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## **Family Life and Professional Work: Conflict and Synergy (FamWork)**

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**Household labour, work-family linkages, and family life:  
A state-of-the-art report**

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## 1. Global societal changes and their impact on the contemporary family

Although family life continues to be highly valued in most societies there is ample evidence that, particularly in Western countries, the family as a social institution has undergone profound changes over the last three or four decades. From a post-modernist point of view these changes can be attributed to societal trends such as increasing amounts of crises, break-ups and disorders which go along with a value system stressing contest, excellence and performance to promote economic development in a globalized and quickly changing world (Pourtois & Desmet, 2002; Sennett, 1998). Within this context, the family is undergoing a fourfold crisis: i.e., a crisis of relationship, meaning, power and values (Pourtois & Desmet, 2000a). Consequently, adults and children are subject to a variety of tensions they have to cope with. Thus, in a global perspective, the question about the compatibility of family and work has to be asked in a more complex way including

(a) a new conception of marriage (or other forms of couple relationships) which is based on affection and, in principle, serves the function of continually negotiating the delicate balance of personal autonomy and dyadic relatedness (de Singly, 2000a, 2000b; Giddens, 1992);

(b) a new meaning of parenthood emphasizing democratic, liberal and egalitarian parent-child relationships (Fize, 1991; Pourtois & Desmet, 2000a, 2003) with corresponding consequences for children's identity formation and personality development (de Singly, 2002a; Purtois & Desmet, 2000b);

(c) a new image of the family resting on pluralistic family reality and diversity (Théry, 2001) where common models of family life co-exist with new, innovative family patterns (Caillé, 2003).

Against the backdrop of this more general picture of societal change in Western countries it should be recognized that families are embedded in particular cultural contexts and their corresponding value systems. In addition, two major societal changes are particularly important with respect to the division of paid work and domestic labour, i.e., women's increased participation in the labour force and changing gender role ideologies. In the following these aspects will be elaborated in some detail, particularly with respect to the division of domestic labour in families.

## 1.1 Cultural values and household labour

Cultural values are standards for what are considered to be good or right ways of being and acting in each society. They include cognitive structures, behavioural and affective dimensions, play a major role in the establishment of personal goals and constitute the basis for self and others evaluation (Rokeach, 1973, cited in Brown, 2002). Concordance between personal decisions, cultural customs and value systems facilitates adaptation to life transitions (Feldman, Marshala & Nadham, 2001). If values influence family relations, the reverse is also true. As far as the division of household labour is concerned, several researchers have found that it reflects and perpetuates cultural understandings of family and it structures gender and class relations (Coltrane, 2000).

Several categories of values can be taken into account, each one with a different prevalence in different cultural groups. Social values such as individualism and familism and modernism/traditionalism are deemed to be particularly important for the purpose of comparing different societies. In general, individuals who hold familism values tend to engage in behaviours and make decisions congruent to family opinions, tend to fulfil the social and family prescribed roles and adjust to family needs; individuals with high individualism values emphasize the ideals of individual liberty and equality, tend to act accordingly to personal choice and feel responsible for one's choices (Raeff, 1997).

It is possible to draw a parallel between individualism/familism values and modernism/traditionalism values, as suggested by Triandis, McCusker and Lui (1990). Using Schwartz values (see Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987), they suggested that in more collectivistic cultures, values promoting the welfare of the group will be emphasized (i.e., family security, honouring elders, etc.). In individualistic societies values promoting individual goals (i.e., exciting life, independent, daring, etc.) would be more prevalent. Beside the overlap between these two groups of values and modernism/traditionalism values the meaning of the constructs must be carefully explored. For example, Fontaine and Matias (2003) found that familism represents two distinct dimensions: patriarchal power and familiar solidarity and support. While the former can be related to traditionalism values, the latter does not present such a clear association. In fact, individuals either with traditional or modern values agreed with the statements referring support (financial and emotional) towards family members. Indeed, this dimension seems very consensual, as it is upheld by most people. Moreover, a study carried out in 1996 in some European countries (France, Germany, It-

aly, Spain and United Kingdom) found that, for most people, the meaning of family values did not imply a traditional family structure or moral and abstract values. Rather, it was explained by support, mutual help and emotional caring within family members (Vicente, 1998).

In most studies, egalitarianism (Apparala, Reifman & Munsch, 2003; Coltrane, 2000) is considered to be a mediating variable between the previous values and household labour division. More modern and individualistic values hold for more egalitarian values (Raeff, 1997) and more traditional values hold for less egalitarian ones (Apparala et al., 2003). Thus, when men or women hold more traditional beliefs and attitudes, a lesser sharing of the housework is expected. On the other hand, more liberal and “non-traditional” attitudes and consequently, egalitarian beliefs, relate to men’s greater contribution in household labour (Apparala et al. 2003; Coltrane & Ishii-Kuntz, 1992; Coltrane, 2000). In fact, assessed at a country level, individualism was significantly and positively associated with the country’s level of egalitarianism (Apparala et al., 2003) perhaps because individualism assumes that people feel responsible for their own actions.

More egalitarian attitudes are also more likely to be endorsed by individuals who are younger, highly educated, have an employed spouse and hold liberal political attitudes (Apparala et al., 2003). Concerning gender differences, the stronger predictor of egalitarianism for men is marital status while for women it is social class. Finally, it was also found that in half of the studied countries, women held significantly more egalitarian attitudes than did men (Apparala et al., 2003). Poeschl (2000) arrived at the same conclusion with a Portuguese sample.

In summary, traditional and familism values, related to patriarchal power, are associated to less egalitarian values and consequently to a minor sharing of household labour. More modern and individualistic values are associated with more egalitarian attitudes and therefore to a greater sharing of household labour.

