Facilitating or resisting: Patterns of satisfaction and spousal attitudes in the family life of highly educated workers

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Facilitating or Resisting: Patterns of Satisfaction and Spousal Attitudes in the Family Life of Highly Educated Workers

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Abstract

Work hours among highly educated employees in the U.S. have increased substantially over the past two decades. Associated with these longer work hours are attitudes reflecting greater emotional involvement in work. The impact of this increased work involvement on the families of workers is largely unexplored. In this study of highly educated workers in two professional organizations, I investigate how work-related phenomena such as time spent working and organizational commitment together affect family satisfaction. From survey data, I find that greater work time reduces general family satisfaction as reported by workers, but does not correlate with workers' satisfaction with their primary relationship. By studying a number of interview-based case studies, I conclude that this lack of correlation is due to the varying expectations and values held by spouses of workers. Depending on these values and expectations, spouses may end up facilitating or resisting the worker's behaviors. Gender factors into spouse responses due to the different choices that men and women have when choosing a partner. Spouses with professional experience themselves, or for whom the material benefits are more important than family time with the worker, are likely to facilitate a partner's work orientation. Spouses who emphasize nonwork or nonmaterial values but have not been able to exercise these values through their choice of spouse, primarily women, are more likely to become resistant to work absorption by their partners.

In recent decades, there have been significant changes in American work habits. Simply put, more adults are working and many are working more. These changes have not been evenly spread across the workforce, however. Women's increased workforce participation has been the primary reason for the increase in the number of workers. Educated workers contribute disproportionately to the increases in average work hours (Jacobs & Gerson, 1998). The causes of women's greater participation in the workforce and its effects upon both the workforce and the family have already been the subject of significant study. Less well understood are the causes of workers' increased focus on work and its attendant impacts upon family, particularly in the context of a society in which dual-earner families have become more prevalent. Concurrent with the increase in work hours of educated workers in particular, there has been a change in these workers' attitudes toward their work. It appears that, among a class of workers sometimes referred to as "knowledge workers," work has become more psychologically central, potentially usurping positions previously held in an individual's life by family and community.

The goal of this study is to contribute to an understanding of the impacts of these changes upon families. I begin with the proposition that it is not simply work behaviors, particularly work time, that affect worker families, but also the attitudes and emotions associated with these behaviors. Specifically, I look at how absorbed behaviors and work attitudes among highly educated workers affect the family satisfaction of these workers and their families.

Literature Review And Theories

At one time, scholars predicted that, as a result of improved productivity and its resulting wealth, men and women of the future would spend a dwindling amount of their time at paid labor and an increasing portion of it on leisure activities. For many decades, this prediction appeared to be coming true as average work hours declined steadily until 1940 (Coleman & Pencavel, 1993a). Since 1940, however, work hours in the United States have remained constant for some workers while climbing for others (Coleman & Pencavel, 1993a, 1993b). The National Study of the Changing Workforce (Bond, Galinsky, & Swanberg, 1997) released data showing that paid and unpaid hours at all jobs have risen from 43.6 hours weekly in 1977 to 47.1 hours in 1997.

For men, the increase has been from 47.1 to 49.9, a 2.8 hour-per-week increase, while for women it has gone from 39 to 44 hours, an increase of 5 hours per week.

Although some authors dispute that this adheres across all sectors of the economy, there is a consensus that, in this country, highly educated workers and professionals are working more hours per week than they were two decades ago (Coleman & Pencavel, 1993a, 1993b). Jacobs and Gerson (1998) point out that many of the recent debates on whether work time has increased have been inconclusive because the studies aggregate the time data, referring to the "average worker," a practice that masks a number of subtrends. These trends include a bifurcation in working time, with more people working either many more or far fewer hours than the norms. Further, consistent with Coleman and Pencavel's results, Jacobs and Gerson note that these extremes are not spread evenly over the population, but, rather, are demographically localized. Almost 40% of men with a college education, for example, are working 50 hours or more per week, compared to less than 13% of those with less than a high school diploma.

The change in work hours has been significant and, by itself, creates something to study with regard to family well-being, but work hours alone do not tell the whole story. Worker attitudes toward their work have also been changing. The National Study of the Changing Workforce found that job autonomy and job satisfaction have increased between 1977 and 1997 -- job autonomy significantly and job satisfaction slightly. In addition, several qualitative, ethnographic pieces of research indicate increasing worker identification with and around paid work for highly skilled workers (Hochschild, 1997; Kunda, 1992; Perlow, 1997). Hochschild's study extends the finding to workers at all levels of the organization. Kunda and Perlow, separately studying the high-technology environment, illustrate how an involving work culture can ensnare employees into giving their undivided attention to work projects to ensure their success. These changes in how highly educated people view or feel about their work may also have an impact on families of workers that is in addition to the impact of pure hours or other behaviors. A person's attitude toward work is likely to influence his or her outlook when not at work, which could change his or her family interactions. For this reason, looking at work attitude as well as work behaviors such as hours is important to understanding how these changes in work may affect families.

There is a variety of evidence that these changes are causing problems for families. The popular press has taken up the topic of parents and other employees struggling with increases in the demands of work and their need for "life balance." High profile business leaders and public servants have left their jobs, citing with apparent honesty the need to focus more of their time on their families. A new corner of the self-help industry focused on time management has grown up advising people how to get more done in less time, how to set and adhere to priorities, how to "get in touch" with and live by one's values, and so on. Corporations, responding to employee survey results stating that balancing work with other aspects of life is an issue for them, hire speakers who present time management and other ideas to stressed employees (e.g., Griggs, 1989), provide day care and fitness facilities on site (Hochschild, 1997), and offer counseling and other forms of remediation through company benefits plans.

Although this perceived speedup is blamed on a variety of things, including both parents working outside the home and an increase in the number of organized activities for children, greater work absorption by parents is another potential culprit. More time spent at work and a higher priority given to work imply less time with spouses and children and a lower priority given to these relationships. This zero sum relationship, predicting a negative correlation between work hours and family satisfaction, has been referred to as "work/family conflict," "role strain," and "stress" by work/family researchers (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly, 1983; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980.)

There has not been adequate statistical analysis of the impact upon children of increasing work hours among parents, but there have been several qualitative accounts of what happens to families when parents choose to focus significant attention on paid work that support the theory of work/family conflict. Hochschild's (1997) The Time Bind portrays the families, both children and spouses, of workers at Amerco as forlornly abandoned by employees only too willing to spend more time at work. Kunda (1996) goes so far as to suggest that some companies arm their employees to do battle with families who might impinge on their work time.

As always, it is worth asking whether there is also causation in the other direction. Are problems at home driving people to work? Hochschild (1997) proposes that women have discovered what men always knew, that work is a good place to escape to when home becomes

difficult. For a variety of reasons, workers' homes have become more difficult in recent years. Two societal and economic changes that have contributed to changes in family life are (1) higher divorce rates, resulting in more single-parent and stepfamilies with their attendant challenges, and (2) more women, including mothers, entering the workforce, resulting in their spending less time caring for home and family.

