Most research on work-nonwork conflict emphasizes time allocation, evoking the metaphor of "balancing" time. Balance imagery is restrictive because it neglects the perceptual experience of time and the subjective meanings people assign to it. We propose an alternative metaphor of time as a "container of meaning." Drawing upon role-identity and self-discrepancy theories, we develop a model and propositions relating meanings derived from work and nonwork time to the experience of work-nonwork conflict. We argue that work-nonwork conflict is shaped not only by time's quantitative aspect but also by the extent to which work and nonwork time is identity affirming versus identity discrepant.

Work-Nonwork Conflict and the Phenomenology of Time

Beyond the Balance Metaphor

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Whether from a scholarly or a practitioner perspective, discussion about the relationship between work and nonwork life usually involves the importance of time allocation. This temporal focus on managing work and nonwork evokes the commonly used metaphor of work-nonwork "balance" (Bohen & Viveros-Long, 1981; Caproni, 1997; Crosby, 1991; Hall, 1990; Kofodimos, 1990; Lobel, 1991). Balance imagery suggests that there is some appropriate distribution of hours that an individual should achieve among the domains of work, family, community, religion, recreation, and so forth. Clearly, time allocation is a critical element in our attempts to gracefully maintain our various roles and commitments. Ultimately, however, a balance-oriented interpretation limits the work-nonwork relationship

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to a zero-sum time allocation exercise and thus misrepresents the complex psychological processes by which people make sense of their time and manage multiple life domains.

In this article, we suggest an alternative metaphor—time as a container of meaning—and argue for supplementing the current focus on quantitative aspects of time with a phenomenological conceptualization of the role of time in the relationship between work and nonwork domains. This metaphor recognizes, on one hand, the fixed nature of temporal resources: Time *is* finite and zero sum in the sense that an hour spent at work can never be reclaimed for nonwork pursuits and vice versa. On the other hand, the container metaphor allows us to address the *nature* of the activities that occupy our time, including the significance that they assume.

The adoption of this metaphor suggests a different approach to research on the relationship between work and nonwork than is common in much of the current scholarly literature. Our review of the literature reveals a relative paucity of research devoted to qualitative aspects of time as it relates to the work-nonwork relationship. Rather, scholars have tended to rely upon quantitative measures of time (e.g., hours worked per week) as the primary independent variable predicting work-nonwork conflict (Burke, Weir, & Duwors, 1979; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Judge, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1994; Keith & Schafer, 1980; Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980; Tenbrunsel, Brett, Maoz, Stroh, & Reilly, 1995).

We propose that the way people think about themselves and their work will impact the experience of work-nonwork conflict, above and beyond the important effects of time allocation. We argue that when people spend their time in identity-affirming activities, be they at work or pursuing nonwork interests, they will tend to perceive less conflict between life domains. In making this case, we develop a model of the relationship between work and nonwork that incorporates the *quality* of time dedicated to each domain.

We begin this article by reviewing scholarly literature on work-nonwork conflict, paying special attention to the opportunity to move from a quantitative focus on time to a qualitative understanding. Drawing on role-identity and self-discrepancy theories, we next outline a framework for understanding how the meanings people attach to time influence the relationship between time allocation and work-nonwork conflict. We present a set of propositions, suggested by the framework, to promote future research. Finally, we discuss the implications of meaning-based work-nonwork conflict for both researchers and practitioners.

SHIFTING THE METAPHORS IN WORK-NONWORK LITERATURE

As Rothbard (1999) notes, most scholars have adopted a "depletion" argument in discussing the relationship between work and nonwork. That is, they assume that work and nonwork are inherently conflicting because they both make claims to the same scarce resources. Among these resources, time is perhaps the most salient (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Tenbrunsel et al., 1995). Given the finite nature of time, it is not surprising that scholars often adopt balance imagery to describe the allocation of investment in work and nonwork time (Lobel, 1991). The balance metaphor is useful in that time is indeed a fixed resource that must be divided among domains that cry out for it. Work organizations directly compete with nonwork domains, such as family, friends, and leisure, for the employee's personal stock of time. Because workers cannot be in two places at once, work time necessarily subtracts from available nonwork time and vice versa.

Perhaps because of the measurability of time (not to mention its salience), temporal approaches to studying the work-nonwork relationship are predominant in scholarly literature. In the next section, we briefly review how scholars have adopted, overtly or implicitly, a balance metaphor in studying the relationship between work and nonwork.

THE LITERATURE OF BALANCE

Studies of temporal determinants of work-nonwork conflict provide strong evidence that time allocation is an important factor in the emergence of conflict. Scholars have consistently shown that more work hours lead to more conflicts between work and family (Burke et al., 1979; Judge et al., 1994; Keith & Schafer, 1980; Pleck et al., 1980). There is also evidence that unusual time demands, such as overtime work, irregular shift work, and inflexible work schedules, are positively associated with work-family conflict (Pleck et al., 1980). On a related note, Gattiker and Larwood (1990) found that career achievement is positively correlated with time away from family.