## **1.2 Participation of mothers in the labour force**

During the last decades the mothers’ participation in the labour force has distinctly increased in Western Europe, the United States and other developed countries (United Nations, 1995). Nevertheless, pronounced differences can be seen between the countries of the European Union. While, for example, in Portugal 72% of the mothers are integrated in the labour force, the percentage for Italy is only 45,7%. Within one country, differences

show up when the number of children under 5 years is taken into account: In Portugal, for example, the high percentages of working mothers with one or two children (73,3% and 71,3%) contrasts with the clearly lower rates for mothers with three or more children (47,4%). Within other countries like the Netherlands, these differences are less distinct, but still significant, i.e., 61,9% and 57,1% for mothers with one or two children compared to 49,4% for mothers with three or more children (Europäische Kommission, 2000).

As the participation of fathers in the labour force, all in all, has not undergone any major societal changes, the number of dual-income couples with pre-school children has pronouncedly increased along with the changes in mothers' labour participation (Franco & Winqvist, 2002). This leads to the importance of gender roles in the analysis of sharing domestic labour among working parents.

### **1.3 Gender and household labour**

As far as the gendered division of household labour is concerned, research to date can be summarized as follows:

(1) Women do substantially more housework than men, and this is especially true for married men and women. It is still taken for granted, as an implicit element of the marriage contract, that women take primary responsibility for domestic work (see Coltrane, 2000; Kluwer & Mikula, 2002, Shelton & John, 1996, for reviews).

(2) Married women's movement into paid employment has not been accompanied by an equivalent increase in the amount of housework done by husbands. Being viewed as secondary breadwinners means that it is women who must make adjustments in order to balance paid and unpaid domestic work (Jackson, 1997; Cancian & Oliker, 2000). Although there has been an increase in fathers' childcare hours, it is not enough to make up the difference (Perista, 2002).

(3) Not only do women perform significantly more housework, but they also perform different types of household tasks. Women tend to perform chores that take place inside home, are routine, absorbing and closely associated with childcare (Presser, 1994; Blair & Lichter, 1991; Perista, 2002). Traditional male tasks tend to have a well-defined beginning and end, are more likely to take place outside the home, offer discretion as to when the task is performed, and may be experienced as leisure (Blair & Lichter, 1991; Shelton, 1992). Driving, paying bills, and shopping have been termed "gender neutral" tasks and tend to be shared more equally (Perista, 2002; Coltrane, 2000). In this context it should be noted that

conventional measures of housework miss some important domains of domestic labour that, as qualitative studies suggest, are more commonly performed by women. Two specific kinds of such work have been termed “emotion work” and “kin work”. The first tends to involve the enhancement of others’ emotional well-being and provision of emotional support. The latter, sometimes also termed “kin keeping” is usually defined as the work required to sustain ties with relatives and caring for them.

(4) Although most adults agree on a highly egalitarian division of household chores and child-care activities (e.g., DeStefano & Colastano, 1990; Schneewind et al., 1992; Schneewind et al., 1997) there seems to be a shift towards a more traditional division after the transition to parenthood. Despite the fact that young parents usually maintain their ideal of equal sharing of responsibilities, the actual division of family work often shows a very different picture: while the fathers reduce their contribution quite substantially, the young mothers take on the bulk of household and child care activities (Jacobs, DeMaeyer & Beck, 1999; Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003). Longitudinal studies show that this “traditionalization effect” seems to prevail to a large extent even when the mothers resume their previous work (e.g., Schneewind et al., 1992; Schneewind et al., 1997). The shift towards a more traditional division of family and provider responsibilities is additionally reflected by evidence showing that fathers increase their effort for professional work after transition to parenthood, while mothers typically decrease their effort (Franco & Winquist, 2002).

(5) Based on an overview of different theoretical explanations for the imbalanced distribution of family work (e.g., Coltrane, 2000; Kluwer & Mikula, 2002; Mikula, 1998) the most consistent findings can be summarized as follows: The division of labour tends to be more unequal (a) when gender differences in outside employment and income are larger (Alvarez & Miles, 2003); (Arrighi & Maume, 2000); (Batalova & Cohen, 2002); (Bianchi et al., 2000); (Davies & Carrier, 1999); (Helms-Erikson, 2001), (b) when the normative climate in the social environment prescribes a sex-typed allocation of work (Kulik & Rayyan, 2003); (Lavee & Katz, 2002)), (c) when spouses have more traditional gender role ideologies (Arrighi & Maume, 2000); (Batalova & Cohen, 2002); (Bianchi et al., 2000); (Buunk, Kluwer, Schuurman, & Siero, 2000); (Helms-Erikson, 2001); (Lavee & Katz, 2002)), and (d) when couples have children at a younger age (Bianchi et al., 2000); (Kentges-Kirschbaum & Petzold, 1995)). Ultimately, however, gender explains the largest amount of variance in individual contributions to family work (Alvarez & Miles, 2003); (Batalova & Cohen, 2002); (Davies & Carrier, 1999); (Lavee & Katz, 2002); for a review see (Coltrane, 2000).

Why does gender remain the most important predictor of housework time? To answer this question, researchers are increasingly drawing on the “doing gender” perspective. This framework argues that domestic labour is a symbolic enactment of gender relations, not a rational choice due to time availability, to the maximization of efficiency, or the conversion of external resources into the exercise of power in the home (Coltrane, 2000). Cunningham (2001) incorporates socialization into a “doing gender” approach. Upon adulthood, children may draw on gendered models of housework performance to organize and justify their own behaviour. Examining forerunners of change in non-traditional gender ideology (men and women who are much less traditional than their parents’ generation and their own generation), Myers and Booth (2002) found that, although family of origin influences exert moderating effects on both sons and daughters, contemporary experiences are more important to daughters’ gender attitudes. The rapid societal change in the field of women’s roles has reduced the early influence of the family of origin. Also, current sex role allocations afford advantages which are large enough to make men resist changes in attitudes and behaviours, allowing them to adhere more rigidly to the teachings of their youth. These effects help to clarify why men’s gender ideologies have been slower to change than women’s and why this pattern is likely to continue.