Many women have moved from the home into the paid labor force, but Hochschild's (1989) previous book, The Second Shift, pointed out that there had not been much reciprocation among men in order to share the home, child, and elder care responsibilities with their working wives. This lack of equality between men and women at home resulted in a particularly difficult and unpleasant situation for women that Hochschild termed the "second shift." Her more recent book proposes that one of the ways women have reacted to this situation is to avoid the home and flee to the workplace. The problem may be self-promoting in that the less time a worker, man or woman, spends at home, the more pressured the home becomes. Although recent time data indicate that men are spending increasing time on housework and women are spending less, the differences between the two are still substantial (27 vs. 16 hours/week) (Juster, Ono, and Stafford, 2002).

Also, as women have joined men in the paid labor force, their values may have undergone modification to be more consistent with those within the work organization. These values emphasize efficiency, productivity, individuality, and measurable outcomes. They differ somewhat from those of the home sphere, which also include relationships, support from and for the community, and focus on others, especially children. This shift in values may make work and care within the home more difficult to tolerate, because, measured by the values of the paid work world, the environment is less suited to efficiency and productivity. For many men and women accustomed to the pace and rewards of the work world, staying home, especially with young children, may seem intolerable due to its slow pace, lack of clear and measurable accomplishments, and loss of focus on the self in favor of a focus on others. For all these reasons, it may be easier to boost one's self-esteem at work.

These arguments point toward the possibility that workers with happier family lives want to spend more time with their families, whereas those with lower family satisfaction are more

likely to escape to work as an alternative. Therefore, whether due to high work hours hurting families or unhappy family lives driving workers to escape to the workplace, both arguments indicate that high family satisfaction should be correlated with fewer hours at work.

There are other theories about how work and families interact that do not point to this positive correlation between higher family satisfaction and fewer work hours. For instance, some families may encourage a worker to become absorbed in work because they value the worker's earnings or other corporate benefits above his or her presence. In this case, the worker may prefer to be home but feel compelled to maximize earnings and benefits and therefore chooses to become work absorbed to satisfy the family. The benefits that the worker may accrue for the family include facilities, vacations, teams, and other social activities that can make families of workers feel cared for as part of a larger corporate "family."

The concept of an "instrumental" relationship with the work organization in which the worker and family gain resources from the relationship subsumes some of these benefits, though the emotional connection that a family might feel goes beyond the theory of an instrumental connection. The implication of a family having an instrumental relationship with a family member's work organization is that greater work time will be correlated with higher family satisfaction because the increased work time will result in greater instrumental benefits for the worker and family. Thus, this theory results in the opposite prediction as those discussed before in which work time and family satisfaction are inversely correlated.

Although the instrumental explanation of work/family connection is manifest at the family level, the level of financial striving may function as a societal value that pushes people toward valuing consumption over leisure or paid work over unpaid work such as caring for family members or the home. In an effort to include the possibility of this instrumental benefit from work absorption, my analyses include respondent income. Though imperfect as a complete representation of this connection, analyzing the importance of worker income to family satisfaction will indicate whether instrumental benefits are an important factor for families, at least from the perspective of the worker.

Yet another theory that predicts a positive connection between work and family does so through the domain of work attitudes instead of behaviors. 'Spillover" theory contends that a

person's mood in one life domain is likely to influence his or her mood in the other domain (Barnett, 1994; Staines, 1980; Williams & Alliger, 1994). If the worker is happy about his or her absorption in or highly committed to his or her employing organization, then the positive mood implied by these work attitudes will spill over into his or her life at home, resulting in a positive correlation between work attitude and family satisfaction. The same could occur with negative emotions or attitudes. A positive relationship between attitude toward work and toward family could, similarly, be the result of personality type in which people who are generally more able to commit themselves are able to do so toward work and toward family.

However, high organizational commitment could have negative outcomes for families as well. It could result in a worker's spouse or children feeling as though the worker is not emotionally available to them, even if he or she is physically present. It is possible that there is a zero sum nature to emotions and attitudes, as there is for time. In this scenario, a spouse might feel in emotional competition with a worker's employing organization if he or she were aware of the level of commitment that the worker felt. For this to be true only for the attitude, it would have to hold even when controlling for hours. In other words, the negative effect of commitment would have to be in addition to any impact from hours, not because of it.

In addition to work behaviors and attitudes having separate effects on families, it is also possible that they might interact with each other such that a change in one might alter the impact of the other. Specifically, if the worker is absorbed in his or her job because of a sense of commitment to the work organization, the worker may justify the effect on his or her family in order to assuage the guilt that may result from the long hours. Because the worker knows that acknowledging this guilt might inhibit the pursuit of a job he or she loves working for an organization he or she believes in, the worker may choose to downplay any harm done to family relations, including with spouse or children.

In contrast, if a worker feels forced into working more than he or she would like and does not feel strongly committed and loyal to the employer, the worker may feel resentful and angry and is not likely to justify the long hours or higher priority or downplay the costs from it. Instead, any damage done to the worker's family relations and satisfaction is likely to be acknowledged

because the worker has little reason to protect the connection to an employer for whom little commitment is felt.

These models are not mutually exclusive and many of them overlap one another. However, each has a different emphasis. In the economic model, individual preferences are less important than the utility of the family unit. In the cultural model, free choices are constrained by cultural biases. Socialization describes how individual preference is strongly shaped during the formative years.

These forces combine in a process of negotiation. Husbands and wives carry out complex negotiations that incorporate both the economic and cultural inputs mentioned previously, their personalities, individual preferences, and negotiation skills. These negotiations generally result in an agreement or contract that, though unwritten, is nevertheless understood by both spouses. Viewing the process as a negotiation emphasizes individual preference and the efforts of two separate, autonomous parties to make a decision that each can accept. This paper explores the impact that work absorption, as measured by work time, and work attitudes have on the family satisfaction of workers and their families. I also look at how time expectations are negotiated between workers, spouses, and children; how individual characteristics including gender and work status, factor into these expectations; and how workers use different frames when viewing time with spouse and time with children.

Methods

This paper, focused on several case studies, is drawn from a larger research project in which I used a two-stage research design in order to collect both qualitative and quantitative data (Gilbert, 2001). The first stage consisted of structured interviews of individual workers in two organizations and some of their spouses. One organization, Happy Health, is a large provider of medical care. The other, Softsign, is a substantial software company. At Happy Health, I spoke with physicians. At Softsign, I interviewed both engineers and nonengineers involved in the design, marketing, and sales of software. The purpose of these interviews was to take an inductive approach to the study of work absorption and to explore in some depth the day-to-day work practices of several highly educated workers in each organization, in order to assess how

these practices interacted with their family lives, how time commitments were negotiated between worker and family, how expectations affected family satisfaction, and how gender or other characteristics factored into these expectations.

The second phase of the study was a survey of employees in each organization from which quantitative analyses on the impact of work hours and work attitudes on family satisfaction were carried out. A total of 447 surveys were completed; 330 Happy Health physicians filled out traditional paper and pencil surveys, and 117 employees of Softsign completed a web version of the survey.