Inductive analyses of time and work-nonwork conflict also support the balance metaphor. Daly's (1996b) exploratory study indicated that for working fathers, family time is always at the mercy of work time, with the family getting only what is left over. Fathers perceived time spent with children as being associated with costs in other areas. Hood and Golden (1979), also in a study of working fathers, found that men view time in economic terms and

engage in "aggressive procurement" of time for family, specifically with children. O'Driscoll, Ilgen, and Hildreth (1992) explored affective experiences related to interrole conflict based on time devoted to job and off-job activities. Perlow (1996), in an observational study of time use, found that engineers have little control over their time due to constant interruptions, which lead, in turn, to a vicious cycle of crisis management. This dynamic, Perlow argues, is a key reason why engineers find work interfering with family and other nonwork pursuits.

Tenbrunsel et al. (1995) justify using time as the primary metric in their study of gender differences in the work-family relationship by arguing that time is *the* limiting resource in terms of leading a balanced life. They claim that "time is a precious commodity, [suggesting that] the concept of fixed resources will dominate over any spillover of disposition and/or mood" in the work-nonwork relationship (p. 236). All of these examples of scholarly literature share this premise: Because the quantity of available time is finite, managing work and nonwork demands is a balancing act that seeks the magical appropriate distribution of hours among important domains.

SHIFTING THE METAPHOR

Despite the rather intuitive connection between time allocation and work-nonwork conflict, Tenbrunsel et al.'s (1995) assertion that a fixed-resource view dominates over all other considerations raises a red flag: The categorical predominance of time as a quantitative resource seems overstated. It is not difficult to think of cases where emotional considerations outweigh purely quantitative time considerations. Who would say, for instance, that 2 hours of angry time with the family are more desirable than a half hour of harmonious time? When given a choice, people often opt for quality, rather than quantity, of time. Looking at work-nonwork conflict purely as a balance issue flattens the variegated terrain of qualitative considerations relevant to the intersection of work and nonwork. Prominent among these is the *significance* that people assign to the time they devote to specific domains.

Daly (1996a) raised the point that although time is measured incrementally, we must also examine its phenomenological properties, that is, the perceptual and subjective experience of time, including the meanings we attach to it. Daly argues that time has suffered from "conceptual deprivation" in the study of work and family; it has been treated simply as a "value-neutral reified quantum," whereas it should also be viewed as a socially constructed embodiment of meaning and identity (p. 2). Daly further states: "Through the assignment of meaning to time in social situations we . . . shape the identities

of the individuals involved. . . . Identity exists in a temporal dimension that is ongoingly constructed and coordinated" (p. 46).

From the perspective of time as a value-laden expression of identity, it follows that time quantity may not be the most important metric to consider when there are salient personal meanings attached to it, as is usually the case with work, as well as with critical nonwork commitments such as family. Indeed, in some cases, people may measure their life in terms of meaningfulness rather than time. Frankl (1985), in his popular treatise on logotherapy (a psychotherapeutic method that helps patients focus on the meaningfulness of their lives), argued that the meaning attached to inmates' time in a Nazi concentration camp enhanced their chances for survival. Frankl notes:

> The pessimist resembles a man who observes with fear and sadness that his wall calendar, from which he daily tears a sheet, grows thinner with each passing day. On the other hand, the person who attacks the problems of life actively is like a man who removes each successive leaf from his calendar and . . . can reflect with pride and joy on all the richness set down in these notes, on all the life he has already lived to the fullest. What will it matter to him if he notices that he is growing old? (p. 144)

Clearly, Frankl's conceptualization of time transcends a fixed-resource view.

When we adopt a phenomenological view of time, balance imagery becomes overly calculative and impersonal and does not capture the sense of meaningfulness that Frankl (1985) describes. Balance imagery reduces human priorities to interchangeable commodities. As one colleague noted, "I never think of myself as 'balancing' work and family—what kind of parent would hold her children 'in the balance'?" Clearly, managing the distribution of one's hours among important tasks is an essential skill for personal effectiveness, but focusing too much on time "in the balance" may divert our attention from other important time-related questions, such as, "How adept am I at imbuing my time with significance that reflects my personal values and identity?"

Morgan (1986) noted that metaphors frame issues in distinctive ways, thus providing novel insights. However, metaphors are not only "ways of seeing" but also "ways of *not* seeing," as they necessarily obscure some aspects of phenomena. Metaphors simultaneously illuminate and limit our apprehension of an issue. It is not surprising, then, that the balance metaphor blinds us to important aspects of work-nonwork conflict that can be revealed by adopting other metaphors. We propose a metaphor that speaks to the phenomenological aspect of time allocation among work and nonwork domains. Viewing time as a container of meaning provides different insights into the work-

nonwork relationship than does the balance metaphor. We will next describe what we mean by the *container of meaning* metaphor, first by focusing on how time is like a container and second by discussing what we mean by *meaning*.

WHY A CONTAINER OF MEANING?

