

The Efficacy of Symbolic Work-Family Integration for Married Professionals who Share Paid Work – A Descriptive Study

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Abstract

This study investigates whether spouses sharing paid work (in terms of workplace, occupation, or both) affects the amount and direction of work-family integration in terms of use of time, space, artifacts, activities, and associates (Nippert-Eng 1996). Results from interviews of each member of twenty-six professional couples reveal that spousal shared paid work arrangements influenced the likelihood of about half of the measures of integration. In addition, the direction of the integration differed between couples who shared workplaces and those who did not. Couples sharing workplace were more likely to integrate work into home, and less likely to integrate home into work, than those not sharing workplace. For most respondents, the demands of paid work were great enough that it was inevitable to have greater work-to-home spillover than the reverse.

Introduction

People's work and family experiences can be manifest in visible symbolic forms, from displaying family photos at the office, to writing doctor appointments next to business meetings on a calendar. Viewing a calendar with both work and family notes and appointments contained therein is, on the surface, a superficial exercise. But examining this artifact in terms of how it represents social identities and processes can reveal that even the most mundane objects and activities (e.g., writing appointments on a calendar) can symbolize larger social phenomena. Social actors' use of space, objects, time, activities, and associates (Nippert-Eng 1996), when examined sociologically, contain meanings that signify work and family experiences and identities. Understanding the artifacts and practices of people can help us grasp the complexity and meaning of the boundary between work and family life. The normative practices used to negotiate and manage the tasks of everyday life are part of the process of work-family negotiation. Representations of this negotiation via common objects, physical space, use of time, daily activities, and work-family associates are the focus of this study. For the remainder of this paper, these representations are referred to as *symbolic work-family integration*, specifically because they are mundane things that, once analyzed systematically, meaningfully symbolize important social identities and experiences for the individuals who use them in their work and family lives.

The social actors involved in work-family integration are as varied as the work and family experiences they encounter. Social scientists have long been interested in how dual-career couples succeed or fail in their attempts to negotiate time and energy between both realms (e.g., Bowen and Pittman 1995; Hochschild 1997; Perlow 1997; Risman 1998; Townsend 2001; Moen 2003; Desrochers, Hilton and Larwood 2005; Schiebinger et al. 2008). Many studies have been devoted to examining work-family integration for dual-career couples, but few researchers have explored integration for a unique population: professional married co-workers. For this population – individuals who embody a unique set of work-family experiences by sharing paid work in some form with a spouse – their classification as simultaneous spouses and colleagues could influence their work-family integration. More specifically, by including spouses in a sample who work at the same workplace, occupation, and both workplace and occupation, it is possible to examine whether the structural arrangement of shared work – that is, whether spouses share workplace or occupation or both – may influence the level, type, and qualitative characteristics of symbolic work-family integration. This research posits that whether spouses share paid work in terms of the physical location of that work, or the mental "location" of an occupation, can affect how work and family boundaries are negotiated.

The primary research question guiding this study is whether the structural arrangement of shared paid work between professional married co-workers (whether they share workplace, occupation, both, or neither) influences the level, direction, and qualitative characteristics of symbolic work-family integration. The goal of this research is threefold: first, to elaborate on unique methods in research on work and family boundaries that are minimally discussed in work-family literature (namely, to get people to talk about artifacts in their environments and their everyday uses and meanings); second, to theorize about how different work groups construct adaptive strategies (Moen 2003) to negotiate work-family segmentation and integration in demanding professional work settings using symbolic artifacts as tools for this negotiation; and third, to investigate an under-studied population whose structural work arrangements (sharing paid work in terms of physical and/or mental "space") make for a unique site for work-family negotiations.

Work and Family Integration Among Professionals

How much the experiences, identities, and cognitions surrounding paid work and family life intersect is the subject of much research. There is no shortage of research on work-family integration – often conceptualized as, or conceptually paired with, work-family negotiation, interface, spillover, balance, or boundaries – for professional dual-earner couples, and the conceptualization of integration has undergone definitional change and empirical testing (e.g., Hertz 1986; Marshack 1994; Bowen and Pittman 1995; Hochschild 1997; Perlow 1997; Risman 1998; Edwards and Rothbard 1999; Edwards and Rothbard 2000; Perry-Jenkins, Repetti and Crouter 2000; Townsend 2001; Kreiner 2002; Moen and Sweet 2002; Moen 2003; Desrochers, Hilton and Larwood 2005). Overwhelmingly, the central message of much of this body of research is that, even though “the work-family interface in dual-earner couples consists of fluid, ever-changing relationships” (Moen 2003: 9) depending on life course stage, professionals are working longer hours, relative to the past and to other industrialized countries, and allowing that work to spillover into other parts of their lives (Townsend 2001). Demographically, demands of professional paid work impact family life in terms of delayed childbearing and declining birth rates (Altucher and Williams 2003). Normatively, as the culture of paid work continues to perpetuate the demand for long hours and “face time,” workers are not increasing their use of family friendly policies (Hochschild 1997). Rather, they are allowing their work worlds to spillover into the rest of their lives – taking work on vacations, making conference calls at home, telecommuting, reading at the dinner table, making business calls on the way to a doctor appointment, etc. While many professionals could consider this spillover a positive result of passion for their profession and the result of continually improving technological devices that allow for cross-realm integration (e.g., wireless internet on mobile phones), a more critical interpretation is that it is a symptom of an overworked professional culture disguised as fun and rewarding (Kunda 1992).

A Framework for Examining Symbolic Dimensions of Work and Family Integration

Even with a plethora of research and theorizing devoted to work and family integration, few pieces of research specifically examine the material cultural dynamics of work-family integration – the “signs of the self” (Rochberg-Halton 1986) that symbolize work-family negotiation. Of the multi-disciplinary research that does address this element, it tends to examine dynamics of either work *or* family (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Rochberg-Halton 1986; Rybczynski 1986; Ehrenreich and English 1989; Kunda 1992; Spain 1992; Spigel 1992; Halle 1993; Hanson and Pratt 1995; Garber 2000; Hareven 2000; Epstein and Seron 2001; Isaksen 2002; Sarti 2002; Vogel 2002), but not both as integrated realms of social experience, and not as they relate to professional couples who share work.

