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DISSERTATION

MARITAL EQUALITY AND WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND GAINS AMONG DUAL-EARNER COUPLES WHO SUCCESSFULLY BALANCE FAMILY AND WORK

Submitted by

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School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, CO

Spring 2001

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE DISSERTATION PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY SHELLEY A. HADDOCK ENTITLED MARITAL EQUALITY ANDWORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND GAINS AMONG DUAL-EARNER COUPLES WHO SUCCESSFULLY BALANCE FAMILY AND WORK BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

Committee on Graduate Work

Co-advisor

Advisor

Department Head/Director

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

MARITAL EQUALITY AND WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND GAINS AMONG DUAL-EARNER COUPLES WHO SUCCESSFULLY BALANCE FAMILY AND WORK

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between marital equality and work-family gains and conflict for dual-earner wives and husbands who believe that they successfully balance family and work. Using a complex associational design, the relationships between five equality variables (division of household labor, childcare, decision making, emotion work, and relative career priority) and work-family conflict and gains were determined. Many antecedents of work-family gains and conflict have been identified in the literature. As of yet, no study has directly explored the influence of marital equality on partners' experiences of work-family conflict and gains.

This study was part of a larger, primarily qualitative, research project that was designed to discover the qualities of and strategies used by dual-earner couples with children who consider themselves to be successful in balancing work and family. Using non-probability sampling, 47 couples were recruited from Denver and Fort Collins, Colorado. Subjects participated in an interview and completed a quantitative questionnaire.

Findings indicated that wives and husbands contributed almost equally to household labor and emotion work. Both partners reported that wives performed more childcare; wives reported that husbands' careers tended to be slightly more prioritized; and husbands reported that wives had slightly more decision-making responsibility. Findings also indicated both partners reported high levels of work-family gains but also some work-family conflict. Wives reported more gains than husbands, while wives and

husbands reported similar levels of conflict. Using multiple regression analyses, only one equality variable significantly predicted work-family gains for both wives and husbands; for both genders, shared career priority was associated with greater work-family gains. None of the equality variables significantly predicted work-family conflict for husbands and wives.

The findings are discussed within the context of current gender norms and expectations. Couples' tendency to prioritize the husbands' career and place primary responsibility for childcare on the wife is discussed within the context of the "norms of domesticity" that assigns men to the "public sphere" of work and women to the "private sphere" of family. Clinical implications and suggestions for future research are provided.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The years of my doctoral education have been fulfilling, engaging, and challenging. I will always remember this as a time when I relied on the mentorship, support, wisdom, and love of many people. To these people, I am deeply grateful. With their help, I was able to achieve important goals in my life.

I would like to thank my beloved husband, Chris Carrier, whose love and support never waver, whose wisdom is often my best guide, and whose character is outstanding. I would like to thank my mother, Marian Haddock, who instilled in me a passion for learning and has been nurturing me toward the goal of obtaining a doctoral degree all my life. To my beautiful brothers and sister—Rick, Patty, and Scott—thank you for being wonderful friends; my life is so blessed by each of you. I am fortunate to have Barbara Carrier as my mother-in-law and friend; thank you for the many ways you have supported us over the years. I am deeply grateful to have the most unbelievably good friends—Tina Blake and Linette Schweizer—who seem to find every opportunity to enrich my life in what seems like countless ways. I also want to thank Stephanie Fish Pace who grabbed hold of me, stood me up, and led me to myself in ways that truly mattered. And, last but not least, I must acknowledge my companions—Sophia Sacajawea Lewis and Louie P. Lewis—who are constant sources of comfort and joy, and our spirit companions, Joey and Bud.

I am blessed to have Toni Schindler Zimmerman as my mentor, colleague, and friend. What can I say? Thank you for the innumerable suggestions, words of encouragement, laughs . . . everything. I am so looking forward to our future collaborations. Thanks to Nat Kees for faithfully using her feminist philosophy in

advising me and for showing me new and interesting ways to teach and counsel. Thanks to George Morgan for his mentorship and helping me develop a good handle on quantitative methods and analyses. I greatly benefited from all your hard work in developing excellent methods and books for teaching research. Thanks to Sharon Anderson for her valuable input as a member of my committee.

Finally, I would like to thank the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for providing generous support for the research project, "Successfully Balancing Family and Work," of which this dissertation is a part. And, thank you to the three wonderful research assistants that worked on this project, Scott Ziemba, Aimee Rust, and Lisa Current.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The increase in the number of dual-earner couples has been one of the most significant social transformations in the United States over the past four decades. The number of dual-earner couples surpassed the number of "traditional" male breadwinner/female homemaker families by the 1970s (Hayghe, 1990). In 1998, there were over 30 million dual-earner households in the United States—outnumbering "traditional" households by nearly three-to-one (Galinsky, 1999).

The increased employment rates of women have challenged long-held cultural norms about family configuration, gender, and division of labor. The origins of these norms can be traced to the Industrial Revolution. The institution of the family underwent dramatic changes as a result of the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century (Coontz, 1992). As the economy moved from a subsistence base to a monetary one, paid work in the labor force became distinct from non-paid work at home. This new system gave rise to the ideology of domesticity—a gender system that justifies and sustains a separation in the "public" and "private" spheres of life (Williams, 2000). The ideology of domesticity is class linked; poor women have routinely worked outside the home for pay (Coontz, 2000). As an ideology, domesticity often did not reflect people's lives, but it had a powerful influence in shaping cultural expectations and practices that affect the lives of all Americans.

Domesticity became "an entrenched, almost unquestioned, American norm and practice" (Williams, 2000, p. 1), characterized by several defining assumptions. First, it presupposes an ideal-worker norm—an expectation that workers do not have care-giving responsibilities (because they are handled by a spouse), and, therefore, can work overtime, relocate, and not take time off for childbearing or rearing. Second, it holds that men are "naturally" suited for employment and women for relationship maintenance, childcare, and homemaking. In this way, men and women's identities have been informed by domesticity as each gender was assigned characteristics that would make them successful in their respective realms. Third, domesticity produced shifts in child-rearing norms, whereby expectations developed that children need almost constant supervision and stimulation, ideally by their mother.

These assumptions—although being challenged—continue to inform the American economic structure, cultural beliefs and values, and the behavior of most modern couples. For instance, according to Waldfogel (1995), in 1991, women with children earned 75 percent of what fathers earned. Because this pay disparity cannot be accounted for by differences in experience or skills, it likely reflects assumptions that women are secondary wage earners for their families. Additionally, although many women have expanded their responsibilities into bread winning, they still tend to be primarily responsible for childcare and household labor, a phenomenon coined the "second shift" by sociologists Hochschild and Machung (1989).

The changing composition of the workforce and changing assumptions about family configuration have led to a national focus on the conflicts and benefits (or gains) inherent in balancing the competing responsibilities of work and family. In the 1990s,

work-family integration has become a prominent and hotly debated social issue (Ferber, D'Farrel, & Allen, 1991; Friedman & Galinsky, 1992). Holcomb (1998) provided a compelling portrayal of the heated and often politically motivated debate that has raged in the media with regard to working mothers. This cultural anxiety and dissension can be evidenced in depictions of dual-earner couples in the popular media, a primary medium by which cultural norms and values are reflected and reinforced. Dual-earner couples are often depicted as time-crazed and their children portrayed as desperate for parental love while being "raised" by childcare providers (Holcomb, 1998). For instance, in 1997, to illustrate the lead story, the cover of Newsweek showed distorted images of a distressed dual-earner couple; the woman and man are each standing in for hands of a clock while their child looks from afar, longing for attention and affection. These couples, in particular the working women, also are often depicted as selfish, ambitious, uncaring, and materialistic—more interested in their careers than in spending time with their children or one another (Holcomb, 1998). For instance, a recent story in Redbook was entitled, "Who's the better mom: stay at home or working moms?" This story contained the results of a reader survey on the question, "Are working mothers selfish?" The media is also replete with alarming and inaccurate information about the outcomes for children of employed mothers (Holcomb, 1998; Galinsky, 1999). A similar message was conveyed in a recent cellular telephone advertisement featured a working mother spending a day with her daughter at the beach. While the mother is busy receiving business calls on her cellular telephone, the daughter begs and pleads to be her mother's only client for the day.

Holcomb (1998) argued that these portrayals are far from harmless images transmitted by the media, but rather are depictions that have become embedded in contemporary culture and shaped American's collective psyches. For instance, many dual-earner couples—particularly working mothers—experience concern and guilt about their family arrangement (Barnett & Rivers, 1996). Although results of empirical research indicate that this "universal guilt" (Barnett & Rivers, 1996) among working mothers generally is unwarranted, it is a natural response to having one's choices, motivation, and quality of parenting constantly called into question in the larger society (Holcomb, 1998). The influence of some of these beliefs also can be evidenced in national policies related to childcare and family leave, and in the practices of professionals. For instance, Haddock and Bowling (in press) found that many therapists had accepted inaccurate messages contained in the media, which was not surprising given that the sample reported using media sources more often than the empirical literature to gain information about dual-earner families.

When examining the cultural ideologies surrounding work and family, it is important to recognize that gender is not the only relevant variable—class is as well. Lower income women have long been in the paid workforce; societal anxiety emerged only when a large number of middle-class women began entering the workforce. Additionally, as Eitzen and Zinn (2000) argued, it is often the same political groups in American society that argue that women (i.e., middle- and upper-class women) should stay home that also argue that mothers on welfare should find gainful employment. In 1999, a leading work-family scholar, Ellen Galinsky conducted a groundbreaking study, in which she interviewed a random sample of 100 parents and children across the country

about their views about parental employment. One of her findings was that approximately 47.5% of American parents believe that mothers who do not really need the money should not work; and 96 to 99% of parents believe that it is OK for mothers to work if they really need the money. Clearly, social class shapes this debate into one largely about middle and upper class families.

Not only have cultural ideologies been slow to respond to the rise in dual-earner families; so too has the structure and norms of the American economy and social systems (Barnett & Rivers, 1996). In many workplaces, norms continue to be structured around an assumption that paid employees have a full-time adult at home that takes care of all non-paid labor. Americans work an average 47-hours per week—3 ½ hours longer than 20 years ago and more than people in any other country in the world (Coontz, 2000). Despite evidence that they improve productivity and morale, many workplaces continue to resist the implementation of family-friendly options, such as flextime, compressed days, and electronic technology (Galinsky, et al., 1996). Further, because the ideology of domesticity is based on an assumption that women are secondary wage earners to primary male breadwinners (Williams, 2000), their lower pay is justified. According to Waldfogel (1995), family status is a significant variable in explaining the lower pay of working mothers. In 1991, childfree women earned approximately 90% of their male counterparts income, whereas mothers earned 75% of what fathers earned.

In response to these major societal changes in the past two decades, researchers have become interested in the interface between family and work. Prior to this interest, rich conceptual and empirical literatures existed for the realms of work and family, but these two domains of life have traditionally been studied independently. In reviewing the

literature, Barnett (1998) noted that early efforts to study the work-family interface focused on the negative consequences of women working. There seemed to be a general assumption that the world of paid employment would be experienced negatively by and result in negative outcomes by women, children, and families. Additionally, few questioned the assumption that women would simply add the responsibilities of paid employment to those of the home. These assumptions led to concerns of "work-family conflict" (that fulfilling the demands of one role—e.g., paid employment—would interfere or preclude the ability to fulfill the demands of other roles—e.g., homemaking and childcare) (Steil, 1997).

Recently, researchers have begun to identify the benefits of combining work and family for women, men, and children (Barnett & Marshall, 1991; 1992; Barnett, Marshall & Sayer, 1992; Crosby, 1991; Hoffman, 1980; 1989; Marshall & Barnett, 1993, Menaghan & Parcel, 1991; Parcel & Menaghan, 1990; Thoits, 1983; Verbrugge, 1983). Such research has been valuable in challenging some of the prevailing assumptions about women and work. For instance, recent research has debunked the widely accepted assumption that the addition of the worker role would add only conflict and stress to women's lives. Instead, this research has consistently found that the more roles a woman occupies, the better her health and well being (e.g., Barnett & Marshall, 1991; Thoits, 1983; Verbrugge, 1983). Further, studies have found that, in some situations, one role can actually serve as a "buffer" for stress in another role (e.g., Barnett & Marshall, 1992; Barnett, Marshall & Sayer, 1992). It appears that although working women may experience strains due to role conflict, they also experience role gratification and many benefits from combining family and work roles. There also is evidence that children and

husbands of working women also benefit (Hoffman, 1980; 1989; Parcel & Mengahan, 1990; Williams & Radin, 1993).

In addition to being primarily conflict focused, early efforts to identify the antecedents of work-family conflict focused primarily on factors in the work domain that may contribute to work-family conflict, such as number of hours worked, supervisor supportiveness, job demands, flexibility, and autonomy. In recent years, researchers have begun to explore family-related factors, such as number of hours performing household labor, marital quality, and social support. Along with this increased interest in family variables, there has been a growing recognition among researchers that work-family issues are influenced by gender-based assumptions or ideologies. For instance, Karambayya and Reilly (1992) stated, "For the most part, entry of women into paid employment has resulted in an extension of women's roles, rather than a redefinition of gender roles" (p. 587). Virtually all researchers agree that this extension of women's roles has not yet been matched with a corresponding extension of men's roles. Hochschild and Machung (1989) found that husbands' contributions to housework and childcare typically have not taken on comparable levels to compensate for women's increased labor force participation. Several researchers argue that it is this discrepancy in household participation that is largely responsible for the consistently reported finding that wives report higher levels of work-family conflict than do husbands. Other researchers (Barnett & Rivers, 1996) highlight that, although slowly, men are increasing their participation in areas of family life that were typically the responsibility of women.