Balance imagery captures the finite nature of time allocation by suggesting that time spent on one domain comes at the expense of other domains. The container imagery, on the other hand, emphasizes the finite nature of time via its external boundaries. Just as one cannot typically stretch a container or increase its capacity, we are all granted a fixed number of hours per day. However, what makes containers distinct is not so much their carrying capacity as their contents. Just as we can choose either to compactly cram a multitude of diverse items into a container or instead leave it virtually empty, we can also fill our allotted hours with a host of small unrelated pursuits, with a single "large" activity, or with practically nothing at all. The decision about what we put into our container hours leads us to a discussion of meaning.

The contents of our time containers can signify many different things: passionate commitments, resented obligations, aimless puttering, or carefree entertainment, to name a few. The significance that time assumes comprises the *meaning* within the container of time. In an ideal world, the activities that occupy our time would signify deep-rooted values and reflect our personal identity. Alternately, they can signify that we are acting on values that are not our own, or that we are attempting to be someone we do not want to or cannot become. The container of time can thus encompass meanings that are identity affirming or identity discrepant. Individual experiences and outcomes associated with these two different types of time content are likely to be very different, even if the size of the containers (i.e., the amount of time expended on an activity) is the same.

Another helpful aspect of the container metaphor is that it does not parcel out time into discrete chunks devoted to different life domains that "weigh" against each other. In the balance imagery, one visualizes so many units of work time at one end of a scale and enough units of nonwork time at the other to establish a fragile equilibrium. The container imagery suggests, rather, that the contents of time may bump into and interact with one another. They must come to coexist in the same space, often very snugly. Often, they meld into a unity such that boundaries are indistinguishable. As a result, the meanings assigned to one activity can rub off on, constrain, or enhance the meanings assigned to another activity within the same container. One cannot merely balance out work time and family time because the significance of what one

does at work will color, for better or worse, the significance one attaches to family time, and vice versa.

THE LITERATURE OF MEANING

The above observations are reflected in research on the spillover relationship between work and nonwork. Scholars have recognized that negative emotions associated with work can spill into one's family relationships (Repetti, 1987; Small & Riley, 1990; Wallace, 1997) and vice versa (Crouter, 1984; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Williams & Alliger, 1994). Only recently, however, have scholars begun to pay attention to the flip side of spillover and to recognize that work and family can also enrich each other (Rothbard, 1999). This is a potentially fruitful field of inquiry, one that is difficult, if not impossible, to approach using balance imagery. Studies of positive spillover implicitly adopt a position, consistent with the container metaphor, that work and nonwork do not simply compete but can also interact in a complementary and synergistic manner.

Some studies suggest that work-nonwork enrichment (or positive spillover) is not uncommon. For instance, Crosby (1982) found that people who are married with children tend to like their jobs better than do singles. Thoits (1983) has shown that the sheer number of one's roles can enhance feelings of security and gratification. Most evidence for work-nonwork enrichment comes not from correlational studies, however, but rather from contingency models. In other words, scholars have argued that the quality of one's roles determines whether conflict is experienced (Bailyn, 1993; Baruch & Barnett, 1987, Burke, 1989). Epstein (1987) further suggested that the quality of the role context also is important; strain, she argued, arises not because of the mere fact of multiple roles but from the absence of legitimation, such that the individual faces negative sanctions for occupying those multiple roles.

What, then, are the role qualities that facilitate work-nonwork enrichment? Although scholars have wrestled much with this question, no integrative framework has emerged to explain it. Contextual factors that appear to facilitate a sense of work-nonwork enrichment include such varied factors as emotional support (Epstein, 1987), work challenge (Barnett, Marshall, & Sayer, 1992), task significance (Jones & Butler, 1980), and other intrinsic work-role characteristics (Voydanoff, 1987). These studies underscore the importance of the quality of one's roles in determining whether one perceives temporal conflicts. But what of individual differences in the construction of meaning around time spent in these roles?

Thoits (1987) has argued that multiple roles are beneficial rather than harmful when self-definitions are congruent with behaviors. In making this

observation, Thoits moves us toward a focus on individual cognitive processes that imbue time with significance. This focus has received only cursory attention in the work-nonwork literature. Champoux (1978) evoked something akin to a cognitive self-definition approach to the work-nonwork issue by using semantic differentials to measure people's work characteristics, nonwork characteristics, and self-concept. He calculated Euclidean distances between these three measures to identify individuals whose self-concepts were more aligned with work or with nonwork. Broadhead (1980), in a study of how medical students manage their work and nonwork identities, suggested that the degree of conflict between work and nonwork was partially a function of the way in which individuals articulate their work and nonwork identities as well as the relationship between the two. Finally, Kelly and Kelly (1994) argued that harmonious relationships between work, family, and leisure are a matter of developing shared meanings among the domains, such that individuals need not divide their lives into distinct segments but rather ensure that dimensions of each are interwoven throughout. Kelley and Kelley note that questions about meaningfulness are not fashionable in current social science research, but they argue that such study is critical in the development of "a new perspective on fundamental issues of overall life patterns and dimensions of meaning" (p. 272).

