

# **Work and family in the era of the transitional career: Determinants of work-family conflict and its relationship to career mobility**

Maxim Kovalenko  
Dimitri Mortelmans

2016 nr. 06

## **WSE Report**

Steunpunt Werk en Sociale Economie

Naamsestraat 61/3551 - 3000 Leuven

T: +32 (0)16 32 32 39

[steunpuntwse@kuleuven.be](mailto:steunpuntwse@kuleuven.be)

[www.steunpuntwse.be](http://www.steunpuntwse.be)

**KU LEUVEN**

# **Work and family in the era of the transitional career: Determinants of work-family conflict and its relationship to career mobility**

Maxim Kovalenko  
Dimitri Mortelmans  
University of Antwerpen

Een onderzoek in opdracht van de Vlaamse minister van Werk, Economie, Innovatie en Sport in het kader van het Vlaams Programma Strategisch Arbeidsmarktonderzoek.

Kovalenko, M., Mortelmans, D. (2016) Work and family in the era of the transitional career: Determinants of work-family conflict and its relationship to career mobility (WSE Report 2016 nr. 06). Leuven: Steunpunt Werk en Sociale Economie / Universiteit Antwerpen.

ISBN: 9789088731334

Copyright (2016) Steunpunt Werk en Sociale Economie  
Naamsestraat 61 /3551 – B-3000 Leuven  
T: +32(0)16 32 32 39  
steunpuntwse@kuleuven.be  
www.steunpuntwse.be

Niets uit deze uitgave mag worden veelevoudigd en/of openbaar gemaakt door middel van druk, fotokopie, microfilm of op welke andere wijze ook, zonder voorafgaande schriftelijke toestemming van de uitgever.

No part of this report may be reproduced in any form, by mimeograph, film or any other means, without permission in writing from the publisher.

WSE REPORT

Work and family in the era of the transitional  
career: Determinants of work-family conflict and its  
relationship to career mobility

Maxim Kovalenko and Dimitri Mortelmans

University of Antwerp

# Contents

Introduction . . . . .	2
Theoretical framework . . . . .	4
Work-family conflict and its determinants . . . . .	4
Work-family conflict and the <i>new career</i> . . . . .	9
Analytical approach . . . . .	13
Method . . . . .	14
Data . . . . .	14
Statistical techniques . . . . .	15
Measures . . . . .	15
Vulnerable groups: definitions and sizes . . . . .	16
Results . . . . .	19
Who is affected by work-family conflict? . . . . .	19
What factors influence the three dimensions of work-family conflict? . . . . .	22
An analysis of the specific groups . . . . .	25
Work-life conflict and the <i>new career</i> . . . . .	40
Discussion and conclusion . . . . .	51
Implications for policy . . . . .	56

# Introduction

The increasing proportions of dual-earner families and single working parents pose new challenges for both workers and employers (Byron, 2005; Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2005). One of these challenges pertains to the issue of combining work and family roles, which has received much attention in the scientific literature (e.g. Direnzo et al., 2015; Greenhaus and Powell, 2012; Poelmans et al., 2013). A major theme in the research on the subject concerns the potential negative effects of the conflict between work and family roles. Indeed, work-family conflict has been empirically linked to a range of outcomes, undesirable not only from the standpoint of the employee, but also from the perspective of the employer and, more generally, society.

Given the economic and societal costs of work-family conflict, it is not surprising that creating a framework facilitating a better fit between work and family domains has become an important public policy effort (European Commission, 2015). In Flanders, the interface between work and family constitutes one of the dimensions of the public policy engagement to facilitate the improvement of job quality and therefore labor market participation (Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2004).

A number of socio-economic processes that have been unfolding on the labor market in the past decades, have resulted in changes in the interface between work and family (Perrons, 2003; De Hauw, 2014). These processes, often captured in the umbrella term *the new economy* (Gummeson, 2002), entail, among other trends, a shift towards knowledge-intensive service economy, proliferation of ICT, increasing flexibilization,

globalization and deregulation of the labor market. The so-called ‘atypical’ working arrangements, such as telework, part-time work, home-based work or weekend work, have gained ground in many countries. The delineation between work and family became less clear cut than previously, activities in each of domains seeping into the other.

The same processes have also led to changes in the dynamic of modern careers (Baruch and Bozionelos, 2010; Sullivan, 1999), resulting in what has been labeled *the new career* (Arthur et al., 1999). Workers are said to be more autonomous in driving their careers, relying on self-directed job changes between multiple employers (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) and on investing in one’s skills and abilities pertinent to employability, in order to bring about long-term employment security. Career mobility is therefore considered to be one of the important aspects of the *new career* (Sullivan and Arthur, 2006), often being seen as an instrument to tackle labor market rigidities and to reduce unemployment.

The study of changes in careers has, however, remained largely isolated from the work-family literature, focusing primarily on the domain of work alone (Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014; De Hauw, 2014). At the same time, given the practical importance of career mobility in the modern economy, and its relationship with work-family balance, it is important to understand the totality of that relationship, as well as its impact on career outcomes.

In this report, we focus on the interrelationship between family and work, connecting the problematic of work-family conflict with the issues pertinent to the debate on contemporary careers. More specifically, we explore how work-family conflict relates

to career mobility, both as cause and consequence. We consider the properties of career transitions, and their effects on transition outcomes. In addition, we explore the dynamic of work-family conflict in several specific groups: individuals with a migration background, women, those aged 50 or more, individuals without diploma higher education and single parents.

## **Theoretical framework**

### **Work-family conflict and its determinants**

Striking a balance between work- and family-related roles is a task that virtually every worker must face nowadays ([Byron, 2005](#)). Several decades ago the division between these two spheres of life was invariably linked to gender. Within the traditional male breadwinner family framework, the husband earned the income, while the wife was primarily responsible for domestic tasks. Even though there always were deviations from this pattern, often substantial, it nevertheless described the situation of most families during the post-war period in many western societies ([Lewis, 2001](#)).

There has been a behavioral and a normative change in the second half of the twentieth century with respect to gender roles and the consequently the division between work and family. The demise of the male breadwinner family model was furthered by the changing nature of the family and intimate relationships ([Giddens, 1993](#)), increasing feminization of the labor market (e.g. [Herremans et al., 2015](#)), the shift towards the tertiary economy, and in many countries a substantial increase in single-person

households (Lewis, 2001).

As the strictly traditional gender-bound modes of dividing familial and work-related tasks have lost their prevalence, the problematics of reconceptualizing the relationship between work and family have emerged in society, and, consequently, in the scientific discourse.

Two broad perspectives on the relationship between work and family have been postulated: work-family enrichment (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006; McNall et al., 2010), and work-family conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Eby et al., 2005). The work-family enrichment perspective is based on the role accumulation theory (Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974), which maintains that participation in multiple life roles can produce positive outcomes for individuals that may outweigh the disadvantages, such as increased stress (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006; Chen and Powell, 2012). The work-family conflict perspective, being the dominant research stream at the moment (Eby et al., 2005; Chen and Powell, 2012), derives its support from the role strain theory (Goode, 1960), also known as role scarcity theory (Marks, 1977). The role strain theory postulates that since an individual has but a fixed amount of time and energy to spend on different life roles, using them in one role diminishes the resources available for other roles. Therefore different life roles can be seen as competitive in relation to each other, given the individual resource scarcity. Consequently, people engaging in multiple life roles experience inter-role conflict as the result of competing role demands and expectations (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). In this report, we are going to focus on the work-family conflict perspective because of its public policy relevance, namely in regard to the work quality initiatives in Flanders (e.g. “Werkbaar werk”)

that include work-family conflict as one of the job quality dimensions (Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2004).

