

Understanding “His and Her” Work-Family Conflict and Facilitation

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Abstract Work-family conflict (negative spillover between work and family) and work-family facilitation (positive spillover between work and family) are two aspects of the work-family interface. Prior work has established that these constructs are statistically and conceptually distinct, but less is known about what work and family characteristics are associated with conflict versus facilitation. Understanding who is most at risk for conflict and most benefiting from facilitation is necessary for establishing effective workplace policies. We used structural equation modeling to determine whether (1) work-family conflict and facilitation have different (statistical) predictors, and (2) whether these predictive relations are moderated by gender. Perceiving more work demands predicted greater work-family conflict, but was unrelated to facilitation. Perceiving more skill discretion at work and being married predicted greater work-family facilitation, but was unrelated to work-family conflict. Perceiving more decision authority and social support at work, and having more children, predicted less conflict and more facilitation. Most predictors were stronger for men than for women. We discuss implications of these results for designing effective policies to increase work-family facilitation and decrease work-family conflict for men and women.

Keywords Work-family interface · Work-family conflict · Work family facilitation · Gender differences

As more women have entered the workforce in the past several decades, both the popular and scholarly media have attempted to understand new challenges in the interface between family and work roles. This challenge has been most often framed as “work-family conflict,” focusing on competing demands for time, role strain (difficulty fulfilling role demands, for example, being a parent versus being a worker), and behavioral incompatibility between roles (e.g., Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). However, scholars have recently begun to emphasize work-family facilitation, or the positive effects that work and family roles may exert on each other (e.g., Greenhaus and Powell 2006). Overemphasis on conflict (negative spillover) to the neglect of facilitation (positive spillover) can not only skew scholarly perceptions, but also deter women from seeking employment due to apprehension about work-family conflict (Barnett and Hyde 2001) or by underestimating non-salary benefits of work for their families (Damaske 2011). Additionally, by gaining greater knowledge of conflict and facilitation, workplace policies can be designed to maximize worker’s physical and mental health. The present study aimed to advance understanding of the conceptual distinction between work-family conflict and facilitation by comparing statistical predictors of each of these constructs, as well as examining gender differences in predictors.

Work-Family Conflict and Facilitation

“Work-family interface” is an umbrella term for constructs measuring any combination of work and family variables (e.g., Frone et al. 1997; Grzywacz and Marks 2000b). Work-family *conflict* includes negative spillover from work to family, and from family to work. Work-family *facilitation* includes positive spillover from work to family, and from family to work.

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Theorists assert that work-family facilitation is not the absence of work-family conflict, but rather that individuals can be either high or low in both facilitation and conflict. As such, facilitation and conflict are separate dimensions, not opposite ends of a single continuum (e.g., Grzywacz et al. 2008). In addition, even though work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict are related, they are still conceptually and statistically distinct (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran 2005), as are work-to-family facilitation and family-to-work facilitation (Grzywacz and Marks 2000a, b). Therefore, the work-family interface can be described as consisting of four dimensions.

In the present study, we used two different cohorts of adults from across the U.S. to determine who was most at risk for work-family conflict, as well as who was most likely to achieve work-family facilitation. The variables we used to answer this question included job characteristics and family characteristics.

Factors Associated with Work-Family Conflict Work-family conflict is associated with serious mental and physical health outcomes. Conflict has been linked, cross-sectionally and longitudinally, to outcomes such as depression (Frone et al. 1996), stress (reviewed in Brough and O’Driscoll 2005), negative emotions (reviewed in Greenhaus et al. 2006), poor physical health (Frone et al. 1996; reviewed in Greenhaus et al. 2006), self-rated mental health (Gareis et al. 2009), heavy drinking (Frone et al. 1996; Grzywacz and Marks 2000a), and dissatisfaction with life (reviewed in Greenhaus et al. 2006).

Job demands and family characteristics have been used to explain work-family conflict. Specifically, working long hours, having more workload pressure, longer commuting time, bringing work home, more contact with work at home, and work-family multitasking (Voydanoff 1988, 2005), as well as less decision latitude and less support at work (Grzywacz and Marks 2000b), have been associated with greater work-family conflict. For family characteristics, having children under 18, especially under age 5, as well as spending more time caring for one’s children (for men only) were shown to be associated with more work-family conflict (Voydanoff 1988). This review of the literature suggests that job characteristics may more strongly predict work-family conflict than family characteristics, a hypothesis that will be directly tested in the present study.

Factors Associated with Work-Family Facilitation

Although work-family facilitation is relatively understudied, it has generally been found to be associated with better mental and physical health such as better self-reported overall health, fewer chronic health problems, and better self-reported mental health (e.g., Grzywacz 2000). Perceiving greater work-family

facilitation has been found to be associated with being married and perceiving more emotional support from family members, less family criticism/burden, and less spousal disagreement (Grzywacz and Marks 2000b). This review of the literature suggests that family characteristics may more strongly predict work-family facilitation than work characteristics, a hypothesis that will also be directly tested in the present study.

Gender Historically, theories of gender, work, and family tended to emphasize and justify gender differences on biological, psychoanalytic, and evolutionary grounds (reviewed in Barnett and Hyde 2001). However, consistent with the general finding of more gender similarities than differences (Hyde 2005), empirical evidence about the work-family interface supports theory that emphasizes similarities between men and women in terms of the benefits of multiple roles and the contributing processes and conditions that facilitate these benefits (Barnett and Hyde 2001).

Consistent with these findings, men and women do not tend to differ in their *mean levels* of the work-family interface variables (see Grzywacz and Bass 2003, but also Grzywacz and Marks 2000b), leading to gender being used as a covariate in studies of the work-family interface rather than an independent variable (e.g., Gareis et al. 2009; Grzywacz and Bass 2003). However, mixed results cast doubts on whether the *predictors* of these variables may differ for men and women. For example, an early study found that the positive relation between *work involvement* and work-family conflict was stronger than for women than men, while the positive relation between *family involvement* and work-family conflict was stronger than for men than for women (Duxbury and Higgins 1991). Thus, the present study addresses whether work and family characteristics differentially predict work-family variables for men and women.

The Present Study

Current knowledge regarding whether or not work-family conflict and work-family facilitation have the same statistical predictors is limited because the only extant study that has addressed this question (Grzywacz and Marks 2000b) used analytic methods (separate regression equations) that could not fully account for known interrelations among predictors or interrelations among dimensions of the work-family interface. A similar problem is apparent in an early study of predictors of work-family conflict that used 48 regression analyses to examine all possible interactions (Voydanoff 1988).