In summary, research provides general support for the idea that characteristics of one's work and nonwork roles influence perceptions of conflict. Research is just beginning, however, to examine the phenomenological aspects of time in the work-nonwork equation and to extend the operational definition of work-nonwork conflict beyond the presupposition that time allocation alone is central. As some scholars have recently noted, the relationship between self-concept and work-nonwork conflict (and enrichment) represents an important, and largely unexplored, opportunity to transcend the primarily temporal perspective on the work-nonwork issue (Caproni, 1997; Carlson & Kacmar, 1996). It is precisely this relationship that we need to illuminate to develop an understanding of the phenomenological role of time in the work-nonwork relationship.

A MEANING-BASED MODEL OF WORK-NONWORK CONFLICT

By viewing time as a container of meaning, rather than as a commodity to be parceled out among domains, we can begin to consider the phenomenological properties of time (above and beyond the number of hours spent) that may lead to feelings of conflict between various life domains. For

purposes of our argument, we focus on the general domains of work and nonwork. In doing so, we do not mean to perpetuate a coarse and artificial dichotomization of life roles into work and nonwork. We must acknowledge, however, that the experience of work-nonwork conflict presupposes a recognition that certain activities and demands have their origin in a work domain whereas others have their origin in a nonwork domain, and this can create tension for individuals. It is the construction of this experienced conflict that we examine here, aided by our time-as-a-container metaphor.

Our argument builds on the notion that perceived work-nonwork conflict will be exacerbated when individuals fill their time containers with activities that they perceive to be inconsistent with their identities. Conversely, individuals who fill their time containers with activities that affirm their self-concepts will experience less perception of work-nonwork conflict than will other individuals facing the same quantitative time pressures but whose activities are not identity affirming. In this section, we develop a conceptual model of the phenomenological properties of time that influence work-nonwork conflict.

DEFINITIONS AND BOUNDARY CONDITIONS

Work-nonwork conflict can assume at least one of two forms. On one hand, conflict is an episodic phenomenon. Work-nonwork conflicts often occur as instances or specific occasions, such as when one must make the painful choice between going to work and attending to family problems. Wiersma (1994) provides an example of research on episodic work-nonwork conflict. Conflict also exists as a generalized perception that one's work and nonwork lives are, to some extent, incompatible. Most research on work-nonwork conflict adopts this approach. It is this form of conflict that our model addresses. Accordingly, we define work-nonwork conflict as a perception that there is a general tension between one's work life and nonwork life. This perception will naturally be related to episodic forms of conflict, as frequent instances of work-nonwork conflict will likely amount to a generalized perception of conflict.

We also wish to specify the boundary conditions within which we expect our model to operate. First, we must not overlook the objective fact that time constraints contribute to felt conflict. Time is finite, and work demands are real; we do not assume that they are entirely socially constructed. We also recognize that when time demands from either work or nonwork are extreme, no amount of meaningfulness contained within that time is likely to mitigate one's sense of work-nonwork conflict. Therefore, our model focuses on that

range wherein work demands do not totally eclipse opportunities to have a meaningful nonwork life, and vice versa.

We also suggest that there is a lower bound on this range. For meaning to play a role in the experience of work-nonwork conflict, there must be some opportunity for work and nonwork demands to collide. If someone has eliminated all nonwork commitments and aspirations or, conversely, has eliminated all work commitments and aspirations (i.e., the independently wealthy, the chronically unemployed, etc.), there is no occasion for conflict, and our model thus does not apply. Furthermore, if an individual's work and nonwork lives are completely intertwined so that they make no distinction between the two (e.g., a family farmer or employee of a family business), work-nonwork conflict is not meaningful. Therefore, our model presupposes (a) a distinction by the individual between work and nonwork domains, (b) some significant level of time demands from both work and nonwork, and (c) the likelihood of occasional mutual exclusivity (i.e., the impossibility of simultaneously meeting both sets of demands). Underlying this boundary condition is the assumption that some level of conflict is actually beneficial in the creation of meaning. It is only when we are forced to make difficult choices that we have the opportunity to define ourselves and thus to develop an identity that can be affirmed.

The existence of these upper and lower bounds to our theory further suggests that the experience of work-nonwork conflict may be at least partially explained by social-structural considerations. So, for example, we may find that meaning-based conflict is more relevant for individuals in certain occupations, certain industries, or at different levels of a hierarchy. Although it is not our purpose in this article to explore these social-structural effects, it is important to acknowledge that the experience of work-nonwork conflict may be influenced by macro structures as well as organizational and individual phenomena.