Early research on work-family conflict did not distinguish between the direction of the conflict, in other words, the interference of work with family roles was not distinguished from the interference of family with work roles (Lewis, 2001; Carlson et al., 2000). In later research, the distinction became explicit, as the empirical data demonstrated that the two types of conflict are related, yet distinct phenomena (Carlson et al., 2000). In this report we limit our inquiry to the work-family conflict dimension due to its aforementioned relationship to work quality.

A formal definition of work-family conflict, according to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), is as follows. Work-family conflict is “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually non-compatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role” (p. 77).

In addition to the distinction between the two directional types of conflict between work and family, there are three *dimensions* or forms pertaining to each directional type (Carlson et al., 2000; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). These three *dimensions* pertain to *time-based*, *strain-based* and *behavior-based* conflict.

An individual has but a limited amount of time to allocate to each of the several roles he or she engages in. Time spent in one role cannot be spent on activities in the other role. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) discern between the two following aspects of time-based conflict. Firstly, time pressures in one role may make it physically

impossible to comply with demands stemming from another. Secondly, even when one is attempting to meet these demands, time pressures can create a pre-occupation with one role.

The second form of work-family conflict is related to strain, stemming from the participation in multiple roles simultaneously. Strain experienced in one role affects performance in another. For example, if a worker suffers from stress at work, the effects thereof can carry over to the familial sphere, e.g. expressed as irritability or fatigue ([Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985](#)).

The third form of work-family conflict pertains to specific in-role behavioral patterns that may be incompatible with expectations in the other role. For example, valuable traits of a high-level executive manager are not necessarily beneficial in family situations requiring a warm, nurturing approach. We will consider all three forms of work-family conflict in our analyses.

Determinants of work-family conflict have been well studied ([Eby et al., 2005](#); [Byron, 2005](#)). These can be broadly classified into work and family domain variables, as well as individual socio-demographic characteristics ([Dijkers et al., 2007](#)). Several types of determinants have been further discerned, pertaining, among others, to individual background, family, organizational characteristics, job attributes, individual differences, organizational support, non-work support, work and career attitudes, spouse characteristics, child and parenting variables ([Eby et al., 2005](#)).

Within work domain, work-family conflict has been positively linked to pressure, stress and demands at work ([Eby et al., 2005](#), p.143). That includes working a greater

number of hours or longer days, working in less enriching jobs, experiencing ambiguity at work, working in a job with higher emotional, mental or physical demands (Bakker et al., 2011; Dikkers et al., 2007; Jansen et al., 2003). Longitudinal studies have confirmed the causal nature of these factors in regard to work-family conflict (Dikkers et al., 2007; Jansen et al., 2003), even though the direction of the causality has been disputed (Dikkers et al., 2007). Supportive organizational culture, supervisor or mentor has been generally found to reduce work-family conflict (Kossek et al., 2011). Some of the previous research has established that having greater autonomy at work contributes to higher work-family conflict (see Greenhaus et al., 1989). Other researchers have found the relationship to be negative (Jansen et al., 2003). Mixed results have been also found in relation to the relationship of skill discretion with work-family conflict, some studies finding a negative effect (Jansen et al., 2003), while others—no significant relationship (Voydanoff, 1988).

Role ambiguity has been linked to higher levels of work-family conflict (Voydanoff, 1988; Greenhaus et al., 1989), whereas other researchers have found no relationship between the two variables (Carlson, 1999).

The availability of work–family benefits (Thompson et al., 1999) as well as the flexibility of working arrangements, such as working schedule adaptability or work-at-home programs have been often found to diminish work-family conflict (Eby et al., 2005; Byron, 2005; Clark, 2001), although findings were mixed for this type of variables as well (Shockley and Allen, 2007).

Within the family domain, having children at home and higher time demands from

family is related to higher levels of work-family conflict (Eby et al., 2005). Marital/partnership status and partner employment may also contribute to higher work-family conflict levels (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; van Veldhoven and Beijer, 2012; Michel et al., 2011). Family income has also been shown to be associated with work-family conflict, given that it affects the capacity to employ external labor for domestic and care tasks (Guttek et al., 1991; Michel et al., 2011; van Veldhoven and Beijer, 2012)

Previous research has yielded mixed results in regard to the relationship between gender and work-family conflict (Eby et al., 2005). Some studies have found that women experience higher work-family conflict levels than men, while others have found no relationship.

## **Work-family conflict and the *new career***

Aside from the aforementioned transformations within the family domain and the rise in female labor market participation, with their respective consequences for the work-family relationship, the last three decades have been also characterized by substantial changes in the work domain (e.g. Beck, 2000; Sennett, 2011; Standing, 2010). In this report we will explore one aspect of these changes, which pertains to the shifts in career dynamic, often referred to as the *new career* (Arthur et al., 1999) or the *transitional career* (Kovalenko and Mortelmans, 2014). In this report, we will use both terms interchangeably. In particular, we will focus on the interrelationship of career mobility and the issue of work-family conflict. In the remaining part of this

section we will briefly overview the said shifts in career dynamic from a theoretical perspective. Subsequently, we will discuss work-life conflict from the contemporary career perspective ([Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014](#)).

Career literature outlines several avenues along which careers have been changing in the last three decades, usually contrasting the contemporary transitional career with the so-called traditional career of the post-war era ([Arthur and Rousseau, 1996](#); [Baruch and Bozionelos, 2010](#)). The traditional career type is characterized by a life-long employment with one or two employers ([Sullivan, 1999](#)), its development occurring predominantly through promotions on internal labor markets. Career success is typically defined by external rewards, such as salary or status.

A plethora of socio-economic factors, including, but not limited to increasing economic globalization, labor market feminization, the proliferation of the neoliberal socio-economic paradigm, technological developments, the shift towards the service economy, intensifying international competition, have put pressures on organizations to become more flexible. The rigid organizational processes and structures typical for the post-war ‘Golden Era’ of full employment were no longer adequate in the new economy. These pressures resulted in flatter organizational structures ([Ashkenas, 1999](#)), stimulated career progression through external labor markets, which ultimately became characterized by more frequent career transitions between employers, i.e. by higher external career mobility ([Sullivan and Arthur, 2006](#)). Organizations have largely relinquished the function of career management; workers themselves are expected to take control of how their careers unfold ([Clarke and Patrickson, 2008](#)). These factors, combined with the demise of the full-employment paradigm as the

cornerstone of economic life in the Western developed countries (Beck, 2000; Standing, 2010), have led to a change in principal mechanisms by which employment continuity in a career is realized. The ability to gain and retain employment, generally referred to as *employability* (Clarke and Patrickson, 2008; Fugate et al., 2004), came to play an important role in the context of insecure labor markets (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). Whereas in the era of the traditional career the emphasis in a career was made on *job security*, in the framework of the transitional career it is *employment security* that became its linchpin (Muffels, 2008).

Even though work-family conflict research has a long-standing history, it is only recently that attention has been paid in the relevant literature to the issues of work-family combination specifically in the context of the *new career* (De Hauw, 2014; Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014). Greenhaus and Kossek (2014) noted that the current research on *new careers* is virtually isolated from the work-family literature; family-domain variables are rarely used in contemporary career studies (De Hauw, 2014). At the same time the authors postulate that “career experiences and home experiences are inextricably intertwined in many contemporary careers” (Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014, p. 362), the statement especially relevant as the borders between work and home have become both more blurred and more permeable than previously (Allen et al., 2014). This occurs in the context of insecure employment relationships, implying the necessity to make more frequent career decisions over the life course, which more often than not will entail considerations in regard to both work and family (Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014; Greenhaus and Powell, 2012; Poelmans et al., 2013).

One of the components within the work-family perspective on *new careers*, according to [Greenhaus and Kossek \(2014\)](#), pertains to *career self-management*, a concept that is strongly related to career *self-directedness* ([De Vos and Soens, 2008](#)), i.e. with the ability to assume an independent role in managing their vocational behavior ([Briscoe et al., 2006](#)).