Need for the Study

Research has documented that many women and men experience work-family conflict and gains. Much evidence exists that work-family conflict is associated with negative outcomes for individual well-being, job performance, and marital and parenting quality and satisfaction. Additionally, researchers have discovered many antecedents to work-family conflict. In recent years, there is a growing interest in family-related factors that might influence levels of work-family conflict, which has led to increased recognition of gender dynamics between couples. Although several studies have explored these issues with regard to division of household labor and childcare, no study has yet explored the relationship between marital equality and work-family conflict. Additionally, because of the strain-based focus of much of the literature, only one study (Marshall & Barnett, 1993) has examined the antecedents of work-family gains; again, this study included only division of household labor and childcare.

What would be the outcome with regard to work-family conflict and gains for women and men if marital partners more equitably shared the major responsibilities of life? Although some research has examined variables that can be considered *aspects* of equality (e.g., division of labor and childcare, and relative career priority), no study has examined the association between marital equality and work-family conflict and gains for men and women.

Problem Statement

This study explored the following research problem: What is the relationship between marital equality—defined as sharing of household labor, childcare, decision-

making, emotional work and career priority in the marital relationship—and work-family conflict and gains?

Research Questions

As listed below, four research questions were tested concerning the relationship between marital equality and work-family conflict and gains. Hypotheses were not posed because there was limited research from which to generate hypotheses. Further, as discussed in Chapter 2, this limited research provided mixed findings related to each question.

1. What are the perceptions of wives and husbands about their relative contributions to household labor, childcare, decision-making, emotion work and what is the relative priority given to each of their careers?
2. What are the work-family strains and gains reported by wives and husbands, and are there gender differences?
3. Is there a combination of equality factors (division of household labor, childcare, decision-making, emotion work, and career priority) that predicts work-family gains better for wives and husbands than any one predictor variable alone?
4. Is there a combination of equality factors (division of household labor, childcare, decision-making, emotion work, and career priority) that predicts work-family strains better for wives and husbands than any one predictor variable alone?

Significance of the Research

In examining the lives of dual-earner couples who successfully balance family and work, this study uses a research tradition (e.g., Gottman, 1999; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995) based on an assumption that solving a "problem" (i.e., difficulties in

managing family and work) is often best accomplished, not by further exploring the problem itself, but by learning about those circumstances in which the problem is not present. Specifically, this study examines the degree of marital equality achieved by successfully balancing couples, and its relationship with the benefits they derive and conflicts they experience in balancing family and work. The study, then, has implications for helping couples who struggle with balancing family and work. This is an important effort given the pressures on modern couples in balancing the many responsibilities in their lives, and what we know about the negative outcomes of work-family conflict for individuals, family relationships, and employers.

Basic Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for this study:

1. Subjects' perceptions of their success in balancing family and work, guided by agreement with five broad statements that define "success," is a valid means of measuring the successful balance of family and work.
2. Marital equality can be defined through five aspects of a couple's relationship—relative contributions to household labor, childcare, decision making, emotion work, and relative career priority.
3. Self-report measures of marital equality and work-family gains and strains are valid means of measuring these underlying constructs.

Delimitations

The following delimitations were made with respect to the research:

The study is limited to the perceptions of dual-earner couples who perceive themselves as successful in balancing family and work. Because of the non-probability sampling

strategy, generalizability is limited. The study was further limited by the time during which data were gathered, which was during 1999-2000.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and definitions were used in this study and are provided here for clarity and consistency.

Dual-earner couple: A couple in which both partners work for pay outside the home at least 35 hours per week.

Successful balance of family and work: Defined by agreement with five statements: (a) The experience of more positives than negatives from the opportunity to fill both work and family responsibilities; (b) A perception of being skilled in balancing the many responsibilities in our lives (e.g., spouse, parent, employee); (c) A perception of creativity in balancing work and family; (d) Experiences of being described by others as skilled in balancing work and family; (e) The perception of having quality and quantity time with your spouse and children, and being mostly satisfied with your performance at work and home.

Equality: The degree to which couples share responsibility for five major areas: household and economic labor, childcare, decision-making, emotional work, and bread winning.

Work-family Conflict/Strain: "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 participation in the family (work) role" (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985, p. 77). Work-family conflict and work-family strains are synonymous.

Work-family Gains: The benefits derived from combining both family and work responsibilities (Marshall & Barnett, 1993).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

To facilitate the reader's understanding of the purposes, design, and potential contributions of this proposed study, I provide some theoretical and empirical groundwork in this chapter. I review the work-family conflict literature, providing conceptual definitions of the main concepts, discussing what is assumed about the prevalence of work-family conflict, and reviewing the empirical findings related to the consequences of and antecedents to work-family conflict. Because only one study (Marshall & Barnett, 1993) has focused on the concept of work-family gains, this topic is less of a focus. Next, I briefly review the equality literature in order to define equality, and provide theoretical rationale for the way in which equality is defined for the purposes of this proposed study. I then review several empirical articles that begin to shed light on the possible relationship between work-family conflict and the way in which couples divide responsibility for major areas of life, including bread-winning, household and economic labor, childcare, decision making, and emotion work.

Work-Family Conflicts and Gains

In general, the work-family literature has attempted to clarify the nature, antecedents, and consequences of managing several responsibilities or roles (e.g., employment, marriage, and parenting). The concept most frequently used to describe the interface between work and family is work-family conflict or strain. However, a new

concept has emerged that highlights the benefits of combining work and family, or work-family gains. To clarify the difference between these two concepts, I review two conceptual frameworks—the "scarcity" and "expansions" hypotheses (Marshall & Barnett, 1993), which focus on the benefits and costs of multiple roles. Then, I review the findings related to the outcomes of managing multiple roles with regard to conflicts and gains. Finally, I turn to a discussion of the antecedents or presumed causes of work-family conflict.

The "Scarcity" Versus "Expansion" Hypotheses

For several decades, the academic and lay populations have debated whether managing several areas of life simultaneously was detrimental or advantageous for women and men (Marshall & Barnett, 1993). Two competing theories have been proposed, which have been referred to as the "scarcity" and "expansion" hypotheses (Marshall & Barnett, 1993).

The scarcity hypothesis maintains that, because individuals have limits of time and energy, additional responsibilities will necessarily create tension and overload (e.g., Coser, 1974). This tradition focuses on the concept of work-family conflict, which Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined as "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 participation in the family (work) role" (p. 77). Three sources of work-family conflict have been identified: time, strain, and behavior. Time conflict occurs when the time demands of one role make it difficult or impossible to fulfill the responsibilities of the other. Such conflicts lead to scheduling difficulties or work-role overload, for instance. Another form

of work-family conflict results when the psychological strain associated with a role, such as anxiety or fatigue, make it difficult to fulfill responsibilities of or enjoy participation in the other role. The third type of work-family conflict arises when the behaviors that are expected in one role (e.g., decisiveness) do not "fit" as well in another role.

The "expansion hypothesis" argues that the benefits derived from multiple responsibilities counterbalance the costs of managing these roles (Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974). The concept of work-family gains, recently coined by Marshall and Barnett (1993), was derived from this theoretical tradition. It suggests that the resources related to work and family responsibilities would contribute to more benefits, such as greater self-esteem, recognition, and more social support. Other studies informed by this hypothesis explore the benefits for women, men, and children of a dual-earner family configuration, which will be reviewed below.

Both the scarcity and expansion hypotheses have received some empirical support. In terms of the scarcity hypothesis, for instance, some researchers have found that demands at work or home, the number of children, inflexibility of work schedule or extensive time commitment to work contribute to work-family conflict (Goff, Mount, & Jamison, 1990; Greenhaus, Bedeian, & Mossholder, 1987; Marshall & Barnett, 1993). Such factors, however, are not found to be significant by all researchers (Hammer, et al., 1997). With regard to strain-based work-family conflict, the quality of one's experience in particular roles has been found to be predictive of role strain (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Burke, 1988; Duxbury & Higgins, 1991). Therefore, negative experiences at work or home can contribute to work-family conflict.

The expansion hypothesis has received support in findings that multiple roles provide individuals with important psychological benefits, such as status, ego gratification, and increased self-esteem (Gove, 1972; Sieber, 1974). Research has also uncovered the "buffering" effect of multiple roles. For instance, healthy family experiences serve as a protection against job stress. When relationships between wives and husbands were good, a poor job had little effect on men's and women's psychological distress. When partner role quality was low, a poor job had a strong influence on distress for both women and men (Barnett, Marshall, & Pleck, 1992). Additionally, there has been empirical support for the assumption that resources will be associated with work-family gains. For instance, social support and less traditional sex-role attitudes have been found to be predictive of work-family gains (Burke, 1988; Marshall & Barnett, 1993).

There is evidence that combining work and family is beneficial to women, their children, and husbands. For instance, for women—across race (Guarnaccia, Angel, & Worobey, 1991; Ross, Mirowsky, & Ulbrich, 1983) and class (Ferree, 1976; Scarr, Phillips, & McCartney, 1989), paid employment seems to be a source of independent identity, increased self-esteem, and enhanced social contacts (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Coleman, Antonucci, Adelmann, & Crohan, 1987; Thoits, 1983). Employed mothers suffer from less depression and anxiety and report higher levels of well-being than nonemployed mothers.

Other studies have focused on the benefits to children when their mothers work (i.e., Hoffman, 1980; 1989; Parcel & Mengahan, 1990; Williams & Radin, 1993), the most obvious of which is economic security. In fact, about 60% of working moms are

married to men who earn less than $15,000 (Women's Bureau, U.S Department of Labor, 1995). When 52% of marriages end in divorce, a woman's economic viability is critical for maintaining the long-term well being of children. Additionally, Hoffman (1989), for example, found that girls with working moms score better on social adjustment tests, do better in school, and have more professional accomplishments. She also found that children with working moms tend to be more independent and have more flexible attitudes about male and female roles. Further, the complexity of mother's responsibilities at work has been positively associated with verbal intelligence in children (Parcel & Menaghan, 1990) and an improved home environment (Menaghan & Parcel, 1991).

Although less often recognized, husbands in dual-earner families also benefit. In many situations, the wives' additional income reduces economic pressures on her husband. Without her income, the husband may have to work longer hours or maintain two jobs in order to support the family. Further, as a society, we are recognizing the importance of fathers being more involved in their children's lives. As marital partners share economic responsibilities for the family, it is reasonable to assume that many fathers will have more time and emotional energy to invest in parenting (Schwartz, 1994).

In the study of the work-family interface, it is important to examine both the conflicts and gains inherent in balancing work and family. Several researchers maintain the validity of both hypotheses, arguing that multiple roles can be both sources of fulfillment and of strain (Crouter, 1984; Gerson, 1985). However, due to widely accepted assumptions that women would experience the additional role of worker as

negative, most research to date focuses on the concept of work-family conflict. Recent research has begun to broaden this focus, offering us a more accurate understanding of the outcomes for women, men, and children when both partners are employed.

The Prevalence of Work-Family Conflict and Gains

In general, the literature seems to presuppose that work-family conflict is a common occurrence. Several studies have supported this presupposition. For instance, Wortman, Biernat, & Lang (1991) found that over 75% of their sample of married female professionals reported experiencing work-family conflict every day. Similarly in their random sample of 300 couples, Marshall and Barnett (1993) found that 75% of women and men reported strain in combining work and parenting roles. And, finally, in a random, national sample of American workers, Galinsky, Bond, and Friedman (1996) found that 58% of parents reported at least some conflict.

However, several researchers (Gerson, 1985; Marshall & Barnett, 1993) have emphasized that work-family conflict is not inevitable. Marshall and Barnett (1993) point out that more than a quarter of the men and women in their sample reported no work-family strains. Additionally, over two-thirds of these individuals reported that combining work and parenting had definite gains, including making them better parents. The majority of these men and women agreed that there are strong benefits to combining work and family roles, and that the benefits outweighed the costs.

The evidence with regards to gender differences in the experience of work-family conflict and gains is mixed. Many researchers (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Googins & Burden, 1987; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991; Hall, 1992; Marshall & Barnett, 1993; Wiersma & Van Den Berg, 1991; Wolcott, 1994;Yogev, 1982), but not all (Greenhaus et

al., 1987; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, Granrose, Rabinowitz, and Beutell, 1989; Pleck, 1985; Schwartzberg & Dytell, 1996), have found that women reported significantly more work-family conflict than did men. According to Livingston and Burley (1991), this disparity in findings may be a function of several factors, including differences in the nature of the sample, time of data collection, and assessment device. Scholars who have found gender differences have proposed several explanations. First, research has consistently demonstrated that women perform the bulk of domestic chores and childcare (e.g., Williams, 2000), which may result in higher work-family conflict for women. Second, women have been socialized to feel responsible for maintaining the well being of their family members, leaving them susceptible to absorbing most of the tensions generated by work-family conflict in order to preserve domestic harmony (Voydanoff & Kelly, 1984). Given the changing role of women, they may also feel guilty or distressed about their difficulties or inability to "do it all." With regard to gender differences in the experience of work-family gains, the only study to examine this concept (Marshall & Barnett, 1993) found that women report significantly more gains than do men.

Although gender differences have not been consistently found, the majority of studies confirm that work-family conflict is higher for parents than nonparents. In their random, national of thousands of American workers, Galinsky, Bond, and Friedman (1996) found that, compared with 42% of nonparents, 58% of parents reported at least some conflict. Several researchers (Barling, 1986; Googins & Burden, 1987; Greenberger, Goldberg, Hamill, O'Neil, & Payne, 1989; Weigel, Weigel, Berger, Cook, & DelCampo, 1995), but not all (Schwartzberg & Dytell; 1996) have found that

employed mothers reported significantly greater work-family conflict than employed fathers.

Age of children has been found to be a significant factor with regards to the work-family conflict of employed parents. Employed parents of preschool age children have been found to report significantly greater work-family conflict than employed parents of older children (Higgins, Duxbury, & Lee, 1994; Hughes, Galinsky, & Morris 1992). Higgins, Duxbury, and Lee (1994) found that women had higher levels of work-family conflict than did men in the early years of parenting and similar levels when their children reach age 13.