AFFIRMING IDENTITY DURING WORK AND NONWORK TIME

According to role-identity theory, the different roles that individuals occupy (in their work and nonwork lives) carry with them different meanings and conceptions of identity, that is, notions of the self as an occupant of a particular role (Burke & Reitzes, 1981; McCall & Simmons, 1966; Reitzes & Mutran, 1994; Stryker & Statham, 1985). Although individuals occupy multiple roles and therefore possess multiple role identities, research has suggested that people tend to be differentially committed to these various role identities (Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Serpe, 1982). The degree of commitment to various role identities suggests a "salience hierarchy" in which some

identities take on more central roles than others in defining who we are and how we behave.

Furthermore, an important distinction can be made between our actual role identities ("who I think I am in a particular role") and our ideal identities ("who I think I should be in a particular role"). Higgins's (1987, 1989) self-discrepancy theory articulates this distinction and argues that emotional responses to the discrepancy between actual and ideal identities can lead to frustration and depression (Higgins, Klein, & Strauman, 1985). Drawing on a rich tradition of work in cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), discrepancy theory underscores the possibility that perceptions of self as an occupant of a given work or nonwork role may not coincide with the ideal conception of self as an occupant of that role. When this discrepancy occurs, self-discrepancy theory predicts that dissatisfaction and frustration will result, as will a desire to resolve the perceived discrepancy.

Following this self-discrepancy argument, we suggest that perceived inconsistencies between actual and ideal identities in work and nonwork domains will impact how individuals experience work and nonwork time demands. If the time demanded by a given domain involves identity affirmation (i.e., actual and ideal role identities are consistent with one another), that time will be replete with personal meaning and thus will mitigate perceptions of conflict between that time and time demanded by another domain. Due to the personal satisfaction experienced during identity-affirming time, the individual will feel that he or she has more emotional and psychological resources to contribute to other life domains.

On the other hand, if the time demanded by a given domain contains activities that are identity discrepant (i.e., irrelevant or contradictory to one's ideal identity), individuals are likely to resent the demand and to perceive it to be in conflict with other life domains that could affirm their identity. The time spent in this domain tends to deplete the emotional and psychological resources that one might devote to other life domains, thus time conflicts become highly salient. This leads to some basic propositions:

Proposition 1: When work or nonwork time entails activities consistent with one's ideal identity, perceptions of work-nonwork conflict will be diminished.

Proposition 2: When work or nonwork time entails activities discrepant to one's ideal identity, perceptions of work-nonwork conflict will be heightened.

THE ROLE OF IDENTITY ANCHORS

A number of scholars have suggested that although individuals have both work and nonwork identities, these two identities may not be equally salient. For instance, Lobel (1991) theorized that differences in the salience of role

identities across work and family would predict investment in work and family roles. Differences in identity salience between work and nonwork roles are central to the theorizing of Evans and Bartolomé (1984), Voydanoff and Donnelly (1989), and Gutek, Searle, and Klepa, (1991). Empirical work has confirmed that some individuals assign more salience to their work identity whereas others assign more salience to their nonwork identity (Champoux, 1978; Lobel & St. Clair, 1992). In addition, more general theories regarding the management of multiple identities have suggested that these identities are arranged in a hierarchy of importance, salience, commitment or some combination thereof (e.g., Stryker & Serpe, 1982).

Our model recognizes the differential salience individuals attach to work and nonwork identities and seeks to explain how these differences might impact felt conflict. In developing this model, we suggest that individuals "anchor" their identities, in a generalized manner, either in the work or nonwork domain. In evoking identity anchors, we recognize that identity salience hierarchies may not be static; Stryker and Serpe (1982) suggested, for instance, that identity salience is situationally triggered. However, our stated purpose is to theorize about conflict as a generalized rather than episodic phenomenon. Prioritization of work and nonwork identities most certainly shifts on a day-to-day basis as individuals navigate the episodic pressures of their multiple roles. However, like Champoux (1978), Lobel (1991) and Gutek, Searle, and Klepa (1991), we suggest that over the long run and, perhaps more important, over the range of instances wherein the two identities bump into one another, one will emerge as more central. We therefore anticipate that different configurations of identity anchor and identity affirmation will result in different effects on felt conflict between work and nonwork. We next consider how these configurations impact the perception of conflict.

Scholars of work-nonwork conflict have devoted much of their attention to two different forms of work-nonwork conflict: spillover conflict, in which frustrations and stress from one domain seep into other domains, and compensation conflict, in which people emphasize success and fulfillment in one domain to compensate for failure and frustration in another (Kabanoff, 1980; Staines, 1980; Voydanoff, 1987). Although early research tended to pit these two "theories" of work-nonwork conflict against each other (Champoux, 1978; Staines, 1980), recent research findings have exhibited evidence that both types of work-nonwork conflict exist, but for different people (e.g., Tenbrunsel et al., 1995). Several different explanations for these differences have been proposed, including individual disposition (Morf, 1989), mood (Repetti, 1987), and gender (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991). However, scholars have noted a lack of strong theoretical explanation for