In extant research, self-directedness has been found to be an important antecedent of various career outcomes, including career satisfaction and perceived employability ([De Vos and Soens, 2008](#)), later retirement ([De Vos and Segers, 2013](#)), and better coping outcomes in the context of insecure labor markets ([Briscoe et al., 2012](#)). Self-directed individuals tend to exhibit a range of behaviors that are instrumental in the contemporary employment environment ([Briscoe et al., 2012](#); [Raemdonck et al., 2012](#); [Seibert et al., 2001](#)).

Existing research suggests that individuals with strong protean career orientation may be more predisposed to assume a whole-life perspective in their career decisions ([Direnzo et al., 2015](#); [Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014](#)); in other words, they tend to consider both work- and family domain factors in their vocational behavior. Furthermore, workers with strong career management skills are more likely to successfully negotiate for specialized working arrangements that would improve their work-family balance ([Hornung et al., 2008](#)).

In a similar vein, [De Hauw \(2014\)](#) explored the relationship between work-home balance and various career decisions, such as upwards, lateral and downwards mobility, career breaks or working hours reduction. According to the study, workers with high levels of work-family conflict may experience frustration and/or discomfort with their

situation. This may induce negative coping mechanisms, such as engagement in unproductive or even destructive behaviors (e.g. workplace deviance). The same context may, however, lead to the activation of positive coping mechanisms that entail a move away from the dissatisfactory situation. Thus, workers can initiate career transitions that entail strain or time reduction, i.e. change in job content or change in working hours.

While [De Hauw \(2014\)](#) explores six different types of career decisions, we approach the same diversity of career moves in two steps. First we consider whether career mobility makes a difference in work-family conflict in general. Second, we zoom in on the specific properties of the career mobility event in a separate model, to see which qualities thereof play a role in shaping work-family conflict.

## **Analytical approach**

This report is divided in two parts, corresponding to the two main steps of our analysis. In the first part, we focus on the determinants of work-family conflict, considering both work- and family-related variables for all three dimensions: time-, strain-, and behavior-based. After reviewing the model for the entire worker population, we turn to examining several specific groups of workers, namely workers without diploma higher education, men and women, workers aged over 50, workers with migration background, and workers who are single parents. We are interested in whether these workers differ from the rest of the population in factors that determine their work-family conflict, and whether their average levels of work-family conflict are different

from other workers, after excluding the influence of various confounding factors.

Part two is dedicated to an exploration of work-family conflict in the context of the *new career*. More specifically, we model the relationship between work-family conflict and career mobility. Does higher work-family conflict lead to more career mobility? What are the consequences of career transitions induced by work-family conflict? Does career mobility lead to a better work-family situation? In the second part we focus on answering these questions.

## **Method**

### **Data**

All of the analyses presented in this report are based on the dataset “Careers in Flanders”, with two waves collected in 2011 and 2012. The survey focused on various job- and career-related aspects of individual respondents, and included a vast array of questions on the corresponding attitudes and behaviors. The dataset contains 1518 respondents in the first wave and 672 respondents in the second wave. Only respondents that worked during the first wave were contacted for the second wave questionnaire. In our analyses of work-family conflict we focus on the employed respondents, respectively 1055 in the first wave and 635 in the second wave. For the initial wave, the gender distribution was 49% men, and 51% women. 16.6% were 18-29 years of age, 17% were 30-39 years of age, 20.5% were 40-49 years of age and 45.7% were 50-64 years of age, the latter age category was oversampled due to the

specific policy relevance of that group.

## Statistical techniques

For all our models we used robust maximum likelihood-based estimation. Equality between different groups was tested using likelihood ratio tests in the context of multi-group structural equation modeling, with the exception of workers with migration background and single parents. The modest sizes of these groups precluded multi-group structural equation analysis. We have used the interaction approach to model the differences for these two groups.

## Measures

Job quality variables were measured by scales based on items from the Questionnaire on the Experience and Assessment of Work (Vragenlijst Beleving en Beoordeling van de Arbeid, VBBA), see [van Veldhoven et al. \(2002\)](#). These pertain to the following variables, original scale names in parentheses: workload (*werktempo*), autonomy (*zelfstandigheid in het werk*), social support (*relatie met collega's en directe leiding*), cognitive demands (*geestelijke belasting*), emotional demands (*emotionele belasting*), physical demands (*lichamelijke inspanning*), role clarity (*onduidelijkheid over de taak*).

Job level was measured as a dichotomous variable denoting whether the respondent held a managerial position (i.e. middle or upper management). A related, but distinct job characteristic pertained to how many other workers did the respondent supervise,

measured as a continuous variable. The distinctiveness of the two variables stems from the fact that workers in non-managerial position can also supervise other workers.

The following variables pertained to the use of flexibility measures at work, measured as dichotomous variables: work-at-home (*thuiswerk*), short work week (*ingekorte werkweek*), overtime recuperation (*recuperatieverlof*), lightened workload (*taakverlichting*).

Taking a career break (part-time) was measured by a dichotomous variable. Education was measured as a dichotomous variable referring to whether the respondent had no diploma higher education. Dichotomous coding was used to designate having no partner and having no children. Partner full-time equivalent (FTE) was measured as a percentage of the full-time contract in a sector. Number of children refers to children living in the household at the time of the survey, age of the youngest child was measured in years. Further, the number of hours devoted to household tasks and childcare, as well as the number of hours devoted to household tasks by the partner are treated as continuous. In regard to gender, men served as the reference category.

## **Vulnerable groups: definitions and sizes**

The importance of specific groups (*kansengroepen*) on the labor market is ingrained in the Flemish labor market policy. The chapter on the inclusive labor market makes a part of the coalition agreement 2014-2019, where the intentions to provide better access to the labor market for the specific groups are declared. Given the relevance of the balance between work and family to the goal of workable work, we have explored

in our analyses whether certain specific groups differ in the way their work-family conflict is engendered and also whether they differ in the intensity of that conflict. Taken more broadly, this translates into the question of whether policy measures aimed at improving work-family balance should be tailored to the particular causal dynamic of the specific groups.

We consider five specific groups in these comparisons, namely workers without diploma higher education, women, workers aged over 50, workers with migration background, and workers who are single parents. Table 1 presents group sample sizes for the respective worker categories.

Table 1: sample group sizes for specific groups.

Group	N
Workers without diploma higher education	624
Women	492
Workers aged over 50	332
Workers with migration background	114
Single parent workers	101

The definitions of the specific groups are as follows. The group *workers without diploma higher education* are defined as workers whose highest educational achievement pertains to secondary education or lower (i.e. no education, primary education, or

secondary education). The further distinction between lower educational levels was not made due to low number of respondents in these categories. The definition of categories *gender* and *workers aged over 50* is self-evident. For the group *workers with migration background* we approximate the definition stated in the Integration Decree (*Integratiedecreet*), which is also included in the coalition agreement of the Flemish government (2014-2019). That definition takes a non-Belgian citizenship for the person in question or their parents as a criterion for having a migration background (as opposed to a non-EU citizenship, see e.g. the definition of *Vlaams Economisch Sociaal Overlegcomité*). As our dataset does not contain information on previous changes in citizenship or on the citizenship status of parents, we define this group based on the respondent having a non-Belgian nationality at the time of the survey and/or having a parent who was born outside Belgium. Such operationalization would incorrectly include respondents whose parents had the Belgian citizenship, yet were born abroad. This category should be, however, statistically negligible. In addition, alternative operationalizations yield group sizes unsuitable for analysis. The imperfect approximation, while enabling the analysis, does imply a limitation that needs to be borne in mind for generalization of the results towards the population. *Single parent workers* were defined based on not having a partner (i.e. not married and not legally cohabitating) and having at least one child in the household at the time of the survey.