I sought out Happy Health and Softsign (along with several law firms that were not willing to participate) as data collection sites because they are currently, or were at one time, reputed to be "family friendly" in comparison to other organizations in their industries. I chose to pursue organizations with this reputation because I felt that choosing organizations known to be particularly insensitive to work/family needs would result in my talking to and surveying workers for whom these considerations were minor. For instance, I assumed that employees at less family friendly organizations would be younger, less likely to have families, and less likely to be part of a two-earner couple with children.

Beyond their reputation for family friendliness, Happy Health and Softsign had other similarities. Most important, both have large numbers of highly educated employees who provide the core services for which the companies are known, resulting in sufficiently large sample sizes to make statistical analysis fruitful.

Happy Health had the reputation of being a "lifestyle alternative" for doctors in comparison to other HMOs or private practice. In the past decade, the medical industry has undergone significant financial and organizational restructuring, which put significant pressures on medical providers to curb costs and find alternative modes of operation. Happy Health responded to these pressures by pressuring physicians to increase productivity.

Perhaps because of the turmoil resulting from these changes, the Happy Health physician wellness office enthusiastically endorsed my study. Through this arm of Happy Health's administration, I was able to contact a dozen individual physicians at a single Happy Health medical center and, ultimately, interview four of them and two of their spouses. Ironically, all

physicians appeared to be exceptionally busy and, therefore, most were unwilling to spend the time to be interviewed.

Softsign has offices worldwide and headquarters within the San Francisco Bay Area. Among software companies, Softsign had the reputation of being very family and woman friendly, a reputation that differs considerably from the software companies of Silicon Valley, famous for their up-til-all-hours, competitive, macho cultures in which work is everything. In addition, Softsign was proud of its generally good human resources reputation due to a no-layoff policy that dated back to the founding of the company.

Unfortunately, similar to Happy Health's experience in the health care industry, changes in the software market had introduced competitive pressures and a downturn in stock price that had forced Softsign to implement a significant layoff in 1999. Unlike Happy Health, Softsign did not implement any official hours increases because employees have no formal schedule, but the layoffs did leave some employees with greater job scope.

My interviews at Softsign were with individuals whose names were given to me by a human resources administrator. Of the 30 individuals the administrator e-mailed to ask about being interviewed, 9 responded that they would be willing to be contacted, and I was able to interview them all. In addition, I interviewed 3 of their spouses and partners.

The 13 workers and 5 spouses interviewed as part of this study were a nonrandom sample of individuals chosen based on their availability and willingness to talk. However, they did represent a range of demographic and job characteristics within each professional group. The doctors were 2 men and t2 women, 2 specialists and 2 primary care, and all 4 with children. The software workers were 6 women and 3 men ranging in job level from 8 to 15 (i.e., from junior engineer to senior management). Four out of 6 women and 2 out of 3 men were parents. As in the survey results, the doctors worked longer hours on average than did the software workers.

Prior to the interviews, I spoke with the subjects by phone to arrange the time and tell them what the interviews would cover. I was very general in these conversations so as not to bias the subjects during the interview. I told them that we would discuss work habits or, if the subject had a family, work and family. The interviews were semistructured so as to guide the discussion toward the subject of work behaviors and attitudes, personal motivation, family satisfaction, and

family reaction to work habits. However, I encouraged the worker or partner, interviewed separately, to talk about related subjects that might be relevant to the topic. Interviews ranged from 40 to 60 minutes and took place at a variety of locations, including onsite at Happy Health or Softsign, at cafes and malls, and two by phone with individuals who were out of state.

Table 1 summarizes a variety of demographic information about the 13 employees that I interviewed. The spouses are not covered in this matrix.

Table 1. Characteristics of employees interviewed (spouses not shown)

Name[1] (* = interviewed spouse)	**Sex**	**Marital Status**[2]	**# Children (ages)**	**Scheduled Hours**	**Job Tenure (years)**	**Actual Hours**	**Preferred Hours**	**Work Motivation**
HAPPY HEALTH								
Mandy	F	M, d	3 (18,15,10)	40	9	50	less	$ for chldrn's education
Peter*	M	D	2 (12,10)	40	5	51 (63 w/call)	same	$, greater work load & responsibility to patients
Chuck*	M	M	4 (9,6,3,3)	44	8	58 (69 w/call)	less	feels responsibility to patients
Holly	F	M	3 (11,8,1)	32	11	47	same (has decreased)	sense of self, immigrant
SOFTSIGN				**Job Grade**				
Deirdre*	F	M	2 (2,0)	15	11	50	same	be on winning team
Heather	F	M, d	1 (22)	14	2	45	less	$
John	M	S	0	13	1	52 (80 lately)	same	learning new things
Victor	M	M	1 (0)	13	<1	43 + 2	same	work content, learn things
Rhonda	F	M	0	12	8	45 + 5	same	care for others, customer service
Moira	F	D	1 (13)	12	1	50-55 before, 40 now	more (would rather feel the way she did when working 55 hrs/wk)	recognition, be part of something bigger
Gina*	F	E	0	10	3	45	same	skills, feedback, $
Bob*	M	M	2 (6,4)	9	3	45 + 6	less	challenge, has too much to do
Cindy	F	D	1 (3)	8	1	40	same	being needed, organizing, $

[1] The names have been changed for confidentiality.
[2] M=married, D=divorced, S=single, E=engaged, d=previously divorced.

Findings

The focus of this paper is to provide an analysis of the case studies gleaned from the interview phase of the research. However, I first provide a brief summary of the findings from the surveys that were carried out as part of the larger research project.

Summary of Survey Results

Analysis of the survey responses produced the following findings on the relationship between work absorption, organizational commitment and family outcomes. The family outcomes measured included satisfaction with (1) general family functioning, (2) relationship with spouse or partner, (3) time spent with children, and (4) personal and leisure activities. First, I found that higher work hours are associated with a reduction in general family satisfaction, including increased concern with the amount of time spent with children and lower personal and leisure satisfaction. Second, a worker's level of organizational commitment did not have a significant impact on family outcomes when looked at in isolation, but when looked at in combination with work hours, commitment moderated the negative impact of hours. In other words, those workers who were more committed to their work and worked long hours reported significantly higher family satisfaction than those working the same number of hours but reporting less commitment to their organization.

Because the levels of family and leisure satisfaction were based on the self-reports from the surveys of workers, the data cannot resolve whether the apparent amelioration of the negative impact of hours on family satisfaction that was reported by highly committed workers is real or imagined. Is it the result of an actual improvement in family function due to workers having a better attitude toward their work, or is it simply a lack of awareness of family functioning or even a justification on the part of the worker?