Consequences of Work-Family Conflict

Several researchers have examined work-family conflict as an independent variable (e.g., Burke, 1988; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1991, 1992; Googins & Burden, 1987; Menaghan & Parcel, 1990), examining the potential outcomes of work-family conflict. Although much of this research has been non-experimental and cross-sectional, precluding predictive ability, assumptions about the consequences of work-family conflict can be made. Consistency of findings allows greater confidence in these assumptions.

Most research related to the outcomes of work-family conflict has been generated from the "scarcity" model. Therefore, most of this research focuses on the negative outcomes of balancing work and family--commonly operationalized as work-family conflict. However, research has also demonstrated strong support for the "expansion" hypothesis. That is, it is clear that occupying multiple roles provides individuals with important psychological benefits, such as status, ego gratification, and increased self-

esteem (Gove, 1972; Sieber, 1974). And, at least one major study found that the majority of employed parents believe that the benefits of balancing work and family outweigh the costs.

Research findings related to the negative outcomes of work-family conflict can be organized in three major categories— those pertaining to one's personal life, health, and well being, and those related to the realms of work and family. With regards to personal health and well-being, work-family conflict has been associated with decreased mental health and psychological well-being (Barnes & Farrell, 1994; Burke, 1993; Coverman, 1989; Frone et al., 1992, 1996; Hughes & Galinsky, 1994; Parasuraman, Greenhaus & Granrose, 1992; Sears & Galmbos, 1992); life dissatisfaction (e.g., Bedeian, Burke & Moffett, 1988; Rice, Frone, & McFarlin, 1992); poorer physical health (Burke, 1988; Frone et al., 1992; Thomas & Ganster, 1995), including psychosomatic symptoms (Burke, 1988), a higher likelihood of engaging in negative life style behaviors (Burke, 1988), and increased cardiovascular disease risk factors among women (Dixon, Dixon, & Spinner, 1991); and decreased well-being, defined as depression, decreased health and energy, and lower life satisfaction (Googins and Burden, 1987; Sekaran, 1985). In a longitudinal study of relations of work-family conflict to self-report and objective cardiovascular health outcomes, Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1997) found that work-family conflict is related to elevated levels of depression and poor physical health, to incidence of hypertension, and elevated levels of heavy alcohol consumption.

Family-related outcomes that have been found to be associated with work-family conflict are family distress (Frone et al., 1992); poorer marital adjustment, quality, and satisfaction (Barling, 1986; Blair & Johnson, 1992; Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, &

Wethington, 1989; Hughes, Galinsky, & Morris (1992); Vannoy & Philliber, 1992); higher levels of marital hostility and less marital warmth and supportiveness (Matthews, Conger, & Wickrama, 1996); marital tension (Hughes, Galinsky, & Morris, 1992); quality of parenting (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Pleck, 1985); more difficulty in parent-child relationships (Small & Riley,1990); increased number of family crises (Rogers, 1985); compromised family performance and more withdrawal (Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997); and less family satisfaction and cohesion (Weigel et al., 1995).

With regard to outcomes for the realm of work, work-family conflict has been found to be associated with less satisfaction with one's job (Burke, 1988; Googins & Burden, 1987), a greater intention to leave one's job and decreased organizational commitment (Burke, 1988; Wiley, 1987), greater psychological burnout (Burke, 1988; Voydanoff, 1987), work alienation (Burke, 1988), work withdrawal (Frone, Yardley, and Markel, 1997), reduced work performance and productivity (Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Pleck, 1985), absenteeism (Crouter, 1984; Googins & Burden, 1987), quality of work life (Higgins et al., 1994), and job distress (Frone et al, 1992). In a meta-analysis of the organizational role conflict literature, Jackson and Schuler (1985) found that role conflict was significantly correlated with reduced job satisfaction, higher levels of tension, reduced levels of commitment, and a propensity to leave.

Antecedents of Work-Family Conflict

As described above, Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) proposed three sources of work-family conflict: time-, strain-, and behavior-based conflict. Sources of work-family conflict include any role characteristic that affects a person's time, involvement, strain, or

behavior in another role. Time-based conflict is related to the structural dimensions of a role, such as schedule flexibility, number of hours worked, and number of children. Strain-based conflict refers to the psychosocial aspects of a role, such as anxiety, stress, or burnout, and the quality of the role, such as control of work schedule, marital happiness, or social support at work or home. Behavior-based conflict results from incompatibilities between expectations for behavior of one role and those of another. The literature to date has primarily investigated time- and strain-based conflict. Measures of behavior-based conflict have yet to be proposed (Loerch, Russell, & Rush, 1989).

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) proposed that work-family conflict may originate from both the work and family domains, and that both domains may produce time- and strain-based antecedents of conflict. Thus far, most research has focused on documenting the impact of work domain antecedents on work-family conflict. Less attention has been devoted to examining the impact of family domain variables on work-family conflict.

Work domain antecedents. Research has demonstrated that structural work demands, such as the amount of work time and the scheduling of the work week are related to difficulties associated with work-family coordination (Voydanoff, 1987). Individuals who work long weeks are more likely to report higher work-family conflict (Blair, 1993; Keith & Schafer, 1980; Voydanoff, 1987; Voydanoff & Kelly, 1984). Employed parents working afternoon, evening, and irregular shifts experienced greater schedule incompatibility between work and family life (Staines & Pleck, 1983).

With regard to strain-based conflict, among the factors that recur as significant are levels of supervisor support, autonomy, schedule control, task complexity, demands, more workplace cultures, and availability and use of family-friendly benefits. These

factors are those that influence the *quality* of the work experience. Several researchers have found that supervisor support is strongly correlated with lower levels of work-family conflict (e.g., Thomas & Ganster, 1995) for employed parents. Greenberger et al., (1989) found that employed married mothers of preschoolers reported lower levels of role stain if they perceived their immediate supervisors as flexible regarding family responsibilities. Goff et al. (1990) found that employed parents of preschoolers reported lower levels of work-family conflict if they perceived their supervisors as willing to discuss family-related problems and flexible when family emergencies arise.

In their large random sample of employees, Galinsky, Bond, and Friedman (1996) found that greater autonomy, more schedule control, fewer demands, and greater security were negatively associated with work-family conflict. They found that employees with more supportive workplace cultures and opportunities for job advancement that were not inhibited by gender or race also perceived less work-family conflict. Similarly, Adams and Jex (1999) recently found that workers who perceive themselves as having greater control over their time experience lower levels of work-family conflict. Jones and Butler (1980) found a negative relationship between task challenge and work-family conflict. Greenhaus et al. (1989) found strong evidence linking work role stress, especially role overload and role ambiguity, to work-family conflict for both women and men. Work that is demanding or not rewarding may increase the chances of work-family conflict, whereas work felt to be rewarding may reduce the chances of strain (Hughes, Galinsky, & Morris, 1992; Piotkowski, 1979). Finally, Warren and Johnson (1995) found that the use family-oriented benefits was associated with lower work-family conflict. It is clear

that the quality of the work role and the degree to which individuals can control their work schedule and tasks significantly influences their experience of work-family conflict.

Family domain antecedents. Time-based factors in the family domain are those that require a person to spend large amounts of time in family activities. Factors that significantly contribute to work-family conflict include the presence of children, especially younger children (Greenhaus & Kopelman, 1981; Hall, 1992); the number of hours a spouse works per week (Beutell & Greenhaus, 1982); and the number of hours spent in childcare and housework (e.g., Googin and Burden, 1987).

Strain-based factors are family variables that may produce strain symptoms of anxiety, fatigue, and tension. Several researchers have found that the quality of experience in the parent or spouse roles is related to work-family conflict (Barnett & Baruch, 1985). For instance, family support and family cohesion (Adams, King, & King, 1996; MacEwen & Barling, 1988;Wiersma & Van Den Berg, 1991) have been found to be predictive of work-family conflict. Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly (1983) and Loerch, Russell, & Rush (1989) found that family conflict is also predictive of work-family conflict among men and women. Additionally, partner's work-family conflict accounted for a significant amount of variance in both males' and females' work-family conflict in a study by Hammer, Allen, and Grigsby (1997). And, finally, Weigel et al. (1995) found that the lingering social stigma of being a working mother also appears to be a strong predictor of work-family conflict for employed mothers.

Antecedents of Work-Family Gains

As mentioned above, only one study has examined the concept of work-family gains. In this study, Marshall & Barnett (1993) found that two-thirds of men and women

report that combining work and family has definite gains, including making them better parents. Additionally, they found that experiences on the job, higher marriage role quality, social support, and less traditional sex-role attitudes were positively associated with greater work-family gains. Variables that were not found to be associated with work-family gains included workload, work role commitment, family income, and division of labor.

Effects of Maternal Employment on Families

One of the central questions related to work-family balance relates to the effect that maternal employment has on children. Despite the normative challenges experienced by some dual-earners, a significant body of literature reports that, in general, in dual-earner families, "the men and women are doing well, emotionally and physically, and the children are thriving" (Barnett & Rivers, 1996, p. 1). Research has consistently reported that mothers' employment in and of itself does not affect the mother-child bond (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1997), does not diminish the influence of parents on children (Fuligni, Galinsky, & Poris, 1995), and does not influence children's assessment of the quality of their mothers' parenting (Galinsky, 1999). As mentioned, many researchers have found benefits of maternal employment for children, a few of which are greater independence and more flexible attitudes about gender (Hoffman, 1989). The effect of maternal employment depends on a number of factors, such as parental attitudes about maternal employment; the income that working brings to the family; the mother's warmth and sensitivity to her children; the quality of parents' jobs; and the quality of childcare (Fuligni, et al., 1995; Galinsky, 1999).

As researchers have begun to understand that "the problem isn't *that* mothers (and fathers) work: It is *how* [they] work" (Galinsky, 1999, p. xiv), a new body of research has

emerged (e.g., Edgell Becker & Moen, 1999; Moen & Wethington, 1992). This research is focused neither on the problems or benefits of dual earning, but on understanding *how* couples describe their adaptive strategies (Edgell Becker & Moen, 1999).

Summary

In summary, research has documented that many women and men experience work-family conflict and gains. Much evidence exists for consequences of work-family conflict for individuals' well-being, their performance as employees, and their experiences as a parent and spouse. Additionally, researchers have discovered many antecedents to work-family conflict. In recent years, there is a growing interest in family-related factors that might influence levels of work-family conflict, which has led to increased recognition of gender dynamics between couples. Although several studies have explored these issues with regard to division of household labor and childcare, no study has yet explored the relationship between marital equality and work-family conflict. Before reviewing the few studies that may shed light on the possible relationship between these variables, I will review the pertinent equality literature, in general.

Marital Equality

Due to various social forces, such as the feminist movement and women's increased labor force participation, more people endorse equality, in intention if not otherwise in action, as an important foundation of intimate relationships than in past decades. For instance, in a recent study of dual-career couples, an overwhelming proportion of participants, both women and men, rated marital equality as "very important" in their own marriages (Rosenbluth, Steil, & Whitcomb, 1998). In addition,

57% of a randomly selected nationwide sample of men and women reported that the ideal marriage is one in which both the wife and husband have jobs and share in the responsibilities of child rearing and caring for the home (DeStefano & Colesanto, 1990). With these changing social attitudes regarding gender, social scientists in the past two decades have begun to explore the way power is distributed in intimate relationships, and the influence of this distribution on the relationship and each of its participants.

What is Equality?

Within this varied literature related to equality, some investigators have studied the concept of power; others the concept of equity; and still others the concept of equality. Each of these concepts, which have proven to be difficult to define, has been measured in various ways. For instance, operational definitions of power often involve measures of influence strategies (e.g., Aida & Falbo, 1991). From the perspective of social justice theory, equity has typically been operationally defined by asking respondents to rate which partner *gives* most to the relationship and which partner *receives* most from the relationship. Equity is defined as a situation where each partners' "inputs" equal their "outputs." The concept of equality has been defined in various ways as well, for instance, as task sharing (Huber & Spitze, 1983), relative say in decision making (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983), mutuality (Steil, 1997), and relative career priority (Steil & Weltman, 1991).

Because this study focuses on factors that influence family/work balance, the concept of equality has been chosen as the independent variable. Compared to the concepts of power and equity, equality pertains more to the way in which couples *share responsibility* for major life areas. The method used for defining equality in this

proposed study was based on the work of two prominent scholars in the area of relationship equality. Connell (1987) proposed a framework for looking at couples in terms of three dimensions: labor, control, and cathexis. Simply put, labor refers to who does what kind of work; control refers to who has authority in a given context; and cathexis refers to who has the responsibility for and work of maintaining emotional connection (e.g., emotion work). Similarly, in her qualitative study of "peer marriages," Schwartz (1994) defined equality as: at least a 40/60 division of household work and responsibility; equal influence over important decisions; equal control over family economic resources and equal access to discretionary spending; and both persons' work given equal weight in the couple's life plan. For this study, equality will be defined as the degree to which couples share responsibility for five major areas: household and economic labor, childcare, decision-making, emotional work, and bread winning. Each of Connell's (1987) dimensions—labor, control, and cathexis—are represented, and the definition is similar to that used by Schwartz (1994).

Equality of Dual-Earner Couples

As mentioned, no study has directly examined the relationships between equality and work-family conflict and gains. However, several researchers have studied dual-earner couples with regard to certain aspects of equality, such as division of labor, decision-say, and career priority. Many scholars have assumed that male power stems from female economic dependency, and thus have hypothesized that women's employment would result in more egalitarian relationships (Hardill, Green, Dudleston, & Owen, 1997; Winkler, 1998). However, this theory has not been substantiated by empirical evidence. Across all methodologies, contemporary marriages, including those

of dual earners, have consistently been found to be unequal (Steil, 1994). There is evidence of a general trend toward couples becoming more egalitarian. For instance, qualitative studies have demonstrated that more egalitarian arrangements are possible, but the nonrepresentativeness of their samples leaves the prevalence of these arrangements unclear (e.g., Hertz, 1986; Hood, 1983). Also of note is that the majority of studies have revealed several positive outcomes associated with equality for both the relationship and each individual partner. For instance, the majority of studies have found that equality is positively associated with marital satisfaction (e.g., Gray-Little & Burks, 1983; Zak, Collins, Harper, & Masher, 1998), marital intimacy, and personal well being and coping (e.g., Rabin, 1994; Steil & Turetsky, 1987). Below, I will review relevant findings pertaining to each of the five variables that together define equality in this study, and draw conclusions about what relationships may be empirically identified in this proposed study.