# Results

## Who is affected by work-family conflict?

In this section we present several descriptive results to provide an overview of how work-family conflict is distributed among basic demographic characteristics. More detailed models that include various work- and family-related determinants of work-family conflict, are discussed in the next section.

Figure 1 presents the distribution of work-family conflict by age, separately for men and women (respectively above and below in the figure).

A few observations can be made based on these graphs. First, both time- and strain-based work-family conflict peak around middle age and subsequently decline. For men, time-based conflict peaks in middle thirties, whereas for women it does so in early thirties. Strain-based conflict peaks in early thirties for men and around the age of thirty for women, declining slightly afterwards. Notably, men experience more time- than strain-based conflict, whereas for women the opposite is the case. Behavior-based conflict is high at younger age and declines until mid-thirties for both men and women, rising afterwards. For women, the peak of behavior-based conflict is rather pronounced at mid-fifties, for men less so.

Figure 2 shows mean scores for the three conflict dimensions, conditional on the number of children in the household.

It appears that time-based conflict is low for workers without children, but rises in a linear progression as the number of children increases. Behavior-based conflict, on the

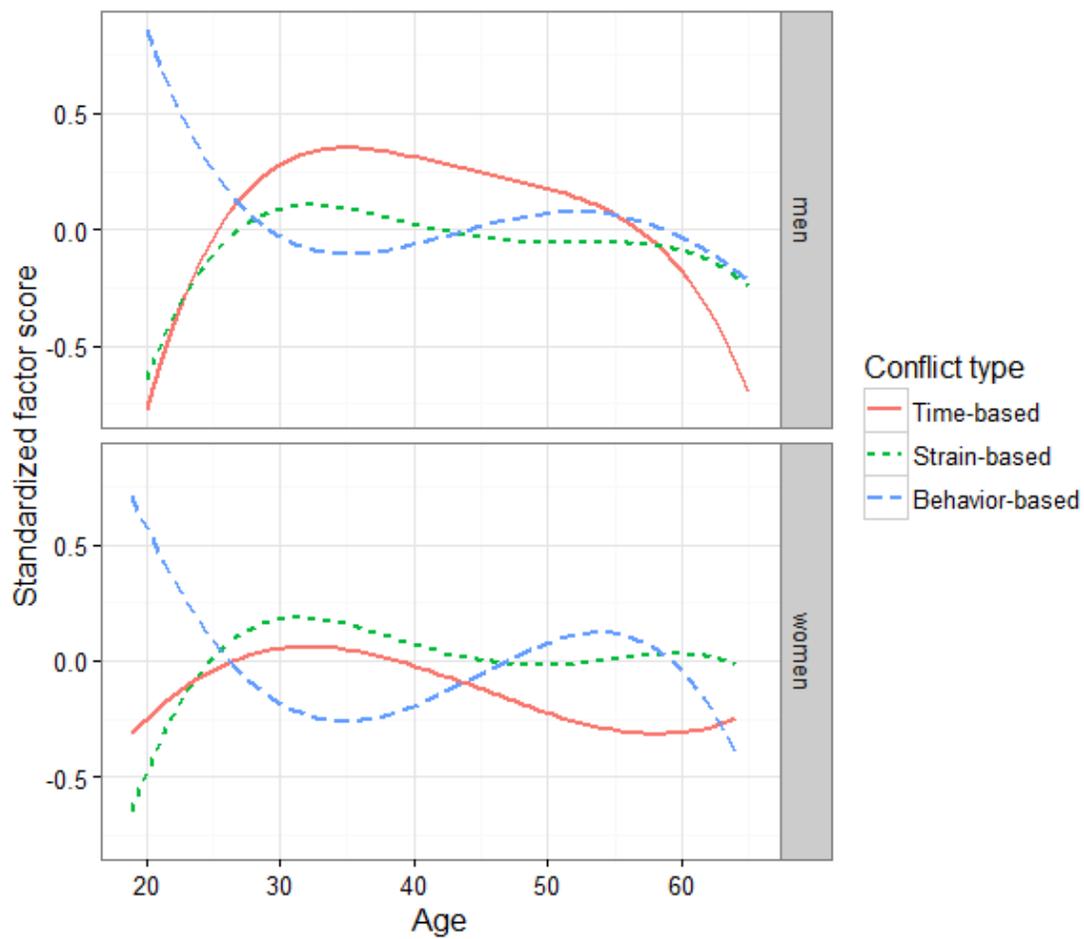


Figure 1: Time-, strain-, and behavior-based conflict by age for men (above) and women (below)

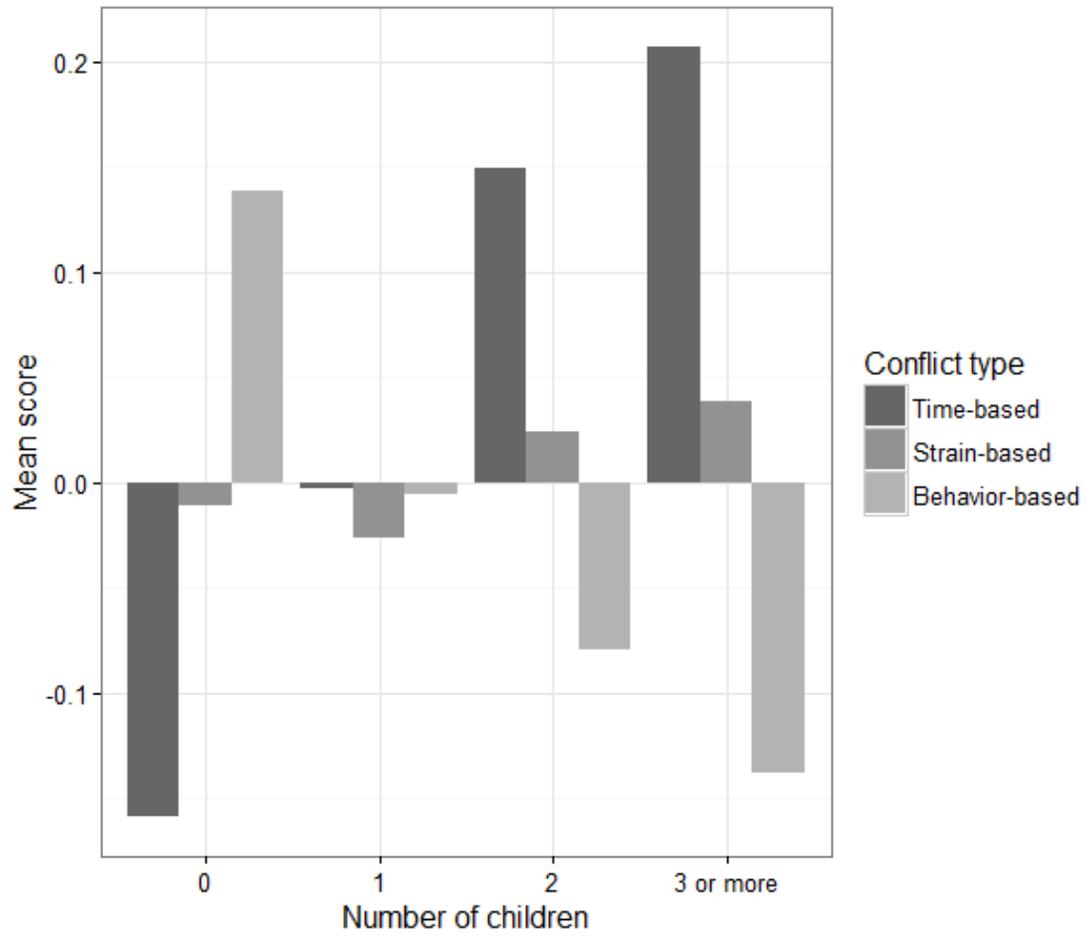


Figure 2: Mean scores for time-, strain-, and behavior-based conflict, conditional on the number of children in the household

other hand, is inversely related to the number of children in the household, declining with more children. The variation of strain-based conflict is not as pronounced, it grows slightly as the number of children increases.