However, work and family scholars have not entirely neglected the use of time, space, artifacts, activities, and associates in their analyses of the integration of the two realms. Social actors participate in creating and maintaining their own strategies for daily living, and these strategies can be manifest visibly and materially (Swidler 1986). Indeed, “[t]he world of meaning that we create for ourselves, and that creates our selves, involves the objective surroundings, and the things we value do indeed act as signs of the self that are essential in their own right for its continued cultivation” (Rochberg-Halton 1986: 164). Hochschild (1997), for example, includes a discussion of at-work family photo displays as reminders to employees that “however much work filled an emotional void left by real families and came to simulate family life, those real families, in all their complexity, were still there” (88). And Nippert-Eng (1996) fully incorporates symbolic measures of work-family integration, such as use of objects and space, as indicators of workers’ cognitive strategies for negotiating boundaries between the two realms. It is this latter source upon which this article’s framework relies.

Through boundary theory, Nippert-Eng (1996) successfully examines the significance of meanings people attach to objects related to work and family life. The author delineates the use of time, space, artifacts, activities and associates as the “signs of the self” that indicate work-family integration, without specifying whether individuals’ high levels of work-home integration are beneficial or detrimental at a macro level. And it is “[t]hrough the visible presence of a variety of living and inanimate ‘props,’ we enhance and attenuate the mental distinctions between realms and selves” (35). By examining indicators of work-home integration and segmentation – from wallets and purses as “identity kits,” to calendars, keys, clothing, photos, vacation activities, food, drink, and talk – Nippert-Eng paints a thorough and unique picture of the symbolism of everyday home and work integration. The social actors in Nippert-Eng’s study use these symbols to perform boundary work – “the process of creating and maintaining more or less distinct ‘territories of the self’” (34) – between the realms of home and work. This research utilizes the same dimensions of symbolic work-family integration that Nippert-Eng’s work does. However, because the focus of her study was on a varied sample within one organization (a sample that did not single out married co-workers who share paid work), the current study adds to Nippert-Eng’s research by extending it to a population that remains understudied.

Professional Married Co-Workers Who Share Paid Work

Even as research on dual-career spouses flourishes, research on professional married co-workers (spouses who share paid work) is limited, especially using the measures in this study (see, for example, Marshak 1994; Astin and Milem 1997; Hornig 1997; Moen and Sweet 2002; Schienbinger et al. 2008). However, it is important research for three substantive reasons. First, personal relationships at work may affect the conduct of work. Second, in scholarly literature, they are depicted as different from other kinds of relationships in organizational settings (Powell and Foley 1999). Mainiero (1989) suggests that workplace romances that lead to marriage may lessen flawed or biased decision-making within the context of formal work roles because individuals' potential is maximized due to the fact that their personal needs are satisfied. Nonetheless, romantic relationships in the workplace, marriages included, may create hostility in the form of perceiving inequities or fear of rewards based on sexual or personal favors (Powell and Foley 1999). In both instances, work and personal relationships are altered and can affect organizational dynamics. And finally, research on married co-workers is important because demographic shifts have increased the frequency of personal relationships in organizational settings. In particular, more women are in managerial and professional positions (Ferber and Loeb 1997), which increases the opportunity for forming romantic relationships between people at the same organizational level than was previously possible. Also, people are delaying the age at first marriage (Cherlin 1992), working longer hours (Schor 1992), and therefore are increasingly likely to meet sexual partners and spouses at work (Michael et al. 1997; Powell and Foley 1999).

Ways that Spouses Share Paid Work – Why “Space” Matters

While research on same-profession or same-job married couples is plentiful (see, for example, Moen and Sweet 2002; Schiebinger et al. 2008), no research has systematically compared married couples who fit into different occupation categories based on sharing occupation, workplace, both, or neither. For today's professional dual-career couples, it is important to examine whether sharing the physical space of a workplace or the mental space of an occupation (or both) affects work-family integration, because it is within these “spaces” that social negotiation, roles, and identity formation take place.

In this research, sharing physical space between spouses is conceptualized as working outside the home for pay in the same office, building, or complex such that in-person visible and/or tactile contact with a spouse are possible multiple times throughout the work day. Sharing mental space between spouses is conceptualized as having a similar occupational title and status level within the same occupation as one's spouse such that occupational information, concepts, and jargon are mutually understood. Couples who work in the same place and in the same occupation share physical and mental space, couples who work in the same place or are in the same occupation share physical or mental space (respectively), and couples who work in different places and different occupations share neither. This study divides the broad category of married co-worker (the independent variable) into four occupation patterns, based on type and amount of shared work space.

The first pattern is represented by couples who share occupation and workplace (SOSW, or “same occupation, same workplace”). These are couples who share both the physical and mental spaces of paid work. Their occupational titles and statuses are close to the same and the husband and wife have multiple opportunities to see or touch each other during the course of a work day, because they work in the same building or same campus (e.g., two lawyers in the same law firm or two faculty members in the same academic department).

The second group included in this study consists of couples who share occupation but not workplace (SODW, or “same occupation, different workplace”). That is, they share the mental space of an occupation, but not physical space in paid work. For these couples, their occupational titles and statuses are close to the same but the husband and wife have little or no opportunity to see or touch each other during the course of a work day because they work in two different locations (e.g., two lawyers in different law firms or two professors at different colleges).

Third, couples who work at different occupations but in the same workplace (DOSW, or “different occupation, same workplace” are examined. These are couples who share the physical space of paid work only. Their occupational titles and statuses are different, possibly hierarchical, and the husband and wife have multiple opportunities to see or touch each other during the course of a work day (e.g., a librarian and a professor on the same college campus or an attorney and an administrative assistant in the same law firm).

Finally, in order to have a control group, couples who work at different occupations and different workplaces (DODW, or “different occupation, different workplace”) are examined. These marriage partners share neither the mental nor physical space of paid work, their occupational titles and statuses are different, and they have no opportunity to see or touch each other during the course of a work day because they work in two different locations (e.g., a professor and a lawyer married to each other who do not do any paid work together).

Understanding the meaning behind artifacts and activities of daily life is crucial in an exploration of work-family integration. Further, the sharing of work “space” between spouses as a unique relationship experience likely influences the boundary work between home and paid work. Thus, the central research question under investigation is whether and how the amount and type of shared paid work “space” between spouses (as indicated by four occupation patterns) influence the level, direction, and qualitative characteristics of symbolic work-family integration (as indicated by use of time, space, artifacts, activities, and associates).

Methods

The results of this study are based on fifty-two individual semi-structured interviews with each member of twenty-six married couples for whom work was shared in terms of occupation, workplace, both, or neither. The 1 ½ - 3 hour interviews were completed between December 1998 and December 1999. A purposive and non-probability network sampling approach was favored over random sampling because the definition of the population examined is limited. Via the author’s professional and social network, and college and law firm directories, individuals were contacted via e-mail or a written letter, and asked to participate if they met the sample criteria. Of those people who met the criteria and were contacted, the response rate was 87%. Nippert-Eng’s (1996) conceptions of work-family integration and segmentation are loosely replicated in this study as dependent variable measures. The five broad dimensions under which twenty-three individual measures fit are: use of time, space, artifacts, activities, and associates. Arguably, several measures could fit under more than one dimension, but the five dimensions themselves are not the focus of this study. Each measure is taken individually as an indicator of the dependent variable of symbolic work-family integration. The broad dimensions and specific measures are listed in Table 1.