Third, while overall family satisfaction, personal and leisure satisfaction, and time with children all suffer from greater work hours, especially among workers with low organizational commitment, surprisingly, marital satisfaction does not appear to, at least from the worker's perspective. "Marital satisfaction" here refers to satisfaction in a relationship with a primary or long-term partner, whether or not a legal marriage exists. Instead, having high financial

satisfaction is the best predictor, among the variables I measured, of a good relationship with a partner. Some aspects of these results are unsurprising. It seems almost common sense that people who work more have less time for and less satisfaction in their leisure time activities, for example. Others results, however, seem counterintuitive or at least in need of further exploration. Why, for example, does overall family satisfaction depend more on "time with children" than on "marital satisfaction"? And why does a worker's time spent at work have no statistical connection to his or her marital satisfaction? Understanding these results became one of the goals of the case studies.

Case Studies from Interviews

As noted, although family satisfaction, leisure satisfaction, and concern over time spent with children were negatively affected by work-absorbed behaviors such as long hours, there was not the same result for marital or relationship satisfaction. Instead, the results were inconclusive. Given this lack of conclusiveness from the survey data, I chose to take an inductive approach and, from interview data, try to understand why there might not be a clear connection between work hours and marital or relationship satisfaction. In talking with workers at both organizations about how their partners react to their work, I realized that, in addition to workers' attitudes affecting the impact of their behaviors on families, their partners' attitudes and behaviors play an equally important role, though the nature of that role varies considerably between workers.

Spouses' expectations and, therefore, tolerance of workers' hours varied significantly among those with whom I spoke. These expectations, combined with those of the worker, led to a variety of negotiations within families about how work should be prioritized vis-a-vis family time.

The case studies are described in four sections, including one on workers without partners, two on workers with partners, divided into those who facilitate the spouse's work versus those who resist it, and one section on how the existence of children influences the work/family nexus. Relationship satisfaction is likely to differ, depending on which type of partner a worker has, though not necessarily as one might predict. Moreover, within each category, the role of gender beliefs and expectations affects the appraisal of time spent at work

versus with family. Differences also exist in the negotiation that takes place between family members over time allocation and the belief systems used in these negotiations.

Workers Without Partners. Not all the workers I interviewed had spouses or partners. The lack of a spouse or partner played an important role in how workers responded to their job, and, conversely, what workers were doing on the job affected their social life and their chances of meeting potential partners. Single respondents were quite open about how not having a partner affected their work behavior and about how their work time might be one explanation for their single status. Although these workers did not have spouses to negotiate with, they did have their own expectations about what their lives should be like. Thus, their negotiations were with themselves.

Cindy, a single mom who works a regular 40-hour week, noted that she frequently logs into her e-mail from home, not because she needs to but because she wants to.

> Yeah, and it's kind of for my own curiosity 'cause I'm bored [laughs]. My nightlife sucks after 8:30. I'm like, oh well, I'll see what's happening. It's pathetic, but it's OK.

Cindy had told me earlier in the interview that she did not want to take on a more demanding job within Softsign because caring for her young son without a partner was sufficiently exhausting and time-consuming that she didn't feel it was a good time to try to move up at work. But having a young child to care for meant that she could not spend her free evenings socializing. Instead, she turned to the electronically available diversion of her job, which sometimes allowed her evening social contact or, at least, information about what she would encounter the next day. Although this mix of activities fell short of her own expectations enough that she called it "pathetic," she accepted that she was filling a social void with work because this was her best evening option given her current single-parent status and the age of her child.

John was the Softsign worker putting in the most hours at the time of the interviews, having worked 80 hours the previous week and gone without a day off in three weeks or a weekend off in two months. He stated that he had worked an average of 50 hours/week last year. When I asked whether he thought he'd get back to that schedule once the current project was complete, he said:

> Yeah. I don't know; it'll probably be more like 60 but, yeah, I mean, really, it's a struggle. It's a struggle to say, OK, this is enough and, you know, I'm gonna go home now 'cause there's always more to do. And that's good and it's bad, you know. I mean, I expect that a 50-hour week, you know, will be sort of the median at some point in there. But there will always be times that they're gonna be higher than that. I think that for the amount of money that I'm paid, I think a 50-hour week is reasonable, yeah.

When asked about his interest in getting married or having children, he replied:

> Yeah, yeah, I think eventually. That's actually one of the problems with working so much is that I haven't been…I don't have a huge social life. I mean, I have some friends ...but I really haven't had a chance to make a ton of friends, and this is like in a year and a half. So I mean that's… that should be enough time to make a lot of good friends.

John, in contrast to Cindy, had chosen to take on a demanding and rewarding job, but its demands were keeping him from creating the kind of social life that he hoped might lead to a future that would include a wife and children. In his negotiations with himself, he rationalized that he was doing what was necessary in this job given his career goals, but he hoped that work demands would ameliorate in the future sufficiently to allow him increased social contacts. A large number of Softsign employees I encountered had met their partners at work (three of the nine Softsign employees I interviewed), indicating that singles like John had been unable to develop or maintain a social life outside the office and had responded by effectively merging their work and nonwork worlds.

Workers with Partners – From Facilitating to Resisting. Having a spouse, partner, or family can either encourage or discourage the worker from spending extra time at work. Spouses exerted both direct verbal or behavioral pressure on the worker to spend more time with the family or, conversely, to earn more money for the family even at the cost of more time away from the family. Or the worker may simply want to be home more (or less) because of the presence of the partner and/or children. I witnessed most of these variations in my interviews of workers.

The Facilitating Partner. Peter, a physician and department chief at Happy Health, works an average of 51 hours per week, not including the additional 12 hours per week he is on call and therefore unable to plan other activities. Recently, he has found it necessary to come in on weekends to catch up on work he has been unable to complete during the week. Peter does not find work highly satisfying, and it is not where he derives his main satisfaction in life, though he notes that, given that he has to work for money, "this particular work is more interesting than most."

Earlier in their marriage, when Peter was a medical resident (a "slave," as his soon to be ex–wife, Pamela, described him), Pamela, an MBA with a finance background, worked to support them and also had a very long commute. Describing their life at that time, she noted:

> I had a high-powered job and I was burned out. And, I mean, seeing my kids just…I mean, literally, I'd put them to bed the night before wearing the clothes they had to wear the next day, pick them up, put them in their car seats, drive to the day care, be there at 7 in the morning, drop them off and go to work, and pick them up at 6:30 in the evening We'd come home and go out to dinner every night because I wouldn't be home long enough to make dinner.

Pamela acknowledged that "we really wanted to change the quality of our lives." So they moved, and Pamela became a stay-at-home mother while Peter became a doctor and the primary wage earner. Echoing Peter's description of his attitude toward work, Pamela said:

> He works because he has to. So does he enjoy it? No. He talks about retiring as quickly as he can. He talks about he wished he didn't have to work. But he's never had a large period of time off, you know. So I think maybe if he were home for a year or two, he'd find that maybe he wished he were working, you know. But he can't have that opportunity since he has to support a family.

With regard to Peter's hours, Pamela was laudatory.

> Well, I think it's pretty admirable 'cause, you know, you hear of physicians never coming home until 11:00 at night. And he's usually home by 6:30 or 7, sometimes earlier, sometimes later, if he has meetings or stuff. But, you know, he really made a big effort to leave work at a responsible hour.