Notwithstanding the theoretical explanations and empirical findings that have been offered to better understand the issue of gendered sharing of domestic work, it is important to study in greater detail how men and women evaluate the modalities of division of family labour that they practice in their every day life. The next section will take a closer look on this topic and present an overview on corresponding research findings.

## **2. Evaluation of the division of family labour**

The majority of studies of the division of family labour focused on the analysis of gender-related inequalities and the exploration of possible causes of inequality, usually from a sociological perspective. Much less is known about the perceptions, evaluations, and consequences of gender-related inequality in close relationships.

But it is reasonable to assume that the division of family labour and its evaluations in particular, will have important consequences for the relationship between the wife and husband and for the personal well-being of men and women (Baxter, 2000); (Kirchler & Venus, 2000); (Stevens, Kiger, & Riley, 2001); (Van Willigen & Drentea, 2001); for a



review see (Coltrane, 2000). The experience of injustice, or lack of satisfaction with the actual division of labour will have negative implications. Interestingly, only a minority of respondents regards the division of labour as unfair (e.g., (Baxter, 2000); (Blair & Johnson, 1992); (Blair, 1993); (Buber, 2002); (Coltrane, 2000); (DeMaris & Longmore, 1996); (Demo & Acock, 1993); (Kirchler & Venus, 2000); (Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994); (Mikula, Freudenthaler, Schröpfer, & Schmelzer-Ziringer R., 1996); (Mikula, Freudenthaler, Brennacher-Kröll, & Brunschko, 1997); (Mikula, 1998); (Mikula & Freudenthaler, 2002); (Spitze, 1988); (Ward, 1993). The lack of perceived injustice among women has stimulated research to identify determinants of perceptions of (in)justice regarding the division of family work. One popular explanatory model for the lack of perceived injustice among women is the distributive justice framework (Thompson, 1991); (Major, 1993)). This theoretical model claims that women do not perceive the unequal division of labour as unfair because it does not violate their sense of entitlement. The model assumes that cognitions about the division of family work are important for the evaluation of entitlement, and (in)justice in this area. It argues that the evaluation of justice is affected by peoples' wants and values, comparison standards and justifications.

Mikula (1998) reviewed relevant empirical studies and grouped the variables which have been considered as possible determinants of perceptions of (in)justice into four categories: work load and division of labour, characteristics of the social system, individual differences and cognitions. The empirical evidence for each of the four groups of variables can be summarised as follows:

Work load and division of labour. Measures of men's and women's employment hours outside the home show low or insignificant correlations with justice perceptions (e.g., (Baxter, 2000); (Blair & Johnson, 1992); (DeMaris & Longmore, 1996); (Demo & Acock, 1993); (Greenstein, 1996b); (John, Shelton, & Luschen, 1995); (Kirchler & Venus, 2000); (Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994); (Mikula & Freudenthaler, 1999). Measures of the division of family work are more consistently correlated with perceptions of (in)justice. Generally speaking, unbalanced divisions of labour are regarded as less fair than balanced divisions (e.g., (Buunk et al., 2000); (Kirchler & Venus, 2000); for a review see (Coltrane, 2000). Absolute measures, such as the hours spent doing family work, are less predictive of justice perceptions than the relative amount of men's and women's contributions to family work (e.g., (DeMaris & Longmore, 1996); (Hawkins, Marshall, & Meiners, 1995); (John et al., 1995); (Kirchler & Venus, 2000); (Sanchez, 1994). In addition, the amount of men's contribution to family work shows higher correlations with perceived justice than the

amount of women's contributions (e.g., (Baxter, 2000); (Demo & Acock, 1993); (John et al., 1995); (Sanchez, 1994) and contributions to female-type tasks (e.g., cooking, cleaning) are better predictors of perceived justice than contributions to other tasks or global measures of domestic labour (e.g., (Baxter, 2000); (Benin & Agostinelli, 1988);(Blair & Johnson, 1992); (John et al., 1995); (Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994); (Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994); for a review see (Coltrane, 2000).

System characteristics. Few studies focused on the characteristics of the family and household system. They found women with outside employment to perceive the division of family work as less fair than housewives (e.g., (Mikula & Freudenthaler, 1999). Marital status and the number of children, as well as individuals' earnings seem to be uncorrelated with justice perceptions (e.g., (DeMaris & Longmore, 1996); (John et al., 1995); (Kirchler & Venus, 2000); (Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994); (Mikula & Freudenthaler, 1999); (Ward, 1993); for a review see (Coltrane, 2000).

Individual differences. Women generally perceive the division of family labour as less fair than men (e.g., (Baxter, 2000); (Blair, 1993); (DeMaris & Longmore, 1996); (John et al., 1995); (Kirchler & Venus, 2000); (Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994); Mikula & Freudenthaler, 1999; (Robinson & Spitze, 1992); (Sanchez, 1994); (Ward, 1993). In addition, younger, more educated, and white people typically perceive the division of work as less fair than older, less educated and non-white people (e.g., (Baxter, 2000); (DeMaris & Longmore, 1996); (Hawkins et al., 1995); (John et al., 1995); (Lavee & Katz, 2002); (Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994); (Sanchez, 1994); (Ward, 1993); for a review see (Coltrane, 2000). The evidence for correlation between gender ideology and perceptions of justice is mixed. Some studies found significant but weak and inconsistent support for the prediction that people with egalitarian ideologies evaluate the unbalanced division of family work as more unfair than those with traditional ideologies (e.g., (Blair & Johnson, 1992); (DeMaris & Longmore, 1996); (John et al., 1995); (Greenstein, 1996a); (Mikula et al., 1997). Other studies reported no significant correlations (e.g., (Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994); (Mederer, 1993); (Ward, 1993).

