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# Managing the Work–Family Interface

Kristen M. Shockley

#### INTRODUCTION

Workforce changes in demographic composition, work attitudes, and employer expectations have led to increased attention to the interaction of employees' work and family lives. Work-family studies gained initial traction in the early 1980s, and it is currently a major area of study within work psychology. Throughout this chapter, I introduce the reader to basic constructs, including work-family balance, conflict, and enrichment, and discuss research surrounding the domain-specific and domain-unspecific correlates of these constructs. Next, the chapter offers information regarding solutions from both the standpoint of organizations and national legislation. Finally, a discussion of future research ideas is presented.

#### **DEFINING CONSTRUCTS**

Although 'work-family (or work-life) balance' is the term favored by the popular press and often invoked in colloquial conversation, academic study of the work-family balance is rather limited. In fact, to date, researchers have not converged on

an accepted definition of the construct (cf. Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Various proposed definitions include balance as the absence of conflict combined with the presence of facilitative processes between roles (Frone, 2003), distributing personal resources across all life roles (Kirchmeyer, 2000), being fully engaged and attentive to all roles (Marks & MacDermid, 1996), and equal or high satisfaction and effectiveness across roles (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003; Kirchmeyer, 2000). In a systematic review and assessment of these many conceptualizations of work-family balance, Greenhaus and Allen (2011) offered a new definition that incorporates some facets of previous definitions but also invokes a person-environment fit angle: 'an overall appraisal of the extent to which an individual's effectiveness and satisfaction in work and family roles and consistent with their life values at a given point in time' (p. 174). Nonetheless, likely attributable to the lack of consensus and complexity of the construct, research, and particularly programmatic research, related to work-family balance is limited.

However, other constructs linking the work and family domains, namely work-family conflict (WFC) and work-family enrichment (WFE), have received considerably more empirical attention. WFC has the longest history, crystallized

by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). The authors proposed that WFC is 'a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role' (p. 77). Unlike work-family balance, which involves a more holistic evaluation of work and family together, the conflict construct is grounded in spillover models (e.g. Staines, 1980), where the focus is on the transfer of attitudes, moods, values, and behaviors from one domain to another. Inherent in the conflict definition are also assumptions related to role theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964) and scarcity theories (e.g. Edgell, 1970; Moore, 1960), namely that role behavior is influenced by expectations in that role, and that each role is competing for scarce resources, such as time and energy, provoking role conflict and overload.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) note two directions of WFC as well as three types. Regarding directionality, work can interfere with family (work-to-family conflict) and family can interfere with work (family-to-work conflict); these are considered unique constructs with distinct patterns of correlates, although they are highly correlated (r=0.39) based on meta-analyses; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Michel, Mitchelson, Kotrba, LeBreton, & Baltes, 2009). The three types are time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based conflict. Time-based conflicts transpire when a work and family activity occur simultaneously and one cannot attend to both (e.g. a child's doctor appointment requires one to miss a work meeting); strainbased conflicts occur when strain created in one role makes it difficult to meet the demands of the other role (e.g. day-long frustration at work causes one to withdraw from family interactions in the evening); behavior-based conflict happens when the behaviors necessary to perform one role are incompatible with the other role (e.g. a tax collector is required to act stern and unforgiving and this behavior carries over into problematic interactions with his spouse). Other researchers have noted additional types of conflict, such as energy-based conflict (Greenhaus, Allen, & Spector, 2006), which involves energy being drained in one role and then hindering performance in the other role, or psychological preoccupation (Carlson & Frone, 2003), which involves being physically present in one domain but mentally absorbed with the other domain.

In more recent times, researchers have begun to focus on the spillover perspective in positive terms, highlighting the ways that work and family roles can enrich each other or facilitate domain performance. Although this empirical focus is somewhat new, theoretical discussion of the concept originated with Sieber's (1974) theory of role accumulation and Marks' (1977) expansionist approach to human energy. In both cases, the researchers noted that the scarcity perspective could not hold true in all circumstances given that some multiple role occupants experience no conflict or overload. Their theories argue that under certain conditions, role accumulation creates. rather than drains, resources that are transferable and beneficial to other roles. Subsequent researchers expanded on these theories to formulate models specific to the domains of work and family (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2007).

From a construct standpoint, the positive interaction between work and family has been given numerous labels, including work-family positive spillover (e.g. Crouter, 1984), work-family facilitation (Grzywacz & Bass, 2003), work-family synergy (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002), and WFE (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). I refer the reader to Wayne (2009) for a nuanced discussion of the differences in these constructs, but because of the large overlap and for ease of interpretation, I will hereafter use the label WFE in reference to this class of constructs. Parallel to WFC, researchers agree that WFE is bi-directional (work enhances family and family enhances work), but there is less agreement over the distinct types of WFE. For example, Sieber's (1974) early conceptualization highlights four resource transfers: gaining privileges, increasing status security, status enhancement, and personality enrichment. Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, and Grzywacz (2006) identified the dimensions of capital (increases in psychological resources such as sense of security, accomplishment, or self-fulfillment that enrich performance in the other domain), affect (increases in positive emotional state that enrich performance in the other domain), and developmental (increase in resources such as skills, knowledge, and perspectives that enrich performance in the other domain). Hanson, Hammer, and Colton's (2006) dimensional structure also includes an affective pathway, but their other two factors are behaviorbased instrumental spillover (when behaviors transfer from one domain to aid performance in other) and values-based instrumental spillover (when values gained in one domain transfer to the other). Thus, there is some discrepancy in how various resources should be categorized, but consensus remains around the idea that resources in the forms of values, behaviors, skills, affect, and other psychological resources can be gained in one domain and transferred to the other.

#### CORRELATES OF THE WORK-FAMILY INTERFACE

#### Domain-specific Correlates of WFC

A common guiding framework used to understand domain-specific correlates of WFC is Frone and colleagues' theory of domain specificity (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997). This theory argues that predictors of work-to-family conflict lie primarily in the work domain, whereas predictors of family-towork conflict reside in the family sphere. Consequences of each type of conflict are also predicted to be domain-specific and are predominantly felt in the receiving domain (i.e. family for work-to-family conflict and work for family-towork conflict). Additionally, Frone et al. (1997) propose a reciprocal WFC loop, such that over time conflict (e.g. work-to-family) creates increased distress in the receiving domain (e.g. family) and generates distress and unfilled obligations in that domain which, in turn, sparks conflict in the other direction (e.g. family-to-work).

Regarding the nature of these domain-specific correlates, among the most robust predictors of work-to-family conflict are work conflict, work overload, work time demands, and organizational and coworker support. Likewise, family conflict, family role ambiguity, family overload, parental demands, and spousal support are strongly associated with family-to-work conflict (Byron, 2005; Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes, 2011b). These patterns are generally consistent with the theory of domain specificity as the relationships between the work variables and work-to-family conflict are stronger than their associations with family-to-work conflict, and the opposite pattern is shown with family-related predictors.