Table 1
Dimensions and Measures of Symbolic Integration for Participant X

<i>Use of time</i>
Number of hours X brings paid work home
How often X sees spouse during work day at work
<i>Use of space</i>
X has home office for self
X has personal file or space at work
<i>Use of artifacts</i>
X has personal websites bookmarked on computer at work
X has work-related websites bookmarked on computer at home
X has family “art” at work
X has other personal items at work
X gets personal journals at work
X gets work-related journals at home
X has pictures of work colleagues at home
X has home and work integrated on keychain(s)
X has family photographs at work
X has home items in work briefcase or bag
X has workplace benefits documentation at home
X has home and work integrated on calendar(s)
<i>Use of activities</i>
X does personal tasks on computer at work
X does paid work at lunch
X does paid work on vacation
If X sees spouse at work, does not change behavior
<i>Use of associates</i>
X has colleagues who are also friends
How often X brings children to workplace
How often X has colleagues to home

The data analysis process was pre-structured in the sense that the interview and survey questions were asked in approximately the same way to every informant. Classifying a respondent as having or utilizing a particular symbolic measure of work-family integration required an initial response of “yes” along the measures of symbolic integration, and then the subsequent open-ended questions were analyzed to seek understanding of the qualitative characteristics of that integration or segmentation. In order for an occupation group to classify as scoring “high” on integration, most of the respondents in that group had to say “yes” to most of the individual measures of integration. To score “low” on integration, less than half of the measures were mentioned by a minority of respondents in the

group. The exceptions to this were questions that asked for frequencies. These were analyzed separately and clustered into high and low groups according to responses.

Sample Characteristics

Two professional occupations with varying occupational norms were included in the study – academics and the legal profession – in order to try to achieve generalizability to professionals while limiting variability due to occupational culture. Informants from a total of six colleges and six law firms, and a total of eighteen academic departments and six law specialties were included. Respondents were included from a large urban community in the northern Midwest, from a smaller suburb of that urban area, and from a medium sized metropolitan area elsewhere in the Midwest.

Couples included in this study needed to meet the following criteria: they needed to fit into one of the four occupation categories discussed above,ⁱ they needed to have held their current occupational positions for a year or more, they needed to have had at least one child who was under fifteen,ⁱⁱ and they needed to have been a professional in either a law firm or a college or university. The ages of the respondents ranged from twenty-nine to fifty-seven, and the number of children still at home ranged from one to four. I interviewed only couples who had at least one child who was still under the guidance of parents in terms of child care or driving. Children still at home were between the ages of one and one half and fifteen. Several couples had children sixteen or older, but if they did, they also had at least one child under fifteen. Eighty-eight percent of the sample were white, a limitation in terms of racial representativeness. Two percent were Asian or Pacific Islander, four percent listed themselves as “other,” and six percent did not answer the question on race. Over eighty percent of them had either a Ph.D. or a J.D., sixteen percent had a Masters Degree, and two percent had a Bachelor’s Degree as their highest level of education attained. By most definitions, all of these couples fit into the upper-middle or upper class, with nearly seventy percent of their family incomes falling between \$60,000 and \$119,999. Six couples had spouses who made approximately the same income as their partners. Of the remaining twenty couples, 20% had wives who made more money than their husbands. Pseudonyms are used in the analysis.

Limitations

This research is limited methodologically for reasons due, in large part, to time and financial constraints. Specifically, the sample size is quite small (N=52), the subtle differences between the legal and academic professions are not accounted for in any detail because of the small sample size, the analysis is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, the data come from a convenience sample, and the results are based on individuals’ retrospective perceptions of their own experiences. However, the in-depth nature of the interview questions and the fact that the population being examined is under-studied seem to counteract any limitations due to sample size. Depth was more important than breadth in this exploratory study. Further, the cross-sectional nature of the study and the retrospective self-reporting of the participants are both appropriate, given that this research is meant to replicate and extend previous cross-sectional research based on participants’ self-reports conducted by Nippert-Eng (1996). It is for the sake of convenience and consistency, then, that this study has these characteristics.

Findings

The way individual respondents demonstrated varying levels of work-family integration fit into one of two patterns, presented in Table 2: 1) the use of about half of the measures varied by occupation group; and 2) the use of the other half of measures was experienced by a majority of professionals in this study, with little or no variation between occupation groups.

Table 2
Variability of Measures of Symbolic Integration

Symbolic Measures that Varied Along Occupation Group Lines	Symbolic Measures that did <i>not</i> Vary Along Occupation Group Lines (and were experienced by majority)
X Has home office for self	Number of hours X brings paid work home
X Has personal file or space at work	X Does personal tasks on computer at work
X Has home items in work briefcase	X Does work at lunch
X Has workplace benefits at home	X Does work on vacation
X Has home and work integrated on calendar(s)	X Has personal websites bookmarked on computer at work
How often X sees spouse during work day at work	X Has work-related websites bookmarked on computer at home
If X sees spouse, does not change behavior	X Has family "art" at work*
X Has family pictures at work	X Has other personal items at work
X Has colleagues who are also friends	X Gets personal journals at work
How often X brings children to work	X Gets work-related journals at home
How often X has colleagues to home	X Has pictures of work colleagues at home
	X Has home and work integrated on keychain(s)

*Note: While this did not vary between occupation groups in terms of quantity of art items, this did vary somewhat between occupation groups in terms of the level of permanence of the art items.

Sharing Workplace Versus Sharing Occupation: Occupation Group Differences

There was slight variation between occupation groups in terms of the level (relatively high or low) and direction (work to home or home to work) of half of the twenty-three individual indicators. Table 3 outlines these group differences generally, while the subsequent discussion articulates the more specific qualitative characteristics of these group differences.