Household labor. Despite the belief of many working couples that partners of working women ought to increase their involvement in domestic obligations (Ferber, 1982), it is consistently documented that women do the majority of the housework—even when employed full-time (Ferree, 1991). How, then, might a more equitable division of labor influence women's and men's experiences of work-family conflict and gain?

With regards to possible effects on women's work-family conflict, Googins and Burden (1987) found that male parents with employed wives reported spending even fewer hours each week on home chores than men with wives at home. They suggested that this discrepancy in household labor likely contributed to the significantly higher levels of work-family conflict reported by employed women than those reported by

employed men. Other studies have found that increased participation by husbands in household duties results in reduced stress for women (e.g., Blair, 1993). The findings of these studies suggest that a more shared responsibility for household labor will be associated with lower levels of work-family conflict for women. This assumption is supported by other less directly related findings. For instance, several researchers (Gottman, 1994; Hochschild & Machung, 1989; Yogev & Brett, 1985) found that higher marital satisfaction for women is positively associated with increased participation in housework by their husbands. Additionally, there is evidence that women experience higher levels of well being and less depression when husbands share household labor (Ross et al., 1983; Schwartzberg & Dytell, 1996).

On the other hand, a few studies suggest that husbands' increased participation will either not be associated with wives' levels of work-family conflict or that it will be positively associated. For instance, Baruch and Barnett (1986) found a strong positive association between husbands' participating in traditionally female tasks and wives' work-family conflict. They also found that more involved husbands were more critical of wives, and that these wives experienced more doubts about husband's participation. These dynamics, which might lead to marital conflict, may influence women's work-family conflict.

Research findings are less clear with regard to how increased household participation by men may influence their experiences of work-family conflict. The findings of some studies suggest the men's work-family conflict may be reduced and their work-family gains enhanced by increased participation in household labor. First, there is strong evidence, despite assumptions, that men's well being is much more tied to

family roles than to work roles (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Pleck, 1985). Further, Yogev and Brett (1985) found that when men share housework they have a happier family life and are as strongly committed to family roles as women. If participation in housework leads to increased commitment and happiness, overall family role quality is likely to improve. As discussed, the literature suggests that role quality is a strong predictor of work-family conflict and work-family gains.

On the other hand, there is evidence that increased participation in household labor may be associated with higher levels of work-family conflict for husbands. For instance, Googins and Burden (1987) found that male employees who had family responsibilities similar to females appeared likely to experience the same levels of work-family conflict as women. In a study of 31 couples who equally share responsibilities of life, Haas (1980) found that half of her subjects—more men than women—reported the experience of work-family conflict. Barnett (1994) found that men, but not women, experience negative spillover of emotions from family to work. In other words, difficulties at home influence men's (but not women's) participation at work. Barnett suggested that this finding might reflect men's relative inexperience in managing family stressors and in juggling work and family responsibilities. It is unclear, then, how men's increased participation in housework might be related with their levels of work-family conflict.

Childcare. It is consistently reported that women are primarily responsible for childcare and other child-related responsibilities (e.g., Williams, 2000). Even more egalitarian men—who believe they should and do participate equally in child-rearing tasks—were found to take less responsibility for such tasks than did their wives (Fish,

New, & Van Cleave, 1992). Again, it is unclear how fathers' increased participation in childcare might be correlated with women's work-family conflict and gains. Based solely on time-based factors, one could reasonably hypothesize that women's work-family conflict would be reduced by increased participation by fathers. Additionally, because some studies have found that greater childcare responsibility is associated with lower well being and increased psychological distress for mothers (Ozer, 1995), it could be assumed that strain-based conflict would also be reduced. Vandell, Hyde, Plant, & Essex (1997) wrote: "Father care may relieve mothers of some of the stress and worry associated with locating and maintaining difficult-to-obtain infant care. Father care may provide mothers with a psychological boost if the mothers believe the arrangement is beneficial for the fathers and infants . . .. Mothers' satisfaction with their marriages also may be affected. If mothers value father care, they may feel more positive about their husbands when the husbands provide such care" (p. 362-363).

However, there is some evidence that increased participation by fathers might be associated with increased work-family conflict for women. For instance, Baruch and Barnett (1981) found that the more individual time fathers spent with children, the less role satisfaction was experienced by the wife. This finding may be accounted for by women's feelings that they should be able to manage it all; fathers' responsibility for children may be interpreted by her as failure to properly fulfill her role as mother. An equal relationship, however, may offset a woman's sense that she must manage it all.

How might increased childcare responsibility be associated with work-family conflict for fathers? Some authors argue that it seems likely that fathers' emotional well-being and marital satisfaction are affected by the hours that they provide infant care.

Fathers may relish the time spent with their young infants. Marriages may be strengthened if the men see father care as an important contribution to family life (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). At the same time, because father care often occurs in conjunction with both parents being employed and working different shifts (Presser, 1994), like mothers, fathers may be exhausted. Marriages may be undermined if couples lack time together or if the men become critical of their wives (Crouter, Perry-Jenkins, Huston, & McHale, 1987)" (p. 363). O'Neil and Greenberger (1994) found that men who have a lower commitment to work and a higher commitment to parenting experience less work-family conflict.

Decision making. Several studies have found that women typically have more say in childcare and daily domestic decisions, whereas men often have greater say regarding where the family will live, career-related decisions, and how finances are managed (Edgell, 1980; Steil & Weltman, 1991). Using the same measure of decision-making as will be used in this proposed study, Cowan and Cowan (1988) found that men in dual-earner couples tended to have slightly, but consistently, more responsibility for financial planning, decisions about work outside the family, and when to initiate lovemaking, while women tended to have slightly more responsibility for making social arrangements and for deciding about participating in community activities and religious organizations.

How might division of decision-making responsibility influence women's and men's experiences of work-family conflict and gains? For both partners, it could be hypothesized that shared decision making would result in reduced burden and responsibility for individual partners. In fact, Karasek (1979) and Karasek and Theorell

(1990) found that for employed women, shared decision making at home is more conducive for health and well-being than having individual decision control. They proposed that high levels of individual control might be associated with responsibility for carrying out decisions, and this could be a potential burden when perceived as excessive or inequitable. Additionally, couples who share decision making would likely have more opportunities to interact, and thus more opportunities for shared intimacy. High marital quality has been found to be negatively associated with work-family conflict and positively related to work-family gains (Marshall & Barnett, 1993). Alternately, one could hypothesize that, for each individual partner, increased decision-making responsibility may increase a personal sense of control, which has been found to be an important factor in reducing work-family conflict (Larson, Richards, & Perry-Jenkins, 1994). Additionally, shared decision making could potentially result in increased conflict as couples attempt to negotiate decisions, and marital conflict has been found to be positively associated with work-family conflict (Loerch, Russell, & Rush, 1989). It is unclear, then, what the relationship between decision making and work-family conflict and gains may be for men and women, but it seems likely that shared decision making will be associated with lower levels of work-family conflict and higher levels of work-family gains for both women and men.

Career priority. In the past, when men were most often the primary breadwinners, it was reasonable to assume that the husband's career was primary and took precedence over the wife's career. However, since the 1980's, falling earnings for men combined with rising labor force participation and earnings for women have likely affected relative career priority within some married-couple families. Data from the Current Population

Survey show that the proportion of dual-earner couples in which wives earned more than their husbands increased from 16 percent in 1981 to 23 percent in 1996. Regardless of these shifts, several studies have found that the jobs or careers of men in dual-earner couples are more likely to be prioritized than those of women. For instance, Hardill et al. (1997) found that, although both partners in dual-career households attach importance to, and devote much energy to, pursuing their respective careers, in most households men's careers tended to be prioritized. Likewise, several studies have found that women are more likely to be the spouse who subordinates career interests to those of her partner (Holmstrom, 1972; Walker & Wallston, 1985; Yogev, 1982). For instance, in a sample of Karambayya & Reilly's (1992), even though wives were getting established in their careers and husbands were already established in theirs, wives were adapting work behaviors to fit the needs of the family significantly more than their husbands.

There have been two studies that have analyzed relative career priority and work-family conflict. Hammer, Allen, and Grisgby (1997) found that work-family conflict was higher for males when their female partners placed more priority on the male partners' career than on their own career. Perhaps for males, knowing that their career was given priority over their partners' career caused increased pressure to perform in that career. Greenhaus et al. (1989) found that in relationships in which each person regards his or her own career as having a greater priority than that of the partner, strain-based conflict seems to be aroused in men. When each partner thinks his or her own career is more important than the partner's career, it is possible that neither partner accommodates to the needs of the other partner.

Taken together, these studies seem to suggest that equal weighting of career priority may be associated with lower work-family conflict and higher work-family gains for both women and men. For women, equal weighting of their career with their husbands' may preclude having to make as many work adaptations to fit the needs of family. For men, equal weighting of careers may result in less pressure to perform as the breadwinner. For both, a similar valuing of and responsibility to work may result in mutual understanding and compassion for one another's work-related triumphs and struggles.

Emotion work. A concept developed by Hochschild (1983), emotion work refers to the labor involved in enhancing another's emotional well-being and providing emotional support (Erickson, 1993). Previously, studies of couples' division of labor focused solely on the division of household tasks and childcare. Since 1983, researchers have begun to recognize the major—but primarily invisible work—that family members must do in maintaining emotional closeness with one another and the well being of its members. It is typically women who are primarily responsible for the well-being of other family members and ensuring that their husbands and children are happy and healthy (Barnett & Baruch, 1987).

When marital partners share emotion work, how might work-family conflict and gains be affected? A related concept, social support, is a well-researched interpersonal resource that directly and indirectly helps reduce stressors and their negative outcomes (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). According to Kushnir, Malkinson, & Kasan (1996), this interpersonal interaction pattern is particularly important for the successful management of a dual-earner family. Researchers have found that social support from a spouse can

help to buffer the depressive effects of major and minor stressors, including job stressors (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Vanfossen, 1981). There is also evidence that spouse support may be helpful by facilitating the use of effective coping strategies (Manne & Zautra, 1989). Wiersma and Van Den Berg (1991) found that work-family conflict was negatively associated with family climate for both men and women. In this study, items for measuring family climate were similar to those used in this proposed study for measuring emotion work (e.g., "expressing appreciation," "offering emotional support when things don't go right at work"). In several studies, the support of a spouse has been found to be particularly helpful to men in reducing stress and work-family conflict (Schwartzberg & Dytell, 1996). It is also worth noting that Erickson (1993) found that men's participation in emotion work was positively associated with marital well-being and that housework is not associated with marital well-being when emotion work is included in the analysis. Based on these findings, it can be hypothesized the shared emotion work will result in reduced work-family conflict and increased gains for both wives and husbands. If emotion work is skewed in favor of one spouse, it can be expected that the "receiver" spouse will experience less work-family conflict and the "giver" spouse more.

Summary

Historically, the gender-based division of labor dictated that the world of work was the realm of men whereas women were responsible for housekeeping, childcare, and the emotional well-being of family members. The shift from the traditional male-breadwinner/female-caretaker family to the contemporary dual-earner family structure has resulted in new challenges for families. In a social context that is still structured on

the assumption of the traditional gender-based division of labor, individual families are inventing new paradigms for being a family (Piotrkowsky, Hughes, Pleck, Kessler-Sklar, & Staenes, 1993). In this context, evidence exists that, although most families are still organized around a traditional division of labor, there is a growing belief in the value of equality in intimate relationships. Although a slow process, behaviors are beginning to reflect these fairly common values. This study seeks to explore the relationship between how couples choose to respond to this changing environment in terms of degree of sharing of life responsibilities and their success in balancing work and family.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted as part of a larger research project funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, entitled "Successfully Balancing Family and Work." This larger study was designed to discover the qualities of and strategies used by dual-earner couples with children who consider themselves to be successful in balancing work and family.

Sampling Methodology

The sample was recruited from Fort Collins and Denver, Colorado, using a convenience sampling design (Gliner & Morgan, 2001). A variety of recruitment efforts were utilized with the intention of "saturating" these areas to recruit participation of a diverse population (e.g., race, income, and career type). Recruitment efforts included: distribution of fliers (see Appendix A) to parents of children in early childhood learning facilities, preschools, daycare facilities, and public elementary and middle schools; articles in two major daily newspapers; reports on two television news programs; display of posters in a variety of retail shops, family activity centers, and large businesses and universities; distribution of e-mails to employees of large businesses and universities; and distribution of postcards to alumni from a major university and members of the Women's Chamber of Commerce in Colorado.

Upon expressing interest in the study, potential participants were screened during a 20-minute phone conversation to determine eligibility. During this phone call, the

study and its requirements (completion of a 30-minute survey, and an in-person or telephone interview of 1 ½-2 hours) were described. Additionally, it was determined if the couple met the basic criteria for the study.

Couples were considered eligible if: (a) they were married, (b) each spouse worked at least 35 hours per week in paid employment, (c) the couple had at least one child 12 years of age or younger who resided with them at least half of the time, and (d) both partners wanted to participate in the study. In addition, couples were asked to consider if all the following statements were descriptive of them: (a) My spouse and I experience more positives than negatives from the opportunity to fill both work and family responsibilities; (b) My spouse and I believe that we are skilled in balancing the many responsibilities in our lives (e.g., spouse, parent, employee); (c) My spouse and I have found and continue to find creative ways for balancing work and family; (d) My spouse and I would be described as skilled in balancing work and family; (e) My spouse and I believe we have quality and quantity time with each other and our children, and are mostly satisfied with our performance at work and home.