On the consequence side, the most strongly associated variables are satisfaction, performance, and strain in each domain, as well as turnover intentions at work. Contrary to domain specificity, Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, and Semmer (2011) found meta-analytically that, as a whole, work-related consequences had larger correlations with work-to-family conflict than with family-towork conflict, and family-related consequences were more strongly related to family-to-work conflict than to work-to-family conflict. One explanation for these counter findings, at least with affective consequences, lies in the source attribution argument (e.g. Grandey, Cordeiro, & Crouter, 2005; Kinnunen, Feldt, Geurts, & Pulkkinen, 2006). When WFC interferes with functioning in the receiving role, individuals are likely to attribute blame to the domain that created the conflict and thereby reduce satisfaction in that role rather than the role that was merely a victim of such interference. In a path analytical meta-analysis testing competing hypotheses, which pitted domain specificity and source attribution perspectives against each other. Shockley and Singla (2011) indeed found greater support for the source attribution perspective.

Alternatively, it may be that what is being captured in these studies is a snapshot of the dynamic process of the WFC cycle discussed by Frone et al. (1992, 1997). Decreased job satisfaction, for example, may result from family-to-work conflict but, over time, it may act as a stressor itself and incite work-to-family conflict. Given the crosssectional nature of most WFC studies, it is impossible to determine the precise point in this cycle that data are being collected and directionality is impossible to ascertain. In summary, while the precise pattern of correlations specific to each direction of WFC are not always theoretically clear, the literature has coalesced on the idea that main correlates of WFC include role-specific time spent, stress experienced, role requirements, support, affective reactions toward the domain, and performance decrements.

#### Domain-specific Correlates of WFE

Likely owing to its relative nascence, there is not a single dominant theoretical framework guiding research on domain-specific correlates of WFE. To a lesser extent than with WFC, domain specificity is used to understand correlates of WFE. Some theoretical frameworks posit relationships consistent with domain-specific patterns (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). such that resources generated in one role enhance performance and affect in that role, which, in turn, positively relate to performance in another role, but other theoretical perspectives acknowledge domain-specific predictors but suggest that the outcomes of any type of WFE are felt systemwide (e.g. Glazer & Beehr, 2005; Wayne et al., 2007).

Empirically, variables that have been found to positively correlate with work-to-family enrichment include support from the workplace (e.g. general supervisor support, family-supportive organizational culture; for example, Baral & Bahrgava, 2010; Gordon, Whelan-Berry, & Hamilton, 2007) and job characteristics (autonomy, schedule control, developmental opportunities; for example, Carlson et al., 2006; Carlson, Ferguson, Kacmar, Grzywacz, & Whitten, 2011). Job demands have been studied as a negative

predictor of work-family enrichment, but results are quite mixed, with several studies finding non-significant results (e.g. Beham, Drobnič, & Präg, 2011; Hill, 2005). For family-to-work enrichment, family support (spousal support, general family support; e.g. Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan. 2005; Hakanen, Peeters, & Perhoniemi, 2011) seems to be the most commonly studied and robust predictor.

Similar variables studied as consequences of WFC have been examined in relation to WFE. Consistent with WFC findings, several studies cite patterns opposite to domain specificity. For example, work-to-family enrichment relates more highly to job satisfaction and work engagement than does family-to-work, and the opposite pattern emerges with family-to-work enrichment such that it is more strongly related to family satisfaction, family functioning, and family engagement (Kacmar, Crawford, Carlson, Ferguson, & Whitten, 2014; McNall, Nicklin, & Masuda, 2010; Shockley & Singla, 2011). Work and family performance and affective commitment relate similarly to both directions of WFE (Kacmar et al., 2014; McNall et al., 2010). Thus, similar conclusions with regard to consequences can be drawn as stated previously with WFC. That is, it is possible that an individual attributes positive sentiments to the role causing the enrichment (i.e. source attribution perspective), or it may be that variables labeled as consequences function more as domain-specific antecedents. It is hard to imagine a domain enriching another if a person is not satisfied or functioning well in the originating domain

#### DEMOGRAPHIC AND NON-DOMAIN-SPECIFIC CORRELATES OF WFC AND WFE

#### Gender

Gender is the most discussed non-domain-specific correlate of WFC (Korabik, McElwain, & Chappell, 2008). A glimpse at the popular press reveals the pervasive assumption that women face greater work-family challenges than men (e.g. 'Why Women Still Can't Have It All'; Slaughter, 2012). Academics have also often made this assumption, although some researchers have offered theoretical arguments that gender differences in WFC vary based on the direction of conflict. Specifically, the rational view argument (Gutek, Searle, & Kelpa, 1991) is based on the traditional division of labor where men performed greater paid labor and women spend more time in

household and childcare labor. According to this perspective, the time spent in a role is positively associated with likelihood of that role interfering with another. Given that on average married men spend more time in work roles than married women (8.5 versus 7.28 daily hours, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013a) and women spend more time in family roles than men (2.8 hours versus 1.6 hours daily; US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013a), men should report greater work-to-family conflict and women should report greater family-to-work conflict.

Conversely, the sensitization perspective (also called the gender role perspective: Gutek et al., 1991) argues that the value placed on a role should impact perceptions of WFC. Social role theory (Eagly, 1987) describes how men and women are socialized to place different values on work and family roles. Women, tending to value the family domain more than work, should be particularly sensitive to intrusions into that domain and thus report greater work-to-family conflict. The opposite pattern would hold true for men, leading them to report greater family-to-work conflict. Thus, the rational and sensitization perspectives make competing arguments about gender and bi-directional WFC.

In an attempt to reconcile mixed findings regarding gender and WFC, Shockley, Shen, Denunzio, Arvan, and Knudsen (in press) conducted a meta-analysis of 354 and 220 studies of work-to-family and family-to-work conflict and gender, respectively. In both cases, the relationship between gender and WFC was very small (rs = -.011 and -.015), suggesting no meaningful association. Because the competing rational and gender role models could effectively cancel out any observed gender differences, the authors also tested meta-analytic path models to determine which perspective seemed to hold the most merit. The rational model was supported, but the sensitization perspective was not. Thus, it does not seem that the null gender and WFC association is accounted for by these two competing forces.

Whether these null effects should be interpreted at face value is unclear. It may be that despite anecdotal beliefs that women experience greater WFC, men are actually experiencing similar amounts. Alternatively, it is possible that typical measures of WFC may not be nuanced enough to capture gender differences. Women, socialized to anticipate difficulty managing work and family (Cinamon, 2006), may respond to typical measures of WFC with different standards than men. Indicating 'agree' to 'my work life interferes with my family responsibilities' may actually represent a different (higher) frequency of WFC for a woman than for a man. It would be interesting to see if gender differences emerge when WFC is measured on a more

discrete, episodic basis, which may reduce some of these shifting standards. Lastly, women often make decisions about work (e.g. scaling back at work when children are born) that men do not make (Becker & Moen, 1999). If not for these pre-emptive decisions, gender differences might be more apparent. This parallels the argument that men and women are not equated on work and family roles in most research samples, meaning that an 'apples and oranges' comparison is occurring. If women held roles similar to men's in terms of work hours, occupational status, and power, gender differences might emerge (Korabik et al., 2008).

Considerably less formalized theory has been proposed with regards to gender and WFE. Some researchers (e.g. Grzywacz & Marks, 2000) have employed the aforementioned rational perspective, noting that women's greater involvement and identity with family should allow for more opportunity for positive gains in family to spill over into work, and the opposite pattern should hold true for men. Theoretically, one could also apply the gender role perspective and posit a competing hypothesis; because women (men) value family (work) more, they may be more sensitive to the family domain being enriched and experience greater family-to-work (work-to-family) enrichment than men (women). Although gender is not specifically mentioned, this aligns with predictions regarding domain salience within Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) theoretical model of WFE.