Same-Workplace-Same-Occupation Couples

Spouses who shared workplace *and* occupation had the highest level of work-family integration along one important measure: the use of calendars. Most people used calendars of some sort – pocket calendars, appointment books, palm pilots, wall calendars, computer calendars – for a variety of reasons, from simply knowing what day it was to writing every detail of work and family life in a highly organized day planner. Those who fit into the SOSW (same occupation-same workplace) group intimately commingled work events and reminders on their home calendars (usually in the kitchens) and home events and reminders on their work calendars. These people were likely to have one "master" calendar that had everything on it – as one respondent noted, "every work commitment, every personal commitment, every child's appointment or school activity, and addresses." For other groups the most likely cross-realm items on home and work calendars were those things that had a direct impact on time spent in the other realm. For instance, a doctor's appointment was listed on a work calendar when it was scheduled during the paid workday. A lecture or business trip was noted on a home calendar so the family could see when that parent would be unavailable during "non-work" hours.

Table 3
Direction and Relative Level of Symbolic Work-Family Integration by Occupation Pattern

	Occupation	
	<i>Same</i>	<i>Different</i>
Workplace	<i>Same</i>	Work to home = High Home to work = Low
	<i>Different</i>	Work to home = Low Home to work = High

Same-Workplace Couples

Sharing workplace, regardless of occupation, seemed to affect the outcomes the most for many individual symbolic variables. Perhaps this was because many of the measures took up physical space, which influenced the use or lack of use of certain symbols. Obviously, spouses who worked at the same place saw each other more during the workday than those who worked at different places (regardless of whether their offices were a half-mile away or ten feet away). More likely, however, couples who shared workplace wanted to avoid overstressing their personal and familial connections in the workplace. Just as Powell and Foley (1999) discuss, personal relationships within a workplace organization create entirely new sets of rules concerning worker relationships, cohesiveness, and morale. And the dynamics of these unique relationships are represented symbolically by the presence and absence of certain integrative symbols. The geographic proximity and shared work “space” of a spouse thus translated into many unique findings regarding the symbolic integration of home into work and work into home. Consequently, the four initial occupation groups have been collapsed into two groups in this section – those who shared workplace or not, regardless of occupation.

Those sharing workplace were more likely to integrate work into home along several lines more than those not sharing workplace. They also were less likely to integrate home into work than those who did not share workplace (see Table 3). People who shared workplace were more likely to have their own home offices or separate home office “spaces” in different rooms than those who worked at different places, especially for those who shared occupation, too. This is interesting because there was very little variation between occupation groups in terms of actually doing paid work at home, but there was a difference in the kind of space delineated in which to conduct that work. Clearly, working within the same space at their paid work necessitated more of their own spaces at home for the potential to do that work. They wanted more symbolic privacy for ownership of their own paid work. These people did not want to share everything about their paid work with their spouses in terms of workspace. People who worked at the same place were also more likely to have workplace benefits (e.g., health insurance, professional membership information) at home. They were more likely to consider colleagues in their list of close friends. And people who shared workplace but not occupation were the most likely to have colleagues visit their homes at least once or twice a month. In terms of these symbolic measures, then, sharing workplace translated into more integration in the direction of work into home.

When the pendulum is shifted to integrating home into work, however, those sharing workplace seemed to avoid it.ⁱⁱⁱ Those who shared workplace were less likely to have home items in their work briefcases, less likely to have a personal file or special place for personal items in their offices,^{iv} and less likely to have pictures of family members at work than those who did not share workplace.

Why the lack of integration of home into work for people who shared workplace? If indeed these people loved their family members and appreciated their home lives, and if indeed these symbols were “signs of the self” as discussed earlier, it follows that when the real “sign” was present, a substitute became less necessary. In other words, when family members were already present in person at the workplace, both because a spouse worked there and because children of same-workplace spouses were more likely to spend time at their parents' workplace, it became less urgent to have symbolic reminders such as pictures present.

Two interpretations follow from this finding. From an optimistic point of view, to put it simply – people did not need a substitute when they could have the real thing. Those who shared workplace avoided symbolically representing closeness in terms of symbolic objects that would only serve as mere substitutes. From a critical point of view, though, respondents either avoided displaying, or expressed concern about overdosing on, too many real and substitute “signs of the self” that represented home life in the paid workplace. The absence of family signs at work for those couples who shared workplace had more to do with issues related to nepotism and independent workplace identities. People wanted to be seen as workers and not have their family connections stressed. Sometimes their family connections were what got them the positions in the first place, and this, as Powell and Foley (1999) argue, could create low worker morale. Special favors for family members do not always go over well in the workplace. For these professionals, any visible reminders that family members were present in the workplace *because* they were family members, whether true or not, could have been perceived as negative by co-workers. For this reason, having fewer pictures of family members on desks, having fewer personal items in briefcases, and having fewer spaces at work devoted to personal items was a more common strategy of action among those who shared workplace. This was especially true for women who got their jobs after their husbands did – a finding that indicates that even symbolically, the perceived identity of “trailing spouse” is both undesirable and possible to deemphasize via visible symbols of home and family in the office.

Another finding reiterated the notion that same workplace spouses avoided symbolic representations of home life in the office. When paid workspaces were examined, it was discovered that, although the quantity of artwork from

family members in offices did not vary by occupation group (see Table 2), the *level of permanence* of that art did vary. Of all of the pictures of kids' drawings in offices, only some workplace individuals had their children's drawings on chalkboards and dry-erase boards, as opposed to on paper that was taped to a wall or mounted in a frame. In other words, the family members' art was temporary, erasable, and easy to remove for people who shared workplace with a spouse. This was most likely true for two reasons. First, these people were more likely than different workplace couples to have their children physically present in their offices, which meant that drawings could be done at parents' workplaces. Second, and more interestingly, because some workplace couples wanted to avoid symbolic representations of their families in the workplace for reasons mentioned above, the temporary nature of kids' drawings on chalkboards meant that they could be quickly removed.

Different-Workplace Couples

In contrast, different-workplace spouses, regardless of sharing occupation, had numerous signs of their family life in their work spaces. The reasons for putting up pictures of family members (or drawings by family members) in offices are illustrated by Frederick, Kelly, and Erik – all of whom work at different places from their spouses. As Frederick observed,

Sometimes it's nice when I talk to people with whom I have a little more than just a professional relationship – people visit – to let them see a picture of [my family members]... the family art work creates some bridge, like a straw to hold on to sometimes when there is need. Sometimes work can be overwhelming and if there is a window through which to notice another world that's out there and that is relevant, too, it can be a refuge... my role as a father and a husband, I think, is also accepted by most people at work, and so I don't shy away from showing symbols that reveal that other existence – they mean something.

Kelly added to Frederick's insights about why family pictures are nice to have in an office by stating, "...it was just nice to have them around, to see their smiling faces, especially when you've got all this asinine work to do. You can turn around and say, 'There is joy in this world!'" And Erik discussed the fact that he can think about family members even if they are not physically present, an activity that helps him get through the day: "I suppose because I miss them and because I'm there so much. I might as well have pictures so I can see them if I can't be with them. And that's definitely why I have placed them where I have. They're very visible...I suppose some of it is that other people want to see these family members I talk about."