Procedure

Couples were interviewed conjointly for approximately 1½ hours and completed a quantitative survey. The interview followed a semi-structured format, including a broad spectrum of open-ended questions regarding philosophies and strategies that have contributed to the couple's overall success. In addition, questions also investigated personal qualities that may contribute to their success, family and marital closeness, future goals/plans, benefits associated with their dual-earning arrangement, and perceived

gender barriers to successful dual-earning. The majority of interviews—which lasted approximately 90 minutes—were conducted in participants' homes.

The questionnaire included the measures for this study. Participant couples were mailed two copies of the quantitative survey. They were instructed to complete the survey independently and to return it to the researchers in separate envelopes prior to or during their interview. Couples were reimbursed $30 for their participation.

Measures

In addition to demographic questions, seven measures relevant to this study were included in the quantitative survey. Equality in the marital relationship was assessed by five variables: division of household labor, division of childcare, division of decision-making responsibility, division of emotion work, and relative career priority. Work-family conflict and gains were measured with two sub-scales of a larger instrument. These measures are included in their entirety in Appendix B.

Division of Household Labor

An 11-item subscale of "Who Does What?" (Cowan & Cowan, 1990) was used to measure spouses' perceptions of their division of household labor responsibility. This measure was developed for Cowan and Cowan's (1990) research on the changes to marital relationships upon the birth of a first child. It was selected for this study because it is designed to measure perceptions of relative contribution to household labor; other methods of measurement of household labor involve asking subjects to estimate the number of hours spent on household labor in general (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1987), the number of hours spent on particular tasks (Gottman, 1999), and perceptions related to whether household labor is divided "traditionally" or "equally" (Marshall & Barnett,

1993). Six versions of the scale are currently available, including one for couples without children, one for expectant couples, and the remainder for couples with children of varying ages. The version designed for married couple with children of any age was used for this study.

For each item of this sub-scale, individuals indicate who does what (or "how it is now" on a 9-point scale ranging from *she does it all* to *he does it all.* The scale includes household labor items that are both "traditionally female" and "traditionally male" tasks, including "planning and preparing meals," "cleaning up after meals," "doing repairs around the house," "taking out the garbage," "buying groceries," and "paying bills." The measure also requests information regarding how the respondent would prefer responsibilities to be divided. Scores are calculated by summing values assigned to responses. Task sharing also can be computed by computing the absolute difference between "how it is now" scores and 5; an even division yields a score of 0. The higher the score, the greater the role differentiation.

In a prior study (Cowan & Cowan, 1990), researchers reported Cronbach's alpha and Spearman-Brown's split-half reliabilities for all sub-scales of the "Who Does What" measure in the .92 to .99 range. Correlations between husband and wife "as it is now" scores for various dimensions were reported to range from .31 to .66. For this sample on the household labor subscale, Cronbach's alpha was .54 for wives and .61 for husbands. Given the low internal consistency reliability on this scale, it was used only for descriptive and group comparison analyses. Because low reliability results in lower power, the measure was not included in the multiple regression analyses.

Division of Childcare

Because of space limitations in the questionnaire, this variable was measured with a one-item measure, developed for the purposes of this study. One item, "Childcare," was added to the Cowan and Cowan (1990) division of household labor measure, but scored separately. Individuals indicated relative responsibility for childcare on a 9-point scale that ranged from *she does it all* to *he does it all.* Scoring was conducted using the two methods described above for the household labor subscale of the "Who Does What?" measure.

Division of Decision-Making

Division of decision-making responsibility was measured using a 13-item subscale of the "Who Does What?" measure (Cowan & Cowan, 1990). As described above, this measure was developed for Cowan and Cowan's (1990) research on the changes to marital relationships upon the birth of a first child. Again, the measure was selected because it examines relative contribution to decision-making in specific aspects of couple's lives. Other similar measures (e.g., Blumstein & Schwartz, 1987) measure decision-making power globally; for instance, using questions, such as "Who tends to see oneself as running the show in your relationship?" or "Who tends to give into the wishes of the other more often?"

For each item of this sub-scale, individuals indicate who does what on a 9-point scale ranging from *she does it all* to *he does it all.* The scale includes decision-making items that are both "traditionally female" and "traditionally male" tasks, including "deciding how we spend time at home," "deciding about vacations: when, where, expenses," "deciding about financial planning: insurance, loans, taxes, plans for savings, etc," "deciding about initiating lovemaking," and "deciding about religious practices in

our family." This measure also requests information regarding how the respondent would prefer decision-making responsibilities to be divided. Scores are calculated by summing values assigned to responses. Task sharing also can be computed by computing the absolute difference between "how it is now" scores and 5; an even division yields a score of 0. The higher the score, the greater the role differentiation.

In a prior study (Cowan & Cowan, 1990), researchers reported Cronbach's alpha and Spearman-Brown's split-half reliabilities for all "Who Does What" sub-scales in the .92 to .99 range. Correlations between husband and wife "as it is now" scores for various dimensions were reported to range from .31 to .66. For this sample on the decision-making subscale, Cronbach's alpha for wives was .72 and for husbands .77.

Division of Emotion Work

A modified version of Wharton and Erickson's (1995) scale was used to measure division of emotion work. Currently, the only published measure of emotion work, the Couple Emotional Labor scale is a 15-item, 5-point Likert scale where 1= never and 5=always. In a prior study (Wharton & Erickson, 1995), internal consistency has been reported at .91 (alpha).

The scale asks respondents to consider only their own contributions to emotion work. For the purposes of this study, the scale was modified to correspond to the scales for division of decision-making responsibility, division of household labor, and division of childcare. Therefore, the scale asked respondents to consider the relative contribution of themselves and their spouse to emotion work by using a 9-point scale that ranges from *she does it all* to *he does it all.* Some item stems were modified slightly to fit with this modified scale. For instance, "offer encouragement to my partner" was changed to "offer

encouragement to one another." Other sample items were: "confide innermost thoughts and feelings," "initiate talking things over," "give compliments," "be a good friend," and "do favors without being asked." For this sample, Cronbach's alpha was .79 for wives and .86 for husbands.

Relative Career/Job Priority

Relative career/job priority (i.e., the relative priority of a person's career or job compared to his or her spouse's career or job) was measured with one item from Greenhaus, Parasuraman, Granrose, Rabinowitz, and Beutell (1989). The item was slightly modified for this study to include "job" in addition to "career." Subjects were asked to select one of five statements: 1=My partner's job/career has a much higher priority than my job/career; 2=My partner's job/career has somewhat of a higher priority than my job/career; 3=My job/career has the same priority as my partner's job/career; 4=My career has somewhat of a higher priority than my partner's career; and 5=My career has a much higher priority than my partner's career.

Work-Family Gains

A subscale of the Work-Family Gains and Strains scale (Marshall & Barnett, 1991) was used to measure work-family gains. The only existing measure of the work-family gains concept, the Work-Family Gains sub-scale consists of seven items about positive gains from combining work and family roles, such as "having both work and family responsibilities, makes you a more well-rounded person," "gives your life more variety," "allows you to use your talents," "challenges you to be the best you can be," and "clarifies your priorities." The items were drawn from open-ended interviews with 403 employed parents (Marshall & Barnett, 1991). Respondents answer the items on a 4-point

scale from 1="not at all true" to 4="very true." In a prior study (Marshall & Barnett, 1991), Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .85 for men, and .86 for women. For this sample, Cronbach's alpha was .82 for wives and .90 for husbands.

Work-Family Conflict

A subscale of the Work-Family Gains and Strains scale (Marshall & Barnett, 1991) was used to measure work-family conflict. The Work-Family Strains scale includes seven items from Wortman, Biernat, and Lang (1991), which measured the extent to which the respondents experienced contagion or spillover of stress from one arena to the other. For instance, sample items include: "When you spend time with your family, you're bothered by all the things at work that you should be doing," "Because of your family responsibilities, the time you spend working is less enjoyable and more pressured, "Because of the requirements of your job, you have to miss out on home or family activities that you would prefer to participate in." Respondents are asked to answer these seven items on a 4-point scale from 1="not at all true" to 4="extremely true". The Work-Family Strains scale also includes two items that measure multiple-role overload (e.g., "How often do things you do add up to being just too much?" and multiple-role conflict (e.g., "In general, how often do you feel pulled apart from having to juggle conflicting obligations"). The respondents answer these two items on a 4-point Likert scale from 1="never" to 4="very often." In a prior study (Marshall & Barnett, 1991), Cronbach's alpha was .78 for men and .81 for women. For this study, Cronbach's alpha was .80 for wives and .75 for husbands.

Data Analysis

The purpose of the study was to address four research questions. For each research question below, the method of analysis is provided.

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of wives and husbands about their relative contributions to household labor, childcare, decision-making, emotion work and what is the relative priority given to each of their careers? Means and standards deviations for each of the independent variables for wives and husbands separately were determined. To determine the difference between the sample mean and the scale midpoint (which represents equal sharing), one-sample t-tests were performed, and difference effect sizes (*d*) were calculated.

Research Question 2: What are the work-family strains and gains reported by wives and husbands, and are there gender differences? Means and standard deviations for the dependent variables of work-family strains and gains were determined. Paired sample t-tests were performed to determine if there were significant gender differences in the strains and gains reported by wives and husbands.

Research Question 3 & 4: Is there a combination of equality factors (division of household labor, childcare, decision-making, emotion work, and career priority) that predicts work-family gains and work-family conflict better for wives and husbands than any one predictor variable alone? For the final two research questions, multiple regression analyses was performed to determine if a combination of equality factors predicted work-family gains and conflict better than one alone. Analyses were performed separately for wives and husbands. For these analyses, an alternative scoring method was used; to determine the degree of equality or task sharing, the absolute value of the

difference of the summary score and the scale midpoint was determined. This scoring method results in a scale that ranges from 0 (equality) to 4 (inequality). Because of lack of prior empirical research or theoretical development in this area, simultaneous regression was performed as opposed to hierarchical regression (Gliner & Morgan, 2001). To check that the data met the assumptions for regression (Cohen & Cohen, 1983), correlations between independent variables were examined for multicollinearity. Additionally, residual plots were examined to check that the residuals for each relationship were independent, homoscedastic, normally distributed, and contained no outliers.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this chapter, a description of the sample is provided. Then, the results from the statistical analyses pertaining to each of the four research questions are described.

Description of Sample

Forty-seven couples were recruited that met the criteria for the study. Table 1 provides key demographic characteristics of wives and husbands. The table reveals that the sample is relatively highly educated, with all participants having graduated from high school, approximately 83% of wives and 79% of husbands having graduated from college, and more than 40% of wives and husbands obtaining at least one graduate degree. The sample is predominantly (85%) Caucasian. For wives, incomes range from a low of $10,000 to two outliers of above $200,000. For husbands, incomes range from a low of $20,000 to one outlier of $190,000. The mean and median income levels (which are calculated with the outlier incomes included) reveal that the sample in predominantly middle income.

The couples were married an average of 12.59 years (SD = 5.8), with marriage length ranging from two to 26 years. The couples had a mean of 1.96 children (SD =.43), with the number of children ranging from 1 to 3. Children ranged in age from six months to 23 years old, with a mean age of 5.11 (SD = 3.1) years for youngest children, and a mean age of 8.48 (SD = 4.6) years for the oldest children.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Wives (N=47) and Husbands (N=47) of Dual-earner Couples

Characteristic	Wives	Husbands
Age		
Mean Age (SD)	38 (5.5)	40 (6.0)
Range	23 – 48	30 – 54
Racial background (%)		
African-American	4.3%	4.3%
Asian-American	2.1	0.0
Caucasian	85.1	85.1
Hispanic-American	8.5	8.5
Native-American	0.0	2.1
Other	0.0	2.1
Highest Level of Education (%)		
High school graduate	4.3%	6.4%
Some college	12.8	14.9
Graduated college	25.5	34.0
Some grad school	10.6	2.1
Graduate degree	46.8	42.6
Income		
Mean Income	$54,400	64,600
Median Income	45,000	54,000
Range	10,000 – 300,000	20,000 – 190,000

A diverse set of occupations was represented among wives and husbands. Common occupations for wives (with the number of participants engaged in each occupation) were: manager (6), professor (6), lawyer (3), nurse (3), teacher (3), executive (3), financial analyst (2), psychologist (2), sales and/or marketing (2), small business owner (2). Other occupations for wives were architect, computer programmer, construction, engineer, housekeeper, publisher. Common occupations for husbands were:

engineer (6), professor (5), manager (4), sales and/or marketing (4), scientist (4), construction (3), counselor (2), small business owner (2), truck driver (2). Other occupations were accountant, baker, executive, firefighter, grocery clerk, minister, musician, and veterinarian.

Results and Analysis

Research Question 1

The first research question involved the perceptions of wives and husbands about their relative contributions to household labor, childcare, decision-making, emotion work and what is the relative priority given to each of their careers? Table 2 provides the means and standard deviations for each variable. To determine the difference between the sample mean and the scale midpoint, one-sample t-tests were performed, and effect sizes (*d*) were determined. These results also are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Sample t-test Results for Wives (N=47) and Husbands (N=47) on Equality Variables

Variable	Wives				Husbands			
	Mean	SD	t	d	Mean	SD	t	d
Household labor[1]	5.05	.67	.51	.07	5.15	.73	1.41	.21
Childcare[1]	4.55	1.12	-2.75**	.40	4.40	.95	-4.33**	.63
Decision making[1]	4.94	.51	- .81	.12	4.82	.43	-2.87**	.42
Emotion work[1]	4.82	.71	-1.74	.25	4.87	.72	-1.24	.18
Career priority[2]	2.68	.78	-2.81**	.41	3.17	.82	1.42	.21

[1] Scale ranges from 1 (she does it all) to 9 (he does it all), with a midpoint of 5 (we do it equally).
[2] Scores range from 1 (husbands' career much more prioritized) to 5 (wives' career much more prioritized), with a midpoint of 3 (both are equally prioritized).
*$p<.05$
**$p < .01$

The table shows that wives perceive an almost equal sharing of household labor, decision-making, and emotion work. The one-sample t tests are not significant ($p > .05$), and the effect sizes are small (Cohen, 1988). Wives report that they perform more childcare than their husbands; the effect size is small to medium. Wives also report that their husbands' careers are relatively more prioritized; again, the effect size is small to medium.