Cognitions. Cognitions about the division of family labour, such as appraisals, attributions, comparative judgements and justifications turned out to be the best predictors of justice evaluations (for a review see (Coltrane, 2000). The following cognitions have been considered in various studies: perceived appreciation of one's work ((Blair & Johnson, 1992); (Hawkins et al., 1995); (Mikula et al., 1996)), discrepancies between actual and desired division of labour ((Kirchler & Venus, 2000)), comparison outcomes

(Freudenthaler & Mikula, 1998); (Mikula, Freudenthaler, Hoertner, & Foufas, 2001); (Mikula, Hörtner, & Foufas, 2001); (Mikula & Freudenthaler, 2002)) as well as procedural justice ((Hawkins et al., 1995)).

Moderator and mediator effects on the relationship between the division of labour and its evaluation and the relationship between perceived injustice, personal well-being, and relationship quality, received only little attention aside from a few exceptions ((Greenstein, 1996a); (Blair & Johnson, 1992); (Mikula et al., 1997); (John et al., 1995); (Sanchez, 1994) ; (Ward, 1993); (Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994); (Robinson & Spitze, 1992); (Reichle & Montada, 1994); (Reichle, 1996); (Lavee & Katz, 2002); (Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999); (Wilkie, Ferree, & Ratcliff, 1998); (Pina & Bengtson, 1993)). To compensate the lack of studies in this area, the analyses of justice perceptions as a moderator and/or mediator are highly warranted.

While a series of studies corroborated the hypothesis that the amount of perceived justice and fairness in sharing domestic work seems to affect the well-being of couples on the individual and relationship level, another line of research addressed the question to what extent different kinds of arrangements and experiences concerning the partners' gainful employment are related to personal well-being and the quality of family life. As has already been pointed out, this issue is particularly important in view of a growing number of so-called dual earner or dual career families. The next section provides an overview of what is known so far about the determinants and impact of different kinds of work-family linkages.

### **3. Work-family linkages**

Over the last years the interface of work and family life has attracted a considerable amount of research (Frone, 2003). In particular, the issue of work-family linkages has been elaborated on conceptual, theoretical and methodological grounds. On the conceptual level, different ways of how family and work experiences influence each other have been distinguished taking into account that "workers' everyday experiences tell us that work and family can benefit each other, and compelling evidence suggests that work-family conflict is distinct from positive spillover or family-work enhancement" (Gryzwacz & Bass, 2003, p. 248).

Empirical work on which combination of work-family linkages contributes most to an optimal balance of work and family life with respect to positive outcomes on the individual, family and work levels is still lacking. However, preliminary research suggests that a well-balanced role system which incorporates all roles (i.e., marital, parental and work roles) without too much friction results in higher levels of well-being (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). In fact, creating and shaping ones life in view of prevalent responsibilities in different life domains within the context of available opportunity structures can be conceived as a major life task of working partners and parents. Starting with a closer look at work-family conflict this section focuses on an overview of research findings pertaining to the field of work-family linkages and their outcomes.

### **3.1 Work-family conflict**

The topic of work-family conflict is of particular interest due to the radical changes of work and family responsibilities. Both American (e.g., Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992a) and European (e.g., Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998) studies indicate that some 40% to even 78% of employed parents experience work-family conflict at least sometimes. Problems in balancing work-family interface have most often been studied among employed women, because women are still primarily responsible for the home and children and therefore they have to balance the demands arising from family and work roles.

Cross-sectional research provides consistent evidence that work-family conflict is associated with various negative work-, family- and stress-related outcomes (see Allen, Herts, Bruck & Sutton, 2000). Frone (2000) has shown that, depending on the type of work-family conflict and type of disorder, employees often experiencing work-family conflict were about 2-30 times more likely than were employees who reported no work-family conflict, to experience a clinically significant mental health problem. Also, longitudinal studies have indicated that work-family conflicts predict adverse health outcomes (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1997) and stress as well as intentions to leave the organization. Consequently, previous studies have so far concentrated on demonstrating the main effects of work-family conflict on well-being and shown that work-family issues are important research targets from the view points of the well-being of individuals, families as well as organizations.

Work-family conflict has been defined as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible (Greenhaus &

Beutell, 1985). This definition of work-family conflict implies a bidirectional relation between work and family life. In other words, conflicts may originate in either domain. Recently, researchers have begun to focus on this distinction about the direction of the work and family interference (i.e., work interfering with family and family interfering with work). Although these two forms of conflict – work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW) – are strongly correlated with each other (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992a, 1992b; Gutek, Searle & Klepa, 1991; Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998), individuals typically report more WIF than FIW. According to Gutek et al. (1991), this may be due to the fact that work demands are easier to quantify, but it also may be that employees' evaluations are coloured by expectations concerning the characteristics of a good employee: a good employee is not supposed to think about family matters at work and thus let them disturb her or his working, but a good employee may think about work matters at home and thus let them interfere with his or her family life. Therefore, as Frone et al. (1992b) have stated, work and family boundaries are asymmetrically permeable.