To advance this prior research, the present study uses structural equation modeling to examine the associations between

each predictor and each dimension of the work-family interface, controlling for other predictors and each predictors' relation with other dimensions of the work-family interface. This approach has a number of advantages. First, it yields results that are more similar to how these variables complexly interact in the “real world.” Work characteristics and family characteristics are interrelated, and this can be accounted for by allowing covariance in the model. Second, it is more parsimonious than multiple regression analyses because latent variables are created by combining both directions (work- > family and family- > work) to create work and conflict constructs that are relatively error-free compared to average or sum scores.

Research Question 1 and Hypotheses The first research question was whether work-family conflict and work-family facilitation have the same statistical predictors. Hypotheses were based on the only other existing study examining predictors of both work-family conflict and work-family facilitation (Grzywacz and Marks 2000b) and predictors reported in other studies (e.g., Voydanoff 1988, 2005). Based on this prior research, we hypothesized that (H1) work characteristics would be more strongly associated with work-family conflict, while (H2) family characteristics would be more strongly associated with work-family facilitation.

Research Question 2 and Hypotheses The second research question was whether predictors of work-family conflict and work-family facilitation differ by gender. We used a multi-group analysis (see Selig et al. 2008) to compare the structural equation model for men and women (see theoretical model in Fig. 1). Based on prior research (e.g., Duxbury and Higgins 1991), we hypothesized that family characteristics would be stronger predictors of conflict and facilitation for women than

for men (H3), while work characteristics would equally strong predictors for women and men (H4). We tested these hypotheses on two different cohorts, collected a decade apart, to determine whether these relations were robust over time and social changes such as widespread internet availability.

Material and Methods

Sample

The present study used data from the first and second waves of the National Survey of Midlife Development in the U.S. (MIDUS), with data collected in 1995 (MIDUS I; notated with a subscript 1) and 2005 (MIDUS II; notated with a subscript 2). MIDUS is a longitudinal study designed by an interdisciplinary team investigating behavioral, psychological, and social predictors of age-related health and well-being in the United States. Non-institutionalized, English-speaking adults (N₁ = 7108; N₂ = 4,963) between the ages of 25 and 74 were recruited using a nationally representative random-digit-dial sample. Participants completed a telephone interview and two mail questionnaires. The initial response rate was 70 % for telephone interviews and 87 % for the mail questionnaires. The average participant age was 46.38 years (SD = 13.00) for MIDUS I and 55.43 years (SD = 12.45) for MIDUS II. The overall retention rate from MIDUS I to MIDUS II was 75 % (adjusted for mortality; Radler and Ryff 2010).

The present study used the sample of participants for whom the variables of interest were available (n₁ = 4,582; n₂ = 2,407; demographic characteristics are given in Table 1). Although MIDUS is a longitudinal study, less than a third (30.5 %) of the *included* sample completed the

Fig. 1 Theoretical model of work and family characteristics predicting work-family conflict and facilitation, moderated by gender

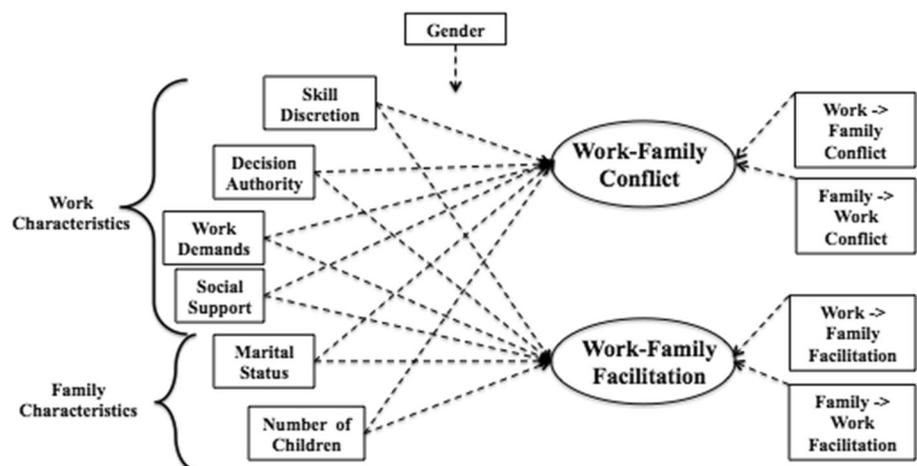


Table 1 Demographic characteristics for included participants in MIDUS I and MIDUS II cohorts

	MIDUS I (<i>n</i> = 4,582)	MIDUS II (<i>n</i> = 2,407)
Age	M = 43.60 years (<i>SD</i> = 10.87)	M = 51.63 years (<i>SD</i> = 9.98)
Gender	48 % female	52 % female
Race		
White	90.8 %	91.9 %
Black	4.8 %	3.6 %
“Other”	2.0 %	2.1 %
Asian or Pacific Islander	1 %	0.7 %
Multiracial	0.7 %	[Not asked]
Native American or Aleutian Islander/Eskimo	0.6 %	1.5 %
Household income	M = \$52,432 (<i>SD</i> = \$35, 624)	M = \$85, 463 (<i>SD</i> = \$62,318)
Education		
High school or less	32.1 %	27.2 %
Some college	31.7 %	28.2 %
Bachelor’s degree	20.3 %	22.6 %
At least some graduate school	15.9 %	22 %
Family structure		
Two-worker family	48.5 %	51.3 %
One-worker family	46.2 %	36.7 %
Hours worked per week		
Men	M = 46 h (<i>SD</i> = 12.98)	M = 43 h (<i>SD</i> = 14.91)
Women	M = 38 h (<i>SD</i> = 12.98)	M = 35 h (<i>SD</i> = 14.33)

measures of interest in both the MIDUS I and the MIDUS II studies, so these two samples were treated as separate cohorts representing different points in time and analyzed separately.

Comparisons between the participants included and excluded from this study are shown in Table 2. The largest difference by far between the excluded and included participants was whether they currently worked for pay.