Wayne et al. (2007) theorize specifically about gender and adopt a resource-based argument, stating that characteristics such as gender and occupational status indirectly relate to WFE by influencing the type of resources that are available and used by employees. Men and women in the same occupational role may exploit resources differently based on gender socialization. Women, in the presence of relational-oriented resources, may experience greater work-to-family facilitation, whereas men would gain more from environmental resources that emphasize job prestige or income. Thus, differences in WFE depend not only on gender but also on the nature of job and family situation in which men and women are embedded. Lastly, some researchers (van Steenbergen, Ellemers, & Mooijaart, 2007) have claimed that because, compared with men, women typically have more choice in entering the work role, work carries a different psychological meaning. A woman's deliberate acquisition of the work role indicates that she anticipates some benefits to engaging in multiple roles and is thus likely to realize this enrichment. Of note is the assumption inherent in this argument that the work role is a deliberate choice for all women, which is undoubtedly not the case.

Empirically, there is not strong evidence to suggest gender differences in WFE. Some studies cite no significant differences (Nicklin & McNall, 2013; Thompson & Prottas, 2005; Voydanoff, 2005), others report that women experience more WFE (van Steenbergen & Ellemers, 2009), and others find that men experience greater WFE (van Steenbergen et al., 2007), although the effect sizes are quite small in cases where gender difference is observed. Overall, although gender is 'deeply engrained work-family relationships' (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005, p. 181), the nature of these relationships remains elusive. As previous researchers have noted (e.g. Eby et al., 2005; Korabik et al., 2008; Powell & Greenhaus, 2010), a more fruitful avenue than examining gender itself is to actually measure and model the variables for which gender is a proxy. Such finergrained assessment will elucidate mechanisms driving gender relations rather than forcing researchers to make broad assumptions, which are often based on increasingly antiquated traditional gender roles.

#### Socioeconomic Status

Within work-family research, socioeconomic status is typically captured by measuring income or skill level of the worker. Meta-analytic estimates suggest a small positive correlation between income and work-to-family conflict and a null association with family-to-work conflict (Byron, 2005). However, given that the majority of work-family research (and presumably those studies included in the meta-analysis) involves managerial samples (Casper, Eby, Bordeaux, Lockwood, & Lambert, 2007), this figure may be skewed by range restriction.

The small body of research focused on lowincome workers suggests that they face unique work-family challenges (Griggs, Casper, & Eby, 2013). Namely, they are more likely to work non-standard or unpredictable work schedules with fewer available work-family support policies (Bernstein, 2004; Muse & Pichler, 2011), more likely to be female, single parents, and often struggle to find affordable, quality childcare (Winston, 2014). Based on general theories highlighting the protective role of resources and detrimental role of demands in WFC and WFE (e.g. Bakker, Demerouti, & Dollard, 2008; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Voydanoff, 2005; Wayne et al., 2007), it stands to reason that low-income workers should report greater WFC and less WFE than higher income workers.

However, WFC studies based on US nationally representative samples, which should not be

prone to range restriction, have not consistently supported this idea. The correlation between income and WFC is small (Ciabattari, 2007) or not significant (Ford, 2011). Interestingly, a few studies focused on low-income workers report relatively low absolute levels of WFC (Ciabattari, 2007; Griggs et al., 2013; Grzywacz et al., 2007; Muse & Pichler, 2011). One explanation is that job opportunities for low-skilled workers are often insecure and limited. As such, when employed, these workers may simply feel grateful for having income to support their families and not internalize the experience as WFC (Grzywacz et al., 2007). On the WFE side, Hammer, Cullen, Neal, Sinclair, and Shafiro (2005) found that a subjective variable related to income, income adequacy (one's perception of how well earnings suit his/her needs), positively related to WFE for wives but not for husbands. In summary, the link between socioeconomic status and work-family constructs remains not well understood, an idea that is further discussed in the 'Future Directions' section.

#### Age and Life Stage

Given the changes in work and family roles that occur throughout the life cycle, age and life stage are seemingly important determinants of the work-family interface. However, both variables are often considered only as control variables in the work-family literature, with little substantive focus (Baltes & Young, 2007). One exception to this is a study based on the 2008 National Study of the Changing Workforce (Allen & Finkelstein, 2014). The authors found that WFC was lowest among people in the empty nest (over age 54 with no children in the home) and establishment (under age 35 with no children) stages of life compared with those in stages where children were living in the home. Moreover, not taking into account life stage, age was negatively related to WFC. Gordon et al. (2007) report similar results with age and WFC in a sample of only women; they also examined WFE and found no association. Although evidence suggests that WFC decreases with age, older workers are nonetheless likely to face substantial challenges that may affect work-family dynamics, such as caring for elderly parents or grandchildren, managing retirement, and coping with negative stereotypes related to age (Allen & Shockley, 2012).

Taking a life course fit rather than a strict WFC or WFE perspective, researchers have also examined how the placement of child rearing within the life course impacts career outcomes. Delaying childbirth is advantageous in terms of women's

objective career success (i.e. job status, salary) (Abele & Spark, 2011; Taniguchi, 1999; Valcour & Ladge, 2008), and men's success is independent of childbirth timing (Taniguchi, 1999). These gendered findings align with Moen and colleagues' (Moen, 2003; Moen & Roehling, 2005; Sweet & Moen, 2006) notion of the gendered life course, which argues that men and women's life paths are markedly different because of cultural schema and unadapting organizational structures that reproduce inequality at home and at work. The requirement of full-time continuous employment for workplace advancement puts women, who are still burdened with the lion's share of domestic labor and face fertility restrictions, at a distinct disadvantage.

#### Marital Status

Similar to age, marital status is often considered a control variable or inclusion criteria rather than the focus of research. But unlike age, the association between marital status and WFC has been estimated meta-analytically (Byron, 2005). Married people report slightly higher work-tofamily conflict, and single people report slightly higher family-to-work conflict. These figures do not consider the parental status of participants. In order to take that into account, Byron tested the percentage of parents in a sample as a moderator of the relationship between marital status and WFC. She found that as percentage of parents in a sample increases, the association becomes more negative for both directions of WFC, indicating that married people with children experience less WFC than single people with children. Minnotte's (2012) work extends this finding by incorporating gender. While married/partnered mothers and fathers experience similar levels of WFC, single mothers experience significantly more WFC than single fathers. Thus, having a partner present in the household seems to act as a resource, reducing WFC. The discrepancy in WFC by gender among single parents may be accounted for by the greater financial resources that men typically have and the tendency for mothers to be the primary custodian (Bianchi, Subaiya, & Kahn, 1999).