Peter and Pamela exemplify Schor's (1991, 1998) theory that satisfying material and commercial desires keeps workers from taking their increased wealth in the form of leisure. Peter notes that their divorce will result in some increased financial pressures

"because we're gonna buy a second home for her to live in, and it's gonna be a very expensive home."

Pamela reflects:

> Well, I know that periods of time I wish we had more money, then I have to stop myself and think maybe we've gotten too commercial, you know, that we've gotten caught up in having to get nice things.... But he makes…I mean, obviously, now he can support two different households and two different mortgages and stuff. He makes enough money. He has two cars, and I'm like, why do you need two cars. Well, if one doesn't work, I'll have the other one.

Pamela's expectations of Peter's work schedule are based on a combination of her own past work experience and her knowledge of other physicians' hours. Further, Peter and Pamela made a conscious choice that he would become the sole breadwinner when she stopped working, and they both had clear material expectations of what his work as a doctor would provide them. Pamela values Peter's work for its financial benefits. Given that she had assumed that he would have to work long hours to provide for them, his ability to stay within her hours expectations and successfully provide the material benefits they agreed upon have made his schedule acceptable to her.

Gender too has come into play in their decisions. The agreement they made in which Pamela chose to stop working resulted in Peter becoming the primary breadwinner. Although this pact was made for economic reasons, the underlying assumption appears to have been that the man should be willing and able to take on the role of breadwinner if that is what the family needs and if the woman is willing to stay home. Peter repeatedly stated that he would rather be staying home than working but was resigned to his role as breadwinner given the past agreement that he had with Pamela. Because their marriage was now ending, his breadwinner role was

becoming even more entrenched because he would now be supporting two separate households and attempting to do so while keeping both at the same standard of living.

Of the employees I interviewed at Softsign, Deirdre is the highest ranking and the one working the most hours except for John, the single man previously described. Deirdre, married with a young child and another on the way, works an average of 50 hours per week and is quite satisfied with her schedule. Her husband, Dan, an ex-Softsign employee, is taking some time off of work while thinking about his next job move. When asked how he felt about Deirdre's job, Dan responded:

> I feel that her job is extremely important. I mean, she loves to work and, you know, in a marriage, anything that helps make somebody happy is. [laughs]. I mean you want them to be happy at it. And, you know, we've been interested in making sure that the career is taking, you know, proper progress, if you will. ... I view it as extremely important, not only from, you know, the family financial point of view, but also for her personal growth and success and happiness 'cause she loves to work.

And when asked how he felt about the amount of time she spends on work, he said

> I think it's needed. I mean, anybody that's…I guess maybe it's because I've worked in the same company. I understand, you know, the hours that you need to put in, or whatever needs to be done. I mean, basically, when you work, it's whatever it takes in order to get that job, you know, done. And, you know, it doesn't matter if it's traveling or, you know, staying super late for many weeks. You know, you have deadlines or something going on, you've got to get it done. And I, you know, I don't begrudge the time or anything.

Dan acknowledged that his willingness was partly due to the reciprocity that he and Deirdre had with each other.

> But…and then the flip side, you know, she's always there for me when I had to do the same type of things, you know. We were buying a company or something like that and, you know, hey, I can't pick up the kid or take her to school or whatever, you know, for the next week and a half. Can you do that? Sure.…She's probably more a balanced…at least as I'm using a benchmark on myself, because when I was working, I was much more work focused. And she's much better at balancing than I.

Viewing her work through the lens of his own work values resulted in Dan regarding Deirdre's schedule as being quite reasonable. Discussing their financial situation and how it's changed since he stopped working, Dan noted:

> When we're both working, it's a nonissue. We're able to put away for retirement, invest, pay all our bills, and still have enough to do whatever the heck we want to do.... I put myself probably under more pressure about it than, you know, Deirdre's not really overly worried about it. I get a little more worried 'cause I like being able to have it all.… It's living basically much more to our means, and that's a little less comfort zone than I like. I like having a nice big comfort zone, especially when it comes to the cash.

Again, Deirdre and Dan would appear to confirm Schor's (1991, 1998) observation – they would prefer to live at the end of their means rather than to live more modestly and work less. Dan's views also resembled those of Pamela in that he clearly values Deirdre's work for its financial benefits to the family. But he also sees it as something that Deirdre values and needs for her own life satisfaction. Unlike Pamela and Peter, Deirdre and Dan formulated a reciprocal allowing each of them to pursue their individual work interests. Their decisions appear to be gender neutral in that Dan has no greater expectations of Deirdre on the home or work front than she does of him.

Their comfort level with the arrangements differ, however, and these differences may be affected by gender beliefs. Dan is more concerned about financial stability than Deirdre, taking on the breadwinner mentality even though the actual role has been shared with, and is currently shouldered completely by, his wife. Dan is more uneasy with the child care arrangements that are necessary for their child (soon to be two) than is Deirdre. Remembering the traditional arrangement he grew up with, he wonders whether having their children raised largely by child care workers instead of parents is a good thing. Though unwilling to translate this concern into a questioning of their reciprocal agreement, it was enough of an issue that he brought it up in the interviews. Deirdre denied sharing any of Dan's concerns on money or child rearing arrangements, neither pressuring Dan to return to work sooner than he felt comfortable nor applying any pressure on herself or him to curtail their work schedules due to child care issues.

She did allow, however, that if their second child took less well to the child care arrangement than their first, they would be in a difficult situation. Dan's stated concerns over both their financial situation and the child care arrangements did not point to a single, gender-based belief system because the monetary concerns left him believing that they both should continue working, whereas the child care concerns made their dual-career arrangement seem problematic.

Both Dan and Pamela support their spouses' work habits and do not see their 50-hour weeks as excessive or problematic. Both of these spouses point out that their own past work habits were more time-consuming than the ones they are living with now, so they regard their spouses as quite restrained and reasonable. Further, both of them acknowledge the financial importance of their spouses' income. In Pamela's case, she is earning very little in comparison to Peter's physician income and is relying on Peter's income, despite their impending divorce, to maintain her and their children's standard of living. Dan also acknowledged the importance of Deirdre's income, which is comparable to his own when he is employed, because the two incomes combined allow them, as Dan said, to "have it all," whereas trying to live on one income means they are living close to their means.

Thus, these two facilitating spouses make no effort to curb their spouses' hours or schedules because (1) they appreciate the financial contribution they are making and (2) based on their own work values and experiences, they see the time their spouses dedicate to work as appropriate and necessary and (3), in Dan's case, as contributing to Deirdre's emotional well-being.

The Resisting Partner. Cathy is a stay-at-home mother and wife of Chuck, a Happy Health physician averaging 58 hours per week at work plus an additional 11 hours per week of being "on call," during which he can make no plans. Chuck is the physician working the greatest number of hours of those I interviewed, and he and Cathy have four children. When I asked Cathy how they decided on their traditional family arrangement, she said:

> It was kind of like a knowing thing. I mean, I think because I had been a teacher, I loved children, I like being with children… I just knew that I wanted to be an at-home mom. I just knew it, and so he accepted it …. And I think because of the demands of his job, he was probably relieved.… He's a very open-minded man, that's for sure. If I wanted to work, that would be fine for him. But he

> probably knew that it would be a little more grounding to have me at home more, and because I wanted to be, it would just make it easier.