Table 2 Statistics comparing included and excluded samples for MIDUS I and MIDUS II cohorts

	MIDUS I		<i>t</i> (χ^2)	MIDUS II		<i>t</i> (χ^2)
	Included M (SD) [%]	Excluded M (SD) [%]		Included M (SD) [%]	Excluded M (SD) [%]	
Gender	[51.7 % male]	[43.4 % male]	(47.10)**	[48 % male]	[45.4 % male]	(3.27)
Age	43.60 (10.87)	50.35 (14.67)	22.18**	51.63 (9.98)	59.01 (13.45)	21.86**
Race	[90.8 % white]	[90.4 % white]	.31	[91.9 % white]	[88.5 % white]	(16.49)**
Self-evaluated health (R)	2.21 (.88)	2.32 (.98)	5.05**	2.27 (.90)	2.65 (1.09)	13.37**
Num. depressive symptoms	.61 (1.75)	.75 (1.94)	3.25**	.49 (1.57)	.56 (1.71)	1.60
Working now	[87.7 % yes]	[27.9 % yes]	(2626.95)**	[80.3 % yes]	[26 % yes]	(1459.15)**
Num. hours worked per week	42.20 (13.56)	58.83 (30.36)	29.54**	39.47 (13.68)	37.83 (17.90)	-2.94*
Homemaker	[98.0 % no]	[79.9 % no]	(654.78)**	[97.4 % no]	[86.5 % no]	194.31**
Spouse/partner working for pay now	[10.9 % yes]	[6.4 % yes]	(8.91)*	[59.7 % yes]	[42.5 % yes]	109.91**
Spouse/partner retired	[6.3 % yes]	[24.7 % yes]	(346.42)**	[14.5 % yes]	[34.3 % yes]	195.44**
Marital status	[67.5 % married]	[63.1 % married]	(14.90)**	[72.6 % married]	[68.9 % married]	8.11*
Num. children	2.09 (1.61)	2.46 (1.70)	9.26**	2.31 (1.66)	2.67 (1.83)	7.24**
Cohabiting	[16.1 % yes]	[13.1 % yes]	(4.28)	[15.9 % yes]	[10.8 % yes]	8.03*
Homemaker spouse	[15.0 % yes]	[15.7 % yes]	.43	[12.8 % yes]	[14 % yes]	1.17
How pleased with life	2.25 (1.38)	2.22 (1.49)	-.67	2.77 (1.70)	2.57 (1.67)	-3.56*

p* < .01, *p* < .001

Study Variables

Work-Family Conflict and Facilitation

All work-family items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (“All the time”) to 5 (“Never”). Items were reverse coded so that higher values reflect greater levels of each construct (e.g., more conflict, more facilitation). These items and scales were constructed for the MIDUS by experts in the field (see Grzywacz and Marks 2000b), and thus have only been used by MIDUS studies (e.g., Gareis et al. 2009; Grzywacz and Butler 2005).

Work-to-Family Conflict Negative work-to-family spillover reflects how often individuals’ jobs negatively affect their family lives (sample items: “Stress at work makes you irritable at home;” “Job worries or problems distract you when you are at home”). This scale consisted of four internally consistent ($\alpha = .84$) items.

Family-to-Work Conflict Negative family-to-work spillover reflects how often individuals’ family lives negatively affect their jobs (sample items: “Responsibilities at home reduce the effort you can devote to your job;” “Stress at home makes you irritable at work”). This scale consisted of four internally consistent ($\alpha = .81$) items.

Work-to-Family Facilitation Positive work-to-family spillover reflects how often individuals’ jobs positively affect their family lives (sample items: “The skills you use on your job are useful for things you have to do at home;” “The things you do at work help you deal with personal and practical issues at home”). This scale consisted of four internally consistent ($\alpha = .74$) items.

Family-to-Work Facilitation Positive family-to-work spillover reflects how often individuals’ family lives positively affect their jobs (sample items: “Your home life helps you relax and feel ready for the next day’s work;” “Talking with someone at home helps you deal with problems at work”). This scale consisted of four internally consistent ($\alpha = .73$) items.

Job and Family Characteristics

In the present study, we used four job characteristics and two family characteristics as predictors of the work-family variables. The four job characteristics were skill discretion, decision authority, demands, and social support. All items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (“All the time”) to 5 (“Never”). Items were reverse coded so that higher values reflect greater levels of each construct. The job characteristic items were created for the MIDUS and were modeled after the Job Content Questionnaire (see Karasek et al. 1998). The two family characteristics were marital status and number (if any) of children. Descriptive statistics for study variables are given in Table 3.

Skill Discretion Skill discretion reflects the degree to which an individual’s job involves learning and using skills (sample item: “How often do you learn new things at work?”). This scale consisted of three internally consistent ($\alpha = .68$) items.

Decision Authority Decision authority reflects the degree to which an individual has control over decisions at his or her job (sample item: “How often do you have a say in decisions about your work?”). This scale consisted of six internally consistent ($\alpha = .85$) items.

Table 3 Descriptive statistics for study variables

	MIDUS I				MIDUS II			
	Overall (N = 2407)	Men (n = 1,155)	Women (n = 1,252)	t (χ^2)	Overall (N = 2407)	Men (n = 1,155)	Women (n = 1,252)	t (χ^2)
Work - > Family Conflict	2.60 (.73)	2.63 (.71)	2.57 (.74)	2.76	2.57 (.69)	2.57 (.65)	2.57 (.72)	-.23
Family - > Work Conflict	2.07 (.63)	2.05 (.63)	2.09 (.64)	-2.00	2.06 (.61)	2.02 (.58)	2.09 (.63)	-2.85
Work - > Family Facilitation	2.88 (.75)	2.84 (.73)	2.92 (.76)	-3.61*	2.93 (.70)	2.90 (.69)	2.96 (.70)	-2.14
Family - > Work Facilitation	3.34 (.77)	3.36 (.78)	3.31 (.76)	2.29	3.41 (.74)	3.42 (.74)	3.41 (.73)	.32
Skill Discretion	3.53 (.74)	3.58 (.73)	3.48 (.74)	4.80*	3.52 (.70)	3.54 (.67)	3.51 (.72)	.90
Decision Authority	3.72 (.86)	3.80 (.85)	3.63 (.87)	6.61*	3.69 (.73)	3.75 (.73)	3.64 (.73)	3.86*
Work Demands	3.21 (.49)	3.21 (.47)	3.22 (.50)	-1.00	3.17 (.45)	3.16 (.44)	3.18 (.46)	-1.21
Social Support	3.63 (.75)	3.57 (.73)	3.70 (.77)	-5.22*	3.51 (.73)	3.56 (.70)	3.66 (.75)	-3.07
Marital Status	71 % partnered	61 % partnered	65.8 % partnered	(77.15)*	72.6 % partnered	79.7 % partnered	66.1 % partnered	(56.18)*
Number of Children	2.24 (1.66)	2.17 (1.66)	2.32 (1.65)	-3.90*	2.31 (1.66)	2.33 (1.66)	2.29 (1.65)	.57

*p < .001

Demands Demands reflects the degree to which an individual's job has many demands (sample item: "How often do you have too many demands made on you?"). This scale consisted of five internally consistent ($\alpha = .74$) items.

