

In a recent meta-analytic review, Byron (2005) provides a comprehensive overview of the antecedents of work-to-home conflict. However, several areas remain unclear in her review: 1) she hypothesizes and finds general support for the claim that women and men have similar levels of work-to-home conflict; 2) her analysis excludes education as a potential antecedent; and 3) her meta-analyses excludes occupation type, levels of status and authority on the job, and supervisory responsibilities because the lack of studies that contain such variables. My study seeks to address these gaps and extend theoretical views about gender variations in inter-role conflict by using data from a 2005 nationally representative sample of 1,800 working adults in the United States. This effort directly responds to Byron's call for researchers to "attend to more finely grained variables that may more fully capture employees' likelihood of experiencing work-family conflict."

Sociological analyses of the social distribution of stressors, such as inter-role conflict, tend to show that "advantaged" statuses (i.e., higher education, prestigious occupations, and higher income) are associated with a lower risk of exposures to such stressors (McLeod and Nonnemaker 1999). Other studies, often in the occupational health literature, identify the potentially harmful health implications of work conditions such as high job demands, low decision-making latitude, and low levels of flexibility with respect to scheduling and work hours (Bakker and Geurts 2004). The general consensus from sociological research into the association between social statuses and well-being is that higher status conditions tend to be associated with more favorable health-related outcomes. That is, workers in professional jobs that contain higher levels of decision-making latitude, autonomy, authority, and pecuniary rewards generally fare better with respect to health than their peers in lower status jobs with less freedom, power, and challenging work (Schieman, Kurashina, and Van Gundy 2004). But are there any costs of higher status work? In this paper, I explore the possibility that well-educated individuals in higher status occupations and their associated work conditions are more likely to encounter higher levels of an important inter-role stressor: *work-to-home conflict*. I also explore variations for women and men.

I focus on peoples' experience of the interference between work and home roles because such conflict represents a core social stressor that can have deleterious effects on well-being (Bellavia and

Frone 2005). Although numerous definitions of work-to-home conflict exist, most focus on the extent that individuals perceive that their work life interferes with the responsibilities, obligations, and expectations of the home sphere (Greenhaus and Parasuraman 1987). Although both directions—work-to-home and home-to-work conflict—are influential stressors (Frone 2000), theory and evidence provides a rationale for expecting different structural and interpersonal antecedents (Bellavia and Frone 2005; Byron 2005; Frone 2003). I hypothesize that higher status occupations and work conditions *increase* exposure to work-to-home conflict. Despite prior observations that professional or managerial workers are more likely to feel “overworked” (Clarkberg and Moen 2001; Jacobs and Gerson 1997) or a “time squeeze” (Hochschild 1997), little is known about levels of work-to-home conflict across a full range of occupations (Bellavia and Frone 2005). Although some document higher levels of work-to-home conflict among professional or managerial workers (Grzywacz, Almeida, and McDonald 2002; Kinnunen and Mauno 1998; Moen and Yu 2000), many studies of the predictors of work-to-home conflict either exclude occupational status, compare broad categories of high and low status groups, or focus exclusively on professionals and/or the well-educated (Grzywacz and Marks 2000; Higgins, Duxbury, and Johnson 2000; Voydanoff 2004). While the psychosocial and material conditions associated with professional occupations are generally beneficial, their may be costs. Specifically, workers in professional jobs tend to have more job demands and work longer hours (Clarkberg and Moen 2001; Maume and Bellas 2001). In turn, demands and hours are associated positively with work-to-home conflict (Grzywacz and Marks 2000; Gutek et al. 1991; Major, Klein, and Ehrhart 2002; Voydanoff 2004). Professionals also are more likely to experience other forms of workplace status, especially high levels of authority, autonomy, nonroutine work, and better pay. Drawing from these ideas, I test the *stress of higher status* hypothesis: Well-educated workers in higher status occupations with more authority, autonomy, nonroutine work, demands, longer hours, and better pay tend to have higher levels of work-to-home conflict. By contrast, an alternative view—the *resources of higher status* hypothesis—identifies education and some work conditions, especially job authority, autonomy, nonroutine work, and income, as resources that lower exposure to work-to-home conflict.