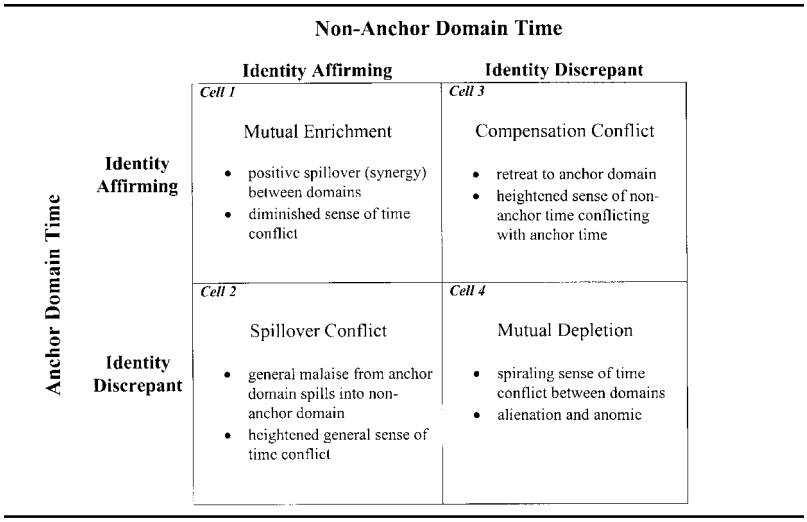

Figure 1: Model of Time Phenomenology in Work-Nonwork Conflict

individual differences in the work-nonwork relationship (Burke & McKeen, 1988; Tenbrunsel et al., 1995).

We theorize that compensation versus spillover forms of conflict can be predicted by considering where individuals' identity anchors are located and whether their identities are being affirmed in the course of their work and nonwork time. To articulate this argument, we have developed a two-by-two model that predicts how the phenomenological nature of work and nonwork time will relate to work-nonwork conflict. The model is summarized in Figure 1.

The two axes of the matrix in Figure 1 denote whether an individual's time in the work and nonwork domains is identity affirming. The vertical axis distinguishes between people who experience their anchor domain (be it work or nonwork) as identity affirming and those who do not. The horizontal axis distinguishes between people who experience the nonanchor domain (be it work or nonwork) as identity affirming and those who do not. Within the cells of the model, we describe the predicted conflict outcome. In the following paragraphs, we consider each cell in turn and articulate the theoretical reasoning for our predictions.

Cell 1: Mutual Enrichment

What happens when individuals experience identity affirmation during both work and nonwork time? This is, of course, the ideal configuration, and

we predict that regardless of identity anchor, value congruence during both work and nonwork time will lead to positive spillover (both domains reinforcing each other) or "enrichment" (Rothbard, 1999). Individuals within this cell may still experience temporal conflicts given the time demands of work and nonwork, but we argue that the phenomenological aspect of their time will be conflict free. That is, work and nonwork will merge into a seamless meaningfulness such that neither is perceived as implicitly threatening to the other, but rather that the two domains are mutually enhancing.

Broadhead's (1980) description of how medical students construct their student and parent roles illustrates mutual enrichment. Broadhead's research suggests that although the demands placed on medical students are intense, many of the students he spoke to did not perceive conflict between their roles as student and parent because they felt that time at school was consistent with both identities. Piotrkowski (1979) provided another striking example. Describing an animal lab technician who experienced his work as fulfilling, she noted that his enthusiasm and self-esteem based on his work experience energized his interactions with his family. She observed that the technician "derives a sense of esteem and identity from his work, and this personal gratification is made available to the family system through his ability to initiate warm and interested interactions" (pp. 60-61).

Research on role accumulation has suggested that roles often engender pleasure and increased energy rather than just strain on other roles (Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974). From studies in this field, it appears that the quality of the role experience is the determining factor as to whether role involvement leads to enrichment or depletion (Gove & Zeiss, 1987; Verbrugge, 1986). Accordingly, when individuals experience identity affirmation in their work and nonwork roles, the result should be increased energy that can be devoted to other roles.

These arguments suggest the following proposition:

> *Proposition 3:* When individuals' time at work and nonwork are both identity affirming, work and nonwork assume a positive spillover relationship. The perception of time conflicts between work and nonwork is diminished, and the individual is energized by his or her time in both domains.

Cell 2: Spillover Conflict

We next consider what is likely to happen if identity discrepancy occurs in the life domain with which individuals most identify. If the identity anchor is work, for instance, such individuals will be highly frustrated when work time is not identity affirming. This is because the identity by which they define

themselves is based on work time that is filled with activities alien or contrary to the values on which they wish to build their identity. Faced with such a threat, they will experience spillover conflict, with their frustration tainting their nonwork time (i.e., impatience in interpersonal interactions or negative affect). Because the nondiscrepant domain is of secondary salience, it does not represent a legitimate forum in which to compensate for the discrepancy in the identity anchor domain. It is, so to speak, at the mercy of the frustrations the individual experiences in the anchor domain. Precisely the same dynamic would be expected if an individual primarily identified with nonwork and experienced identity discrepancy in the nonwork domain.