The table shows that husbands report an almost equal sharing of emotion work, household labor, and career priority. The one-sample t tests are not significant ($p > .05$), and the effect sizes are small (Cohen, 1988). Husbands also report that wives tend to do

more childcare and have more decision-making responsibility than they do. For childcare, the effect size is medium to large, and for decision-making responsibility, it is medium (Cohen, 1988).

To determine the degree of agreement between wives' and husbands' perceptions about their relative contributions to these five relationship areas, two methods were used. First, Pearson correlations were computed for wives' and husbands' scores on each variable. Results are provided in Table 3. All of the correlations are high (.52 to .75) and significant at the .001 level. This means that husbands and wives tend to have moderately high agreement on their relative contributions to these areas of their lives. Note that the negative correlation on career priority also indicates high agreement; because the wording of the item is gender neutral, high scores for both husbands and wives indicates that their partner's career is more highly prioritized. Therefore, agreement would be indicated by a negative correlation.

Table 3

Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Husbands and Wives on Equality Variable Scores

Measures	1	2	3	4	5
1. Decision making	.52***				
2. Household labor		.75***			
3. Childcare			.62***		
4. Emotion work				.72***	
5. Career priority					-.56***

***p<.001

The second method used to determine the agreement between husbands and wives' perception of equality was paired sample t tests. Table 4 shows that there are no significant

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and Paired t-test Results for Wives and Husbands on Equality Variables

Variables	Wives		Husbands		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t
Decision making	4.94	.51	4.82	.43	1.11
Household labor	5.05	.67	5.15	.73	-1.51
Childcare	4.55	1.12	4.40	.95	.09
Emotion work	4.82	.71	4.87	.72	-1.23
Career priority	2.68	.78	3.17	.82	-1.06

*$p<.05$

differences between husbands' and wives' perceptions of their relative contributions in decision making, household labor, childcare, emotion work, and career priority. Again, this finding reflects shared perceptions by husbands and wives of the degree of equality practiced in these marital relationships.

Research Question 2

The second research question involved the work-family strains and gains reported by wives and husbands, and if there were gender differences in these strains and gains. Table 5 shows the means and standard deviations for wives' and husbands' gains and

strains scores. It also shows the results of the paired sample t tests performed to reveal gender differences in gains and strains.

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Paired t test Results for Wives and Husbands on Strains and Gains Variables

Variables (93)	Wives		Husbands		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t
Work-family gains	3.60	.44	3.30	.68	2.73 **
Work-family strains	1.95	.47	1.94	.44	.03

Note: The Likert scales for both variables ranged from 1 to 4, with higher scores indicated more perceived gains and strains.
**p<.01

Both wives and husbands reported high levels of gains and some strain in balancing family and work. Paired sample t tests revealed that wives reported more perceived benefits from combining family and work than do husbands. No gender differences were found in perceived work-family strains.

Research Question 3

To determine if a combination of equality variables (division of household labor, childcare, decision-making, emotion work, and career priority) predicts work-family gains better than one variable alone, simultaneous multiple regressions were performed separately for wives and husbands. Remember that for these analyses, an alternative scoring method was used; to determine the degree of equality or task sharing, the absolute value of the difference of the summary score and the scale midpoint was determined. This scoring method results in a scale that ranges from 0 (equality) to 4

(inequality). Additionally, recall that because of inadequate internal consistency reliability on this measure for this sample, the household labor variable was not included in regression analyses.

To determine if the data met all assumptions for regression, correlations between all of the independent variables were performed to check for the potential problem of multicollinearity. Tables 6 and 7 shows the correlations between all of the independent variables, and between the independent and dependent variables, separately for wives and husbands. Although some variables are significantly correlated between .32 to .38, Cohen and Cohen (1983) indicated that correlations of this size do not tend to be problematic in interpreting regression results.

Table 6

Intercorrelations among Variables for Wives (N=47)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Dependent variables						
1. Work-family gains	--	-.40**	.15	.10	.25	-.36**
2. Work-family strains		--	-.18	.00	-.10	.09
Predictor variables						
3. Decision making			--	.08	.38**	-.02
4. Childcare				--	.27	.10
5. Emotion work					--	.10
6. Career Priority						--

*$p<.05$
**$p<.01$

As an aside, it is interesting to note the correlations between work-family gains and strains for wives (r = .40) and husbands (r = .19). Although for wives the correlation was significant, the variables shared only 16% covariance; and for husbands, the correlation was non-significant. This indicates that the constructs of work-family conflict and work-family gains are at least partially independent.

Assumptions related to the residuals were also examined and met. Specifically, in examining residual plots, it was revealed that the residuals were independent, homoscedestic, normally distributed, and contained no outliers.

Table 7

Intercorrelations among Variables for Husbands (N=47)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Dependent variables						
1. Work-family gains	--	.19	-.01	-.23	-.09	-.39**
2. Work-family strains		--	-.11	.18	.05	-.11
Predictor variables						
3. Decision making			--	-.00	.34*	.20
4. Childcare				--	.32*	.13
5. Emotion work					--	-.10
6. Career Priority						--

*$p<.05$
**$p<.01$

Table 8 summarizes the results of the regression for wives. The table shows that the model is significant, with one variable significantly associated with greater gains—

relative career priority. The direction of this relationship indicates that the more wives perceive their careers are as equally prioritized with their husbands, the greater benefits they experience in combining family and work.

Table 8

Regression Analysis Summary for Variables Predicting Wives' Gains (N=47)

Variable	B	SE B	β
Decision making	.05	.19	.04
Childcare	.03	.07	.07
Emotion work	.22	.13	.25
Career priority	-.25	.09	-.39**

Note. R^2 = .22, R^2_{ADJ} = .14 (F = 3.94, p = .005)
**p < .01

Although the regression model is statistically significant; is it practically significant? There are several methods for determining practical significance. First, the R^2 indicates that the model accounts for 22% of the variability on work-family gains. According to Cohen's (1988) general guidelines, an R squared of this size in our field typically indicates a medium to large effect size. Second, in examining the unstandardized beta (B) on career priority, one can assess the "meaningfulness" of this relationship to the extent that one can see that one-unit difference in career priority (with other variables held constant) is associated with a difference of .25 units in work-family gains, which is on a 4-point Likert scale. This reflects a small but meaningful relationship.

Table 9 shows the regression summary for husbands' work-family gains. For husbands as well, the model is significant, with only career priority significantly predicated work-family gains. The direction and strength of the relationship between relative career priority and gains are similar to those for wives. In other words, when husbands perceive that their careers are as equally prioritized as their wives, they experience more gains from combining family and work.

Table 9

Regression Analysis Summary for Variables Predicting Husbands' Gains (N = 47)

Variable	B	SE B	β
Emotion work	-.17	.22	-.13
Childcare	-.12	.13	-.14
Decision making	.23	.30	.11
Career priority	-.40	.14	-.41**

Note. R^2 = .20, R^2_{ADJ} = .12 (F = 3.37, p = .047)
**p < .01

The model accounts for 20% of the variability on work-family gains, which typically indicates a medium to large effect size (Cohen, 1998). Second, in examining the unstandardized beta (B) on career priority, one can assess the "meaningfulness" of this relationship to the extent that one can see that one-unit difference in career priority (with other variables held constant) is associated with a difference of .40 units in work-family gains, which is on a 4-point Likert scale. This reflects a meaningful relationship.

Research Question 4

To determine if a combination of equality variables predicts work-family conflict better than one variable alone, simultaneous multiple regressions were performed separately for wives and husbands. Because of inadequate internal consistency reliability, the household labor variable again was not included in regression analyses. As described above, all assumptions were examined and met.

Table 10 summarizes the results of the regression for wives' strains. The table shows that the model is not significant, indicating that wives' work-family conflict is not predicted by a combination of equality factors.

Table 10

Regression Analysis Summary for Variables Predicting Wives' Strains (N = 47)

Variable	B	SE B	β
Emotion work	-.05	.16	-.06
Childcare	.01	.08	.01
Decision making	-.22	.22	-.16
Career priority	.07	.10	-.10

Note. R^2 = .04, R^2_{ADJ} = -.05 (F = .96, p =.389)

Table 11 shows the regression summary for husbands' work-family strains. Again, the model is not significant, indicating that husbands' work-family strains are not significantly predicated by a combination of equality factors.

Table 11

Regression Analysis Summary for Variables Predicting Husbands' Strains (N = 47)

Variable	B	SE B	β
Emotion work	.01	.16	.01
Childcare	.11	.09	.20
Decision making	-.11	.22	-.09
Career priority	-.07	.10	-.12

Note. R^2 = .06, R^2_{ADJ} = -.03 (F = .650, p = .63)

Summary of Findings

The results of these analyses indicated that these successfully balancing husbands and wives report almost equal sharing of household labor and emotion work. Both wives and husbands report that wives do somewhat more childcare than do husbands. Additionally, wives report that husbands' careers are prioritized somewhat more than their own, and husbands report that wives' have relatively more decision-making responsibility. Both wives and husbands report experiencing high levels of gains in balancing family and work, with wives reporting more gains. Both wives and husbands report experiencing some strain, with no gender differences in perceptions of these strains. One equality variable—career priority—is predictive of wives' and husbands' work-family gains. When couples perceive their careers to be more equally prioritized, they experience more benefits from combining family and work. No equality variables were predictive of wives' or husbands' experience of work-family strain.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The previous four chapters presented the problem, provided a review of the literature, described the research design and methodology, and presented the results of the statistical analyses used to answer the four primary research questions. This chapter will provide a discussion of the results within the context of the study's limitations.

Limitations

There is no prior research that examines the relationship between marital equality and the work-family conflict and gains of wives and husbands. This study can provide only preliminary and exploratory insight into the relationship between equality and work-family conflict and gains because of several methodological limitations. First, the sample cannot be considered representative of all dual-earner couples. Couples were not randomly selected and, in fact, they were recruited based on their perceptions that they are successfully balancing work and family responsibilities. Second, using a self-report data collection technique is likely to result in inflated or deflated scores on measures, and can only assess subjects' perceptions. Third, the relatively small sample size provides adequate but limited power for the regression analyses, which results in a higher risk of Type II error.

Discussion of Findings

Despite these limitations, the results of this study provide valuable insights into the relationship between marital equality and the benefits and strains associated with

balancing family and work. In this section, the findings related to each major research question will be discussed.

What degree of equality is achieved among couples who perceive themselves as successful in balancing family and work? In testing the difference between the sample means on the five equality variables and the scale midpoint, the results indicate that marital partners in this sample contribute relatively equally to household labor and emotion work. Both wives and husbands reported that wives contribute more to childcare; wives reported that their husbands' careers are prioritized slightly more than their careers; and husbands reported that wives tend to have more decision-making responsibility. Taken together, these data reveal that these couples have achieved considerable equality in their marital partnership. These findings appear to contrast with a considerable body of research that has found that while most modern couples see the egalitarian marriage as ideal, they are not yet able to achieve it in practice (Schwartz, 1994; Rosenbluth, et al., 1998). Although many scholars assumed that women's employment in dual-earner marriages would contribute to more egalitarian relationships (Hardill, Green, Dudleston, & Owen, 1997; Winkler, 1998), this theory has not been substantiated by empirical evidence. Across all methodologies, contemporary marriages, including those of dual earners, have consistently been found to be unequal (Steil, 1994).

How can the uncharacteristic equality of this sample be explained? First, it is important to recognize that quantitative, self-report measures of equality often yield higher scores on equality (partly because of the perception of social desirability) than qualitative, observational measures (Hochschild & Machung, 1989; Schwartz, 1994). Yet, the quantitative findings related to equality are consistent with the qualitative,

interview-based findings of the larger project (Haddock, Zimmerman, Ziemba, & Current, in press; Zimmerman, Haddock, Rust, & Ziemba, in press). When asked during interviews about the philosophies that underlie their successful work-family balance, virtually all of the couples stated a belief that a key to their success was a commitment to marital partnership or equality, and provided many examples of how they equitably divide relationship power, labor, and cathexis (Haddock, Zimmerman, Current, & Ziemba, in progress). Because the quantitative data allows a more molecular (e.g., fine-tuned) view when compared to the more molar (i.e., broad strokes) view of the qualitative data (Cairns, 1979), the quantitative data provides evidence that these couples' commitment to partnership is not just ideological, but realized in actual behaviors. Although the methods and analysis of this study do not allow a conclusion that this marital equality significantly contributes to their successful balance of family and work, it provides preliminary support for the generation of such a hypothesis for future research.

It is interesting to note that the couples reported higher levels of equality in the areas of household labor and emotion work, than they did on childcare, career priority, and decision making. The inequality in career priority is consistent with the findings of other researchers. For instance, Hardill, et al. (1997) found that, although both partners in dual-career households attach importance and devote much energy to pursuing their respective careers, in most households men's careers tended to be prioritized. Likewise, several studies have found that women are more likely to be the spouse who subordinates career interests to those of her partner (Holmstrom, 1972; Walker & Wallston, 1985; Yogev, 1982). It also is consistently reported that women are primarily responsible for

childcare and other child-related responsibilities. For instance, Fish, et al. (1992) found that even more egalitarian men—who believe they should and do participate equally in child-rearing tasks—were found to take less responsibility for such tasks than did their wives. Several studies (e.g., Edgell, 1980 Steil & Weltman, 1991) have found that women typically have more say in childcare and daily domestic decisions, whereas men often have greater say regarding where the family will live, career-related decisions, and how finances are managed. In examining the qualitative data of this larger project, the researchers (e.g., Zimmerman, Haddock, Ziemba, & Rust, in progress) found that women tend to perform the organizational labor of the family. For instance, wives tended to keep the family calendar, manage children's activities, and orchestrate household chores. It may be that this "invisible" organization labor results in couples' perceptions that wives make more of the family decisions.