Social Support This scale combines two subscales from MIDUS, coworker support and supervisor support, into an overall measure of social support at work (sample item: "How often do you get help and support from your coworkers?"). The scale consisted of five internally consistent ($\alpha = .84$) items.

Marital Status MIDUS has five categories for marital status: married/partnered, separated, divorced, widowed, and never married. For this study, we dichotomized this variable into married/partnered and unmarried/unpartnered (separated, divorced, widowed, and never married).

Children For number of children, each participant's number of reported biological and adopted children were summed. This number could be zero, as childless participants were included.

Results

Data Analysis

All research questions were testing using structural equation modeling in IBM SPSS's AMOS program (Arbuckle 2006). We created two latent variables from the work-family variables. The *work-family conflict* latent variable consisted of the work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict scales. The *work-family facilitation* latent variable consisted of the work-to-family facilitation and family-to-work facilitation scales. Each of the six predictor variables was regressed on each of the two latent variables. The work characteristic predictors were allowed to covary with one another, as were the family characteristic predictors.¹ We ran parallel models separately for MIDUS I and MIDUS II.²

¹ We ran all models with household income as a control. This resulted in no differences in statistical significance, and negligible value changes (e.g., $\beta = .63$ to $\beta = .62$). Thus, reported results are not adjusted for this covariate.

² We also ran the main model as a multigroup model comparing families in which both partners work to families in which only one partner works. Most model parameters were similar across the two models. The only statistically significant differences were as follows. For two-worker families, decision authority was negatively associated with conflict, while this pathway was not significantly related for one-worker families. For one-worker families, social support was positively associated with work-family conflict, while this pathway was not significantly related for two-worker families. These differences suggest that the benefits of decision authority and social support found in the present study may be more applicable to two-worker families than to one-worker families.

The six predictor variables and the four work-family variables used in the structural equation models were not normally distributed according to the Shapiro-Walk test (all $p < .001$). However, maximum likelihood estimators are robust to violations of normality, especially when sample sizes are large (Benson and Fleishman 1994), as in the present study.

Descriptive Statistics

MIDUS I—1995 Cohort

Tables 2 and 3 shows descriptive statistics for the study variables, overall and by gender. For the MIDUS I cohort, independent-sample *t*-tests revealed that women reported significantly more work-to-family facilitation, indicating they perceived more positive spillover from work to family than men did. Men and women did not differ on perceptions of family-to-work facilitation or either type of conflict. Men reported perceiving that their jobs had significantly more skill discretion and decision authority, while women reported perceiving more social support from supervisors and coworkers. Men and women did not differ in their perceived work demands. Finally, men were more likely than women to be married or partnered, while women had significantly more children than men.

MIDUS II—2005 Cohort

For the data collected 11 years later for the MIDUS II cohort, the only significant gender differences were that men were more likely to be married and reported perceiving more decision authority than women.³ Descriptive statistics for study variables are given in Table 3.

MIDUS I-1995 Cohort: Predictors of Work-Family Conflict and Facilitation

We tested our first research question, whether work-family conflict and work-family facilitation have the same predictors, by comparing the pathways from the predictive variables to each of the latent constructs. The model fit⁴ for the MIDUS I model (see Table 4) was acceptable according to established model fit cut-points (e.g., NFI > .90, GFI > .90, CFI > .93, RMSEA < .08; Browne and Cudeck 1993; Byrne 1994). The MIDUS I model met each of these criteria (NFI = .95; GFI = .98; CFI = .95; RMSEA = .04).

³ We were unable to examine gender-by-time interactions due to the small overlap in the samples.

⁴ Chi-square tests are inaccurate for SEM models with more than 400 cases (Kenny 2015), as in the present study, and thus were not included.

Table 4 Regression results predicting work-family conflict and facilitation, MIDUS I and MIDUS II

	Work-Family Conflict		Work-Family Facilitation	
	β (S.E.)	Critical Ratio	β (S.E.)	Critical Ratio
MIDUS I				
Skill Discretion	.01 (.02)	.71	.28 (.02)	16.88*
Decision Authority	-.07 (.01)	-4.86*	.10 (.01)	7.37*
Work Demands	.61 (.02)	27.09*	.05 (.02)	2.41
Social Support	-.20 (.01)	-14.49*	.11 (.01)	7.77*
Marital Status	-.03 (.02)	1.36	.11 (.02)	4.97*
Number of Children	-.03 (.01)	-4.27*	-.02 (.01)	3.45*
MIDUS II				
Skill Discretion	.007 (.02)	.34	.35 (.02)	16.14*
Decision Authority	-.06 (.02)	-3.36*	.08 (.02)	4.07*
Work Demands	.63 (.03)	22.22*	.05 (.03)	1.57
Social Support	-.18 (.02)	-10.56*	.11 (.02)	5.84*
Marital Status	.07 (.03)	2.67	-.02 (.03)	-.54
Number of Children	-.02 (.01)	-2.32	.03 (.01)	3.70*

* $p < .001$

Conflict

Perceiving greater work-family conflict was significantly associated with three of the four work characteristic variables: perceiving less decision authority, perceiving more work demands, and perceiving less social support at work. Perceived skill discretion was not significantly related to perceiving work-family conflict. One of the two family variables was related to perceptions of work-family conflict. People with fewer children perceived more work-family conflict, but marital status was not related to work-family conflict. Hypothesis 1, that conflict would be more strongly associated with work characteristics than family characteristics, was partially supported.

Facilitation

A slightly different profile emerged when predicting work-family facilitation. Work-family facilitation was significantly associated with three of the four work characteristics variables, but the three variables were not the same variables that predicted work-family conflict. Perceiving greater work-family facilitation was significantly associated with perceiving more skill discretion (which was not associated with work-family conflict), more decision authority, and more social support. Perceived work demands were not related to perceptions of work-family facilitation (which did predict work-family conflict, above).

In contrast to work-family conflict, work-family facilitation was significantly associated with both family characteristic variables. Perceiving more work-family facilitation was associated with being married and having fewer children. Hypothesis 2, that facilitation would be more strongly

associated with family characteristics than work characteristics, was partially supported.

Summary

Comparing the predictors of conflict and facilitation for the MIDUS I cohort showed some differences. Whereas perceiving greater work demands was significantly associated with greater work-family conflict, these perceptions were unrelated to work-family facilitation. Perceiving more skill discretion and being married/partnered were associated with more work-family facilitation, but were not significantly associated with conflict. Having fewer children was associated with less work-family facilitation, but more work-family conflict.