With Frederick, Kelly, and Erik, the fact that their spouses were not at the same place meant that other workers had to be reminded of these family members. But more than that, these professionals themselves had to be reminded of family because they were not able to see the in-person versions of family during the paid workday. The substitutes were there to bridge their worlds, and make them feel better about why they were working so hard in the first place. Further, they did not need to avoid showing signs of family members, because they already had independent workplace identities separate from spouses' identities. Nepotism and special favors to family members in the office were not issues for people who did not share workplace. As is clear from Kelly's and Frederick's comments, home was seen by respondents as a refuge or joyful place, while work was a demanding necessity – a finding elaborated in the next section.

In sum, there were variations of work-family integration along occupation lines: sharing workplace meant more symbolic integration of work into home, and not sharing workplace meant more symbolic integration of home into work. Sharing workplace with a spouse more strongly influenced symbolic work-family integration than sharing occupation. Perhaps this is because physical space is itself a symbolic "prop" of social life – one that has a more direct impact on allowing for or constraining the set of visible tools social actors have to choose from. The ways people used time, space, artifacts, activities, and associates had a lot to do with people trying to make themselves survive everyday life. Sometimes people thought of paid work in terms of something they "had to do," and family in terms of something they "wish they could do more of," even if the paid work was immensely satisfying and the family life was incredibly challenging. This directly contrasts Hochschild's (1997) finding that people were decreasingly likely to see home as a haven in the heartless paid work world. Symbolically, then, for spouses who shared workplace and were consequently reminded of the joys of family life during the work day by seeing family members at their paid work (albeit in small and not-too-distracting doses), there was less need to yearn for the joys of home. Conversely, those who did not see their spouses or children at work – those who did not share workplace – "missed" them, and placed as many substitutes for family members' presence in their offices as possible. However, sometimes same workplace spouses avoided bringing home to work in order to lessen the symbolic clues that could indicate nepotism, "trailing spouses," or spousal favors in the workplace.

For those who shared workplace, work was likely to symbolically integrate into home. This integration was likely to come in the form of creating a separate and private office space in the home, having and doing social things with colleagues as friends, and having workplace benefits at home. These measures actually served to maximize

efficiency and to get the most satisfaction out of work and family life with the least personal effort. Whether that effort was manifest in terms of a cluttered office or a wall absent of kids' drawings is less important than whether the particular symbolic coping mechanism for balancing work and family demands was successful for each individual. Coping mechanisms for the demands of professional paid work life are the central focus of the remaining sections, and represent more similarity between occupation groups than difference.

Professionalism and the Primacy of Paid Work: Occupation Group Similarities

Personal and Professional Territories of the Self: Same or Different?

There are cultural expectations associated with professions in American society. According to Larson (1977), professionals work under an established social credit, or a non-contractual based contract. Their work is insulated. However, the freedom and flexibility do not negate the amount and quality of work that professionals invest. They put in long work hours, bring their work home or on vacation, or even cut down on vacation time in general. Paid work overlaps with home in part because of the passion and love for the area in which the professional is working. They control, or seek to control, the area in which they work, and see themselves outside or above the working class. However, as Kunda (1992) attests, even professionals have contradictory feelings about their work – they are simultaneously motivated and cynical about the amount of time they put into their paid work. For professionals, regardless of whether they share workplace and/or occupation with a spouse, work is both an overwhelming plague and an important source of identity and achievement. Below are described the symbolic strategies that these professionals use to resolve the cognitive dissonance around spending too many hours at work when other parts of life are important to social identities.

Watches and Professional "Time." The respondents in this study shared characteristics common in professional cultures – namely, the nebulous classification of work time as distinct from family time (Moen 2003). For example, every respondent in this study was asked whether he or she wore a watch. Jasmine, who intentionally decided no longer to wear a watch, responded,

Every attorney I know wears a watch, and we're constantly married to the time because of the billable hours. And so, it was always just something I thought I could live without. I have clocks all around me, I had a clock on my computer and a clock on my phone, I have another clock in my office, I have one in my car, so I could keep accurate track of my day without having [a watch]. And I knew that I would just be looking at it all the time, even when I wasn't at work.

How does one measure time when there is no punch clock? For people who have a lot of autonomy in their paid work, and who have work spilling over into all facets of life, it is difficult to assess accurately how much time they spend doing paid work outside of "normal" working hours. Of the full-time professionals in this study, nobody worked less than forty hours a week. In fact, the individuals who were classified as working two-thirds or three-fourths time also worked at least that amount.

Time is a complicated matter when discussing work and family life. Simply asking how many hours per week one brings paid work home is not enough (Moen 2003). It doesn't take into account whether one goes back into the office to do work, whether one has no conception of what "normal" working hours are, or whether one spends large portions of daytime hours doing paid work in a home office. Thinking of paid work only in terms of spending forty hours working at the office and classifying any other work as "bringing work home" is inaccurate for these professionals. The fact that the people in this sample brought between zero and thirty hours of paid work home per week is meaningless in and of itself.

Bringing paid work home (or letting it infringe on family time by going back into the office) is an indicator of integration in the direction of work to home. Bringing home to work in terms of time is measured by taking time to do personal things at work. For most people, this meant doing personal things on their computers at work. One professor told a story of her colleague who had recently purchased his daughter's prom shoes over the internet while sitting in his office. Nearly three-fourths of the people in this sample spent time doing personal things on their work computers. For many, this time was delineated as separate "personal time." Checking personal e-mails, reading an on-line newspaper, looking for vacation information, or buying personal items off the internet were most likely to happen in the mornings or during lunchtime. In this sense, there was integration from home to work because most people did personal activities at work, but there was segmentation because a particular time of day was set aside to perform these tasks.

When one has a salaried position with autonomy, flexibility, and no clear "boss" looking over one's shoulder, it is not unusual to take time during the work day to do small personal tasks. This was especially true for most of the sample concerning personal computer tasks. A majority of the people had personal websites bookmarked on the internet at work, sent and received personal e-mails from work, and conducted personal business on-line (e.g. reading a

newspaper, shopping for books, wine, or plane tickets). At first glance, this seems to represent a very clear integration of home into work, but when it became evident that many of these people did not have a computer at home with a fast modem to conduct this “business” efficiently, this integration became less intentional and more related to convenience. Convenience is itself symbolically influenced, which is discussed below.

