the experience of work-family conflict, strain, and organizational attachment.
19. Particularly striking is the fact that except for Frone & Yardley (1996), the few studies that have studied some antecedents of work-family policies (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Osterman, 1995) did so with the purpose of testing a framework of institutional pressures, and not of studying antecedents of work-family policies. It is clear that, consequently, they lack the focus of a dedicated study. Yet, a systematic study of antecedents is important enough to invite future research.
20. An important weakness of most studies, maybe with the exception of Frone & Yardley (1996) and Osterman (1995), is that they tend to focus on the same limited set of work-family policies: flextime and childcare. This can be contrasted with the wide variety of family-supportive practices and policies (for an overview, cf. Table 4). Although it can be interesting to focus on one policy to study the specific effects of this policy, the business reality is that companies rarely limit their work-family program to one policy. It can be expected that one, limited set of policies will be less effective than a broader set or a complete configuration of mutually reinforcing policies. Therefore, in order to assess the real effectiveness of these programs, future studies need to consider the whole configuration of policies. In line with the ongoing discussion among human resource management scholars, work-family policy researchers could ask themselves whether there is such a thing as a set of best practices that apply for all companies. Alternatively, it may be that there is a limited set of types of companies, each type using similar policies, or that each individual firm needs its own unique set of policies. Some principles are likely to be universal (e.g. flexible work schedules), but at the same time we can expect each firm, with its unique control system, incentive system and organizational culture, to require a different specific configuration of policies. This calls for more in-depth qualitative studies, comparing and contrasting a limited set of firms and the unique interaction between firms and policies.

Table 4. An overview of individual and organizational practices and policies aimed at the management of work-family conflict

1. INDIVIDUAL PRACTICES AND COPING TECHNIQUES

1.1. Self-knowledge related with work and family

- Values
- Career ambition
- Family planning

1.2. Skills for balancing work and family

- Stress management
- Relaxation
- Time management / prioritizing
- Problem-solving
- Balancing work and family
- Parenting
- Conflict management
- Negotiation skills
- Prenatal and nutrition course (for employees)
- Self-care (for employees)

2. ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES

2.1. Family friendly culture

- Work-family conflict is an issue
- Equal opportunities
- Respect for employee's private and family life
- Open communication
- Family-friendly leadership style

2.2. Human Resource Management

Within each tool of human resource management, there is no discrimination towards people with families, and limitations imposed by these families are explicitly taken into account:

- Selection & recruitment
- Promotion / career development
- Wage & incentive systems
- Performance evaluation
- Training & development

2.3. Managerial initiatives and organizational development aimed specifically at management of work-family issues

2.3.1. Structural measures

- Statement acknowledging importance of family and personal life
- Planning and implementation of a family supportive program (FSP)
- Work-family staff
- Assigning work-family program coordination duties
- Work-family support groups
- Work-family-related company survey

2.3.2. Programs

- Employee assistance program
- Health promotion program
- Stress management program
- Work-family program
- Absenteeism program
- Handbooks for employees and managers on family-supportive policies

Table 4 (continued)**2.4. Counseling**

- Employee assistance program (medical, psychological and social assistance)
- Expatriate counseling

2.5. Flexible work arrangements

- Flexible working hours (flextime), variable starting and quitting times
- Part-time work
- Job-sharing
- Compressed work week
- Reduced work hours

2.6. Leave arrangements

- Family / maternity / paternity leave
- Child rearing leave
- Leave for taking care of sick / disabled parents or children
- Sabbatical
- Seasonal schedule
- Unpaid holiday
- Career interruption
- Paid-time-off banks

2.7. Family support facilities

- Childcare information / referral
- (Off-site /on-site/near-site) child-care center
- Employer financial subsidies to pay for day-care
- Donations to local day-care facilities in return for slots
- Provision of or payment for childcare during business travel or extra work hours
- Childcare discounts or vouchers
- Eldercare information / referral
- (Off-site /on-site/near-site) elder-care center
- (Off-site /on-site/near-site) breastfeeding center
- School-age programs (after school / holidays)
- Dependent care development fund
- Sport /fitness facilities

2.8. Material support

- Housing
- Education loans
- Insurance (medical, dental, vision, hearing)

2.9. Off-site work facilities

- Telecommuting or flexplace
- Tele- or home offices / work at home

2.10. Information / training coping skills

Newsletters, informative sessions, seminars or workshops, during or after hours on:

- Management of work-family conflict (for managers)
- Management of work-family conflict (for (volunteer) care providers)
- Stress management (for employees)
- Relaxation (for employees)
- Time management / prioritizing (for employees)
- Problem-solving (for employees)
- Balancing work and family (for employees)

Table 4 (continued)

- Parenting (for employees)
- Conflict management (for employees)
- Negotiation skills (for employees)
- Prenatal and nutrition course (for employees)
- Self-care (for employees)

3. GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- Legally enforced leave arrangements
- Tax advantages for family-friendly companies
- Subsidies to family-friendly companies
- State-supported child care centers
- Subsidies to service-providers
- Development programs for company managers on work-family issues
- Development of a family-friendly index / award
- Subsidies to individuals with big families and/or companies
- Tax advantages for individuals with big families and/or companies
- Conferences, workshops on work-family issues

21. Another striking limitation of the accumulated research findings is that they are limited to Anglo-Saxon, mostly American, contexts. Considering the heterogeneity of legislative contexts in countries outside Canada and the US, and the argument that institutional pressures play an important role in the adoption of work-family policies (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995), we can seriously question the generalizability of the findings of mostly American studies. Another argument is that different cultures are characterized by different work and family values, practices and habits. This calls for cross-cultural studies of work-family policies and programs.
22. Another important factor to take into account is the importance of the individual company culture for the emergence and nature of work-family conflict. For instance, it is known that in many of the big consulting firms there is a clear, unwritten rule that employees are supposed to either win promotion after a certain number of years or leave the company (an “up-or-out” rule). This rule may create a culture that is very hostile to female employees who want to have children. Other examples of family-unfriendly cultures are:
- Companies with multinational career paths. To be promoted, one has to accept assignments in foreign destinations;
 - Command-and-control cultures. All decisions, including work arrangement decisions, are uniform and centralized;
 - Workaholic cultures. Working extra hours is generally considered as the norm; refusing to do this means jeopardizing one’s career opportunities.

Scholars studying organizational antecedents of work-family conflict should be aware that the company culture is often a scarcely visible (certainly for cross-sectional quantitative studies) yet significant cause of problems.

23. To round up this series of limitations, I would like to refer to recent articles (Grover & Crooker, 1995; Flynn, 1996) that have drawn attention to a group that is generally ignored by companies with work-family policies. It is a group that is increasingly demanding equal treatment: employees without children or single employees. The message is basically that if one wants to take this group

into account and not lose valuable employees because of pro-family discrimination, family-supportive programs should be broadened to be work-life balance programs that address the needs of these groups equally. This can be contrasted with the finding of Grover & Crooker (1995) that people are more attached to organizations that offer family-friendly policies, regardless of the extent to which the people might personally benefit from the policies. This debate will undoubtedly become a topic of interest for students of work-nonwork conflict in the future.

To conclude, research on the antecedents and outcomes of family-supportive policies is still in its infancy. This is clear from the fact that there has been no attempt to provide a framework or a systematic exploration of antecedents and outcomes. More rigorous studies, considering a wider set of antecedents, outcomes and contexts, are needed. Considering the number of cases mentioned in the business press, there is certainly no lack of empirical data.

A framework for research on the work-family interface

To round off this paper I will introduce a framework for research on the work-family interface that can help scholars working in this field to identify their research focus and contrast it with potential under-researched areas within the field. To structure the presentation of the framework I have determined (1) different levels of analysis, (2) different focuses of analysis, (3) different scopes of analysis, and (4) different methodologies. I will start by explaining these different levels, scopes, focuses, and methodologies. They will provide the dimensions that will allow me to differentiate types of studies.

Level of analysis

When choosing the level of analysis we should distinguish between the individual level, the inter-personal level, the organizational level, and the societal level. The reason for considering the individual level is that work-family conflict, the core variable of research in this field, is –by definition– a phenomenon that is situated at the individual level. It is the personal experience of a conflict between family and work responsibilities. At this level we can distinguish between specific groups. A second level, as pointed out above, holds a lot of promise for research and is seriously underrated: the interpersonal or dyadic level. We have some examples of couple analysis, but I can also think of employee-supervisor dyads. Students of organizations need to address the question of whether, when, why and how managers or organizations decide to deal with work-family conflict. Thus, the focus shifts to the organizational level – to human resource strategies and practices in general, and to family-supportive policies in particular. An important part of the work-family literature concentrates on precisely that aspect. Lastly, the societal level also plays an important role: first, for understanding the socio-demographic factors that drive work-family conflict; and second, for formulating government policies to address this problem, which touches many layers of the population.

Focus of analysis

Closely related to the level of analysis but different from it is the focus of analysis. We can focus on more fundamental questions or we can look at day-to-day reality to study specific practices and policies that have been developed by individuals or by organizations.

This distinction generally coincides with the distinction between more theoretical and more practitioner-oriented approaches. However, we should also distinguish between purely descriptive and more normative focuses. The fundamental questions are concerned with “why” things are the way they are, going beyond psychological or managerial concerns to touch upon philosophical matters. They try to find answers to questions such as “Why do people (employees, human resource managers, top managers, supervisors, mothers, fathers) assign priority to the family or to work?” or “What are the exact reasons why people experience role conflicts?” We consider that answering these fundamental questions is an absolute requisite to change focus without running the risk of addressing trivial questions. The more down-to-earth focus of analysis goes straight to specific practices (of individual fathers and mothers) and policies (of firms), to study what works and what does not. This analysis can generate direct output in terms of useful advice for individuals and firms. The above-mentioned types of analysis can be more descriptive in nature, focusing on what is the real nature of the phenomenon or what practices and policies are being used; or they can be approached from a normative perspective, which means that we look into the ethics of what should be the priority and the most appropriate type of action for individuals and firms.