Are these hypotheses equally relevant for women and men? Systems of stratification contribute to gender variations in work conditions. Although employed men tend to have greater job authority, autonomy, nonroutine, and higher paying work, gender variations in the links between occupations, work conditions, and work-to-home conflict remain unknown. The traditional view has its origins in the “gender model”, which emphasizes the conventional ideologies and socialization processes that yield different role meanings, expectations, and obligations for women and men. In general, family-related roles tend to be more central for women’s identity, and status attainment processes are more central men’s identity. Thus, the *traditional role-balance* hypothesis asserts that intrusions from family to work have been more permissible for working women, while it has been more acceptable for men to “take work home”. To the extent such traditional norms remain, working women may encounter more conflict from work-to-home than men, especially if they hold higher status jobs.

An alternative to the traditional role balance view, the *egalitarian role balance* hypothesis suggests that stress of higher status predictions are equally likely among women and men. There may be a “price” for interesting and rewarding work. The egalitarian role-balance perspective suggests that “price” is becoming similar among women and men, especially those in higher status work positions. The traditional gender-role perspective of men’s and women’s experience of and commitment to work and family roles posited that men’s involvement in the family domain was more connected to the traditionally gendered division of household labor; work conditions did not determine their degree of family work. However, Pleck (1977) predicted that reductions in occupational sex segregation will also increase the likelihood that women in higher status work positions may seek to weaken traditionally gendered parameters of work and family—specifically expanding the expectations and responsibilities of men for family work. Although women still tend to spend more time on childcare and housework than men, a more symmetrical work/family balance may have emerged for women and men in the United States (Fuma 2005). By extension, women in societies with a more egalitarian role balance may be less likely to define work as supplemental to family roles and men may be less likely to define family roles as supplemental to their work roles (Grzywacz and Marks 2000).

### *A Brief Summary of the Sample, Measures, and Results*

To test these ideas, I use data from telephone interviews in 2005 with 1,800 adults in the 50 United States. Eligible participants are 18 years of age or older and participating in the paid labor. Interviews were conducted in English, so participants had to be sufficiently fluent in order to complete the interview. Measures include: work-to-home conflict, gender, race, age, marital status, education, occupation, weekly work hours, personal income, percent contribution to household income, job sector, job tenure, job authority, job insecurity, interpersonal conflict in the workplace role-set, workplace role-set multiplicity, decision-making latitude on the job, nonroutine work, job demands, job noxiousness (“hazards”), number of individuals < age 18 in the household, number of individuals  $\geq$  age 18 in the household, division of household labor, economic hardship, and feeling rushed for time.

I find that women and men appear to report similar levels of work-to-home conflict, net of age, marital status, education, and occupation. However, a suppression effect emerges once I adjust for weekly hours at work: At the same number of work hours, women report significantly higher levels of work-to-home conflict than men. This pattern holds net of the number of individuals under age 18 living at home and other sociodemographic controls. Higher levels of work-to-home conflict are found among: 1) non-Hispanic whites versus both African-Americans and Hispanics; 2) the well-educated versus individuals with less education; 3) workers in higher status professional occupations versus workers in lower status occupations such as service, craft and repair, operators, and laborers; and 4) workers with higher levels of authority versus those with less authority at work. Overall, the findings support the stress of higher status hypothesis; there is mixed evidence about the traditional versus egalitarian role balance hypotheses. Collectively, these findings address some of the gaps reported in a recent meta-analysis of the antecedents of work-to-home conflict and expand knowledge about the social-structural sources of inter-role stress in the United States, particular with respect to gender. Although higher status positions yield rewards, findings show that such positions are not impervious to inter-role stress which may offset those rewards. [REFERENCES CITED ARE AVAILABLE IN THE FULL MANUSCRIPT]