Another distinction which has been made is a tripartite classification of the types of work and family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Time-based conflict is experienced when time pressures associated with one role prevent one from fulfilling the expectations of the other role. Strain-based conflict is experienced when strain or fatigue in one role affects performance in the other. Behaviour-based conflict occurs when specific behaviours required in one role are incompatible with behaviour expectations within another role. The latter form of work-family conflict has been difficult to operationalize and as a result there is little empirical evidence for the existence of behaviour-based work-family conflict. However, for example, Carlson (1999) found that each of the forms of conflict could be reliably measured and had an unique set of antecedents, although the three dimensions of conflict correlated strongly with each other. In the meta-analysis of Allen et al. (2000), the consequences of work-family conflict (WIF) were divided into three categories: work-, nonwork-, and stress-related outcomes. A number of studies have found that increased work-family conflict is related to increased job burnout (e.g., Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998; Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrian, 1996). In the meta-analysis (Allen et al. 2000) the weighted mean correlation calculated across studies that examined job burnout was .42.

### **3.2 Work-family linkages: Direct or indirect effects?**

In their review, Crouter et al. (2001) report that linkages between work and family life have mostly turned out to be indirect. Work stress can be linked to parents' feelings of overload and strain (e.g., Repetti, 1999), which influences in turn the parent-child relationship, e.g., less acceptance, higher conflict, and more aversion (Galambos, Sears, Almeida & Kolaric, 1995; Crouter, Bumpus, Maguire & McHale, 1999; Repetti, 1999). In turn, this process is related to less positive adjustment in the offspring. Kinnunen and Mauno (2001) found that high time demands, low control at work and job insecurity were linked to parenting behaviour through the negative job-related affect they create. Especially job exhaustion was related to child rearing stress, which in turn hindered child centrality and supervision of the child. For men this relationship was also mediated by job-related negative mood.

However, there is also evidence for direct links between parental job experiences and children's well-being (Perry-Jenkins & Gillman, 2000). In this study the role of parental well-being as a mediator between parental work experiences and child well-being did receive only little support for fathers and no support for mothers. Fathers' positive work experiences were directly related to school-aged daughters' reports of less daily hassles and less negative psychosocial well-being. Interestingly, for mothers in dual-earner families positive work-experiences were directly related to daughters' report of lower well-being, but in single-mother-families it worked as a buffer to aggressive tendencies for their sons (but not for their daughters).

### **3.3 Work-family linkages: Gender differences?**

In a review on emotional transmissions in the daily lives of families, Larson and Almeida (1999) report that a large body of findings in the field of emotional transmission studies has focused on parents' jobs as a source of emotion in the family. Interestingly, in studies thus far, fathers' stress at the job seemed to spill over and affect other family members, but negative emotions of employed mothers do not affect other family members. Crouter et al. (1999) reported for example that fathers' work pressure predicted both parents' feelings of role overload (i.e., cross-over), whereas mothers' work pressure predicted only their own overload, not their spouses'. In addition, Repetti's diary study (1997) showed that fathers' more negative social interactions were related to fathers' and children's reports of fathers being less responsive (i.e., social withdrawal) and to fathers' reports of being more irritable (negative spill-over effect). In contrast, mothers who experienced more negative interac-

tions reported a higher responsiveness and also their children reported a higher responsiveness of their mothers.

Kinnunen and Mauno (2001) found that job exhaustion was a negative experience in relation to family functioning as well as to the experience of work-family conflict, in particular for men. A final example can be found in a study of Almeida, Wethington and Chandler (1999). On days when fathers experienced stressors such as work overloads or home demands, they were more than twice as likely to experience tension spillover from the marital dyad to the parent-child dyad than on stress-free days, but for mothers there was not such a connection.

### **3.4 Work-family linkages: The role of personality as mediator/moderator**

Personality of mothers and fathers might also play an important role in work-family spillover effects. One important aspect of personality refers to personality factors or dimensions as is evidenced in the so-called Big Five model (McCrae & Costa, 1999). In this model five personality dimensions are described: Extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness to experience.

Thus far, personality factors have not been extensively studied in the context of work-family conflict. In fact, there are only a handful of studies in which personality factors have been included although with mixed results. For example, Grandey and Cropanzano (1999) studied self-esteem as a moderating variable between four role stressors and work, family and life distress, but did not find such effects. In addition, Noor (1997) did not find any moderator role of negative affectivity when studying the relations between work and family roles and well-being among women. In the study by Aryee, Luk, Leung and Lo (1999), there existed no moderating effects of emotion- and problem-focussed coping on the relationship between work-family conflict and the well-being indicators of job, family and life satisfaction.

However, there are several studies which did find effects for personality. Carlson (1999), for example, studied the role of personality as predictor of three different forms of work-family conflict (i.e., time-, strain-, and behaviour-based conflict). The personality variables that were taken into account in this study were Type A (persons who are typically ambitious, persistent, impatient, and involved in their work) and negative affectivity (persons who have a tendency to experience aversive emotional states and self-concept). These personality variables explained additional significant variance beyond situational factors

(role conflict and role ambiguity at home as well as at work) as antecedents to all forms of work-family conflict. Stoeva, Chui and Greenhaus (2002) also studied the role of negative affectivity in work-family conflict. In contrast to Carlson (1999), they found only indirect links. Job stress and family stress functioned as mediators of the relationship between negative affectivity and work-to-family conflict as well as between negative affectivity and family-to-work conflict. In addition, negative affectivity had a moderating effect on the relationship between family stress and family-to-work conflict. The relationship between family stress and family-to-work conflict was stronger for individuals reporting high negative affectivity, compared to those reporting low negative affectivity.

Kinnunen, Vermulst, Gerris and Mäkikangas (2003) studied the role of personality in work-family linkages using the Big Five dimensions as variables. Personality was found to moderate the relationship between fathers' experiences of work-to-family conflicts and well-being outcomes. More precisely, emotional stability – a construct that can be regarded as the opposite of neuroticism - seemed to be a protective factor in the work-family domain. It protects one from negative effects of work-family conflict on work (job exhaustion) and on general well-being (depression). This result supports the finding of Stoeva et al. (2002). Additional support can be found in the study of Rantanen, Pulkkinen and Kinnunen (submitted for publication). They found neuroticism to function as a moderator explaining the relationship between work-to-family conflict and parental distress.