Chuck concurred:

> I mean, I think it was just sort of…what she wanted to do and.… I think we'd always… I don't know if I can say assumed, but that's what she wanted to do, was to stay home with the children and that we'd always sort of talked about that it was important for a mother to be home with the kids.… I don't know if we've never had the discussion because, I mean, obviously my being in orthopedic surgery residency, there was…. It would seem a little bit bizarre for me to say, well, I'm gonna stay home with the kids, and you just be a teacher…. I mean, and considering the income difference that we could make….

Thus, Cathy and Chuck eased into a traditional family structure with she at home and he as primary earner, each of them assuming that this was how it would turn out. Their decision was partly based on the gendered assumption that it was important for a mother to be home with the children and partly on his vastly higher earning potential, making the decision seem financially obvious.

In reflecting on how she felt about Chuck's work, Cathy started by assuring me that she has great pride in what Chuck does and the fact that "he is a caring, patient, capable, competent physician." When asked about his schedule, Cathy responded:

> Well, he'll say that he doesn't work as many hours as I say he works. Now, I mean, to me I feel like he's at work quite a lot.… He's gone a lot, you know... because like last night he was on call. He got home rather late, so he didn't see the kids before they went to bed. And then he had to be early today for OR [operating room], so he was gone before…you know, he was gone at 6:30. He didn't see them before they left. Now, that's when it's spaced together, when it's difficult. You know, I think…you know, I just deal with it. But the girls this morning were sad, you know. They wanted to say…they wanted to see daddy. They wanted to give him a kiss, you know. Sometimes they call him at work, and they'll leave a message on the machine, and they give him a kiss on the machine. And then he calls back when he can, and then it's…you know, so it's a give and take. But I feel that it's a lot of hours.

Given her feelings about Chuck's schedule, Cathy tries to communicate her needs and views to him. She notes that "he's getting better because I'm getting noisier," but she recounts an incident regarding their most recent vacation.

> He rarely takes more than a week off. For some reason, he's got it in his head that he can't take more than a week off. OK, so that I think is a clear thing with him. I had told him that I really wanted him to take the day off before we leave because we were renting a motor home.... It would be great if you could take that day off so that we can just... get it all together, and then you feel a little ready for it too. 'Cause he has this tendency to work up until the very minute he leaves. And he's not a type-A. I don't know what it is. It's just this thing about it's hard to leave work because there's all these patients…. He didn't, for some reason, didn't listen to me.... He had told me maybe five days before, "Oh, and I opened up that morning" (signed up to see patients). And I said, "Now why did you do that?"… He doesn't listen to me, you know, when it comes to that kind of thing.

Cathy was somewhat irritated by Chuck's refusal to spend the day preparing for their trip instead of seeing patients.

> Yeah, and so I kind of said to him, I said, "Now, you know, we've got a lot to do for this trip." And I said, "It'll be OK." And I kind of was making fun of him. I kind of said to my friend, Rosemary [visiting that evening], I said, "Yeah, he's supposed to be off tomorrow, but he had to fill it in for his patients. And he looked at me and he said, "I have a very demanding job. I'm sorry if you don't like it. And you knew this when you married me."

Cathy's gentle prodding of Chuck around his tendency to feel more need to be at work than at home resulted in an angry and defensive reaction from him. Though both report their conflict over the issue to be mild, Cathy's message does get through to Chuck, and her preferences are then reflected in his own preferences regarding how much he'd like to work. When asked whether he'd rather work more, less, or the same as he is now, Chuck responded:

> Probably a little bit less than what I work now.… I think probably the biggest thing is if I could just get home maybe half an hour to an hour earlier so if I could always leave at 5 or 5:30, instead of sometimes 6 or 6:30.

This change would allow Chuck to be home for dinner, which is what Cathy said she thinks is important to her and for them as a family. Cathy's "resistance" to Chuck's work hours results from her own values and expectations that are not being met. Less focused on financial and material needs than either Pamela or Dan, Cathy is child centered and wants Chuck to have more involvement with their family life. She needs help with their children. She feels the children would benefit from Chuck's being more involved in their lives. She doesn't want Chuck to regret missing family involvement. Unlike Dan and Pamela, she does not believe that her spouse needs to be as responsive to his work as he is and thinks that he could switch some of his time and energy to his family. Cathy's expectations are gendered in that her values, as defender of the family unit, are those traditionally expected of women. Her willingness to take on Chuck's seeming preference for work over family makes her a "resisting" partner. She frames her resistance in terms of both her own needs and those of the children.

Gina works for Softsign and is engaged to Mickey, whom she met at Softsign but who now works for a technology start-up nearby. Mickey has the more demanding work schedule because of the environment within his start-up. Gina works an average of 40 to 50 hours a week and is very happy with both her job and the amount she's been able to learn at Softsign. In their relationship, Gina makes an effort to remind Mickey that there is more to life than work.

> I will care, and he knows that I will care when it comes around…. If it happens all the time, every single day, he knows that I worry. I grew up with a workaholic dad, and so it is very important to me that he has outside work time. I'm always stressing, we need to get out this weekend, you know. It's fine if you're gonna work and come home and eat and go to bed, but there are definitely.… Like I'll call him and say, "Did you work out today? You at least need to stretch" because he had back surgery. So I try to like get him away....Yeah, my last boyfriend about three years ago, this guy that I was seeing, worked a lot and I had major issues with it because I was having.… I really thought I was gonna end up with this person and I had…I was thinking of my dad. And so I would really freak out about it. 'Cause I don't remember doing very many fun things with my dad growing up because he was always working.

Mickey, for his part, says that he's getting the message:

> It's kind of neat to be able to work on the latest and greatest stuff. And I guess, you know, to have…to do something and have somebody recognize it is really cool. But I think just recently it's like all this stuff really doesn't…it doesn't matter because…it doesn't matter like, you know, having a best friend that I can marry and I can have a life and kids and, you know, plan for the future, and do things with friends. Of course, I was…it was like I was in the extreme. I was just coding and locked myself away from everybody.... But I think it's kind of been planted in the back of my mind just to put in your time, go home, kind of disengage from it, and just, you know, live your life instead of this being like the central focal point.

Gina has a set of values that she applies both to herself and her future husband. Her experience as the child of a workaholic led to her aversion to excessive work time, and she is trying to influence Mickey's values so that they are more in line with hers. Like Cathy, Gina is a woman trying to reduce her partner's work emphasis. Unlike Cathy, she is doing it from the standpoint of a full-time worker herself and before she and Mickey have children.

Given the stage of their relationship, she cannot negotiate on behalf of existing children, although she does refer to future children when discussing the reasons for her efforts to change Mickey's time allocation. Mostly, however, she points out that she will not be interested in sharing her life with him if he cannot curb his work orientation, and she emphasizes her belief that he will benefit from leading a more balanced life. This latter argument is similar to Cathy's concern that Chuck is missing the experience of being with his children while they are still young.