How can the slightly unequal division of career priority and childcare in this sample be explained? In explaining gender differences that are often salient and a major source of interest in the literature, two general hypotheses have been postulated: the gender-role perspective and the rational perspective (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). Both hypotheses have been supported by empirical evidence, and are therefore helpful in interpreting these findings.

The gender-role perspective maintains that gender socialization prescribes different responsibilities and priorities for men and women. As described earlier, these gender expectations are reflected in the norms of domesticity (Williams, 2000), which hold that breadwinning is the primary responsibility of men and childcare the primary responsibility of women. As concluded by Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) in

summarizing their large-scale research on men's and women's different work-family priorities, these gender norms continue to shape the behaviors of modern men and women. Clearly, the findings of this study support this conclusion; even in a sample of relatively equal couples, women tended to hold more responsibility for childcare and men for breadwinning.

The rational perspective postulates a different kind of explanation—one that is more related to the practicalities of daily life, such as income disparities. From this perspective, one would hypothesize that the couples prioritized the husbands' career relatively more (and therefore wives compensated by taking more responsibility for childcare) because husbands' incomes are higher than the wives'. To test this assertion, I conducted a correlation between income differential and career priority, and found a low, non-significant correlation for both women ($r = .25$, $p = .093$) and men ($r = .23$, $p = .117$). Therefore, the hypothesis generated from the rational perspective was not supported. It may be, then, that while these couples have in general been able to resist societal expectations related to division of labor, decision making, and emotion work in their marital relationship, their priorities and behaviors related to career priority and childcare continue to be shaped by powerful social expectations related to gender.

What work-family gains and strains are experienced by couples who perceive themselves as successful in balancing family and work? As can be expected, both wives and husbands in these successfully balancing relationships reported benefits from combining family and work responsibilities. These findings provide support for the expansion hypothesis, which posits that multiple roles may be a source of satisfaction and gains for men and women. The findings are also consistent with the research of Marshall

and Barnett (1993) who found that, even among a random sample of dual-earners, most men and women report that combining work and family has definite gains.

Also consistent with Marshall and Barnett's (1993) findings, women in this sample reported greater gains than their husbands. Several reasons can be postulated for this gender difference. First, as Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) concluded, satisfaction with personal growth for both genders tends to be enhanced when engaging in an aspect of life that has been undervalued in traditional gender roles: for men, investment in family; for women, investment both in career and personal development. Second, because of traditional gender socialization that assigns men primary responsibility for breadwinning, men may be more likely to look to their career more for financial gain than other intrinsic gains. For instance, Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) found that while women value work more for self-expression, personal development, and the challenge of increasingly stimulating tasks, men are more concerned with attaining a sound financial base. Third, as proposed by the expansion hypotheses, it may be that women's work role enhances their family relationships by buffering them from stress in the home role. For example, for a woman experiencing difficulties with a child's behavior, positive work experiences actually may buffer her from stress related to parenting. And, finally, from a feminist perspective, it may be that women's economic contributions allow them to create a more egalitarian partnership with their husbands, which has been found to enhance individual well being (Steil, 1994) and marital quality (Gottman, 1999; Schwartz, 1994).

It is also interesting to note that both men and women in these successfully balancing couples still experience some strain in balancing the many responsibilities in

their lives. Therefore, the findings provide support for the scarcity hypothesis as well. Sample means for both women and men indicated low to moderate levels of strain. These couples' perceptions of success in balancing, then, do not translate simply to an experience of ease or lack of conflict. In fact, it can be argued that success in balancing will necessarily involve some degree of strain as these couples are engaged actively in both the work and family domains of life (Barnett, personal communication). Their commitment to both the work and family realms likely results in conflict when competing demands in responsibilities surface in daily life.

Of particular interest in this context is that these wives and husbands reported similar levels of work-family strain. While a few studies have found no gender differences in work-family strains, the majority of studies have documented significant gender differences. These gender differences are most often explained by wives' higher involvement in the family role vis a vis their husbands. It may be that, because the couples in this sample had achieved a relatively high degree of equality in their relationship, each being almost as involved as the other in both work and family life, they experience similar levels of strain. This conclusion is consistent with the research of Googins and Burden (1987), who found that male employees who had family responsibilities similar to females appeared likely to experience the same levels of work-family conflict as women.

As noted in Tables 6 and 7, the correlations between gains and strains for women and men were small, indicating that the constructs are at least partially independent. For husbands, the correlation was non-significant. For wives, the correlation of -.40 reflects a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988). Marshall and Barnett (1993) also found small

correlations between gains and strains in their random sample of dual earners. These findings provide evidence that both the expansion and scarcity hypotheses are valid—even with couples who perceive themselves as successfully balancing family and work. This conclusion is consistent with current arguments in the field (e.g., Barnett & Rivers, 1997; Galinsky, 1999; Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000); many scholars argue that work-family researchers need to move from an either/or position about the benefits and drawbacks of work-family balance to a both/and position. In other words, in analyzing findings across studies in the literature, these scholars have come to the conclusion that combining family and work is *both* beneficial *and* a source of strain.

How can the gender differences in the strength of the correlations between gains and strains be explained? It may be that because women tend to experience a "universal" experience of guilt about working because of significant public scrutiny (Barnett & Rivers, 1996), women may tend to more easily lose sight of the benefits of working when their conflict is high. For instance, if a woman is in a "high conflict" time, she may experience concern and guilt about her abilities to effectively balance family and work. This may cause her to experience work as the "cause" of these problems, and she may experience the work-related benefits she derives from work as "selfish"—a common theme in the media (Holcomb, 1998).

What is the relationship between equality and work-family gains for couples who perceive themselves as successful in balancing family and work? Only one equality variable, relative career priority, was associated with work-family gains for both wives and husbands. Although the lack of significant findings related to the other variables

may be due to weak statistical power, it is important to generate other hypotheses for understanding these findings.

Because no prior research has examined the relationship between equality—broadly defined—and gains, this research provides only indirect guidance in interpreting these results. However, one study (Marshall & Barnett, 1993) included division of household labor and childcare as two of several variables in a regression on work-family gains. They also found that division of household labor and childcare did not significantly predict work-family gains.

In understanding why relative career priority was a significant predictor while the other variables were not, the findings of Freidman and Greenhaus (2000) might provide some insight. Although they did not study the predictors of work-family gains specifically, they did examine predictors of related constructs, such as job satisfaction. They found that work-related experiences such as psychological involvement, greater authority, more developmental job assignments are much more important than family factors like marital and parental relationship quality in predicting job satisfaction. In fact, they quantified how much more predictive work-related factors were than family factors, stating that work-related experiences are roughly 15 times more important in determining job satisfaction than family factors. It may be, then, that because career priority is more closely related to the work realm than the other factors, it has more power for predicting the benefits derived from work

Why might equal sharing of career priority be associated with higher work-family gains? As postulated by Hammer et al. (1997), it may be that when couples equally prioritize one another's careers, they have a greater understanding of each other's needs

and aspirations, provide support to each other, adjust their expectations regarding each other's role involvements and develop a system of mutual accommodation. It also may be that equal prioritizing of careers allows each partner to invest fully in both work and family roles, which has been associated with greater benefits from both realms (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000).

Women and men may experience fewer non-financial benefits from working when their career is relatively more prioritized because they feel the additional burden of breadwinning. In this situation, partners might have more of a tendency to look at their jobs as something they have to do for financial reasons, and that they have to succeed at financially, thus focusing less on intrinsic benefits and more on financial aspects of their job. On the flip side, if a partner's career is not as highly prioritized as their partner's, they may get less support from their spouse for work-related stress and/or less encouragement to succeed and/or invest in work. They also may focus more on family in compensation for their partner's focus on work, thereby receiving more gains from the family than the work role. In summary, for women, equal weighting of their career with their husbands' may preclude having to make as many work adaptations to fit the needs of family. For men, equal weighting of careers may result in less pressure to perform as the breadwinner. For both, a similar valuing of, and responsibility to, work may result in mutual understanding and compassion for one another's work-related triumphs and struggles.

What is the relationship between equality and work-family strains for couples who perceive themselves as successful in balancing family and work? No equality variables were found to be predictive of work-family conflict for women or men. Again,

the lack of significant findings may be the result of weak statistical power, given the small sample size. However, it is important to consider other explanations for the null relationship between equality and work-family conflict. As discussed above, in designing this research study, I was unable to generate hypotheses about the relationship between each equality variable and work-family conflict because the findings of prior research are contradictory. For instance, while some research (e.g., Blair, 1993) found that increased participation of husbands in domestic labor resulted in reduced conflict for wives, others (e.g., Baruch & Barnett, 1986) found that it resulted in increased conflict. Additionally, some researchers (e.g., Yogev & Brett, 1985) have postulated that men's increased participation in household labor resulted in less work-family conflict for husbands, while others (e.g., Googins & Burden, 1987) found higher levels of conflict for men who participate more in household labor.

The findings of this study and the inconsistent findings of other studies may be explained by considering the different *sources* of work-family conflict, proposed by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). As discussed above, they proposed three kinds of conflict: time-based conflict, which occurs when the time demands of one role make it difficult or impossible to fulfill the responsibilities of the other; strain-based conflict, which results when the psychological strain associated with a role, such as anxiety or fatigue, make it difficult to fulfill responsibilities of, or enjoy participation in, the other role; and behavior-based conflict, which arises when the behaviors that are expected in one role (e.g., decisiveness) do not "fit" as well in another role (e.g., marital relationship).

When spouses contribute relatively equally to various aspects of family life, they may experience increases in one form of conflict and decreases in another. When

conflict is operationally defined in global terms—without accounting for the different kinds of conflict—as it was for this study, the relationship may "wash out." For instance, it may be that when spouses share household labor, the wife experiences reduced time-based conflict (because she has less work to complete) but she may experience more strain-based conflict (because she experiences tension or guilt about not handling these traditionally female tasks herself, or because she has to negotiate task completion and quality with her husband). For the equally sharing husband, he may experience more time-based conflict (because he has more work to complete), but less strain-based conflict (because his participation allows him to feel like a more valued, involved member of the family, and because his marital satisfaction increases). In other words, overall strain may remain about the same—as one kind of strain increases and another decreases.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the results of this study, the following recommendations for further research are suggested:

1. As mentioned, this study examined the concept of work-family conflict generally. It did not differentiate the different *sources* of work-family conflict that have been proposed by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985): time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behavior-based conflict. In future research related to the relationship between relationship equality and work-family conflict, researchers should measure the various kinds of work-family conflict separately.

2. This study examined the relationship between marital equality and work-family conflict and gains in a population that perceives themselves as successful at balancing family and work. Given the relatively high degree of equality in this sample, it is reasonable to hypothesize a relationship between marital equality and successful work-family balance. However, this study does not directly examine this relationship. Future research could directly examine the relationship between marital equality and success in balancing family and work.

3. The couples in this sample were predominately White, highly educated, and middle-income. The findings of this study then can not be generalized to more general populations. This study should be replicated with a other populations of couples, including gay and lesbian couples, racial minority couples, and those of lower-income status. Ideally, the study should be replicated with a larger, random sample of dual-earner couples.

Clinical Implications for Working With Dual-Earner Couples with Children

Given the limitations of this study, clinical implications from this research must be formulated tentatively. However, both general and specific recommendations are relevant.

In general, it is critically important for therapists who work with dual-earner couples to be knowledgeable of the empirical literature for at least three reasons. First, given the polarized societal discourse, there is a significant amount of misinformation on the topic of dual earning and work-family balance. Knowledge of the literature allows therapists to analyze critically societal messages and their own preconceptions about

dual-earner families. Many pieces of "popular wisdom" have been disputed by research. For instance, the common belief that children of dual-earner couples enjoy less time, attention, and commitment from their parents has been disputed by empirical evidence (see Galinsky, 1999). In fact, children enjoy more time with their employed parents than they did 20 years ago; the number of hours a parent works per week is not related to the amount of time they report spending with their children; and children of employed mothers are just as likely to report having enough time with their mother than are those of stay-at-home mothers. A therapists' acceptance of misconceptions about dual-earners (e.g., the children do not have enough time with their parents) may lead to misguided assessments and ill-conceived interventions.

Second, possessing accurate information also allows therapists an opportunity to educate their dual-earner clients on these findings, particularly those who have internalized gender stereotypes from the larger culture. In this way, therapists can play an active and critical role in helping working parents examine these messages, which is essential in efforts to release unjustified guilt and/or make decisions about how one's family will balance family and work.

Third, the empirical literature can guide therapists in making informed suggestions designed to assist the couple in improving their ability to manage their multiple responsibilities. In this way, therapeutic conversations do not get mired in potentially unrealistic conversations about should the client work or not; instead, therapist and client can also consider changes to the *way* the client works. Many resources are available that provide accurate information about dual-earner families and offer valuable suggestions, such as Galinsky (1999), Haddock, Zimmerman, Ziemba, and Current (in

press), Holcomb (1998), Barnett and Rivers (1996), Deutsch (1999), and Schwartz (1996).

Several specific recommendations based on this research also are relevant. First, in working with couples that are struggling with managing family and work responsibilities, it is important to normalize stress and conflicts related to balancing family and work. This research illustrates that even those couples who feel successful in balancing family and work report moderate levels of strain. It follows, then, that it is important in defining goals for therapy not to equate successful work-family balance with no stress or strain. The findings of this research underscores that it may be unrealistic for many people to experience no conflict or strain in attempting to meet the various responsibilities in their lives. It may be more productive for clients to work to reduce rather than eliminate these strains.

Additionally, given that the absence of strain is not equated with the successful balance of family and work, therapists should ask clients to define "what it would look like" for them to be successful in balancing family and work responsibilities. This line of questioning would assist clients in defining their priorities related to work-family balance and then operationalizing these priorities in their daily lives. For instance, if a client indicates that one of their key priorities is to have quality and quantity time with his children, the therapist can help him to determine (a) what *amount* and *kind* of time he believes is desirable, (b) to what degree his current daily behaviors are in accordance with this priority, (c) how to change his daily behaviors to achieve this amount and kind of time with his children.