## What factors influence the three dimensions of work-family conflict?

To determine which factors are responsible for work-family conflict, we start with a model that describes the relationships between work- and family-related determinants for the entire sample, later to be nuanced for specific labor market groups. The model is presented in Table 2. Just as its counterparts in the subsequent sections, the table contains three sets of regression parameters, each corresponding to a dimension of work-family conflict.

Table 2: Population model of the determinants of work-family conflict. Note: \*( $p < 0.05$ ), \*\*( $p < 0.01$ ), \*\*\*( $p < 0.001$ )

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Education (secondary)	-0.092	0.027	0.061
Gender (women)	0.042	0.177*	-0.095
Age	0.000	-0.001	0.001
Weekly hours	0.025***	0.006*	-0.004
Workload	0.244***	0.251***	-0.027

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Autonomy	-0.125	-0.125*	0.112
Social support	-0.564**	-0.582***	0.109
Cognitive demands	0.066	0.057	0.074
Emotional demands	0.185**	0.191***	-0.216***
Skill discretion	0.186	0.121	-0.403***
Physical demands	0.094	0.079	0.067
Role clarity	-0.07	-0.202	0.110
Family income	-0.006	-0.022	-0.037*
Managerial function	0.025	-0.123	-0.081
Supervisor	0.001	0.002	0.000
Work-at-home	-0.017	0.025	-0.165*
Short work week	-0.030	0.020	0.140
Overtime recuperation	-0.014	0.036	-0.102
Lightened workload	0.147	-0.068	-0.109
Career break	-0.026	-0.010	0.002
Having no partner	-0.037	-0.055	0.450**
Partner FTE	-0.001	-0.002	0.002*
Having no children	-0.560**	-0.327	0.096
Age youngest child	-0.024**	-0.013	-0.001
Number of children	0.052	-0.017	-0.010
Hours household tasks	-0.004	-0.004	0.001
Hours childcare	-0.009	-0.011*	-0.008

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Partner hours hh. tasks	0.002	0.002	0.001

For time-based conflict, we find the significant positive relationship with hours worked per week, workload, and emotional demands. These factors increase time-based work-family conflict. The same type of conflict is mitigated by social support at work and the absence of children. Age of the youngest child has also a negative effect, implying that smaller children are more conducive to time-based conflict.

Strain-based work-family conflict is higher for women, those who work more hours per week, have higher workload, face more emotional demands in their work. The same type of conflict is lower for those with better social support at work, have more autonomy in their job and spend more hours caring for children.

Behavior-based work-family conflict is lower for workers with higher emotional demands in their job, and higher skill discretion. This type of conflict is lower in families with higher income. Workers who have the possibility of working at home, also have lower levels for this type of conflict *ceteris paribus*. Having no partner has a positive effect on behavior-based conflict (i.e. increases it), and for those who do have a partner, the full-time equivalent (FTE) of the partner aggravates this type of conflict.

## **An analysis of the specific groups**

Continuing the exploration of work-family conflict determinants we now turn to models describing specific groups on the labor market. In this section we focus on workers without diploma higher education, men and women, workers aged over 50, workers with migration background, and workers who are single parents. We are interested in whether the relationships between work-family conflict and its determinants is different in these particular groups in comparison with other workers. From the policy perspective, this question pertains to (1) whether these groups must be targeted specifically in the context of work-family conflict mitigation and (2) whether the measures taken should be different for these groups, e.g. by tackling other determinants. Testing for differences between the groups allows us to answer the question of whether work-family conflict is higher for these groups *after controlling for various work- and family-related factors*. Does, for example, the difference in time-based conflict between men and women, which we have discussed in the previous section, remain after we control for, among other variables, workload, number of hours worked per week and having a partner?

### **Workers without higher education**

Table 3 presents the results for the model comparing workers with and without a higher education diploma. This and subsequent tables in this part should be read in the following fashion. Each column represents a regression model for the stated dimension of work-family conflict. A single estimate is given when no between-group

differences were observed. Two coefficients are provided for variables on which the groups differed, one for each group.

Table 3: differences in the determinants of work-family conflict for workers with and without diploma higher education. For statistically significant differences, both parameters are reported, first one referring to the group with higher education and second to the group without higher education. Note: \*(p < 0.05), \*\*(p < 0.01), \*\*\*(p < 0.001)

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Gender (women)	0.024	0.175*	-0.084
Age	0.000	-0.001	0.003
Weekly hours	0.031***/0.021***	0.006*	-0.004
Workload	0.238***	0.245***	-0.002
Autonomy	-0.145*	-0.114	0.118
Social support	-0.604***	-0.581***	0.112
Cognitive demands	0.066	0.055	0.044
Emotional demands	0.180**	0.181***	-0.203***
Skill discretion	0.216*	0.093	-0.381***
Physical demands	0.092	0.091	0.051
Role clarity	-0.075	-0.209	0.121
Family income	-0.010	-0.022	-0.036*

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Managerial function	-0.004	-0.144	-0.076
Supervisor	0.000	0.002	-0.001
Work-at-home	-0.032	0.019	-0.193*
Short work week	-0.034	0.029	0.117
Overtime recuperation	-0.025	0.031	-0.113
Lightened workload	0.191	-0.066	-0.110
Career break	-0.078	-0.032	0.040
Having no partner	0.036	-0.016	0.497**
Partner FTE	-0.001	-0.001	0.003**
Having no children	-0.502*/-0.573**	-0.365/-0.349	0.146
Age youngest child	-0.023**	-0.013	-0.009 / 0.003
Number of children	0.049	-0.024	0.011
Hours household tasks	-0.004	-0.003	0.000
Hours childcare	-0.009	-0.012*	-0.007
Partner hours hh. tasks	0.003	0.003	0.002

Aside from negligible differences in (latent) variable measurement, several distinctions between the two groups have been found significant. For the time-based work-family conflict, the effect of working hours per week is higher for workers with higher education, the difference being about one and a half times of the effect for workers without higher education. This implies that overtime is more detrimental in terms of

work-family conflict for highly educated workers, all other factors being held equal. Having children, on the other hand, has a greater impact on the time-based conflict for workers without higher education. The difference between those with and without children exists also for the strain-based conflict dimension. However, given that the relationship is not significant in both groups, this bears no practical implications. The same observation pertains to the behavior-based conflict and the age of the youngest child.

**Mean comparison** Secondly, we have tested for the equality of mean scores for both groups pertaining to time-, strain-, and behavior-based work-family conflict. Our results showed that average levels of work-family conflict on all three dimensions *do not* differ significantly between workers with and without higher education, controlling for other factors in the model.

## **Gender**

Differences in the effects of various factors on work-family conflict for men and women are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: differences in the determinants of work-family conflict for men and women. For statistically significant differences, both parameters are reported, the first one referring to men and the second one referring to women.