With regard to WFE, only one known study (Innstrand, Langballe, Espnes, Aasland, & Falkum, 2010) has explicitly examined marital status in relation to WFE. Using a Norwegian sample, they found that work-to-home enrichment did not vary based on family structure, but childless couples reported significantly more family-to-home enrichment than single individuals, single parents, or two-parent families. Other studies include

marital status as a control variable and thus report a correlation; however, these estimates are quite inconsistent with some studies citing greater WFE among married people (Gordon et al., 2007), others citing less (Andreassen, Hetland, & Pallesen, 2013) and some finding a null association (Chen & Powell, 2012). Moreover, meaningfully aggregating these findings is difficult given the lack of consideration of parental status in conjunction with marital status. Relatedly, studies differ in their consideration of cohabitation. Cohabitators are often treated as married or single, but rarely as a unique group in analyses. Given that nonmarried cohabitators typically share a more equitable division of household labor than married couples (Davis, Greenstein, Marks, & Gerteisen, 2007), this shift in family demands could be consequential for WFC and WFE experiences.

#### Kinship Responsibilities

Following from the basic idea that demands in each domain are a major source of WFC, responsibility for dependents has often been examined as a correlate of both work-to-family and family-towork conflict. Interestingly, meta-analytic estimates suggest a rather small association between number of children and both directions of conflict. However, when operationalized in a more specific manner, such as weighting overall responsibility based on the ages and living arrangements of children or elders in need of care (i.e. Rothausen, 1999), correlations are typically larger (e.g. Dickson, 2008; Shockley & Allen, 2010). With regards to WFE, most studies cite a non-significant association between number of children and enrichment (e.g. Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner, & Hansen, 2009; Karatepe & Bekteshi, 2008; Lingard, Francis, & Turner, 2010; McNall, Masuda, & Nicklin, 2009; Polk, 2008), although some report positive associations with both directions (Kinnunen et al., 2006) or only family-towork enrichment (Nicklin & McNall, 2013). It stands to reason that having greater kinship responsibilities may provide greater opportunity for enrichment to occur.

Additionally, a small body of literature has accumulated regarding the unique work-family situation of workers with special needs children (e.g. those that are physically or mentally disabled, seriously ill, or diagnosed with a developmental disorder). Given the greater time and emotional demands of special needs children (Rao & Beidel, 2009; Rosenzweig, Brennan, Huffstutter, & Bradley, 2008), it is not surprising that their parents report greater WFC than parents without

special needs children (Stewart, 2013). Moreover, the level of strain from family moderates the caregiving demands and family-to-work relationship for parents of disabled children such that the relationship is stronger when family strain is higher (Li, Shaffer, & Bagger, 2015). Very little WFE research has been conducted on these populations, but one study found that mothers of children with learning disabilities reported significantly higher work-to-family enrichment than mothers of typically developing children (Al-Yagon & Cinamon, 2008).

#### Personality

Personality plays an important role in workplace attitudes and behaviors, and the work-family interface is no exception to this. Cho, Tay, Allen, and Stark (2013) provide evidence for the existence of a disposition to experience work-family spillover. That is, experiencing spillover between roles, whether it be positive or negative, is an individual difference characteristic that is stable over time and unique from the Big Five personality constructs. With the exception of openness to experience, the Big Five also relate to WFC and WFE, with higher agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extraversion relating to less WFC and greater WFE and neuroticism exhibiting the opposite pattern. Positive and negative affectivity exhibit similar patterns of correlations as extraversion and neuroticism, respectively (Allen, Johnson, Saboe, Cho. Dumani, & Evans, 2012; Michel, Clark, & Jaramillo, 2011a).

Another personality variable that has gained considerable traction in the work-family literature is the concept of preferences for role segmentation. According to boundary theory (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996), individuals manage competing roles through the creation of meaningful boundaries that help simplify and order the environment. However, people differ regarding the extent that they prefer and they are able to keep boundaries permeable and flexible, which, in turn, influences the relative segmentation or integration of roles (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006). Specifically, boundaries that are highly impermeable and inflexible will lead to greater segmentation of roles, while those that are highly permeable and flexible will contribute to increased integration of roles. Research has not found a consistent link between segmentation preferences and WFC, but actual segmentation practices are associated with less WFC and less WFE (cf., Allen, Cho, & Meier, 2014), suggesting that when roles are kept highly separated any type

of spillover is less likely. Lastly, although empirical research on the concept is lacking, individual differences in multitasking ability or preferences (i.e. polychronicity) are likely to have a positive impact on the ability to handle demands from multiple roles, thus reducing conflict and potentially enhancing enrichment. Future researchers are encouraged to explore this idea.

#### Well-being Consequences

WFC is associated with several domain-unspecific outcomes, such as life satisfaction, mental and physical health, and health behaviors, such that greater WFC relates to poorer well-being (Amstad et al., 2011; Greenhaus et al., 2006). WFE has also been linked to these variables, exhibiting patterns opposite those of WFC (McNall et al., 2010). Mental health is most often operationalized as depression or depressive symptoms, although some studies have examined anxiety or psychological strain (e.g. Grzywacz et al., 2007; Rantanen, Kinnunen, Feldt, & Pulkkinen, 2008). Physical health has been operationalized in diverse ways, including self-reports of overall health (e.g. Johns, 2011), checklists of somatic symptoms (e.g. Major, Klein, & Ehrhart, 2002), and through objective indicators such as blood pressure, heart rate, and cholesterol levels (e.g. Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1997; Shockley & Allen, 2013; van Steenbergen & Ellemers, 2009). Health behaviors that have been studied in relation to WFC include alcohol consumption, smoking, exercise, food choices, and family dinners (e.g. Allen & Armstrong, 2006; Allen, Shockley, & Poteat, 2008; Frone, Russell, & Barnes, 1996; Väänänen, Kumpulainen, Kevin, Ala-Mursula, Kouvonen, Kivimäki, Toivanen, Linna. & Vahtera, 2008; Wang, Liu, Zhan, & Shi, 2010). WFE has been linked with greater physical activity (Demerouti & Geurts, 2004) and less alcohol consumption (Grzywacz & Bass, 2003).

Theoretically, the links between WFC/WFE and life satisfaction are thought to be largely indirect, operating through domain-specific (i.e. family and job) satisfaction. With WFC, this idea has received some empirical support through meta-analytic tests of mediation (Michel et al., 2009). Regarding health outcomes, basic stress theories (e.g. Cox, 1978) suggest a direct relationship between WFC as a stressor and strain reactions in the form of mental and physical health and health behaviors. Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory forms the basis for the association between WFE and health. According to the theory, positive emotions produce physiological

responses, thoughts, and actions that are beneficial to health. Assuming WFE produces such positive emotions, these favorable reactions should follow.

As noted with domain-specific correlates, it is important to keep in mind that most work-family research is based on cross-sectional studies; thus, reverse causality is plausible. For example, people experiencing depressive symptoms are more likely to perceive negative events and are less attuned to positive events (Beck, 1967), which could alter reports and experiences of both WFC and WFE. Simultaneously, people experiencing depressive symptoms may be less effective in each domain due to the lack of motivation associated with depression (Kelloway, Gottlieb, & Barham, 1999). A few longitudinal studies that have measured WFC at a time point preceding measurement of depression/distress report no significant association (Hammer et al., 2005; Rantanen et al., 2008) or greater evidence for reverse causality (Steinmetz, Frese, & Schmidt, 2008), although others have found a positive longitudinal link with only the family-to-work conflict direction and depression (Frone et al., 1997a).