Both Gina and Cathy use multiple arguments to try to influence their partner's behaviors and attitudes toward work. Both come to their relationships with their own set of personal values that emphasize the importance of family and nonwork activities. Each woman believes that her partner can reduce his emphasis on work without catastrophic consequences for his career. Both of these couples appeared to have strong and positive relationships, so the resistance to the partner's work behavior is not simply one of many areas of conflict between them. Instead, the resistance is an effort on the part of the women in the partnerships to garner more time for the couple and, in Cathy's case, for the children because they value the time as a couple or a family.

None of the men in the sample expressed the desire to influence their spouses to work more or less. They seemed less actively involved in altering their partners' values and work behaviors, or perhaps they were less willing to express these desires to me. These men were either involved in dual-career relationships in which both partners worked similar hours or their wives worked very little or not at all and took primary responsibility for the children. The men in the dual-career relationships were all spouses of professional women I interviewed. All the highly educated women workers I interviewed were married to men with similar work commitments. In contrast, the highly educated men in the organizations I interviewed were all married to women who were now working very part-time or not at all. Some of these wives had been professionals themselves at one time but had left their careers for homemaking. Some had never been professionals. The men in egalitarian relationships accepted the work commitment of their spouses, which was no greater, and often less, than their own. The men in traditional relationships either appreciated that their wives were doing the "harder" job or were resigned to their role of breadwinner and did not seek to renegotiate the agreement they had made even if they claimed not to prefer their role.

Children. Although I did not interview children, their presence was felt and their needs interpreted by the parents with whom I spoke. Moira is a single mother of a 15-year-old boy who has her son approximately 60% of the time. Until Softsign's layoff of last summer, she had been working 55-hour weeks and loving it. Since then, disenchanted by the way in which the layoff was implemented and therefore feeling less secure and committed to the company, she has reduced her work time to 40 hours a week and is spending some of her energy preparing herself should the right opportunity arise to move to a new company.

> Yeah. I think one of the things I consider when I think about going to another company that looks exciting is typically they work long hours, which I've done before. But I'm also worried that if I got myself into that environment that I would sacrifice my son in order.… I know myself well enough to know that I would work all the time, that I would want to be there all the time with everybody because I'm…that part of the team player in me wants to be right in there with everybody else. And I know that, you know, having a 15-year-old, if I was doing that, means that he would be alone for

> that amount of time. So there's a part of me that just doesn't want to sacrifice that time with him in order to pursue that sort of addiction I have for this adrenaline thing going on.

I asked Moira whether she felt she had sacrificed her son during the prior period in her current job when she was working such long hours because she had not mentioned that in our previous discussion about her work.

> Yeah, I was a little.... Like occasionally on a Saturday I would say, you know, can you go hang with your friends, and I'm gonna go to work for a few hours, you know. Or I'd bring him with me and send him to the mall, or something like that. You know, I arranged for him to do things, but still it meant that I was leaving him to do it. And it worked out, you know. It was for a short time. It was for, you know, maybe a year or something. It was for a relatively short time.
>
> Yeah, so it seemed OK. And, you know, anything you step into a day at a time seems OK, you know. And I think that's what worries me is that I would…you know, I'm here right now, and I go home at 5:30, and it's safe. And I know when I'm gonna be home. And if I go to another company, would I be staying 'til say 7:00 and calling him and saying, you know, I'll be right home. So I worry…you know, I worry about that, about those kinds of hours, doing those kinds of hours again. Although I miss it.

Moira did not say that her son ever complained about her lack of presence, but she herself felt a responsibility to be with him that is in direct conflict with her own preference to be absorbed in her work.

Deirdre, the married Softsign manager working 50-hour weeks, feels very comfortable that her two-year-old child does not need additional time with her.

> I think I thought I'd spend more time with my family, and what I found is that they need less time than I thought they did. Like I said, my daughter's very social; she doesn't require a lot of one-on-one personal attention from me. She actually prefers to be at school, and she gets easily bored at home. And so after having had her home and learning that about her, it…she likes to be around a lot of people. So being at home isn't fun for her. She wants to be with the other kids.

Deirdre's husband, Dan, concurs, but has a sense of unease about the amount of time their daughter spends in day care.

> When I was working, it was…she was getting dropped off at 7 to 7:30, and she would get picked up between 6 and 6:30, you know, whenever Deirdre would [get there].…And that would kind of force her out the door.…
>
> You know, I have a little bit of guilt, I think, of having a child in day care kind of to begin with…'cause I came from a very traditional home. And, you know, there's something that just seems not as good as it should be, you know, when you have the kid in day care.
>
> From her perspective or observing her, I don't really see any difference actually. It's not like, you know, her temperament's worse when she's in there a long time versus a short time. It's all purely self-injected guilt.

Dan and Deirdre have agreed that it is acceptable for both of them to be heavily involved in and committed to work, resulting in their child spending 11-hour days in child care. Deirdre says that if her child had responded differently and had preferred to be with her, then she may have chosen to work less. But because she is convinced that this is what the child prefers, she feels no pressure to reduce her work hours. Despite this, during his recent time off from work, Dan has chosen to reduce the child's child care time to 6-hour days so he can spend more time with her. However, he states that the child will resume her longer days in child care and will be joined at the child care center by her eight-week-old brother, not yet born, when he gets a new job and returns to work.

They both admit that their dual commitment to their jobs and the time they spend on work may have to change if their second child does not acclimate to institutional care as smoothly as their first. Although they did not have an agreed upon plan for what would happen should their second child have a harder time with child care than their first, Deirdre felt that Dan would be more likely to be willing to stay home than she would.

> The thing for me was just, you know, not the baby care, that was the fun part. The rest of it was having my whole day be … laundry

> … or whatever. It just didn't work for me…you know. And I have friends who just love that stuff, but for me, it just was…oh boy, that's the worst thing. My husband loves that stuff, so we're kind of reverse roles. He loves a clean house and whatever, and so, you know, it works out fine.… He would do it. I would do it, too, but he'd do it before. He'd be the first person to volunteer for that.

Cathy, the doctor's wife mentioned previously, felt that Chuck should spend more time with their children, both for the good of the children and because she didn't want Chuck to miss the opportunity to experience them while they were still young. Cathy advocated on behalf of the children and also let them express their desires directly to Chuck. Despite these efforts, Chuck did not seem concerned that the children were being harmed by his absences.

> Well, I think that even with the extra time my kids seem to be kind of proud that their daddy helps people and stuff like that. One time one of the three-year-olds hurt her leg, and she wasn't walking on it. So I told my wife to bring her down. So she brought all the kids down, and she was able to do it. And I…we have a little flouroscan. It's a portable X-ray machine that you can just take, and it's for small bones. And it was her leg, so I put her leg into it. And took a picture, and then you can actually make a copy of it, and I gave it to her, and she carried this picture around for like two weeks 'cause daddy fixed her leg… And I think my second son, he said he wants to be a doctor. I'm kind of trying to maybe dissuade him a little bit. I don't know.