A personality trait that has been reported as an important protective factor in the family domain is agreeableness (Kinnunen et al., 2003). Agreeable fathers were protected from the negative effects of family-to-work conflict on marital satisfaction. Besides these moderating effects, both work-to-family and family-to-work conflict and emotional stability and agreeableness had main effects on well-being. In the same vein, Rantanen et al. (submitted for publication) found that conscientiousness was another protective moderator in as much as highly conscientious individuals are less likely to experience work-to-family conflict compared to those who score low on conscientiousness.

Another aspect of personality refers to personality types which can be based upon compositions of personality factors. There is empirical evidence to construct a personality typological categorization of subjects based on their individual scores on separate Big Five dimensions. On the basis of the Big Five factor scores subjects can be categorized as resilient, overcontrolled or undercontrolled types (Asendorpf, Borkeman, Ostendorf & van Aken, 2001; Robins, John, Caspi, Moffitt & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1996). It would be interesting to study the role of personality types in work-family linkages in future research.



### **3.5 Marital relationships and work-family linkages**

The quality of partner relationships is often considered to be an important outcome variable in research on work-family relations. It is also possible to conceive marital quality as moderating effects of work overload on the parental knowledge and monitoring of their child (Bumpus et al., 1999). Milkie and Peltola (1999) found that those who experienced marital happiness experience more success in balancing family and work.

Coverman (1989) presented data showing that higher work-family conflict was related to lower marital satisfaction for men but not for women, whereas two studies revealed significant relationships for women but not for men (Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998; Matthews, Conger & Wickrama, 1996). Crouter et al. (2001) reported that husbands who make long hours at work (> 60 hours per week) spend less time in shared activities with their wives than those who investigate less in work-related activities. However, husbands' long working hours seemed to have little consequences to partners' subjective evaluations of their marital relationships. Contrary, husbands' role overload affected marital quality negatively (e.g. partners felt less loved, more conflict). It thus seems that husbands' subjective feelings of role overload are a better predictor of marital quality than the number of hours being at work. A recent diary study (Doumas, Margolin & John, 2003) reported spillover (for men and women) and crossover (only for women) from individual experiences to marital interaction the same day and from marital interaction to individual experiences the next day. Wives seemed thus to be more reactive. Interference by time (more positive marital interaction on days when one worked less and felt more energetic, more working for women on days after husbands' negative marital interaction) and energy proved to be important, but in contrast with earlier research, less support was provided for the importance of stress as an interference process.

However, there are also studies where work-family conflict was not related to marital satisfaction, for example, this was the case among teachers in the study by Netemeyer and his colleagues (1996). Nevertheless, the weighted mean correlation of work-family conflict for marital satisfaction found across studies was -.23 in the meta-analysis of Allen et al. (2000).

### **3.6 Work-family linkages and coping: Individual strategies and supportive structures**

Although there exist quite a few studies on the work-family interface and its effects, particular with respect to the impact of work-family conflict, there is astonishingly little research addressing the issue of coping with stresses stemming from family-work incompatibilities on the individual, couple, family or work level. One short-term coping strategy that seems to be widely used after stressful workdays is social withdrawal. Repetti and Wood (1997), for example, found that working mothers were less available for their preschool children when they had experienced work-overload or interpersonal stress in their job. Similarly, in a study focusing on interaction in marital relationships it turned out that stress at work led to social withdrawal and reduced amounts of marital interaction (Repetti, 1989).

Bodenmann (2000) who developed an instrument to assess dyadic coping in couples found that working wives exhibited more emotion-focused and supportive dyadic coping if they worked longer. On the contrary, husbands tended to show less topic-related, emotion-focused and supportive dyadic coping if they had a higher work-load. For an explanation of this gender discrepancy Bodenmann refers to the work of Whiffen and Gotlib (1989) as well as Greil, Leitko and Porter (1988) who found that wives and, even more so, working wives feel more responsible for their husbands' inconveniences which they tend to attribute to themselves. While according to Bodenmann's (2000) study couple support in the face of work-induced stress resulted in differential gender effects there is some evidence that, in general, social support eases the stress stemming from competing work and family roles (Rwampororo, 2001; Perrone & Worthington, 2001).

Concerning long-term personal strategies to cope with work-family incompatibilities, Hall (1972) derived three types of coping behaviour from a role theory approach, i.e., structural role redefinition (e.g., eliminating or negotiating a reduction of real activities), personal role redefinition (e.g., altering one's own standards of role performance), and reactive role behaviour (e.g., adjusting to the role demands by more efficient time management). In a similar vein, Becker and Moen (1999) found that their sample of dual-earner couples used a series of coping strategies that can be subsumed under three broad categories, i.e., placing limits (e.g., limiting work hours or refusing overtime work), distinguishing between "job" and "career" (e.g., one spouse is scaling back his or her career aspirations), and trading off (e.g., long-term change of the spouses' involvement in a career or job track).

Similar to an earlier study by Wiersma (1994) which uncovered a number of strategies to manage work-family conflict such as setting priorities, reframing adversities or mu-

tual help, Haddock, Zimmerman, Ziembra and Current (2001) approached the issue of coping with the multiple challenges of more or less compatible work-family activities from a different point of view. Based on a strengths and resources paradigm as it is suggested by proponents of the “positive psychology” movement (e.g., Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), these authors conducted an interview study asking well-functioning dual-earner couples with children what kind of strategies they use to successfully manage their family and work responsibilities. First, Haddock et al. (2001) noted that, contrary to negative media images and social dynamics that are insensitive to the lives of dual-earner families, many of them are largely healthy and thriving. Moreover, these authors found that successful dual-earner families structure their lives around the following ten major strategies: valuing family, striving for partnership, deriving meaning from work, maintaining work boundaries, focusing and producing at work, taking pride in dual earning, prioritizing family fun, living simply, making decisions proactively, and valuing time.