It is worth mentioning, as a final point, the consideration of WFC and WFE interactively in relation to outcomes. Although many researchers measure both WFC and WFE, Gareis, Barnett, Ertel, and Berkman (2009) explicitly tested three different perspectives: independent effects (WFE and WFC act independently of one another on outcomes), interaction effects (WFE buffers the negative impact of WFC to a greater degree under conditions of high versus low WFC), and relative difference effects (the relative amount of WFE compared with WFC matters in predicting outcomes). Results varied based on the direction of spillover. For work-to-family conflict and enrichment, the independent effects model fits the data best, indicating that the construct has unique, independent effects on mental health, life satisfaction, affect balance, and relationship quality. However, for the family-to-work direction, an interaction model was most fitting, suggesting that the relationship between family-to-work conflict and outcomes was weaker when family-to-work enrichment was higher. In general, these findings highlight the importance of considering both positive and negative work-family interactions to gain a fuller picture of the WF interface.

To summarize, studies focusing on domainspecific and domain-unspecific correlates of WFC and WFE are abundant. The general trends suggest that experiencing WFC is generally bad for well-being, whereas WFE is favorable. Domainspecific support and stressors play an important role in determining levels of WFC and WFE. Lastly, certain individual differences impact work-family experiences, although the associations with seemingly apparent variables such as gender and socioeconomic status are dubious and could benefit from more nuanced assessments.

### WHAT CAN ORGANIZATIONS DO TO HELP EMPLOYEES MANAGE WORK AND FAMILY?

Organizations are increasingly recognizing the need to assist employees in their work and family management. The Families and Work Institute's recurrent National Study of Employers shows many favorable trends from 2008 to 2014. For example, the number of employers in the US offering flexibility in start and stop times of work, flexibility in location of work, control over break time, provision of more than 12 weeks of maternal leave, and provision of dependent care, eldercare, and employee assistance plans has increased (Matos & Galinksy, 2014). There is also evidence that employers are increasingly viewing workfamily initiatives as a key driver of employee recruitment and retention, particularly with the Millennial generation (e.g. Families and Work Institute, n.d.; Society for Human Resource Management, 2009). Work-family support policies can be divided into broad categories: formal and informal benefits. These are discussed, in turn, in the following sections.

#### Formal Family-Friendly Benefits

Formal policies can be further divided into two types: flexibility-based policies and dependent care supports. Flexibility-based policies include flextime, flexplace (i.e. telecommuting), compressed work weeks, reduced hours or part-time work, and job sharing. Dependent care supports include policies aimed specifically at assisting with care of dependents. Examples include caregiving leave, childcare or eldercare referral services, dependent care assistant plans that help employees pay for childcare with pre-tax dollars, and childcare vouchers or subsidies, on-site daycare, and emergency or sick care for children (Matos & Galinksy, 2014).

Flexibility-based policies have received considerably more research attention than dependent care supports, likely due to their low cost and broader availability. According to the 2014 National Study of Employers, 81 percent of employers surveyed offer occasional flextime and 67 percent offer

occasional flexplace. These numbers are smaller but still substantial regarding the availability of flextime and flexplace on a regular basis (41% and 38%, respectively). Comparatively, on-site, emergency, and sick childcare as well as vouchers are quite rare (<4% of companies offer this), but referral services and dependent care assistance programs are more common (offered by 27% and 61% of companies, respectively; Matos & Galinksy, 2014).

Family-friendly benefits have often been touted as a key solution to employees' work-family management (Allen & Shockley, 2009; Allen, Johnson, Kiburz, & Shockley, 2013; The White House, 2014). However, empirical research suggests that the value of benefits may be overstated, at least for the most commonly offered benefits of flextime and flexplace. In a meta-analysis, Allen et al. (2013) found no significant association between flextime use and bi-directional WFC as well as family-to-work conflict and flexplace. The association between flexplace use and work-to-family conflict was significant but very small, calling into question the practical significance. Research is comparatively sparse on other types of flexible benefits. Individual studies have found that parttime work relates negatively to work-to-family conflict but is not associated with family-to-work conflict (Hill, Yang, Hawkins, & Ferris, 2004; Oishi, Chan, Wang, & Kim, 2015; van Rijswijk, Bekker, Rutte, & Croon, 2004). Compressed work weeks have been examined within quasiexperiments aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of an alternative schedule compared with a standard schedule. Across three different interventions, results were favorable for work-life outcomes, including work-family conflict (Dunham, Pierce, & Castaneda, 1987), workfamily balance (Lingard, Brown, Bradley, Bailey, & Townsend, 2007), and management of personal activities (Vega & Gilbert, 1997). Job sharing has not been examined in relation to work-family outcomes to my knowledge.

With regards to dependent care supports, studies examining individual policies in relation to work-family outcomes are rare; instead, checklists that list various supports are often used as a measure of dependent care use (Kelly, Kossek, Hammer, Durham, Bray, Chermack, Murphy, & Kaskubar, 2008). Likewise, meta-analytic research only reports the association with overall dependent care support use with work-to-family conflict, citing a significant but small negative correlation (Butts, Casper, & Yang, 2013). Parental leave has been a topic of considerable focus in a variety of disciplines (sociology, economics, political science), but there has been limited research conducted from a psychological perspective that examines leave use in relation to WFC upon return to work. Most of the extant research examines parental leave from a macro-perspective and considers the impact of national leave policies rather than an individual's actual use of leave (e.g. Allen et al., 2014; Ruppanner, 2013; Strandh & Nordenmark, 2006). Evidence is inconsistent across these studies as to whether the generosity of leave policies relates to WFC. The implications of cultural context are further discussed in the 'What Can Governments do to Help? (And Other Cross-Cultural Implications)' section.

WFE has only been examined in relation to any type of family-friendly benefit in a handful of studies. Results are mixed, with a few studies citing very small or non-significant correlations between work-to-family enrichment and schedule flexibility/schedule control (Beham et al., 2011; Carlson, Grzywacz, Ferguson, Hunter, Clinch, & Arcury, 2011; Carlson, Grzywacz, & Kacmar, 2010; Moen, Fan, & Kelly, 2013) and others reporting larger positive correlations (Carlson et al., 2011a; Kacmar et al., 2014). Use of dependent care supports has been examined in relation to familyto-work enrichment in a few studies (Dikkers. Geurts, Den Dulk, Peper, Taris, & Kompier, 2007; Pedersen, Minnotte, Kiger, & Mannon, 2009) and shows no association, and Dikkers et al. (2007) also cite a counterintuitive negative association between subsidized childcare and parental leave and work-to-family enrichment. On the contrary, in qualitative research, family-friendly benefits, and schedule flexibility in particular, are noted by participants as critical to WFE (Hill, Allen, Jacob, Bair, Ferrin, Sacha, Van Langeveld, Martinengo, Parker, & Walker, 2007; Pedersen & Jeppesen, 2012).

Drawing from resource-based theories, theoretically, family-friendly policies should act as a resource, reducing WFC and facilitating WFE. In practice, there may be other variables at play that detract from the efficacy of the policies. Allen et al. (2013) suggest that the freedom gained from flexibility may increase the amount of family responsibilities an individual assumes, which, in turn, could increase the opportunity for family to interfere with work. The authors also argue that with the increased number of choices that familyfriendly benefits allows, self-regulatory resources may be drained, creating additional stress and opportunity for WFC (Allen et al., 2013; Iyengar & Lepper, 2000). Another explanation specific to working from home and on-site childcare is that being physically located in the family domain while engaging in work (or vice versa) can lead to role blurring and subsequent WFC (Ashforth et al., 2000). As a final consideration, the informal organizational context, detailed in the following section, in which benefits are offered has a

substantial impact on the use and efficacy of the benefits.