Note: \*(p < 0.05), \*\*(p < 0.01), \*\*\*(p < 0.001)

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Education (secondary)	-0.100	0.021	0.095
Age	-0.000	-0.002	0.001
Weekly hours	0.024***	0.005	-0.003
Workload	0.332***/0.137	0.252***	-0.039
Autonomy	-0.156*	-0.129*	0.121
Social support	-0.637***	-0.589***	0.136
Cognitive demands	0.062	0.051	0.105
Emotional demands	0.196***	0.195***	-0.244***
Skill discretion	0.239*	0.126	-0.441***
Physical demands	0.089	0.073	0.077
Role clarity	-0.045	-0.202*	0.080
Family income	-0.006	-0.022	-0.035*
Managerial function	0.017	-0.123	-0.065
Supervisor	0.000	0.002	-0.000
Work-at-home	-0.022	0.027	-0.162
Short work week	-0.029	0.017	0.144

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Overtime recuperation	-0.005	0.037	-0.112
Lightened workload	0.139	-0.067	-0.103
Career break	-0.006	-0.001	0.005
Having no partner	-0.025	-0.045	0.480**
Partner FTE	-0.001	-0.002	0.003*
Having no children	-0.522**	-0.337	0.083
Age youngest child	-0.023**	-0.014	-0.002
Number of children	0.048	-0.019	-0.006
Hours household tasks	-0.003	-0.003	-0.001
Hours childcare	-0.007	-0.011*	-0.008
Partner hours hh. tasks	0.002	0.003	0.003

A single determinant has been found to differ for men and women in its effects on work-family conflict. Thus, higher workload causes more time-based conflict for men, having controlled for other factors in the model, than for women. It must be noted that for women the effect of workload is just shy of reaching significance ( $p = 0.058$ ).

**Mean comparison** Out of the three dimensions, a significant difference has been found in the mean scores of strain-based work-family conflict between men and women. For women, this type of conflict is higher, having controlled for all other factors included in the model (standardized difference of 0.139,  $p = 0.038$ ). On the two

remaining dimensions no significant differences were found.

### Workers aged over 50

In this section we present a model describing differences for workers aged over 50 and workers aged under 50. The model is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Differences in the determinants of work-family conflict for workers aged over and under 50. For statistically significant differences, both parameters are reported, the first one referring to those over and the second one to those under this age. Note: \*( $p < 0.05$ ), \*\*( $p < 0.01$ ), \*\*\*( $p < 0.001$ )

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Education (secondary)	-0.080	0.032	0.038
Gender (women)	0.028	0.160*	-0.049
Weekly hours	0.025***	0.006*	-0.004
Workload	0.243***	0.245***	-0.021
Autonomy	-0.142*	-0.119*	0.134*
Social support	-0.613***	-0.635***	0.137
Cognitive demands	0.062	0.056	0.060
Emotional demands	0.191***	0.185***	-0.004/-0.331***
Skill discretion	0.199	0.136	-0.438***

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Physical demands	0.098	0.092	0.041
Role clarity	-0.068	-0.203	0.106
Family income	-0.011	-0.026	-0.042*
Managerial function	0.042	-0.109	-0.106
Supervisor	0.001	0.003***/-0.004	-0.001
Work-at-home	0.005	0.040	-0.202*
Short work week	-0.028	0.018	0.129
Overtime recuperation	-0.031	0.029	-0.103
Lightened workload	0.159	-0.050	-0.139
Career break	-0.098	-0.046	-0.011
Having no partner	0.032	-0.002	0.499***
Partner FTE	-0.001	-0.001	0.004**/0.002
Having no children	-0.514**	-0.282	0.099/-0.058
Age youngest child	-0.020***	-0.008	-0.005
Number of children	0.042	-0.029	-0.007
Hours household tasks	-0.004	-0.004	0.000
Hours childcare	-0.007	-0.007	-0.011*
Partner hours hh. tasks	0.003	0.003	0.002

For workers over 50, having to supervise other employees is conducive to strain-based work-family conflict. For those under 50, the relationship is not significant. Emotional

demands, on the other hand, are not related negatively with behavior-based conflict for workers over 50, as opposed to the rest of the sample. In addition, higher full-time equivalent of the partner leads to greater behavior-based conflict for workers over 50, while being non-significant for workers under 50.

**Mean comparison** For the three dimensions of work-family conflict, none of the scores were significantly different. This implies that conflict levels on all three dimensions are similar for the two groups, accounting for all other predictors in the model.

### **Workers with migration background**

In this section the group of workers with migration background is compared to the rest of the sample. In this model a different testing technique is adopted due to the modest target group size; here the interaction variables indicate whether the differences are statistically significant. The model for workers with migration background is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: differences in the determinants of work-family conflict for workers with migration background. The difference tests were carried out using interactions of the migration background dummy variable with factors of interest. Note: \*( $p < 0.05$ ), \*\*( $p < 0.01$ ), \*\*\*( $p < 0.001$ )

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Workload	0.230**	0.211***	-0.003
Autonomy	-0.245**	-0.176*	0.067
Social support	-0.625**	-0.618**	0.118
Cognitive demands	0.128	0.068	0.094
Emotional demands	0.176*	0.166*	-0.240***
Skill discretion	0.177	0.124	-0.379*
Physical demands	0.154	0.143*	0.085
Role clarity	-0.002	-0.127	0.010
Migration Bg	0.322	1.065	0.144
Migration Bg x Workload	0.075	0.301	0.135
Migration Bg x Autonomy	0.249	0.270	0.247
Migration Bg x Social support	-0.055	-0.224	0.326
Migration Bg x Cognitive demands	-0.364	-0.125	-0.326
Migration Bg x Emotional demands	-0.155	-0.011	0.210
Migration Bg x Skill discretion	0.098	-0.163	0.294
Migration Bg x Physical demands	0.128	-0.116	-0.153

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Migration Bg x Role clarity	0.140	0.301	0.084
Education (secondary)	-0.104	0.045	-0.059
Gender (women)	0.024	0.138	-0.063
Age	-0.002	-0.002	0.004
Weekly hours	0.021***	0.006	-0.004
Family income	0.002	-0.013	-0.041*
Managerial function	-0.103	-0.167	-0.073
Supervisor	0.001	0.003*	0.000
Work-at-home	0.071	0.093	-0.256**
Short work week	0.025	-0.066	0.149
Overtime recuperation	-0.025	0.066	-0.069
Lightened workload	0.245	-0.034	-0.015
Career break	-0.056	0.077	-0.071
Having no children	-0.449*	-0.228	0.139
Age youngest child	-0.003	-0.003	0.007
Number of children	0.057	-0.012	-0.045
Hours childcare	-0.006	-0.007	-0.006
Migration Bg x Age youngest child	-0.030	0.020	0.002
Migration Bg x Number of children	-0.017	-0.092	0.027
Migration Bg x Hours childcare	-0.009	-0.006	0.000
Migration Bg x Family income	-0.128**	-0.073	-0.032
Migration Bg x Age	0.004	-0.004	-0.010

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Migration Bg x Weekly hours	0.018	-0.004	0.010
Having no partner	-0.046	-0.177	0.405*
Partner FTE	0.000	-0.001	0.002
Hours household tasks	-0.005	-0.004	-0.002
Partner hours hh. tasks	0.002	0.000	0.001

For the time-based work-family conflict, the only significant difference pertains to family income, its increasing levels having a mitigating effect on this conflict dimension for workers with migration background. This is not the case for the rest of the sample, possibly since the average income of workers with migration background is lower to begin with. In respect to other determinants in this model, no difference between the two groups were found.

**Mean comparison** According to the model at hand, workers with migration background do not score significantly different than the rest of the sample on any of the three work-family conflict dimensions. This implies they experience similar levels of work-family conflict, when all other factors in the model are taken into account.

## Single parents

Model presented in Table 7 compares single-parent workers with the rest of the sample in regard to work-family conflict.