To illustrate, we consider an example provided by Crouter's (1984) field study of nonwork spillover into work. In one interview, a mother working on an assembly line told Crouter, "It's a hassle to worry about babysitters. Also, it's hard when a kid gets sick. I worry and don't get work done as well. I get in a bad mood at work, preoccupied with worrying" (p. 431). Although this research did not attempt to determine where the woman's identity was anchored or the extent to which that identity was affirmed on the job or off, her sentiments are consistent with Cell 2 in our model. If individuals anchor their identity in nonwork (e.g., motherhood) and feel that their nonwork time does not affirm that identity (e.g., the woman has been unable to ensure the child's well-being), then the frustration related to nonwork time will create perceptions of conflict with regard to work time. A similar scenario could be constructed for spillover from work to nonwork.

Proposition 4: When individuals experience identity discrepancy in their anchor identity domain, frustration from the anchor domain will spill over into the nonanchor domain, heightening perceptions of work-nonwork conflict.

Cell 3: Compensation Conflict

A different dynamic would emerge, however, if identity discrepancy occurred in the life domain that is not one's identity anchor. For instance, when individuals primarily identify with nonwork (e.g., family), identity discrepancy during work time will lead to compensation conflict and the tendency to resort to the anchor domain to achieve affirmation. In other words, people anchored in nonwork identities will compensate for unfulfilling work time by imbuing nonwork time with personal meaning. Although this retreat to the anchor domain alleviates, to some extent, the frustration experienced in the identity-discrepant domain, this compensation relationship serves to segment the two domains, which ultimately breeds a sense of incompatibility. Episodic conflicts may be minimized in the short term, but

phenomenological conflict over work and nonwork time will be accentuated. Ultimately, the individual will come to see the identity-discrepant domain as an unwelcome intrusion into the more highly valued anchor-domain time.

Wilensky's (1960) classic study provides a clear example of a compensatory relationship between work and nonwork. He observed that assembly line workers compensated for their dull and unsatisfying work time by emphasizing exciting and stimulating nonwork pursuits. In terms of our framework, we suggest that these workers retreated to a core nonwork identity when their work time did not affirm their identities as people who enjoyed challenge and stimulation.

Recent work by Hochschild (1997) illustrates compensation in the reverse direction. Hochschild argues that individual workers (particularly women) have recently begun to retreat from the stresses of family time to devote more time to work because that time is more fulfilling and rewarding. Although this interpretation paints a rather pessimistic view of modern family life, it is entirely consistent with our model. The women Hochschild describes are placing greater salience on their work identity and are using their identity-affirming work time to compensate for the frustrations associated with a nonwork domain in which the reality of conflict and stress are discrepant with an ideal identity of one who fosters harmony and control.

Proposition 5: When individuals experience identity discrepancy in their nonanchor identity domain, they will compensate by focusing their time and energy on their anchor identity domain. This heightens perceptions of work-nonwork conflict, including the perception that nonanchor domain time is intruding on anchor domain time.

Cell 4: Mutual Depletion

When individuals experience identity discrepancy during both work and nonwork time, the identity anchor is irrelevant. The individual has no forum in which to express his or her values, and not only conflict but also alienation or anomie is likely to occur. Dual identity discrepancy would be marked by a rapidly upward spiraling sense of conflict, not only between work and nonwork but also between the individual's ideal identity and the actual life he or she leads.

Our review of work-nonwork conflict literature revealed few clear-cut cases of a Cell-4 dynamic. The implicit assumption among work-nonwork researchers appears to be that people do achieve fulfillment during either their work or nonwork time. Unfortunately, this implicit assumption seems overly optimistic given our associations with some individuals who experience general alienation and anomie rather than enrichment, spillover, or compen-

sation. One contribution of our model, therefore, is to draw our attention to the possibility of both discrepant work and nonwork identities and the associated phenomenon of mutual depletion.

Although the research literature appears to be silent on the phenomenon of mutual depletion, we find it richly illustrated in certain literary sources. A powerful example is provided by the character of Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* (1949/1977). In the work domain, Willy Loman saw himself as a polished and successful salesman with a good network of friends. In the nonwork domain, Willy saw himself as a popular man and an inspirational father. Miller's play is about Willy's reaction to a series of events and realizations that demonstrated that his actual work and nonwork identities were inconsistent with these ideals. For Willy, these realizations turned out to be too much to handle, causing him to become delusional and, ultimately, to commit suicide. Although these may be extreme reactions, they illustrate the tension and frustration that we predict will occur for Cell-4 individuals who are unable to affirm their identities during their time in either the work domain or the nonwork domain.

Proposition 6: When individuals experience identity discrepancy during both work time and nonwork time, work-nonwork conflict will be marked by mutual depletion. Alienation and anomie result.