Although this research study did not empirically test the relationship between equality and success in balancing family and work, it is noteworthy that the participant couples (who believed they were successful in balancing family and work) were characterized by such a relatively high degree of equality. In interviews, virtually all of the couples indicated that marital equality or partnership was one of the philosophies that they believed was central to their successful balance of family and work (Haddock, et al., in press). This finding is consistent with current research that has established the importance of equality or shared power to the quality of intimate relationships. For instance, Gottman (1999) indicated that sharing power is one of the seven principles essential for a successful marriage. In addition, Schwartz (1996) found that equal relationships enjoy high levels of intimacy and marital satisfaction, surpassing those observed in unequal marriages.

In working with dual-earner couples, it is recommended that therapists assess the degree of equality the couple has been able to achieve in their relationship (see Haddock, Zimmerman, & MacPhee, 2000), assisting the couple in achieving higher levels, if deemed appropriate (see Gottman, 1999; Rabin, 1996). The findings of this research indicate that therapists may want to pay particular attention to how couples share childcare and breadwinning responsibilities. Even these successfully balancing couples tended to have difficulty achieving their goal of equality in these two areas. As discussed, these difficulties appear to reflect the influence of gender norms on the behaviors of couples. Therefore, couples may benefit from consciousness raising about the gender-based values in our society, and how these values may be positively or negatively influencing how they relate with one another. For example, couples can

discuss the influence on both partners when one couple's career is prioritized. They may recognize that the partner more responsible for breadwinning experiences significant pressure in this role, which subsequently "gets in the way" of emotional connection with family members. On the other hand, the partner whose career is not prioritized may experience feelings of being a less valuable member of the family, thereby limiting the partner's capacity to achieve intimacy with one another (Gottman, 1999).

The results of this research indicate that while marital equality may produce more successful work-family balance, it may not result in reduced conflict for wives and husbands. It may be that equal involvement of both partners in both work and family life results in similar moderate levels of strain. Barnett (2001, personal communication) indicated that inequity typically results in low levels of strain for husbands and high levels of strain for wives. In working with a couple to achieve more equality, it may be difficult to motivate husbands to become more involved in family life, thereby potentially increasing their own work-family conflict. One strategy may be to explore the effects of the wives' relatively higher work-family conflict on her, her partner, and their children.

The results of this research also indicate that, in helping couples reap the benefits of dual earning, therapists are advised to pay particular attention to the way in which couples prioritize their careers. This study found that shared career priority resulted in greater gains for both husbands and wives. As discussed, it may be that when couples equally prioritize one another's careers, they have a greater understanding of each other's needs and aspirations, provide support to each other, adjust their expectations regarding each other's role involvements and develop a system of mutual accommodation. It also may be that equal prioritizing of careers allows each partner to invest fully in both work

and family roles, which has been associated with greater benefits from both realms (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000).

Finally, it is important for therapists to recognize that, in working with dual-earner couples who are struggling with work-family balance, solutions may not lie solely in their ability to adopt and implement better philosophies and strategies, such as better time management or present-centered living. Certainly, dual-earners need to be active agents in creating a successful balance of family and work; at the same time, however, it is important to recognize that their agency is limited by outdated ideologies and practices. It is noteworthy that the couples interviewed in this study largely experienced the support of supervisors and work institutions (Haddock, et al., in press). The personal responsibility of dual-earners must be conceptualized within a context of restraints, such as evident in many workplaces—restraints that are greater for individuals in marginalized groups based on gender, race, and class. While couples can strive to be creative, proactive, and flexible in carving out a dual-earner lifestyle that works, their success is likely to also depend on responsive workplaces and supervisors.

Conclusion

This study was conducting during a period of great social change regarding gender norms and expectations. Historically, the gender-based division of labor dictated that the world of work was the realm of men whereas women were responsible for housekeeping, childcare, and the emotional well-being of family members. The shift from the traditional male-breadwinner/female-caretaker family to the contemporary dual-earner family structure has resulted in new challenges for families. In a social context that is still structured on the assumption of the traditional gender-based division of labor, individual families are inventing new paradigms for being a family (Piotrkowsky,

Hughes, Pleck, Kessler-Sklar, & Staenes, 1993). This study provides some evidence that, although a slow process, the behaviors of some couples are beginning to reflect newly developing values about the importance of equality in intimate relationships. The purpose of this research was, in part, to discover the potential influences of these changing gender norms. While it revealed shared career priority is associated with greater work-family gains for both women and men, it found no relationship between other equality variables and work-family conflict. Given the limitations of this study, it will be important to conduct further research in this area, specifically to empirically test whether equality is associated with greater success in balancing family and work.

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APPENDIX A: FLIER

Please share with a friend

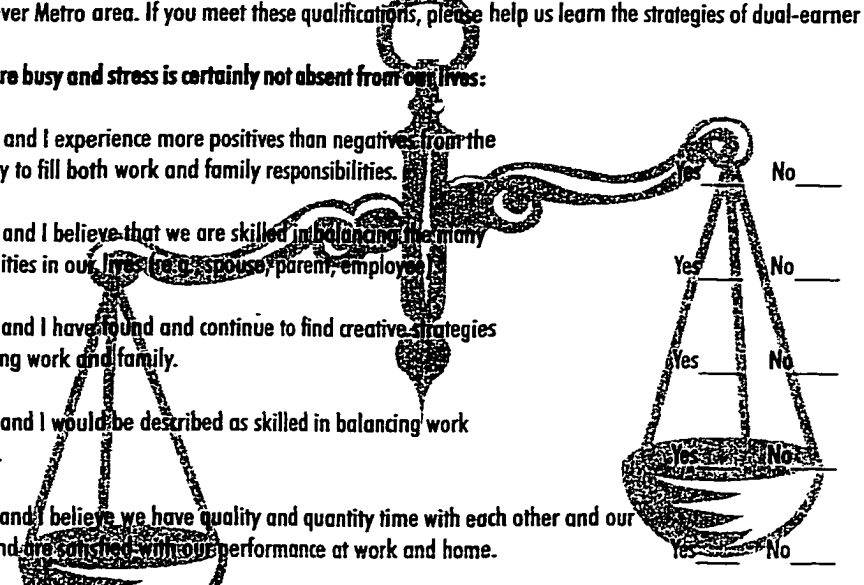
Do You, or Someone You Know....
Successfully Balance Your Family and Your Job?

AWORK

If so, WE WANT YOU!!!

As family researchers at Colorado State University, we are interested in learning the ways in which dual-earner couples successfully balance work and family. To participate in this study, a couple must be able to answer "yes" to all of the following questions, must have both spouses employed full-time, have at least one child under 12 years of age, and participants must live in the Denver Metro area. If you meet these qualifications, please help us learn the strategies of dual-earner couples.

Although we are busy and stress is certainly not absent from our lives:



1. My spouse and I experience more positives than negatives from the opportunity to fill both work and family responsibilities. Yes___ No___
2. My spouse and I believe that we are skilled in balancing the many responsibilities in our lives (e.g., spouse, parent, employee). Yes___ No___
3. My spouse and I have found and continue to find creative strategies for balancing work and family. Yes___ No___
4. My spouse and I would be described as skilled in balancing work and family. Yes___ No___
5. My spouse and I believe we have quality and quantity time with each other and our children, and are satisfied with our performance at work and home. Yes___ No___

For more information about the research project, please call Toni Zimmerman, Ph.D. and/or Shelley Haddock, M.S., at (970) 491-1639 in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at Colorado State University. Visit our web site at www.colostate.edu/programs/workandfamily for more information. Couples who participate will be compensated $30 after completing a questionnaire and interview (2 hour commitment).

Colorado State University

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

The demographic questions and quantitative measures for this study were part of a larger project. Therefore, only those questions and measures used for this study are included below.

Demographic Questions

1. Your age? _____ years

2. Gender: _____ F _____ M

3. Please indicate your racial heritage (Check all that apply):
   _____ African-American
   _____ Asian-American
   _____ Caucasian
   _____ Hispanic-American
   _____ Native American
   _____ Pacific Islander
   _____ Other Please specify _____

4. Please check the highest level of education completed:
   _____ Grade school or less
   _____ Some high school
   _____ Graduated high school
   _____ Some college
   _____ Graduated college
   _____ Some graduate study
   _____ Graduate degree(s)

5. What is your approximate gross annual income (not including your spouse's income):
   _____

6. How long have you been married to your current spouse? _____ years
   _____months

7. Please provide the following information about your children:

Name	Age	Gender

8. Are you self-employed? _____ Yes. _____ No.

9. What is your primary occupation? _____

10. What is the average number of hours you work each week? _____

Quantitative Measures

Decision-Making

To measure relative decision making, responsibility, and power, a subscale of "Who Does What?" was used (Cowan & Cowan, 1990). Below is the measure.

Please show how much influence you and your partner have in the family decisions listed here.

	she has it all				we have equal influence				he has it all
a. How we spend time at home	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
b. How we spend time out of the house	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
c. Deciding which friends and family to see, and when	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
d. Deciding about vacations: when, where, Expenses	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
e. Deciding about major expenses: house, car, Furniture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
f. Deciding about financial planning: insurance, loans, taxes, plans for savings, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
g. Deciding when and how much time both partners should work outside the family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
h. Initiating lovemaking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
i. Determining the frequency of lovemaking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

j. Deciding about religious practices in our family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
k. Deciding about involvement in community Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
l. Deciding how people should behave toward one another in our family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Scores are calculated in two different ways, depending on the purpose. To determine relative contribution, scores can be summated. To determine task sharing, the absolute value of the difference between the summated score and 5 can be determined. An even division yields a score of 0. The higher the score, the greater the role differentiation.

Division of Labor

To measure relative division of household labor, a subscale of "Who Does What?" (Cowan & Cowan, 1990) was used. Below is the measure.

Please show how you and your partner divide the family tasks listed here.

	She does it all				we both do this about equally				he does it all
a. Planning and preparing meals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
b. Cleaning up after meals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
c. Repairs around the home	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
d. House cleaning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
e. Taking out the garbage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
f. Buying groceries, household needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
g. Paying bills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
h. Laundry: washing, folding, ironing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
i. Writing letters/making calls to family and friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
j. Looking after the car	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
l. Caring for plants, garden, yard	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Scores are calculated in two different ways, depending on the purpose. To determine relative contribution, scores can be summated. To determine task sharing, the absolute value of the difference between the summated score and 5 can be determined. An even division yields a score of 0. The higher the score, the greater the role differentiation.

Division of Childcare

To measure division of childcare, one item—"childcare" was added to the household labor measure. The same 9-point scale was used.

Emotion Work

To measure relative contributions to emotion work, a modified version of the "Family Emotion Work Scale" (Wharton and Erickson, 1995) was used. The modified version of this measure is below.

How often do you engage in each of the following toward your partner?

	She does it all			we both do the about equally				he does it all	
a. Confide innermost thoughts and feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
b. Initiate talking things over	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
c. Try to bring partner out of a feelings of restlessness, boredom, or depression.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
d. Let my partner know I have faith in him or her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
e. Sense that my partner is disturbed about something.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
f. Offer encouragement to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
g. Give my partner compliments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
h. Stick by my partner in times of trouble	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
i. Offer advice when my partner is faced with a problem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
j. Respect my partner's point of view	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
k. Act affectionately toward my partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
l. Express concern for my partner's well being	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
m. Communicate feelings about the future of our relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
n. Be a good friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
o. Do favors for my partner without being asked.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

The original version of this measure included a 4-point Likert that measured only a subjects' own contribution to emotion work. The Likert scale was adapted for this study to measure each partner's relative contribution.

Career Priority

To measure relative career priority, a one-item measure (Greenhaus, et al., 1989) was used. Below is the item.

In terms of job/career priority, place a checkmark next to the item that most closely reflects your views.

1. My partner's job/career has a much higher priority than my job/career.
2. My partner's job/career has somewhat of a higher priority than my job/career.
3. My job/career has the same priority as my partner's job/career.
4. My job/career has somewhat of a higher priority than my partner's job/career.
5. My job/career has a much higher priority than my partner's job/career.

Work-Family Gains

To measure work-family gains, a sub-scale of the "Work-family Gains and Strains Scale" (Barnett & Marshall, 1990) was used. This measure is below.

Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following statements are true or not true.

	Not at all true	A little true	Somewhat true	Very true
a. Having both work and family responsibilities:				
-Makes you a more well-rounded person.	1	2	3	4
-Gives your life more variety.	1	2	3	4
-Allows you to use all your talents.	1	2	3	4
-Challenges you to be the best you can be.	1	2	3	4
-Means you manage your time better.	1	2	3	4
-Clarifies your priorities.	1	2	3	4
b. Managing work and family responsibilities as well as you do makes you feel competent.	1	2	3	4

Work-Family Strains

To measure work-family gains, a sub-scale of the "Work-family Gains and Strains Scale" (Barnett & Marshall, 1990) was used. This measure is below.

Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following statements are true or not true.

	Not at all true	A little true	Somewhat true	Very true
a. When you spend time with your family, you're bothered by all the things at work that you should be doing.	1	2	3	4
b. Because of your family responsibilities, you have to turn down work activities or opportunities that you would prefer to take on.	1	2	3	4
c. Because of your family responsibilities, the time you spend working is less enjoyable and more pressured.	1	2	3	4
d. When you spend time working, you're bothered by all the things at home or concerning your family that you should be doing.	1	2	3	4
e. Because of the requirements of your job, you have to miss out on home or family activities that you would prefer to participate in.	1	2	3	4
f. Because of the requirements of your job, your family time is less enjoyable and more pressured.	1	2	3	4
g. During the time set aside for work, you feel resentful because you'd rather be spending time with your family.	1	2	3	4

Please indicate how often you experience the following.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	often
a. In general, how often do you feel pulled apart from having to juggle conflicting obligations?	1	2	3	4
b. How often do the things you do add up to being just too much?	1	2	3	4