The results of the Haddock et al. (2001) study make a strong point that, in principle, dual-earner families have or can acquire the competences necessary to cope with the challenges of balancing work and family life in a proactive and self-directed way – a point of view that has been advocated since some time by authors who are active in the field of work-life balance coaching (e.g., Covey, 1989; Seiwert, 2001). Notwithstanding the benefits of a positive and proactive attitude (and engendering behaviours) towards the challenges of life it goes without saying that supportive structures outside the family realm can also contribute a lot to ease the stress and strain that dual-earner families are often confronted with.

Although a more detailed report on research covering the impact of supportive structures on the lives of dual-earner families is beyond the focus of this report, two major supportive systems will be briefly mentioned.

Non-parental childcare. One of the most important support systems that working parents can fall back on besides intra-familial support (e.g., grandparents’ help) is institutionalized non-parental childcare. Provided that it is cost-effective and high in quality, non-parental childcare has been shown to reduce parental stress and also foster the cognitive and socio-emotional development of working parents’ children (see Clarke-Stewart & Allhusen, 2002, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network, 2003, for reviews). Thus, informal and self-organized as well as institutionalized non-parental childcare that meets the needs of working parents and at the same time provides high quality care for their children is highly warranted.

Family-friendly work places. The second supportive structure that helps to ease work-family incompatibilities refers to family-friendly work places. The provision of part-time jobs (particularly for mothers) and flexible work schedules are only two items of a longer list of family-friendly measures that enable working parents to better integrate their work and family roles (Crouter & McHale, 1993; MacDermid & Targ, 1995). However, it should also be noticed that specific intra-familial conditions such as low family-to-work conflict enhance working parents' readiness to use organizational work-family benefits while this seems not to be the case when work-to family conflict is high (Frone & Yardley, 1996). Notwithstanding the subtleties of work-family relations just mentioned, there is some research evidence that, in general, implementing family-friendly measures turned out to be a win-win situation for both employees and companies because, besides the positive effects for working parents, the higher job dedication and productivity of employed parents pay off for companies subscribing to family-oriented policies (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend in Zusammenarbeit mit der Europäischen Union, 2003; Kramer, Burian, Gerbracht & Hegner, 1998).

#### **4. Theoretical and methodological developments**

This section is devoted to some remarks concerning recent theoretical and methodological developments in the field of family research covering the topics of division of domestic labour and work-family relations. In particular, the following paragraphs will focus on a brief account of integrative conceptual models. In addition, some innovative assessment tools and data analytic strategies will be briefly described.

##### **4.1 Theoretical developments: The quest for comprehensive models**

In two decade reviews of the 1990s, one focusing on the social embedding of household labour (Coltrane, 2000) and the other on the linkages between the family and work domain (Perry-Jenkins, Repetti & Crouter, 2000), the authors drew on several approaches to structure the corresponding body of research. While Coltrane (2000) enumerated a variety of different theoretical developments in the study of household labour such as gender construction, economic and exchange theories, morality theories, psychological and socialization theories, Perry-Jenkins et al. (2000) preferred to locate research within different re-

search traditions, e.g., the maternal employment tradition, the workplace as context for socialization tradition, the impact of occupational stress on families tradition.

Interestingly, both reviews show almost no overlap concerning theoretical and empirical approaches in studying the domestic labour and the work-family domain. Although there are a few studies devoted to the relation of workload and the division of domestic labour as pointed out in section 2 of this report, this can be taken as a clue to what extent selective fragmentation of research can lead to a restricted view of the phenomena under study. In the meantime, several authors have called for a more integrative approach which allows to study the dynamic interrelatedness of proximal and distal variables that, on the one hand, directly or indirectly influence personal, couple and family systems and, on the other hand, are being influenced by those contributing to the processes occurring within and between family and work settings.

A first step in this direction took Grzywacz and Marks (2000) who provided a conceptually meaningful clarification of work-family linkages resulting in different kinds of positive and negative spillover effects between the work and family domain (i.e., work-family conflict, work-family facilitation, family-work conflict and family-work facilitation). A recent empirical test of this model revealed that particularly family-to-work facilitation serves as a protective factor to buffer deleterious effects of work-to-family conflict (Grzywacz & Bass, 2003). In addition, upon preliminary work using this model it has been suggested that the facilitation dimension is related to a different pattern of antecedents than the conflict dimension which holds particularly for the family-to-work facilitation component (Frone, 2003). This might be another clue to use a more integrated approach concerning the interplay and mutual impact of experiences related to paid work and domestic labour (Schneewind, Kupsch & Dillitzer, in press).

One step further, systemic-contextual models comprising antecedent, concomitant and outcome variables along Bronfenbrenner's (1989) process-person-context model or, in its dynamic version, process-person-context-time model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) need to be constructed. Comprehensive models based on eco-systemic theoretical propositions would require considering cultural variables, extra- and intra-familial opportunity structures along with personal and relationship resources to explain the processes of balancing work and family demands with respect to specific outcomes on the personal, couple, family and work level. One such conceptual framework has been specified and operationalized by the present writers who are members of a multinational research consortium supported by the European Commission. The FamWork Research Consortium is presently

conducting a coordinated study on the conflicts and synergy in family life and professional work in seven European countries (see FamWork Research Consortium, 2001, and the Consortium's website [www.eu-project-famwork.org](http://www.eu-project-famwork.org) for more details). It is expected that this study will provide a broader and more comprehensive as well as differentiated picture of how and to what effects working parents with young children deal with the multiple demands of work and family life. Ultimately, it is expected that the results of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the initiatives needed to promote work-family balance in young dual-earner families.