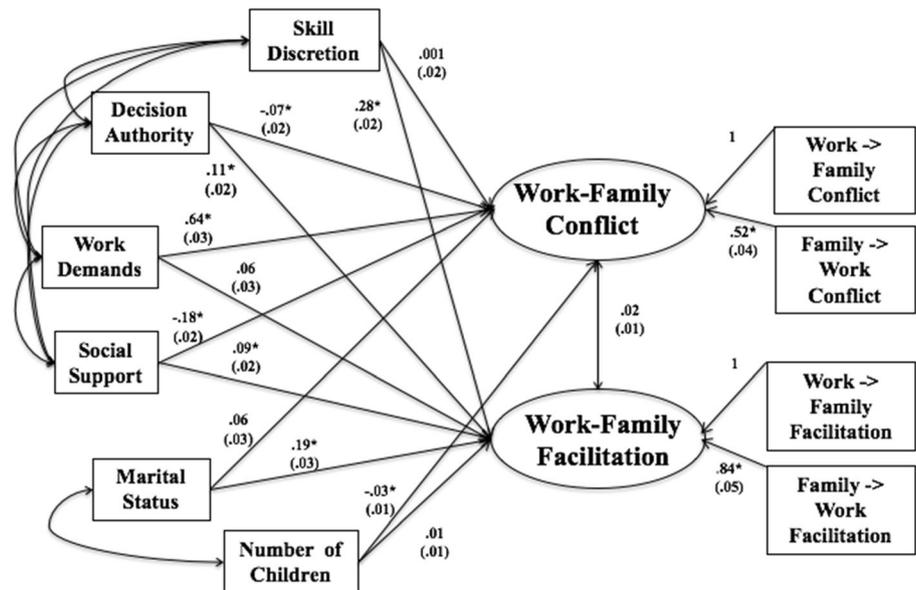
MIDUS II-2005 Cohort: Predictors of Work-Family Conflict and Facilitation

We replicated the test of our first research question, whether work-family conflict and work-family facilitation have the same predictors, by comparing the pathways from the predictive variables to each of the latent constructs with the 2005 cohort data. The fit for the MIDUS II model (see Table 4) was acceptable (NFI = .95; GFI = .98; CFI = .96; RMSEA = .04).

Conflict

The purpose of the following analyses was to test the same models using data from MIDUS II as a replication to examine the robustness of the effects found in the prior section. Replicating the results from the MIDUS I cohort, greater perceptions of work-family conflict were significantly associated

Fig. 2 The tested model for men, MIDUS I. Double-headed arrows indicate estimate covariances between variables. The model fit was acceptable according to several fit indices (NFI = .95; GFI = .98; CFI = .95; RMSEA = .04)



with three work variables, perceiving less decision authority, more work demands, and less social support at work; skill discretion was not significantly related to work-family conflict. Also replicating results from MIDUS I, marital status was not significantly associated with conflict.

In contrast to MIDUS I, number of children was not associated with conflict, whereas in the MIDUS I model, number of children was inversely related to conflict (see Table 4). Hypothesis 1, that conflict would be more strongly associated with work characteristics than family characteristics, was more supported in the MIDUS II cohort, as only the work characteristics significantly predicted work-family conflict.

Facilitation

Replicating the results from the MIDUS I cohort, the same three of the four work characteristic variables predicted work-family facilitation in the MIDUS II cohort. In both cohorts, more skill discretion, more decision authority, and more social support were associated with greater work-family facilitation, and work demands are not significantly associated with facilitation. Both family characteristics were associated with facilitation in MIDUS I; however, in the MIDUS II cohort, both of these associations were different. Marital status was no longer significantly associated with facilitation in MIDUS II, and the direction of the significant association with number of children was reversed, such that having more children was associated with greater facilitation in the MIDUS II cohort.

Summary

Comparing the predictors of conflict and facilitation for the MIDUS II cohort shows that both constructs have three

significant work characteristic predictors, although skill discretion only predicted facilitation and work demands only predicted conflict. Marital status did not predict either constructs, and number of children only predicted facilitation. Thus, Hypothesis 2, that facilitation would be more strongly associated with family characteristics than work characteristics, was more supported in the MIDUS I cohort than the MIDUS II cohort.

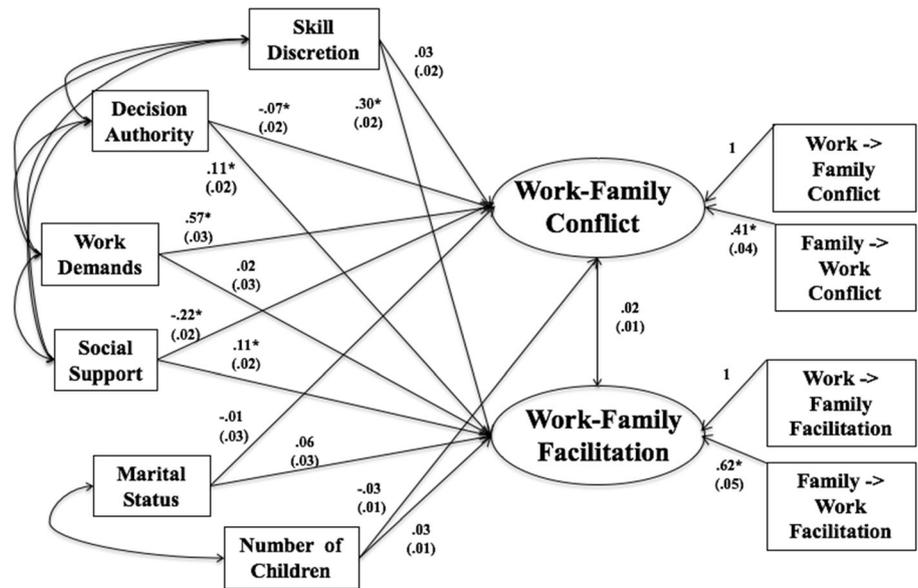
MIDUS I- 1995 Cohort: Gender and Predictors of Work-Family Conflict and Facilitation

We tested our second research question, whether predictors of work-family conflict and work-family facilitation differ by gender, using multigroup analysis to compare the regression weights of the predictive variables across two samples, men and women (see Fig. 2 for men and Fig. 3 for women). Regression weights, critical ratios, and critical ratios for difference are given in Table 5 for MIDUS I.

Conflict

The three work characteristics related to greater perceptions of work-family conflict-perceiving more work demands, less social support, and less decision authority- were the same for men and women, while perceptions of skill discretion were unrelated to work-family conflict for both men and women. The only gender difference that was found was that the one family characteristic, having more children, that was associated with less work-family conflict, was only significant for men. Marital status was unrelated to work-family conflict for both men and women. Using the critical ratios for difference to compare the model for men and women, no significant

Fig. 3 The tested model for women, MIDUS I. *Double-headed arrows* indicate estimate covariances between variables. The model fit was acceptable according to several fit indices (NFI = .95; GFI = .98; CFI = .95; RMSEA = .04)



gender differences were evident, supporting a gender similarities interpretation.