Table 7: differences in the determinants of work-family conflict for single parents. The difference tests were carried out using interactions of the single parent dummy variable with factors of interest. Note: \*( $p < 0.05$ ), \*\*( $p < 0.01$ ), \*\*\*( $p < 0.001$ )

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Workload	0.221***	0.252***	0.000
Autonomy	-0.250**	-0.169*	0.098
Social support	-0.618**	-0.608**	0.037
Cognitive demands	0.093	0.056	0.064
Emotional demands	0.147*	0.152*	-0.231***
Skill discretion	0.154	0.064	-0.236
Physical demands	0.163*	0.113	0.059
Role clarity	0.027	-0.090	0.026
Single parent x Workload	0.238	0.003	-0.221
Single parent x Autonomy	0.894	0.422*	0.006
Single parent x Social support	1.887	0.080	-0.082
Single parent x Cognitive demands	0.267	-0.139	-0.161

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Single parent x Emotional demands	-0.142	-0.150	-0.037
Single parent x Skill discretion	-0.644	0.493	0.043
Single parent x Physical demands	0.038	0.265	0.037
Single parent x Role clarity	-1.243	-0.178	0.144
Single parent	1.451	0.498	-1.290
Education (secondary)	-0.127	0.032	-0.056
Gender (women)	-0.011	0.140	-0.073
Age	-0.002	-0.001	0.002
Weekly hours	0.025***	0.007*	-0.003
Family income	-0.011	-0.028	-0.024
Managerial function	-0.069	-0.169	-0.109
Supervisor	0.001	0.003*	-0.001
Work-at-home	0.058	0.083	-0.228**
Short work week	0.060	-0.077	0.150
Overtime recuperation	-0.037	0.069	-0.085
Lightened workload	0.229	-0.072	-0.016
Career break	0.024	0.108	-0.053
Single parent x Age youngest child	-0.015	0.052	0.078
Single parent x Number of children	0.193	-0.098	0.008
Single parent x Hours childcare	0.041	0.033**	0.007
Single parent x Family income	-0.072	-0.007	0.065
Single parent x Age	-0.034	-0.021	-0.002

	Time	Strain	Behavior
Single parent x Weekly hours	-0.009	-0.017	0.013
Having no children	-0.491*	-0.294	0.102
Age youngest child	-0.008	-0.002	-0.004
Number of children	0.062	-0.026	-0.035
Hours household tasks	-0.007	-0.005	0.001
Hours childcare	-0.012*	-0.011	-0.006

For single parents, having higher autonomy at work increases strain-based work-family conflict, as opposed to other respondents, for whom autonomy has a mitigating effect. In regard to the same dimension, single parents experience more conflict as the amount of time (per week) devoted to childcare increases, in comparison with other respondents. No differences between the two groups were found for time-based and behavior based work-family conflict.

## **Work-life conflict and the *new career***

In this section we will turn to the issue of work-family conflict in the context of the *new career*, in particular paying attention to the aspects of career mobility and self-directed career attitude. First, we will focus on the profile of workers who have made a career transition for family reasons, and compare the transition outcomes for this group with outcomes for workers who transitioned for reasons other than family. Second, we will explore the relationship between career mobility and the three dimensions of work-family conflict. Does, for example, high work-family conflict lead to a career transition? Does, in turn, career mobility lead to a better fit between work and family? In addition, we will consider the aforementioned relationship between work-family conflict and self-directed career orientation.

### **Family-related career mobility: a blessing or a curse?**

Career transitions can be made for many reasons, including salary, promotion, career break, resignation and so forth. Some workers use career mobility to improve their work-family balance, e.g. to accommodate changing childcare requirements, or simply spend more time with their partner. We begin the comparison by exploring basic demographic characteristics of workers who have made a career transition for family reasons.

Out of 1055 employed respondents in our sample, 494 (46.8%) have experienced a career transition in the past decade, of those 236 men (47.8%) and 258 women (52.2%). Of 561 non-movers (53.2%), 314 (56%) were men and 247 (44%) were women.

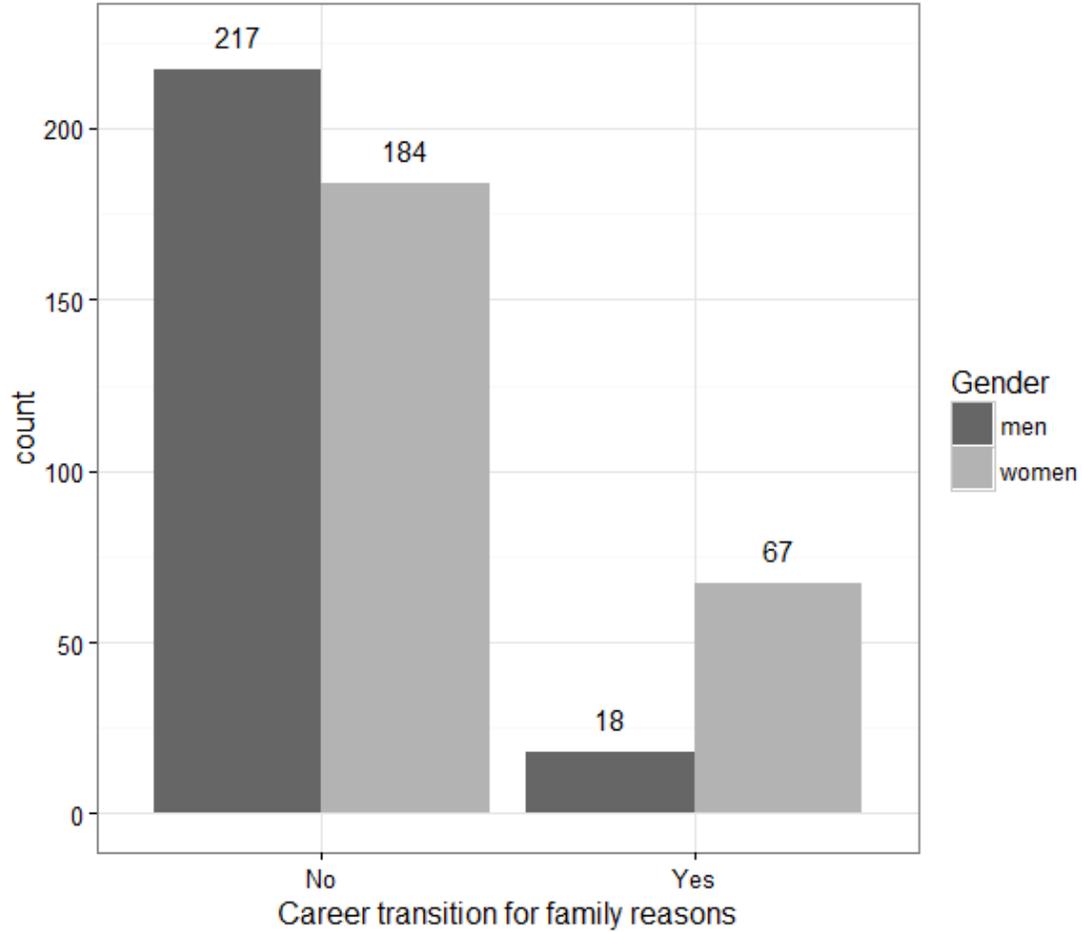


Figure 3: Career transitions by gender and transition motive

This implies that women experience more career mobility than men ( $p(\chi^2 > 6.75, 1 \text{ df}) = 0.009$ ), which is in line with previous research (Kovalenko and Mortelmans, 2014). Figure 3 presents the distribution of individuals who have made a career transition in the past decade, split by gender and familial vs. non-familial reasons for the transition. We consider only the last transition the respondent has made.

Out of 494 movers, 86 (17.4%) have made a career transition primarily for family-

related reasons. Of those, 68 (79.1%) were women and 18 (20.9%) were men. When comparing all movers, family-related reasons are clearly more typical for women than for men ( $p(\chi^2 > 28.78, 1 \text{ df}) = 0.000$ ).

Figure 4 shows the age distribution for movers for family vs. non-family reasons. It is apparent that workers aged between about 30 and 40 have a higher probability to have made a career move for family reasons.