Scope of analysis

When choosing the focus of analysis, one can concentrate on the local situation, broaden the focus to include the region more in general, or take a cross-cultural perspective. On the one hand, work-family conflict is culturally bound for the simple reason that the family plays a very different role in, let us say, Latin as opposed to Scandinavian countries. On the other hand, several authors have argued that the incidence of work-family conflict is associated with institutional pressures, which we can expect will be different in different countries. To allow an in-depth analysis of these institutional pressures, it can be important to focus on one nation.

Methodological considerations

To distinguish between methodologies, we can use two dimensions: time and depth. The time dimension refers to studying the phenomenon at one moment in time, or its evolution over a period of time. I am referring here to the distinction between cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. By depth we mean the difference between large-scale, rather superficial quantitative data that allow us to estimate the importance of phenomena and statistical relationships between variables, and qualitative analysis concentrating on individual cases to allow a more in-depth insight into the phenomenon.

The framework

The above paragraphs have provided the different dimensions. Tables 6A and 6B give an overview of different possible studies, crossing several of these dimensions:

- Individual, inter-individual, organizational, and societal
- Theoretical / fundamental, and practitioner-oriented
- Descriptive and normative
- Local, regional, and cross-cultural
- Cross-sectional and longitudinal
- Quantitative and qualitative

Table 5A: Different possible studies, taking into account different levels of analysis, scopes of analysis, and methodologies (longitudinal vs. cross-sectional, quantitative vs. qualitative)

		Qualitative			Quantitative	
		Individual / couples	Organizational	Individual / couples	Organizational	
Cross-sectional	National	(1) In-depth interviews with couples in Spain	(2) In-depth case-study of one Spanish company with WF-policies	(3) Survey-research among Spanish managers	(4) Survey-research among Spanish (companies) HR-managers	
	Cross-cultural	(5) In-depth interviews with couples in several European countries	(6) In-depth case-study of several European companies with WF-policies	(7) Survey-research among European managers	(8) Survey-research among European (companies) HR-managers	
Longitudinal	National	(9) Diary-research of couples mentioned in (1) over time	(10) Follow-up study of case mentioned in (2)	(11) Panel-study following Spanish couples over time	(12) Longitudinal study of Spanish (companies) HR-managers	
	Cross-cultural	(13) Diary-research of couples mentioned in (5) over time	(14) Follow-up study of cases mentioned in (6)	(15) Panel-study following European couples over time	(16) Longitudinal study of European (companies) HR-managers	

Table 5B: Different possible studies, taking into account different levels of analysis, focuses of analysis, and methodologies (quantitative vs. qualitative research)

		Individual	Organizational	Societal
		Individual	Organizational	Societal
DISCIPLINES	TOPICS	Philosophy / anthropology / psychology	Organizational psychology / organizational behavior / human resource management	Sociology / Law / Industrial relations
Fundamentals	Qualitative	Anthropological study of motives of specific persons, such as male managers with a dual-career family	Anthropological study of motives of specific organizational actors or representatives, such as human resource managers.	Philosophical study of motives for societies to address work and family issues.
	Quantitative	Large-scale, cross-sectional or longitudinal studies (focusing on individuals or couples) of antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict	Large-scale, cross-sectional or longitudinal studies (focusing on firms) of antecedents and outcomes of work-family policies.	Sociological analysis of socio-demographic factors driving the intensification of work-family conflicts
Policies and practices	Qualitative	In-depth case-studies of diary research of individuals or couples	In-depth case-studies of organizations with or without family-supportive programs	In-depth case-studies of nations with or without family-supportive government policies
	Quantitative	Inventarisation of individual practices	Inventarisation of organizational policies	Inventarisation of government policies

A scholar of work-family conflict may choose a combination of dimensions to determine his or her approach. It is clear that some approaches have tended to dominate the field, such as individual, local / regional, cross-sectional and quantitative studies. To balance research in this field, I call for more inter-individual, organizational, cross-cultural, longitudinal and qualitative studies, which –paradoxically– offer much more depth than the dominant ones. Probably, this is related to the overall quantitative bias in the academic community, which values numbers and quantifiable models over more complex and subtle insights. It can probably also be traced back to a certain level of convenience, as more qualitative, longitudinal and cross-cultural studies demand much more preparation, more field work, more work recording, data encoding and processing, interpretation, interpretative hazards, international collaboration, time and money, and insistence to get the work published. Yet considering the importance of balancing work and family, for the wellbeing of individuals, couples, their children, organizations and society as a whole, I believe this effort is more than justified.

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