#### Informal Support

Organizations vary in the extent that they support and value the integration of employees' work and family lives, an idea termed work-family culture (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). A related concept is family-supportive organization perceptions, or an individual's global perceptions about an organization's family-supportiveness (Allen, 2001). Many factors drive a company's workfamily culture, including organizational time demands (e.g. expectations for long hours of work and for prioritizing work over family), perceived career consequences for using work-family benefits (e.g. being overlooked for promotions or viewed as uncommitted), supervisor and coworker support (e.g. the extent to which supervisors and coworkers are sensitive to, and accommodating of, employees' family needs and engage in role modeling behaviors), and the extent that physical presence at work is emphasized over results (cf., Shockley, Thompson, & Andreassi, 2013).

Work-family culture and family-supportive organizational perceptions are each associated with WFC and account for unique variance beyond the availability of family-friendly benefits (Allen, 2001; Michel et al., 2011b; Thompson et al., 1999). Additionally, there is evidence that workfamily supportive culture acts as a moderator between use of family-friendly benefits and other outcomes, including withdrawal from the workforce (Pas, Peters, Doorewaard, Eisinga, & Lagro-Janssen, 2011) and engagement (Ratnasingam, Spitzmueller, King, Rubino, Luksyte, Matthews, & Fisher, 2012), such that the effects of familyfriendly benefits are more salubrious when used in a supportive cultural context. Work-family culture also positively relates to WFE (Baral & Bhargava, 2010; Peeters, Wattez, Demerouti, & de Regt, 2009; Wayne, Randel, & Stevens, 2006).

Of the various components that drive work-family culture, supervisor support has received the most empirical attention. Researchers have differed in their discussion and likewise measurement of supervisor support as general (support for personal effective at work) or support specific to family issues (e.g. Allen, 2001; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Thompson et al., 1999). To compare the unique effects of each type of support, Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, and Hammer (2011) tested a meta-analytic path model and found that both types of support were related to lower levels of WFC, but that effect size was stronger for work-family-specific

support. Furthermore, Hammer and colleagues (Hammer, Kossek, Zimmerman, & Daniels, 2007; Hammer et al., 2009) conducted a series of studies aimed at understanding specific behaviors that drive family-supportive supervisor perceptions. The authors identified four dimensions: emotional support, instrumental support, role modeling behaviors, and creative work-family management. Emotional and instrumental support are common in conceptualizations of social support in general (e.g. House, 1981). The two unique dimensions, role modeling behaviors and creative work-family management refer to 'supervisors demonstrating how to integrate work and family through modeling behaviors on the job' (Hammer et al., 2009, p. 841) and 'managerial-initiated actions to restructure work to facilitate employee effectiveness on and off the job' (Hammer et al., 2009, p. 842).

Hammer et al. (2009) found that each dimension relates negatively to work-to-family conflict but shows no association with family-to-work conflict. Conversely, all four dimensions relate to family-to-work enrichment, but only role modeling relates to work-to-family enrichment (Hammer et al., 2009). However, other researchers have found that aggregated measures of family-supportive supervisor behaviors relate favorably to both directions of WFC and WFE (Crain, Hammer, Bodner, Kossek, Moen, Lilienthal, & Buxton, 2014; Odle-Dusseau, Britt, & Greene-Shortridge, 2012). Regardless, these results suggest that the supervisor plays a substantial role in an individual's work-family experiences.

Beyond supervisors, support from people in the workplace may also come from coworkers. Coworker support is negatively associated with both work-to-family and family-to-work conflict as assessed by meta-analysis (Michel et al., 2009) and positively related to both directions of enrichment (Lu, Siu, Spector, & Shi, 2009). Diving further into the issue of what kinds of behaviors constitute a family-supportive coworker, Mesmer-Magnus, Murase, DeChurch, and Jiménez (2010) conducted a qualitative study as part of a scale development. They note six unique dimensions: offering childcare assistance, engaging in deviating behavior (e.g. covering up for the employee when he/she misses work for family reasons), facilitating telework, offering a continuing work modification, offering a short-term work modification, and engaging in helping behavior. Additionally, research suggests that coworkers are most likely to be supportive when embedded in supportive contexts (high supervisor support and family-friendly work culture) and highly cohesive workgroups where justice perceptions about family-friendly benefits are high (Mesmer-Magnus & Glew, 2012; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2009). As organizations continue to shift to teambased structures, it seems that the role of coworker support will continue to grow in importance.

Lastly, of particular relevance to the efficacy and use of formal benefits, particularly those that involve being physically present at work, is the dimension of results-focused versus face-time culture (Shockley & Allen, 2010). Organizations high in face-time orientation expect employees to work long hours in an on-site office and distribute rewards accordingly (Major et al., 2002). This concept underlies the Results Only Work Environment program (ROWE: Ressler & Thompson, 2008), which encourages employees to 'do whatever they want, whenever they want, as long as the work gets done'. Quasi-experimental research evaluating the impact of a ROWE initiative at a large consumer products company suggests that shifting norms about physical presence at work relates to a reduction in WFC and improved work schedule fit (Kelly, Moen, & Tranby, 2011), in addition to other valuable organizational outcomes, such as reduced turnover (Moen, Kelly, & Hill, 2011).

#### Practical Recommendations

As detailed previously, research on the efficacy of formal family-friendly benefits for reducing WFC and enhancing WFE is a bit disappointing. Nonetheless, there is still a compelling business case for offering such benefits. Meta-analytic research suggests that many types of flexibility-based benefits relate to job satisfaction, performance, absenteeism, and turnover intentions (e.g. Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, & Neuman, 1999; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007), and dependent care supports relate favorably to job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intentions (Butts et al., 2013). Thus, the general work-related well-being of employees seems to improve with use of benefits.

Moreover, there is growing evidence for the impact of family-friendly benefits on firm financial indicators (cf. Kelly et al., 2008). For example, Clifton and Shepard (2004) created a family-friendly index based on the number of benefits offered in Fortune 500 companies and found a 1 percent to 3 percent increase in output per employee for each 10 percent increase on the family-friendly index. Similar trends were found in a study of companies in Working Mother magazine's 'The Best 100 Companies for Working Mothers' list (Meyer, Mukerjee, & Sestero, 2001) and in a sample of only Spanish organizations (Martínez-Sánchez, Pérez-Pérez, Vela-Jiménez, & de-Luis-Carnicer, 2007). Shareholder returns

also show an association, as Arthur (2003) found that the announcement of a work-family initiative was associated with a rise in stock prices. It is important to note that these studies are correlational; accordingly, we cannot definitely conclude that the offering of benefits causes increases in firm performance. It is also possible that the highest performing organizations, with continually increasing stock prices, are those that actually have the financial resources to offer benefits.