Lunchtime as a Site for “Peripheral” Work Continuity. Questions about eating habits were asked. Many respondents would work while they ate at their desks. Others did peripheral work – they checked e-mails, read the university or firm newsletter, or read a professional journal. As Paul said, “I do work when I eat, but if I bring a sandwich up I wolf it down in five minutes. I usually can’t concentrate while I eat.”

But just what is “peripheral work?” Robert, a science professor, pondered this question:
I take a lunch break... it happens more often than not that I am reading a science magazine. I am really interested in science, so I don’t consider it work. Classically, yes, it is work, but if I didn’t count that as work then I wouldn’t be working at all. Is reading science a break or not?

Robert would often walk home and eat “with” his wife Iris. They both worked in the same science department but in different occupations. He said that they “eat at the same time, but not necessarily together...neither of us is chatty like we are at the end of the day.” So there would sit Robert at the kitchen table in the middle of the workday with his wife Iris, reading a science magazine that was work related but was also something he didn’t consider to be work. Neither of them would talk about personal matters. In fact, talking at all was kept to a minimum. In this brief scenario, it becomes clear just how complicated the symbolic measures of work-family integration are. With many people in this sample, the lines between work and family were not clearly drawn. Reading a science magazine was the same as reading a hobby magazine. Eating lunch with a spouse during the work day was not unusual. However, some lines were drawn, and if any were drawn at all, it was for the sake of continuity of thought – to avoid too much family interruption during the work day. Thus, the “chatty” part of the day – the time reserved for lengthy discussion – was reserved for after work. The spouses ate “at the same time, but not necessarily together.” Integration was possible and indeed preferable, but not at the cost of continuity in the thinking processes associated with paid work.

Most people said that sometimes lunch became a forum for holding committee meetings (dinners were also often work-related, especially when interviewing job candidates or when a distinguished lecturer visited campus). Inevitably, if these professionals ate meals with their colleagues (and in some cases with spouses, too), they talked about work. For most people the amount of mealtime work-related discussion was acceptable, but for those who shared workplace with a spouse this was overwhelming at times.

Vocations, Vacations, and Work “Toys”: The Coexistence of Work and Leisure Identities. When asked to talk about the last vacation they took, some respondents gave a puzzled look. Nearly half of the informants would pause, give a confused look, and say something like, “You mean a real vacation, where we weren’t doing work? Well, I guess it was somewhat work related anyway.” Nearly half of the couples had at least one member say that the last vacation they took included some form of work, too. This work most often took the form of a professional conference, followed by travels with an accompanying spouse or family members. Some people also felt the need to have work always with them – even when visiting family members or staying in a hotel for a weekend getaway. Mark and Connie, a two-lawyer couple, both commented about bringing work on their week-long excursion to a lake cabin with the family. Connie said, “I felt really guilty about being on vacation, so I worked probably one or two hours a day.” These two were able to put in billable hours while sitting on a lakeside beach – they even checked e-mail and voicemail from afar.

Clearly, the aforementioned symbolic measures for most of these professionals translated into an integration of work and family. It was as common to bring work on vacation as it was to leave it behind. Doing work tasks during “personal” or “home” time was not unusual. Doing personal tasks during “work” time was also common. In general, though, it seemed as if work tasks cut into personal time more often than the other way around. Can one therefore make the assertion that work dominated these people’s lives at the expense of their personal lives? This question is as difficult as the chicken-and-egg question. If Robert’s science magazines were clearly work-related or clearly personal-related, the answer would be much simpler. But for him, as with many of these professionals, being a professional meant that his paid work overlapped with his passion for an area of study. His “vocation” was the same as his “vacation.” There was little distinction between what was work-related and what was personal or leisure-related.

For many of the scientists interviewed, there was a deep affinity for “toys” – molecular models, lizard figurines, small dolls – all of which were located in their offices and used mostly for work-related tasks. Often the toys were there to help their students avoid fidgeting when talking through an issue. Sometimes they were actual models used in classrooms. But sometimes they became toys for their children to play with when they visited mom or dad’s office. And other times they became reminders of a world that was less serious than the all-consuming world of science. In all cases, it was difficult to distinguish whether these toys were work-related or personal-related. For many of these

people, that distinction was irrelevant because they loved their work so much, and because handling a plastic molecular model kit was simultaneously performing paid work and “playing.”

Sometimes large portions of these professionals' personal time would be devoted to seemingly work-related leisure activities, a phrase that was not a contradiction in terms. Several academics who studied the history or languages of various parts of the world commented that traveling to those places was often an automatic combination of the personal with the professional. When asked if they had any non-work or personal objects in their offices, several attorneys pointed to photos hanging on the walls of judges for whom they had performed clerkships. Many of the professors decorated home spaces with artifacts purchased on research trips. Work was so much a part of these people's identity that it became difficult to distinguish their professional selves from any other conception of self. This high level of integration, for the most part, was a relatively universal experience for the people in this sample, especially in terms of bringing work into home.

When the Convenient Becomes Symbolic

One of the goals of this project was to elicit people's strategies for using everyday objects in their work-family negotiations – a goal that was made clear to respondents during the interviews. People's comments, however, showed that they felt that these artifacts were not always blatantly useful in interpreting the roles and relationships that were manifestations of work-family integration. For example, the use of one keychain on which home and work keys were fully interspersed often had less to do with cognitive integration of the two realms, and more to do with convenience or merely the mindless order in which the keys were attached to the ring. Referring to personality as a causal mechanism, one respondent noted, “I'm not a big memento kind of guy.” Another commented, “my wife thinks I've filled every room [at home] with [work] stuff ... I'm a packrat.” Family members' recommendations also played a part. When asked why he had so many of his kids' drawings hanging in his office, John replied, “Because the girls come up to me and say, 'I made this for you to hang on your office wall.'” Similarly, when I asked Andrew why he had pictures of his family members in his office, he said, “My wife thinks it's a good idea.” Nonetheless, although respondents themselves felt as if these symbolic measures had little meaning other than being related to personality quirks, the way that groups of respondents commented about them actually brought to light other more meaningful connections. That is, an apparent lack of significance of these symbols individually actually translated into subtle yet meaningful goings-on related to work and family life manageability for these people in aggregate, which is discussed throughout this section.

Symbolic Strategies for the “Time Squeeze.” The professionals in this study suffered from an ailment that plagues much of the American workforce: what Schor (1992) calls a “time squeeze.” People are working more hours and more people are working. The symptoms of the time squeeze are “an acceleration in the pace of life, a rise in time-saving innovations, increasing stress, and role overload” (22). And while technology and rising aspirations, especially among the professional-managerial class, have accelerated time for American workers, the end result has been that “[t]ime has become more precious because people have less of it to call their own. We have become a harried *working*, rather than leisure, class, as jobs take up an even larger part of ever more Americans' lives” (Schor 1992: 24). The desire for convenience is alive and well in contemporary American society. “Closing shop,” or ceasing work temporarily, even for an afternoon, is a difficult concept to employ in the United States, where number of hours worked are increasing under the rubric of increased productivity, competition, and workaholism (Kunda 1992; Schor 1992; Moen 2003).