#### **4.2 Methodological developments: New assessment tools and data-analytic strategies**

Recent methodological developments in the field of work-family relations refer to utilizing innovative assessment tools and to applying more complex and sophisticated strategies of data analysis. In the following both will be briefly addressed.

New assessment technologies. Besides traditional assessment technologies such as qualitative interviews, self-report questionnaires and, to a lesser extent, observational techniques a relatively new assessment approach has been added to the research tools in the family-work domain. In particular, if it comes to the study of short-term processes relating to contextualized experiences (e.g., the assessment of work-to-family and family-to-work spillover) a more fine-grained assessment methodology is needed. For this purpose self-monitoring and diary approaches proved to be helpful devices for sampling experiences in situ (Hormuth, 1986). This is one of the reasons why, in addition to traditional self-report measures, a computer-based self-monitoring approach which has been developed by Perrez and his co-workers is being used in the FamWork project just described (for details of this methodology see Perrez & Horner, 1997; Perrez & Reicherts, 1996; Perrez, Berger & Wilhelm, 1998; Perrez, Schöbi & Wilhelm, 2000).

Recent research further underlines advantages of self-monitoring and diary approaches by detecting systematic biases in traditional approaches (e.g., Stone et al., 2000). Bolger, Davis and Rafaeli (2003) point out that aggregated measures usually do not account for differences in variability between persons that may be important to the topic in question (e.g., feelings or context-specific cognitions). Diary data of individuals with sufficient entries allow to address questions not only about between-person differences of state variables but also between-person differences in the variability of such measures. Moreover, the usefulness of self-monitoring methodology has been demonstrated in research

studying time-sequences related to topics like circadian or diurnal rhythms, whereas for the examination of within-person processes, between-person processes and the combined analysis of both, diary approaches turned out to be the method of choice. Bolger et al. (2003) conclude that “[...]diary designs are superior to traditional designs in examining processes because they allow investigators to examine the temporal sequencing of events and to control for third variables by using participants as their own control” (p. 587).

The technological implementation of self-monitoring methods has been further developed in recent years as the use of computer-based tools in research is stimulated by the advanced technological development, resulting in more powerful and user-friendly devices such as palm-held computers. A comparative study by Stone et al. (2002) emphasizes the advantages of computer-based tools over paper diaries.

New data-analytic strategies. In addition to new developments in the area of assessment technologies, progress has also been made concerning more sophisticated data-analytic procedures. For example, path analytic and structural equation models are being used more and more often to test specific theory-driven hypotheses referring to family-work linkages (e.g., Crouter et al., 1999; Paulson, 1996). Furthermore, the use of moderator and mediator analyses (Baron & Kenny, 1986) has become a prominent data-analytic strategy to test for the relevance of interaction effects and the effectiveness of intervening processes as, for example, has been described in section 3 of this report.

More recently, for several reasons, hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) has become an important data analytic strategy, especially with respect to the analysis of relationship data (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). First, HLM is an extremely flexible methodological strategy to conduct multi-level analyses. Thus, in the field of work-family balance where most of the data refer to individual-based observations, it is important to decompose the total variance of individual-based observations (e.g., reports on marital quality or parenting behaviours) into components that can be attributed to person, couple or family effects. For example, in a recent study Gareis, Barnett and Brennan (2003) have successfully used HLM methodology in a within-couple analysis of dual-career couples which allowed them to separate individual and crossover effects of work schedule fit. It should also be mentioned that HLM can easily be extended to include the relative contribution of cultural variables such as familism or modernism (see section 1 of this report) in a multi-level analysis of work-family linkages.

Second, HML can be used as a methodological strategy in the analysis of growth curves as has been demonstrated, for example, in studies modeling psychological change

within couples (e.g., Raudenbush, Brennan & Barnett, 1995; Karney & Bradbury, 1997) and, more specifically, in modeling changes in job conditions and concomitant changes in psychological distress in dual-earner couples (Barnett & Brennan, 1997). In addition, growth curve analysis based on HML can be readily applied to self-monitoring data that have been simultaneously assessed in specific relationship systems such as dual-earner couples.

Finally, beyond data-analytic strategies based on multivariate linear models, research in the work-family domain lends itself easily to configural or typological strategies of data analysis as it is quite common in the realm of personality research or in studying patterns of perceived environments (e.g., Asendorpf et al., 2001; Moos & Moos, 1986). Although corresponding data-analytic tools such as cluster analysis or configural frequency analysis are readily available these methodologies are conspicuously underrepresented in work-family research. Thus, exploring, for example, interrelations of patterns of work and family life and even more so developmental change of such interrelated family-work patterns within a longitudinal design would be an important new addition to the burgeoning field of work-family research.

## **5. Conclusions**

The present state-of-the-art report focused on research pertaining to the multiple facets of work and family linkages including the division of domestic labour. Starting from a more general perspective of societal changes in Western countries encompassing mothers' increased participation in the labor force and cultural as well as gender-related changes, relevant research on the division and evaluation of domestic labour has been reviewed. In addition, research in the closely related area of work-family linkages has been presented with a special emphasis on gender, personality, couple relationships, coping and support systems. Finally, recent theoretical and methodological developments have been addressed which led to the conclusion that integrative conceptual models along with innovative assessment tools and corresponding data-analytic strategies are highly warranted for further research. It is expected that new research-based insights in the complex interplay of the work and family domain will pave the way to designing appropriate measures that might help working parents to optimize the balance of their work and family life.



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