To the question of how to maximize the impact of family-friendly benefits on work-family-specific outcomes, the answer seems to lie in informal culture. Altering culture is difficult (Schein, 1985), but one promising avenue to enact change is through training supervisors to be more family-supportive. Researchers from the Work Family Health Network (Kossek & Hammer, 2008) have conducted extensive research aimed at identifying specific behaviors that are family-supportive and developed a training and self-monitoring intervention that helps supervisors increase such behaviors. Research suggests that the training does increase familysupportive behaviors in supervisors and decreases WFC in subordinates. Another auspicious initiative at the team level is titled Predictability, Teaming, and Open Communication (PTO; Perlow, 2012), which requires each team member take a designated night off during the week. As part of the initiative, weekly team meetings to discuss feelings associated with work and non-work are also held. Based on experimental designs in a consulting firm with long hours and previously unpredictable schedules. Perlow found that teams engaging in PTO reported improved satisfaction with workfamily balance as well as increased team communication, efficiency, and productivity. She notes that this initiative received significant resistance at first, but once enacted became very popular within the organization and led to a general cultural shift in views toward work time and work-family management. Finally, Harrington and James (2006) provide a comprehensive description of several prerequisites of true cultural change. Some examples are creating buy-in from top management and having a structural plan in place that outlines specific behaviors that can foster change.

## WHAT CAN GOVERNMENTS DO TO HELP? (AND OTHER CROSS-CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS)

Work and family dynamics are entrenched in the broader cultural, institutional, and economic context in which an individual resides. Although many work-family-relevant facets of society are deeply entrenched (i.e. cultural values), national legislation is one factor that is amenable to change. The World Policy Forum has created the Work-family. and Equity Index by detailing information about 177 countries regarding the types of legislation they offer to support working families, such as regulations on working hours, provisions for family care needs (e.g. parental leaves and breastfeeding breaks at work), and rights to equal pay for equal work (World Policy Forum, 2014). While the US fairs well with regulations involving fairness and discrimination at work and pay for overtime. the country lags behind on laws related to the maximum length of work week and leave around childbearing (Heymann, Earle, & Hayes, 2007). In fact, the US is one of only four nations (along with Swaziland, Papua New Guinea, and Liberia) that does not offer paid maternity leave. In stark contrast, most Nordic and Western European countries have quite generous work-family policies. For example, Swedish working parents are guaranteed 480 days of paid parental leave, and 60 of those

days are reserved for the father. Several researchers have studied the association of national work-family policies, in particular, parental leave, with variables associated with worker and child well-being. When controlling for other relevant economic and social variables, state leave policies are positively associated with actual use of parental leave, length of parental leave, and re-entering the labor force (cf. Boushey, O'Leary, & Mitukiewicz, 2013; Hegewisch & Gornick, 2011), and negatively associated with child and infant mortality rates (e.g. Ruhm, 2000; Tanaka, 2005). Furthermore, the length of parental leave available has both positive and negative implications. On one hand, it is associated with longer duration of breastfeeding and more immunizations in children (Berger, Hill, & Waldfogel, 2005) and increased labor force participation of women (Blau & Kahn, 2013). On the other hand, there is evidence that longer leaves relate to a larger gender pay gap and greater gender segregation of occupations, given that women are the primary takers of leave (cf. Galtry & Callister, 2005). Moreover, nations differ in the aid they give in relation to quality childcare, lack of which has been cited as a major barrier to women's workforce participation (OECD, 2007).

Beyond legislation, researchers have cited the importance of values within a culture to work-family outcomes. A commonly studied value is individualism/collectivism, defined as the extent that people in a culture primarily look after their own interests and those of their immediate family versus being concerned with group goals related to a larger social network (Triandis, 1995). Despite theoretical reason to suspect that the greater social support present in collectivistic societies should contribute to lower levels of WFC and higher levels of WFE (Powell, Francesco, & Ling, 2009), meta-analytic research (Allen, French, Dumani, & Shockley, 2015) suggests no significant mean differences in work-to-family or family-to-work conflict across collectivistic versus individualistic societies. Only one known study has compared WFE across cultures on opposite ends of the individualism/collectivism spectrum (North America and China), and they also found no mean differences (Jin, Ford, & Chen, 2013).

However, some differences have been observed when individualism/collectivism is analyzed as a moderator between antecedents and outcomes and WFC. Four studies found that the link between work demands and work-to-family conflict was stronger for people residing in individualistic cultures than for those in collectivistic cultures (Jin et al., 2013: Lu, Gilmour, Kao, & Huang, 2006; Spector et al., 2004, 2007), although another study comparing the US and China found the opposite pattern (Yang, Chen, Choi, & Zou, 2000). Regarding outcomes, the link between WFC and domain satisfaction also seems stronger in the individualistic countries than collectivistic countries (Lu, Cooper, Kao, Chang, Allen, Lapierre, O'Driscoll, Poelmans, Sanchez, & Spector, 2010; Galovan, Fackrell, Buswell, Jones, Hill, & Carroll, 2010), although, again, another study found different results, reporting no evidence of a moderating effect (Jin et al., 2013). Overall, it is unclear whether inconsistencies in results are due to the focus on different countries, differences in research designs and methods, or lack of measurement equivalence of common measures across cultures.

Another cultural variable with particular relevance to the work-family interface is gender egalitarianism, or the extent to which a society minimizes differences between the sexes while promoting equality (Emrich, Denmark, & Den Hartog, 2004). Theoretically, it is difficult to disentangle the relationship between country-level gender egalitarianism and WFC without considering gender (Ollier-Malaterre, 2016; Powell et al., 2009). Couples within societies that are more egalitarian tend to have more equal division of labor, which can lead to greater WFC for the couple as a whole (Strandh & Nordenmark, 2006). However, when the division of labor is more traditional, working women should experience greater WFC and men should experience less. This idea was not supported by meta-analytic research using four different operationalizations of gender egalitarianism (Shockley et al., in press). Likewise, Allen et al.'s (2015)

meta-analysis cites no differences in either direction of WFC in samples from countries that score low on the World Economic Forum's gender gap index (Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2012) versus those that score high on the index. Furthermore, research explicitly examining gender egalitarianism and WFE is sparse, but a study (Lyness & Judiesch, 2014) focused on work-family balance in 36 countries found that the discrepancy between women's and men's balance was larger in countries that were less egalitarian than those that were more egalitarian, although results varied somewhat based on the measure of gender egalitarianism employed.

In summary, it is clear that legislation has implications for work-family issues on the national level, such as percentage of women in the labor force and infant health. We know less about how legislation impacts individuals' specific work-family experiences. This is a particularly difficult issue to disentangle given the interaction between legislation, national culture, and the organizational culture. Research in this area has a solid foundation, but as globalization continues and an increasing number of organizations operate multinationally, understanding of work-family issues in various cultural contexts will grow even more critical.

#### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

In 2014, the Work and Family Researchers Network hosted a conference that included a plenary session titled 'A Call to Action: Where the Work-family Research Field Should Go in the Next Ten Years'. The session featured eight prominent work-family scholars, Tammy Allen, Lotte Bailyn, Jeffrey Greenhaus, Joseph Grzywacz, Jerry Jacobs, Susan Lambert, Suzan Lewis, and Mina Westman, who each spent a few minutes discussing their perspectives on the future of the field. In the following section, I have summarized and expanded on common points mentioned by these experts.