Paid work was all-consuming for the people in this study. Were there any compensatory mechanisms in place to cope? That is, if work took over the rest of life, how did people cope with the primacy of work in terms of use of time, space, artifacts, activities, and associates? Did they feel it was necessary to cope at all? Here is where the use of time, space, artifacts, activities, and associates became symbols of coping mechanisms, in place to deal with a hectic work and family life. To a large extent, many people in this study tried to make their lives more convenient, and this emerged in the symbolic measures of work-family integration. Even if respondents seemed similar along many measures, the causal mechanisms that brought them to that similarity differed.

“There is no logic to it. I just kind of like it,” said Scott about a cat mask pinned to his bulletin board in his office. Two sentences later, he added, “It's kind of a cat with flowers, which is not my normal look, but sometimes you just need to preserve one's sometimes frail sense of humor.” In one breath, someone would say that an object meant nothing to him other than pure whimsy. In another breath, a deeper individual meaning surfaced in his discussion – a meaning that revealed that life's demands have weakened his sense of humor. Sometimes interviewees would not get past the “there is no logic to it” comments. It became important to see which items symbolized work-family integration directly, and which items actually represented some other facet of work and family life that more indirectly symbolized mechanisms in place to deal with high levels of work integration into family. In other words, some symbolic measures clearly represented an integration of work into family (or, less often, family into work) by most everyone in the sample. But some measures more subtly symbolized ways that these individuals coped with the

level and direction of that integration. To a great extent, work symbolically spilled over into most aspects of life for much of the sample, and the way that people dealt with that spillover was symbolic in itself.

Several respondents commented how the existence of home and work keys on their keychains was less related to symbolic work-family integration than it was to convenience:

This happens to be the keychain that came with our Volvo. It is two rings together, but there is no rhyme or reason to most things in our life, it's just ease and speed. On the keychain are two car keys, my office key, a house key that we never use, and I don't know what the other key is.

This one I think is for the house. We rarely lock the house so I rarely use it. I don't even know what all these keys are.

I used to have a keychain that is together so that you could take your car keys off. It was a valet key chain so you could take the car keys off without giving the valet your keys, and it broke. It just separated in half and I've been too lazy to get it fixed. And I also kind of like having my back door keychain on one and my front door keychain on the other. Then if I lose one, I'm not locked out.

By definition a symbol represents something else, and sometimes that representation seemed to be fairly benign or related to individual preferences. Upon further reflection, however, all of the "individual preferences" symbolized a commonality among most of these professionals: a desire for more efficiency in order to better manage a hectic work and family life. Consistent with past research on seemingly individual work-family preferences and person-environment "fit" (Edwards and Rothbard 1999; Kreiner 2002), sometimes people's preferences were based on a desire to manage their lives the best way they knew how. Even if people cited coincidence for how they arranged their keys on their keychains, for example, the primary reason for any variation was to simplify a hectic life – for "ease and speed," or to avoid being "locked out" when life's demands made you frazzled and forgetful. It was not uncommon for people to say, "I don't even know what all these keys are," mostly because they were too busy worrying about picking up children from soccer practice, impressing a valuable client, or grading a stack of sixty term papers.

Extreme Segmentation and Integration as Different Causal Means to the Same End. As far as having personal items in the office in the form of posters, art projects from children, travel souvenirs, plants, and other home-related paraphernalia, people seemed to include items insofar as they matched their personal preferences. Some respondents were purists – they did not like any sort of "clutter" in their lives anywhere, and they cited personal preference as the cause for this view. In these cases, people were likely to avoid too much "stuff" in their homes, cars, and offices. Take Marcus, an arts and humanities professor, whose house and office (as well as his wife's office) were by far the neatest and cleanest of all the other respondents'. When asked what was in his cars, he said, "Two car seats... I don't like clutter, so they're pretty clean." His wife also alluded to the fact that her husband was very tidy. She was not "allowed" to clutter up the cars with anything unnecessary. Marcus expanded at great length in different parts of the interview how life in general had gotten too complicated. He intentionally avoided using e-mail for personal correspondence and decisively wrote letters by hand. When asked about his impressions of the use of technology in work and family life, he said,

That's my anti-tech spin. I'm really concerned about how we're on that track. And we just don't stop and look at the leaves. My goal in my profession and my family and for myself is to keep fighting that battle to slow down. It's difficult. We're on this vicious pace.

His purism was directly related to his view that life had gotten too complicated for him, his family, and for the world in general. Any inclusion of too many cross-realm symbols would have represented the demands of one realm in the other one. Thus, he avoided too much integration as a coping mechanism for aggregate work-family spillover and stress.

Like Marcus and other segmentists or "purists," extreme integrators classified their strategies to commingle work and family as "personality quirks." Contrastingly, however, these people successfully commingled kids' drawings next to piles of paid work. In fact, this integration was also a compensatory mechanism for dealing with the complexities of work and family demands, just as Marcus's purism and segmentation were. For Edward, a science professor, it was difficult for him to distinguish whether "work-family balance" was even a balancing act at all. He saw them as not a balancing act so much as a limitation of the number of hours there are per day. I don't have a strict partition between family and work, partly because I don't think of work as one thing. I think of being department chair as one set of activities, research is another, and so on, so there are these different competing little things that you can manage between them, and family is just a bigger chunk... there's no partition for us. It all mushes together.

The demands of Edward's work and family life were numerous – he had an aging parent who needed frequent care, his wife had an illness that prevented her from having enough energy to do much housework, he was acting as department chair, and he was regularly involved in research at a lab that was located ninety miles away. As he put it, "We both sometimes thought it'd be nice to have a homemaker – a third person to take care of all this stuff!"

For Edward, it was not uncommon to have professional journals in his car, just in case he needed to do some extra reading at his daughter's soccer practice. He had no shortage of drawings his kids had done when they were younger in his research office. He was a definite integrator:

It's very common for me to think about what I'm doing at work, and then after the logistics of getting home, I just keep on going as soon as I get home. I log onto the computer, respond to email, and so it doesn't really turn off. And in the morning I might do the same thing in the other direction. We always sit down for dinner as a family. So that stops that part of it at least... It's more like the barriers of time are not the same as barriers of the mind. Do you know what I mean? If I'm working on something, I sort of want to finish it, even if I move someplace else. I like to finish it and get it done.