Facilitation

The three work characteristics related to greater perceptions of work-family facilitation-perceiving more skill discretion, more decision authority, and more social support at work-were the same for men and women, while perceptions of work demands were not related to facilitation for either men or women. The one family characteristic related to work-family facilitation, being married or partnered, was only significant for men. Number of children was not related to work-family

facilitation for men or women. Using the critical ratios for difference to compare the model for men and women, the only significant gender difference was the positive relation between marital status and facilitation for men but not women, supporting a gender similarities hypothesis.

Summary

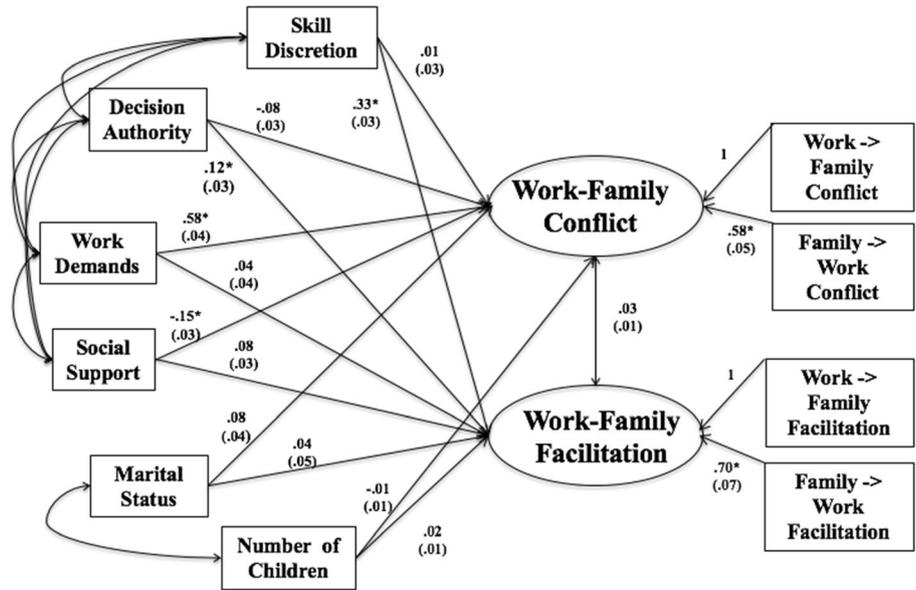
Hypothesis 3, that family characteristics would be stronger predictors of conflict and facilitation for women than for men, was unsupported for the MIDUS I cohort. The only significant gender difference in the multigroup model was marital status' relation to work-family facilitation. Contrary to our hypothesis, this

Table 5 Model pathways by gender, MIDUS I

Predictor	Men		Women		Critical ratio for difference
	β (S.E.)	Critical Ratio	β (S.E.)	Critical Ratio	
Work-Family Conflict					
Skill Discretion	.001 (.02)	-.03	.03 (.02)	1.16	.86
Decision Authority	-.07 (.02)	-3.72*	-.07 (.02)	-3.32*	.20
Work Demands	.64 (.03)	20.72*	.57 (.03)	17.41*	-1.43
Social Support	-.18 (.02)	-9.45*	-.22 (.02)	-11.00*	-1.63
Marital Status	.06 (.03)	1.80	-.01 (.03)	-.21	-1.46
Number of Children	-.03 (.01)	-2.80*	-.03 (.01)	-3.11	-2.0
Work-Family Facilitation					
Skill Discretion	.28 (.02)	12.47*	.30 (.03)	11.76*	.57
Decision Authority	.11 (.02)	6.00*	.11 (.02)	5.06*	-.25
Work Demands	.06 (.03)	2.06	.02 (.03)	.69	-.83
Social Support	.09 (.02)	4.97*	.11 (.02)	5.14*	.54
Marital Status	.19 (.03)	6.31*	.06 (.03)	2.01	-3.04*
Number of Children	.01 (.01)	1.26	.03 (.01)	2.83	1.21

*p < .001

Fig. 4 The tested model for men, MIDUS II. *Double-headed arrows* indicate estimate covariances between variables. The model fit was acceptable according to several fit indices (NFI = .95; GFI = .98; CFI = .96; RMSEA = .04)



relation was significant for men but not women. Hypothesis 4, that work characteristics would be equally strong predictors of conflict and facilitation for men and women, was supported for the MIDUS I cohort by the lack of gender differences in these associations. In the total model, 11 out of 12 comparisons did not differ significantly between men and women, supporting a gender similarities interpretation.

MIDUS II-2005 Cohort: Gender and Predictors of Work-Family Conflict and Facilitation

We again used data from MIDUS II to test whether results were robust and analyzed separate models for MIDUS I and MIDUS II (see Fig. 4 for men and Fig. 5 for women).

Regression weights, critical ratios, and critical ratios for difference are given in Table 6 for MIDUS II.

Conflict

Replicating the MIDUS I analyses, two out of four work characteristics- perceiving more work demands and less social support- were associated with more work-family conflict for both men and women, while perceptions of skill discretion were unrelated to conflict for both men and women in both models. However, the models differ in that perceptions of decision authority were significantly associated with conflict for both men and women in the MIDUS I model, while they were not associated with conflict for either men or women in

Fig. 5 The tested model for women, MIDUS II. *Double-headed arrows* indicate estimate covariances between variables. The model fit was acceptable according to several fit indices (NFI = .95; GFI = .98; CFI = .96; RMSEA = .04)