#### Person-centric Approaches

Paralleling organizational behavior research in general, most work-family research follows a between-subjects 'levels' approach (Maertz & Boyer, 2011). In this approach, participants judge the extent that they agree/disagree with items intended to represent experiences of WFC or WFE

over a nonspecific period of time. Some researchers (e.g. MacDermid, 2005) have criticized this type of measurement, arguing that it requires a high degree of cognitive work, requiring individuals to simultaneously determine if conflict occurred, the cause of it (i.e. was it work or family that interfered with the other domain?), and to accurately retrieve this information from memory. Additionally, although much information regarding correlates of WFC/WFE has come from this approach, it is not conducive to understanding actual WFC/WFE experiences as they unfold (Shockley & Allen, 2015).

A within-subjects 'episodes' approach is one way to overcome some of the limitations associated with the levels-based approach (Maertz & Boyar, 2011). It involves collecting data from participants as (or shortly after) actual work-family experiences occur. Rather than reporting on the general frequency that they experience WFC or WFE, participants report information about discrete instances (i.e. working late and missing family dinner on a Tuesday). Many research questions can be uniquely addressed with this approach, particularly with regard to decisionmaking processes (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003). Examples include understanding contextual factors that impact how people make decisions in the face of a potential WFC (Shockley & Allen, 2015), understanding if there are compensatory patterns to decision-making processes such that people are more likely to choose work over family after they have previously chosen family over work, studying attributional processes to better understand how people determine if a conflict was work-to-family versus family-to-work, and understanding how, and if, attributions of blame for the cause of the WFC relate to shortterm attitudinal and behavioral consequences. Additionally, researchers have often discussed the role of emotions in WFC (e.g. Judge, Ilies, & Scott, 2006; Livinsgton & Judge, 2008), but they remain understudied. Given the fleeting nature of emotions, they seem conducive to such methodology. Finally, with regard to WFE, studying discrete experiences that people consider enriching could greatly contribute to our nascent understanding of the WFE construct itself. Overall, this is a promising avenue of research that will allow researchers to address many previously unanswered questions.

#### Greater Attention to Study Design

Work-family research within organizational psychology is characterized by mostly cross-sectional,

correlational studies that rely on convenience samples and single-source data (Casper et al., 2007; Lapierre & McMullan, 2016). This has multiple implications for the nature of conclusions that can be drawn from the literature. First, assumptions of causality are difficult to make outside of experimental contexts. Unfortunately, for many workfamily questions, experimentation is simply not possible or ethical, but when feasible, rigorous experimental designs with random assignment should be used. As an example, rather than repeatedly exploring the correlation between telecommuting use and WFC, the literature would be better served by conducting experiments with groups randomly assigned to standard or telecommuting working conditions. Only one known study with this design exists (Bloom, Liang, Roberts, & Ying, 2015). This clearly limits the conclusions that researchers, organizational practitioners, and policy makers can draw. Moreover, it is important that experiments be well-designed. Kossek, Hammer, Kelly, and Moen (2014) provide an excellent outline for designing, implementing, and evaluating work-family and health organizational change initiatives, with a focus on experimental contexts. Experiments need not be limited to only organizational initiatives. Interventions focused on personal efforts for better work-family management through communication, reflection, or mindfulness would also be useful (Kossek, Baltes, & Matthews, 2011).

Second, convenience or snowball samples were used in a staggering 80 percent of workfamily studies published between 2004 and 2013 (Lapierre & McMullan, 2016), making the extent to which findings are generalizable to the broad population of workers quite uncertain. Relatedly, because many of these samples are managerial (Casper et al., 2007) and likewise focus on solutions that are applicable to managerial and office jobs (i.e. flexibility), our knowledge of workfamily solutions for lower-skilled workers is very limited. Given that 68 percent of the US workforce does not have a college degree and 11 percent have not completed high school (IPUMS-CPS, 2009), this is a large oversight. Also, solutions that are embedded within union contexts have been largely overlooked. Although union membership is decreasing in the US, 11.3 percent of workers are still unionized (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013b), and union membership is as high as 67.5 percent abroad (i.e. Sweden; OECD, 2012). Clearly, obtaining nationally representative samples is challenging and costly, but there are numerous datasets that are available for public use within the US and other countries (e.g. U.S. National Study of the Changing Workforce, American Time Use Survey, University of Michigan Health and Retirement Study; Singapore National Study of Work-Life Harmony; Luxembourg Income Study). Increased use of such data will not only enhance the generalizability of research but it can also help make a more compelling case for national policy changes.

#### The Role of Technology

Changes in information and communication technologies have altered the nature of work itself and the integration of work with non-work. The most obvious implication is release of spatial and temporal boundaries surrounding workplace activities. Although there has been a substantial amount of research focused on telecommuting in general. considerably less research focuses on how the specific use of informational and communication technologies (ICT) relates to work-family outcomes (Chesley, Siibak, & Wajcman, 2013). The small body of extant research seems to suggest mixed effects. On one hand, ICT may facilitate work-family management because it fosters communication surrounding family responsibilities (Wajeman, Bittman, & Brown, 2008), and, in some cases, allows employees to be physically located with family while still monitoring work demands (Middleton & Cukier, 2006). On the other hand, use of ICT can create a 'norm of responsiveness' where employees are disparaged if they are not constantly connected (Barley, Meyerson, & Grodal, 2011), and there is evidence that children resent parents' use of mobile devices (Steiner-Adair, 2013). Research that evaluates the conditions under which technology use facilitates or hinders work-family management would advance the field.

Supplementary to the need to integrate technology as a focus of work-family research is the need to better leverage technology as a research tool. This includes using smartphones to conduct person-centric and episodic studies as previously discussed, health instruments to obtain objective and frequent data, and using wearable devices to quantify interpersonal interactions. A few examples of technology to obtain objective health data include tracker devices such as the Fitbit, which records steps taken, distance traveled, calories burned, and active minutes of the wearer, and sleep actigraphs that provides data on sleep quality and duration (see Crain et al., 2014, as an example). Use of these devices can allow researchers to rule out certain confounds, such as common method bias, bringing us closer to causal knowledge.

Another technology that seems promising for work-family research is the sociometric badge.

The device mimics a worker identification badge and contains infrared, microphone, and Bluetooth technology to record speech patterns, an accelerometer to monitor movement, and a radio transmitter to gauge physical proximity of a person to others (MIT Media Laboratory, 2011). The technology has previously been used to examine gender differences in the workplace (Waber, 2014). Employees within two companies in different industries wore sociometric badges for six weeks. No substantial behavioral or collaborative gender differences were observed (the small differences favored women), but in both companies, women were unrepresented at the top levels of management. This data counters many common behavioral explanations for gender gaps and better isolates the detrimental role of cognitive biases. Other potential uses for sociometric badges are to obtain objective data related to family behaviors. Participation in household labor and childcare is prone to overestimation, and this technology could be used to gauge how often family members interact at home on days, for example, where WFC or WFE occurred versus did not occur.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study of the work and family interface is an important topic for many employed individuals. As the workforce continues to change, its significance will only grow. Although there is a substantial amount of previous research devoted to understanding work–family constructs, their correlates, and organizational and governmental initiatives, there is substantial room for additional research to understand contemporary issues as well as micro-processes.

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