Chuck and Cathy encouraged their children to admire Chuck because he is a doctor who helps make people better. For Chuck, this acknowledgement of his healing role by his family affirms his own sense of meaning in what he does. It is as or more important than his actual presence with them, though he did state a mild desire to work less in order to respond to Cathy's concerns that he be home for dinner.

Deirdre and Dan, Cathy and Chuck, and Moira all take their children into account when deciding how much to work or whether to support their spouses in their work habits. Resisting spouses resist partly in the name of their children; facilitating spouses believe that their children are well served in whatever care arrangement they are in. Thus, how workers and spouses perceive the needs of children sometimes correlates but sometimes conflicts with the work time preferences of workers and with the facilitating versus resisting behaviors of spouses. Whether

children's needs cause the work time preferences versus the work preferences influencing perceived needs is difficult to know without longitudinal data.

Conclusion

I started this research with a number of questions about the relationships between work behaviors or work attitudes and family satisfaction among highly educated workers. From survey data, I learned that greater work time reduces general family satisfaction, increases the worker's concerns over spending enough time with children, and reduces satisfaction with personal and leisure time. When workers feel committed to their work organization, these negative effects of long work hours are somewhat reduced, at least from the standpoint of the worker. This may be due to the worker using psychological justification to defend his or her work behaviors.

Workers' satisfaction with primary relationships, however, was not correlated to work time. My case study research uncovered a number of explanations for this survey finding. These include the differing expectations and value systems that spouses brought to relationships. The different spousal choices of men and women have resulted in some gender variations in their reactions to worker behaviors. This variability of expectations, values, and options combined with different worker behaviors and attitudes led to negotiations among couples that exhibited a variety of belief systems and negotiation strategies.

The spouses and partners of workers entered their relationships with differing expectations, depending on their own past work and family experiences, their personal values, and their desires for their own future lifestyle. Individuals who had experienced significant work absorption themselves were more likely to accept this behavior in their spouses. Those who had experienced absorbing work but were now working part-time or not at all and were relying on the worker for support were especially understanding and uncritical of high work time. In contrast, spouses or partners who either did not describe themselves as having been absorbed workers or who openly stated their values as including nonwork priorities such as family, community involvement, or recreation were more openly critical of work-absorbed behaviors and sought to change them.

Spouses who placed heavy emphasis on material expectations and needs were especially likely to be tolerant of work-absorbed behavior because they saw it as integral to work success and knew that this success was related to their own and their family's financial and material well-being. In these cases, material needs appeared to take precedence over any need for the worker to spend more time with the spouse or family. These values often were held by the same spouses who had been in absorbing professions. It seemed as though, despite their having chosen to exit those high-pressure, high-paying jobs themselves, they had not given up on the level of material comfort that those jobs led to but had, instead, transferred their expectations to their spouses.

Gender was a factor in these expectations and negotiations in several ways. First, men and women appeared to have had or to have made a different set of choices when picking a partner. Although all the highly educated female workers I interviewed were married to full-time professional men, all the male workers from Happy Health and Softsign I interviewed were married to women working part-time or not at all. Because I interviewed some spouses as well, however, my case studies include both traditional and dual profession couples. Highly educated men appeared to have the choice between women who would become homemaker caregivers and those who were more likely to remain professionals. Highly educated women, in contrast, all ended up with professional men.

Men's ability to realize a traditional family structure through their choice of spouse led to their being less likely to end up resisting their wives' work orientations. Men who had a traditional image of how a family should be run already had wives who stayed home or worked part-time and took care of the house and care work. They had chosen to satisfy their expectations through the choice of their spouse, making it less likely that they would be put in a resistor position. The men married to the professional women had chosen these dual-career relationships based on their own values, indicating either a tolerance or a desire for equality and/or a preference for having an additional professional wage in the family. Having made this choice, these men were inclined to support their wives' work orientation.

Women, both the professionals and the stay at home, were more likely to act as defenders of home and family and, as such, to resist the work behaviors of their male partners. This was

probably due to the fact that women did not appear to have, or to make, a choice over their spouse's work orientation. Therefore, all the women workers ended up with similarly professional partners. For some of these women, this orientation was consistent with their own values. For others, however, their values put them in the position of defending or protecting their own and their family's needs in the face of their partner's work demands. They became resisting spouses.

Finally, my case studies illustrate the complex negotiations that take place between spouses over the issue of time allocation. These negotiations take place repeatedly throughout the life cycle of a relationship. Gina and Mickey, engaged but not yet married, were in the first round of these discussions. Gina was trying to modify Mickey's values and perspectives. His receptivity to her efforts led to her willingness to commit to the relationship. In these negotiations, she referred to her experiences from the past, (i.e. her workaholic father), and the present, (i.e. her own efforts to lead a balanced life), as well as her hopes for the future. She referred to all these time frames in her life in order to persuade Mickey that there were dangers to extreme work orientation as well as benefits to a more varied and balanced life.

The next life stage in which time allocation negotiations appeared most prominent was when couples were having children. Cathy and Pamela, the two doctors' wives with whom I spoke, had both chosen to stop working within a year or two of having their first child. Deirdre and Dan, with one two-year-old and another child on the way, were in the process of creating a family and were clearly in the midst of negotiating over how they should allocate their work and family time. Dan's memory of a more traditional upbringing led him to feel discomfort with the institutional child care arrangement they had chosen so far. He and Deirdre were still negotiating over how to allay his discomfort: whether to pay for more personalized, in-home care or whether he might be willing to take on the role of primary homemaker and caregiver.

Cathy and Pamela, solidly in their family years, were carrying out the agreements made with their doctor husbands that they would manage their households and their husbands would be primary breadwinners. In Pamela's case, her material expectations were being met, and she was accepting of the time Peter spent at work. Though they were in the process of divorcing when I spoke to them, both agreed that Peter would continue to be the primary breadwinner and Pamela

would continue working only part-time until their children grew up. They both insisted that his work time had nothing to do with their divorce.

Cathy, however, having also chosen to stay home and care for their children, found that her own values and needs were not being met due to Chuck's work habits. Like other resisting spouses, she used a variety of arguments in negotiating with Chuck over his behaviors. First, she pointed out that she herself had needs, mostly as a parent who was sometimes overwhelmed with four children. Second, she invoked the needs of the children as an important factor that he should take into account. Finally, she argued that Chuck also should reflect on his own life choices in case he came to regret his current time allocation choices in future years. Cathy was least direct about her own needs as a wife.

These case studies provide a number of explanations for the lack of a direct correlation between the work time of educated professionals and their satisfaction with their primary relationship. These include differing expectations and values among spouses. In particular, the instrumental or material value of work appears, for many spouses, to be of equal or greater importance than family time. The negotiations that take place within families are repeated over the life cycle of the relationship, include references to the needs of the spouses as well as children and the workers themselves, and serve to balance and integrate the differing values, gender experiences, and belief systems that each partner brings into the relationship.

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