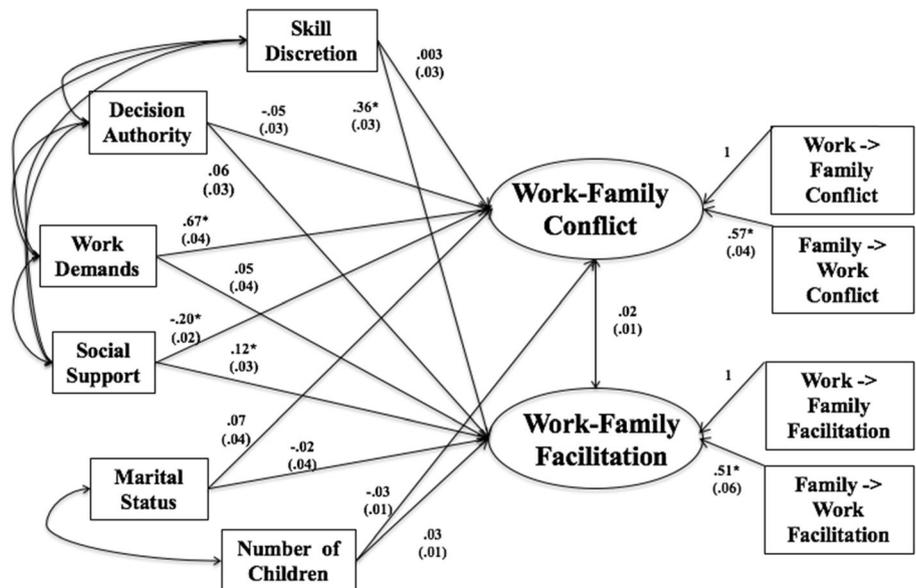


Table 6 Model pathways by gender, MIDUS II

Predictor	Men		Women		Critical ratio for difference
	β (S.E.)	Critical Ratio	β (S.E.)	Critical Ratio	
Work-Family Conflict					
Skill Discretion	.01 (.03)	.32	.003 (.03)	.11	-.16
Decision Authority	-.08 (.03)	-2.84	-.05 (.03)	-1.90	.76
Work Demands	.58 (.04)	14.43*	.67 (.04)	16.67*	1.58
Social Support	-.15 (.03)	-6.08*	-.20 (.02)	-8.48*	-1.45
Marital Status	.08 (.04)	1.86	.07 (.04)	2.03	-1.14
Number of Children	-.01 (.01)	-.61	-.03 (.01)	-2.57	-1.36
Work-Family Facilitation					
Skill Discretion	.33 (.03)	10.08*	.36 (.03)	12.37*	.71
Decision Authority	.12 (.03)	4.13*	.06 (.03)	2.15	-1.55
Work Demands	.04 (.04)	.91	.05 (.04)	1.10	.13
Social Support	.08 (.03)	3.09	.11 (.03)	4.67*	.96
Marital Status	.04 (.05)	.89	-.02 (.04)	-.58	-1.03
Number of Children	.02 (.01)	2.03	.03 (.01)	3.17	.74

**p* < .001

the MIDUS II model. Again replicating MIDUS I, neither of the family characteristics, marital status or number of children, were related to conflict for either men or women. Using the critical ratios for difference to compare the MIDUS II model for men and women, no significant gender differences were evident, supporting a gender similarities interpretation.

Facilitation

Only one out of four work characteristics, perceiving more skill discretion, was associated with greater work-family facilitation for both men and women. A second work characteristic, perceiving more decision authority, predicted greater facilitation for men only, while a third work characteristic, perceiving more social support, predicted greater facilitation for women only. This is in contrast to the MIDUS I model, in which these three work characteristics were associated with facilitation for both men and women. The fourth work characteristics, perceptions of work demands, were not related to work-family facilitation for men or women, replicating MIDUS I. Neither of the family characteristics, marital status or number of children, were related to facilitation for either men or women, whereas marital status had been associated with facilitation for men in MIDUS I. Using the critical ratios for difference to compare the model for men and women, no significant gender differences were evident, supporting a gender similarities interpretation.

Summary

Hypothesis 3, that family characteristics would be stronger predictors of conflict and facilitation for women than for

men, was unsupported for the MIDUS II cohort. There was no significant gender difference in these predictors in the multigroup model; indeed, the family characteristics did not predict work-family conflict or facilitation for either men or women. Hypothesis 4, that work characteristics would be equally strong predictors of conflict and facilitation for men and women, was supported by the lack of gender differences in these associations. Although two differences were evident when comparing the significant pathways in men and women’s models, the lack of significant critical ratios for difference show that the regression weights did not significantly differ from one another, further supporting a gender similarities interpretation.

Most of the associations in the model replicated from MIDUS I to MIDUS II, including 11 out of 12 gender comparisons that did not differ significantly between men and women. The only critical ratio for difference that was evident was marital status’ positive association with facilitation for men but not women in MIDUS I, an association that was not evident in MIDUS II. The other differences between the MIDUS I and MIDUS II models were as follows. Decision authority was no longer significantly associated with conflict for men or women in MIDUS II. The negative association between number of children and conflict for men in MIDUS I was no longer evident in MIDUS II, nor was the association between social support and facilitation for men. The association between decision authority and facilitation for women in MIDUS I was no longer evident in MIDUS II. All other associations replicated from MIDUS I to MIDUS II, indicating robustness of the model in general.

Discussion

The present investigation contributes to the study of work-family conflict and facilitation by providing evidence that predictors of work-family conflict are not necessarily the same as predictors of work-family facilitation. Similarities and differences between the predictors suggest how to increase positive spillover (facilitation) and decrease negative spillover (conflict) between work and family. The present study also contributes important information by showing that associations between family and work predictors and conflict and facilitation operate similarly for men and women. Gender similarities suggest that, despite mean-level differences in some of aspects of the work-family interface, the work and family characteristics that predict these aspects do not radically differ for men and women. Together, these results suggest strategies for optimizing worker well-being.

The characteristics that predicted both conflict and facilitation suggest domains of particular risk or possibility. In two different cohorts measured a decade apart, findings were robust: workers who perceived that they have more decision authority and social support at work also perceived both less work-family conflict and more work-family facilitation. Hence, maximizing worker's perceived authority to make decisions in the workplace and facilitating greater supportiveness among coworkers may have "doubly positive" effects by not only decreasing negative spillover from work to family, but also by increasing positive spillover from work to family. Indeed, evidence suggests that interventions designed to increase workplace social support (e.g., Heaney et al. 1995) and employee control (see Egan et al. 2007, for a review) have positive effects on worker physical and mental health. Our findings suggest that one reason such interventions have positive consequences is that they could dampen negative work-family spillover and amplify positive spillover.

The positive effect of having children was evident for both cohorts, though in slightly different ways. For the 1995 cohort, the decrease in both work-family conflict and work-family facilitation associated with having children is somewhat puzzling. However, for the 2005 cohort, we saw the opposite association, in which a greater number of children was associated with greater work-family facilitation. The reason for the reverse of this association is not clear, but given that MIDUS II cohort sample is older, they may have older children, which may be associated with more facilitation and less conflict than younger children.

Other work and family characteristics exerted positive or negative effects on only one dimension of the work-family interface. For example, for both cohorts, workers who perceived having more demands at work perceived more work-family conflict. Indeed, degree of work demands was the strongest predictor of work-family conflict for both men and women for both cohorts, demonstrating the robustness of this

finding. However, workers with more work demands did not report less work-family facilitation in either cohort. Decreasing workers' perceptions of demands may be a key way to decrease work-family conflict, although our results do not suggest this would change workers' facilitation. This finding also reinforces the importance of treating work-family conflict and work-family facilitation as conceptually distinct constructs.