IMPLICATIONS

The framework we have described suggests a number of interesting ramifications for theory and research. First, the framework provides some theoretical rationale behind the distinctions between spillover and compensation conflict. Although others have found that gender (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Tenbrunsel et al., 1995) and other individual characteristics (Morf, 1989; Repetti, 1987) predict spillover-versus-compensation relationships, the theoretical rationale behind such findings is not yet well integrated. Our framework provides an explanation, based on individual identity anchors and affirmation versus discrepancy, for expecting spillover or compensation conflicts to emerge.

The framework also strikes an optimistic note by helping to sort out the mechanisms underlying the emergence of healthy positive spillover relationships between work and nonwork time. Most relevant research has focused on the dysfunctions associated with spillover (stress, for instance) and has overlooked the possibility of positive relationships between some work-nonwork domains (Greenhaus, 1989). Our framework suggests the possibility that investment in one domain may reinforce involvement in another. If

one's work domain activities consist of meanings that one values personally, even a demanding schedule may not undermine one's sense of balance (Broadhead, 1980). A promising approach to managing the challenges of thriving in multiple domains simultaneously may be to identify the meanings, values, and skills that underlie multiple domains and leverage them so that they are mutually supportive. Research on person-job fit (e.g., O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991) or an investigation of the content of skills shared across domains (Bailyn, 1993) may provide useful insights for work-nonwork conflict research.

The phenomenological perspective adopted in this framework also provides a foundation from which to study some as-yet neglected aspects of work-nonwork conflict. For instance, research has almost exclusively relied upon self-report data. This is not entirely inappropriate because work-nonwork conflict is generally conceptualized as an intrapsychic phenomenon. However, other stakeholders are affected by the method individuals use to balance their work and nonwork lives. Perhaps even when employees themselves feel no conflict between domains, their families, friends, and nonwork associates feel neglected. The meaningfulness approach is important because a deep sense of identity affirmation at work could lead an individual to single-mindedly focus on work to the extent that he or she overlooks the demands of family and community and becomes "unbalanced" without realizing it. Future research should address how identity-related conflict reduction impacts the family and other domains.

The framework allows us to ask another important question: Does the meaning attached to work or nonwork activities influence our perception of the *amount* of time devoted to them? Some research suggests that it does. Notably, Czikszentmihalyi (1990) has found that when individuals become one with their task (i.e., experience "flow"), they lose track of time. One interpretation is that their time is so consumed by the meaning of the task that it becomes irrelevant. There may be other important ways that the nature of our time affects our experience of its quantity.

Finally, an insight peripheral to the framework bears mention. If, as we argue, quantitative and phenomenological elements of time conflict are distinct, there may be ways in which temporal conflicts between work and nonwork are beneficial in terms of personal meaning. Deutsch (1973) introduced the notion that intrapsychic conflict can be constructive as well as destructive. This may also apply to role conflict, which, according to Katz and Kahn (1978), arises when an individual faces incompatible demands such that compliance to one role makes compliance with another difficult or impossible. Role conflict is usually considered destructive, or at least inherently problematic, but there may be ways in which the tension between work

and nonwork time enhances performance in both work and nonwork. Using a balance metaphor, this is hard to imagine. However, from a meaning-based approach, if the work and nonwork domains share intrinsic motivations, then temporal conflicts need not destroy one's sense of balance. Rather, individuals who live within multiple domains that are temporally conflicting but consistent in terms of core values may achieve balance by focusing on what is central to their identity in each domain. Tension is perhaps necessary to allow individuals to filter out elements of their responsibilities extraneous to their desired identity. The organization of one's life around core values is consistent with much popular literature on balance (see, e.g., Covey, 1989) and merits more scholarly attention.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we have developed a framework that considers work-nonwork conflict as a function of the subjective experience, or phenomenology, of time. The framework suggests that individual differences in identity and values in addition to differences in work and nonwork time demands predict the extent to which employees will experience conflict between work and nonwork. The phenomenological perspective does not negate the balance perspective that describes the importance of wise time allocation. Rather, it complements the time allocation focus that has characterized much work-nonwork research to date.

An important contribution of the framework is its espousal of a broader view of how individuals actually experience the relationship between work and nonwork time. Although the common imagery of work-nonwork balance is very useful for conceptualizing how individuals deal with time demands, its zero-sum overtones make it ill-suited to address how the meanings associated with work and nonwork can inform the experience of conflict. We have argued that time can also be viewed as a container of meaning. This imagery is more consistent with a phenomenological approach to time and suggests that what we include in our work and nonwork time can have as much of an impact on our perceptions of conflict as the actual amount of time devoted to either domain.

We advocate a perspective that work-nonwork conflict is more than a problem of balancing hours as commodities. This perspective not only opens new avenues of inquiry but also fosters optimism concerning employees' abilities to achieve a meaningful integration of work and nonwork. If work-nonwork conflict is merely a matter of allocating one's limited store of time, there is little that can be done to assuage it, other than cutting back one's in-

volvement in one or another domain. On the other hand, if work-nonwork conflict is also a matter of identification and values, there is hope that employees and organizations can adapt to one another and enhance the prospect of people leading multidimensional lives that are both balanced and meaningful.

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