But this high level of integration was really a coping strategy for dealing with life's challenges. When asked whether technology added stress to his life, took some of it away, or both, he replied,

Mostly it takes it away. I wouldn't say it adds stress. I'm sure all of the technology stuff adds extra time for me, but I enjoy it enough so it's – there's a continuum there between hobby and – you know the type – where if you want to do something twenty times, you can either just do it twenty times or you can think of a complicated way to get it done automatically, and I'm more of the latter. It may take equal amounts of time each way.

The means to the end – making things temporarily more complicated to end up with less complication in the long run – was Edward's strategy for managing much of his life. On the surface, then, having high levels of integration seemed like an unnecessary complication, or a part of his personality. But this ended up being a way to deal with all facets of life, with work and family as parts of a whole that were highly integrated, and caused great amounts of stress.

Upon closer examination, then, the personalized inclusion or exclusion of home "clutter" was largely based on subtle strategies to manage work and family life. Sometimes people were so busy dealing with the time demands of work and family, they were lacking the objective measures of integration because they "hadn't gotten around to bringing in kids' drawings," or "hadn't had time to even think about decorating the office." The presence or absence of personal decorating in office spaces had a lot to do with how busy people were, how "pure" they wanted to maintain their realms, or how "cluttered" they could have their space without feeling overwhelmed. All in all, these were compensatory strategies for dealing with an aggregate amount of demands from both paid work and family life. The means to achieve work-family balance may have varied depending on how much "clutter" one needed to deal with competing demands, but the end desired result was the same: life manageability. Marcus would never have survived in Edward's shoes, and vice versa, but they both wanted to lessen stress. Either by purification or by extreme co-mingling of work and family realms, both men demonstrate a way that tension is resolved, at least temporarily – the tension between spending too much time on professional work and things like family and leisure.

In terms of professional and personal time management, and in terms of convenience as a symbolic entity in and of itself, then, occupation pattern did not influence the level, direction, or qualitative characteristics of symbolic work-family integration. Instead, other cultural forces were working. For the professionals in this study, the similarities across occupation pattern groups were components of professional cultural expectations in general – a blurring of temporal boundaries between home and work, an expectation that work can and should flow into family time (but not necessarily the other way around), and seemingly idiosyncratic strategies of action that represent more universal motivation for creating convenience in a society that greedily takes time, activities, objects, people, and physical space away from family and puts them into the professional paid work world.

The previous discussion illustrates the many ways that people compensated for work-family challenges. For most respondents, the demands of paid work were great enough that it was inevitable to have work symbolically spillover into home. Further, since the demands of work and family were great for a majority of these people, any seemingly personal differences in the symbolic representations of integration showed variations in how people coped with those demands. Thus, the cultural tools that these people were given may have been the same (dealing with stress), and the end product was the same (life manageability), but the way in which they used the tools varied (living with high versus low symbolic work-family integration).

Conclusion

If, as Wood and Duck (1995) attest, "...to determine the scope and limits of a theory, one must evaluate it in contexts and with people who potentially *challenge* its adequacy and accuracy" (xi-xii), then this study has demonstrated that using Nippert-Eng's (1996) framework for understanding professional married co-workers is both appropriate and complex. It is appropriate because this population is a subset of a larger population that utilizes cultural strategies of action to perform boundary work in terms of work and family – usually as a reaction to expectations from the greedy workplace. And this study yields complex results with regard to the original research question. Certainly occupation pattern for married co-workers affects symbolic work-family integration, since half the indicators suggest so. It is in the interviewees' discussions of *how* they use artifacts, activities, associates, places, and time that revealing patterns about professional work-family life emerge, however. This study demonstrates that structural paid arrangements can influence how culture matters (Swidler 2001) to involved actors, but also that the sometimes unmanageable expectations of the professional paid work world may trump the influence of the specific occupation pattern that spouses have.

By examining how these individuals strategically deal with the larger professional pressures, we can perhaps begin to take these micro-level strategies of action and enlarge them to change the bigger cultural expectation of the overworked professional. If, even in the midst of structural paid work strategies (such as sharing workplace and/or occupation with a spouse) it becomes too difficult or stressful for relatively affluent and successful professionals to maintain tasks such as raising children, producing economic resources, maintaining marital and family stability, and establishing coherent identities, then we need to ask deeper questions about the ways we attach people to communities or work and to families. Moen (2003) articulates that there is a "societalwide mismatch between the new workforce and out-of-date rules and regimes" (10), one that mandates a policy shift away from conceptualizing work and family as distinct realms, and toward a focus on "the infrastructure of time" (10) that is in place in existing work policies that constrain workers' options. Part of understanding time is understanding its symbolic dimensions. How workers use the space, time, artifacts, activities, and associates in paid work and family life has to be part of the picture that researchers paint about the current professional work climate. More generally, researchers who wish to understand the relationship between structural constraints and habits, rituals, relationships, and objects of daily life should take into consideration how physical environment plays a role. Hopefully that is what this study has begun to do – kept track of a unique set of symbolic strategies that are often ignored by work-family scholars, policy-makers, and employers, but that are tremendously important in the daily work and family lives of married professionals.

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ⁱ The numbers of couples in each of the four occupation groups are as follows: SOSW – 7; SODW – 8; DOSW – 9; DODW – 2. Clearly the last group is very small compared to the others. Since the focus of this study is to compare between different types of shared paid work, it was more crucial to have respondents in the first three categories. Further, the fourth group only contains attorney-academic couples, a population difficult to find.

ⁱⁱ This was necessary because, as the life course (Townsend 2001) and family development conceptual frameworks argue (Aldous 1996), family dynamics change over time, especially depending on age of children. In order to control somewhat for this, I only included couples who had at least one child who was dependent on parents for many things, from toilet training to rides to soccer practice. While it can be argued that many differences may exist between having a three-year-old and a thirteen-year-old, in this study it was found that the demands of either were equal in terms of time and energy. It was only in childless couples and couples with grown children over the age of twenty (interviews conducted as pre-tests) where these demands were significantly lessened in terms of time and energy.

ⁱⁱⁱ An exception to this was bringing children to work. Sharing workplace meant increased likelihood of bringing children to work for extended periods of time relative to not sharing workplace (as opposed to running an errand or picking something up from the office). This was most often because spouses took turns spending time with the child, who could arrive at the same place and have twice as many people look after him or her. This had a lot to do with logistics and likelihood of having at least one spouse available for tending to a child at work.

^{iv} Those who shared occupation but not workplace were the most likely to have personal files at work.