For both cohorts, workers who perceived they had greater skill discretion also perceived more work-family facilitation, but their perceptions of work-family conflict were unrelated to skill discretion. Skills learned or used at work benefitting the home may be one example of an employment benefit that could be underestimated by workers, especially women, weighing only a job's salary against the potential for work-family conflict (e.g., Damaske 2011). In particular, "mommy-track" jobs (e.g., Sancier 1989), in which women who become mothers are put in trajectories within their field that are less skilled and provide fewer opportunities for advancement in exchange for flexibility, are thought to reduce work-family conflict (contrary to the findings of the present study), but may also deprive a family other benefits of a mother's skilled labor.

In the 1995 cohort, being married or partnered was associated with more work-family facilitation but was not associated with work-family conflict. As discussed in more detail later, further analyses revealed that this relation was true for men, but not for women. The finding that marriage disproportionately benefits men, including in terms of career success, is well established (reviewed in Grzywacz and Marks 2000b), and is further supported by the present study. However, these characteristics are no longer significantly related in the 2005 cohort, which may reflect increased gender equality in the MIDUS II cohort, in that marriage no longer disproportionately benefits one partner's career.

"His and Hers" Work-Family Conflict and Facilitation

The findings of the present study contribute to the vast literature supporting the "gender similarities hypothesis" (Hyde 2005), which posits that men and women are more similar than different. The present study builds on previous work showing similar effects of work and family roles on men and women (Barnett and Hyde 2001) and similar levels of work-family conflict for men and women (Grzywacz and Bass 2003) by demonstrating that work and family characteristics are similarly predictive of work-family conflict and facilitation for men and women. In each cohort, ten of the predictive pathways were the same for men and women, while only two were different. Most associations showed similar patterns for men and women and were also robust over time. When considering the critical ratios for difference, which

compares the magnitude of pathways, the conclusion is even stronger: only one pathway significantly differs for men and women in the MIDUS I model, and none significantly differ in the MIDUS II model.

There were a few exceptions. Being married and having fewer children predicted greater perceptions of work-family facilitation and conflict, respectively, for men but not women in the MIDUS I cohort, while these characteristics were not related for either men or women in the MIDUS II cohort. These findings suggest that family characteristics affected work more similarly for men and women in 2005 than in 1995, perhaps because partners' time and energy on family work became more equitable. For both men and women, greater decision authority was associated with less work-family conflict in the MIDUS I cohort, but this relation was not significant for either men or women in the MIDUS II cohort. The mean levels of this variable did not change over time, leaving it to future studies to elucidate what changed in this relation.

A few variables were significant predictors for both men and women in the MIDUS I cohort, but only for one gender in the MIDUS II cohort. In the MIDUS I cohort, more decision authority and social support predicted greater work-family facilitation for both men and women, but in the MIDUS II cohort, decision authority was only significant for men, while social support was only significant for women. This divergence could indicate that men and women may use different strategies to achieve positive spill-over or find different aspects of work beneficial for their roles at home. Despite these exceptions, the associations between this study's variables were overwhelmingly similar to each other for men and women and across time.

Limitations and Future Directions

Like all studies, the contributions of this study are bounded by the methods and sample we used. Many variables of interest, such as how many children are currently in the home and what external childcare (if any) is used, were not available, but are important to include in future studies.

The data that formed the basis of the current report were collected in 1995 and 2005. Since then, technologies that affect the work-family interface (e.g., widespread home internet access, smart phones) have proliferated. These technologies make work more available at home and home more available at work (e.g., Chesley 2005; Fenner and Renn 2010). Further research that builds on the current findings is necessary to understand the extent to which factors associated with these technologies, such as employer expectations of worker availability via email, alter the pathways identified in the present study. However, the robustness of the present findings across a decade of great technological and social change, such as widespread internet availability, increases our confidence in the

robustness of these associations. Future research examining these relations with more frequent measurements would be even more helpful, adding the ability to capture dynamics such as children growing up and yearly technology changes.

Although general job characteristics such as the ones we identified have been shown to affect the work-family interface (see also, Grzywacz and Marks 2000b; Voydanoff 2005), an organization's *work-family-specific* benefits and culture may provide additional insights about positive and negative spill-over between family and work (Thompson et al. 1999). Incorporating such information could help to uncover the extent to which policies versus worker's *perceptions* of the consequences of such policies (for example, in terms of social support at work) affect positive and negative spillover between work and family.

It is important to note that although the conceptual and statistical models we report show the job and family characteristics predicting the work-family interface, our cross-sectional data cannot establish causal direction, and associations among these variables are likely bidirectional across time. As such, "predictors" should be interpreted statistically, not causally. Most of the research on factors associated with the work-family interface has been cross-sectional. Future longitudinal research, such as panel modeling of the work-family interface, family, and work characteristics, could better address causal questions of predictors and outcomes.

Finally, the generalizability of our results is limited by the characteristics of the sample we used. MIDUS participants were randomly recruited to be representative of the US population, but their participant rates are not representative. In particular, a very large proportion of the samples were white, limiting generalizability of these results to members of other racial and ethnic groups. Further, only a subset of participants was eligible for inclusion in this study based on their completion of the work-family interface items, which resulted in a relatively healthy, employed sample. The results may not generalize to other samples, such as individuals with intermittent employment due to health concerns or self-employed, partially retired adults. It is unknown how the selective sample affected the associations found in this study.

Conclusion

Overall, these findings support the conceptual distinction between work-family conflict and work-family facilitation (Grzywacz et al. 2008). Our results reveal a different constellation of predictors for negative and positive spillover between these two contexts of daily life. This study also underscores the importance of directly addressing gender when studying these topics. As in previous research (e.g., Grzywacz and Bass 2003), men and women's reports of work-family conflict and facilitation were similar, with the exception of women

reporting more work-to-family facilitation in 1995. The present study goes beyond prior research to show that relations between facets of the work-family interface and work and family characteristics tended to be similar for men and women. Better understanding of the factors that allow men and women to minimize work-family conflict and maximize work-family facilitation will be important as the balance between paid employment and family responsibilities continues to challenge individuals, organizations, and nations.

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Compliance with Ethical Standards All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Conflict of Interest Rachel R. Stoiko declares that she has no conflict of interest. JoNell Strough declares that she has no conflict of interest. Nicholas A. Turiano declares that he has no conflict of interest.

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