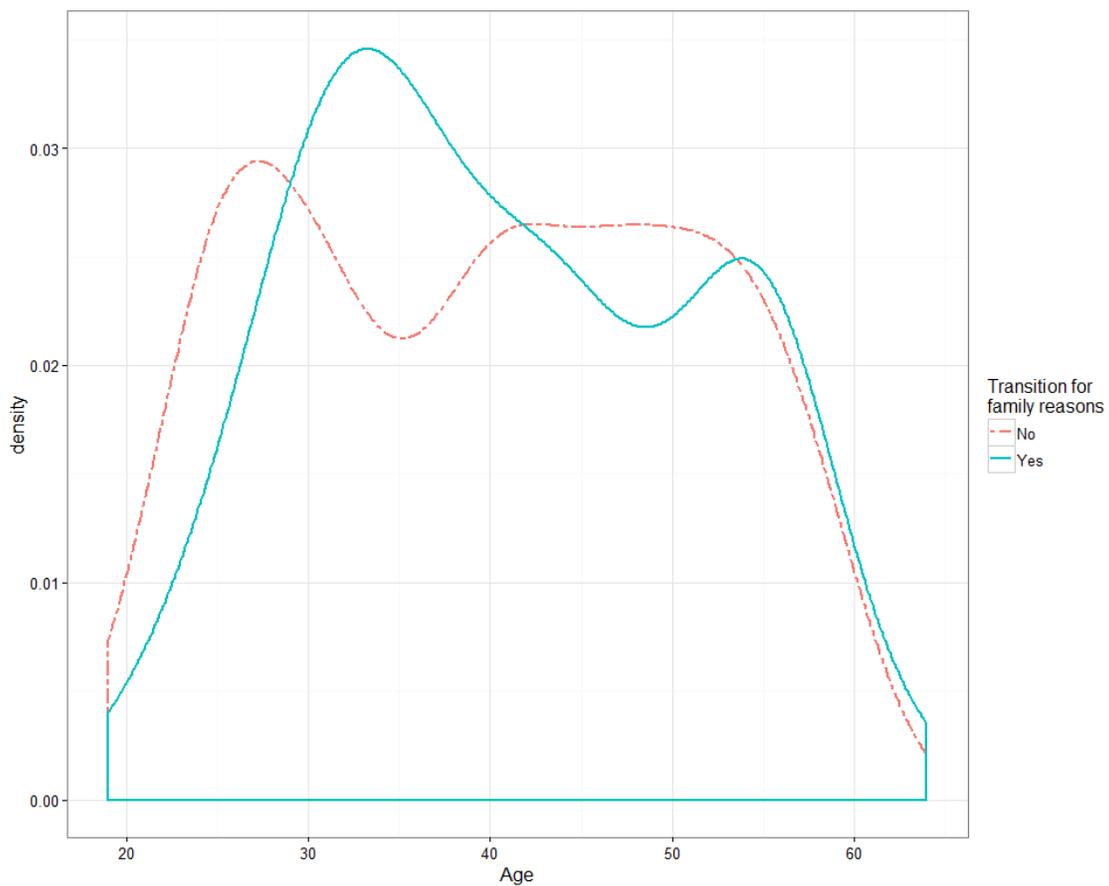


Figure 4: Probability density functions for age, a comparison between workers who made a career transition for family reasons vs. those who made a career transition for other reasons

As can be expected, having children is a factor in a family-related career move. Of movers with children, 21.2% have made a career transition due to family reasons, as opposed to just 11.9% of movers without children ( $p(\chi^2 > 6.422, 1 \text{ df}) = 0.011$ ).

In the following analysis we explore the difference in various job properties before and after a job transition, where we compare respondents who made the transition mainly to achieve better work-life balance, and respondents who made the transition for other reasons. For example, when asked if their salary was lower, equal or higher in the new job, how did respondents who moved for work-life balance reasons compare with those who moved for other reasons? Table 8 presents a series of regression models, which compare the two groups on a range of transition outcomes, including salary, job responsibilities, job security and so forth. Naturally, to some degree differences in transition outcomes between the groups could be attributed to factors other than the transition reason, such as the number of hours worked per week, gender, age, educational level, number of children in the household or having a partner. These variables were controlled for in the model.

The models in Table 8 indicate that those who transition for work-life balance reasons, do so more voluntarily than other transitioners. Expectedly, respondents in the first group reported working less hours per weeks, which is consistent with their initial goal to improve work-family balance. However, their scores on several other outcomes suggest that increased work-family balance may have come at a cost of a degradation in other job qualities. In comparison with transitioners for other reasons, these respondents have lower salary, even after controlling for hours worked per week, lower skill discretion, less autonomy, lower levels of job content variation, less possibility

Table 8: Multiple regressions of job quality changes after a job-to-job transition. Workers who moved for work-life balance reasons are compared with workers who moved for all other reasons

	WLB move	Weekly hours	Education (S)	Gender (F)	Age	N Children	Partner	Intercept
Voluntariness last transition	1.542***	0.016	-0.480	-0.092	-0.034**	-0.231	0.422	0.756
Salary	-0.515***	0.014**	-0.111	-0.157	-0.015***	0.015	0.028	0.297
Job responsibilities	-0.174	0.014***	0.024	-0.103	-0.009*	0.030	0.070	-0.189
Skill discretion	-0.243**	0.015***	0.024	-0.047	-0.012***	0.006	0.097	-0.132
Autonomy	-0.195*	0.013***	-0.036	-0.039	-0.006	0.045	0.062	-0.267
Workload	-0.159	0.018***	-0.089	0.190	-0.004	-0.003	0.129	-0.650*
Job content variation	-0.341***	0.010**	0.047	0.047	-0.010**	0.027	-0.002	0.022
Possibilities for initiative	-0.206*	0.012***	-0.040	-0.025	-0.013***	0.037	0.094	0.027
Job security	-0.145	0.003	0.198**	-0.086	-0.019***	-0.042	-0.080	0.701**
Education possibilities	-0.079	0.008*	0.078	-0.183*	-0.013***	-0.017	-0.002	0.295
Promotion possibilities	-0.14	0.007*	0.054	-0.146	-0.014***	-0.010	-0.061	0.423
Contract work hours	-0.434***	0.018***	0.043	0.160*	-0.010**	0.038	-0.070	-0.327
Overtime hour amount	-0.166	0.017***	-0.116	0.186*	-0.010**	0.002	0.109	-0.360
Work-home commute time	-0.168	0.001	-0.177*	-0.055	0.000	-0.007	-0.031	0.173
Job matches interests	-0.160	0.006*	-0.001	-0.092	-0.009**	0.023	0.089	0.089
Pleasure in the job	-0.188*	0.013***	0.062	0.061	-0.006	0.004	0.112	-0.367
Job matches one's wishes	-0.088	0.011***	0.079	0.013	-0.009**	0.006	0.048	-0.180
Organizational match	-0.019	0.003	0.123	-0.122	-0.011***	-0.004	-0.005	0.351

for initiative, and less pleasure in the job. While the results pertain to self-reported measures, it is clear from these models that the respondents who moved for work-life balance reasons, perceive the characteristics of their new job in a less appealing light compared to other transitioners. As an aside, it is worth noting that age is negatively related to most transition characteristics, implying that job transitions at later age entail a higher risk in terms of less favorable job quality characteristics. At the same time, differences between men and women largely disappear after controlling for hours worked per week, with the exception of education possibilities, contract work hours, and overtime.

### **Career mobility and work-family conflict**

In this section we turn to the role which career mobility plays in the regulation of work-family conflict. As outlined above, it is expected that higher levels of work-family conflict will lead to career mobility, as individuals move away from frustrating or stressful situations (De Hauw, 2014). At the same time, the question remains open whether career mobility will, on the average, lead to lower work-family conflict, as it would follow from the same theoretical framework. In addition, we expect that self-directed career attitude will be related to lower work-family conflict. To remind the reader, earlier research suggested that self-directed individuals are more prone to considering both work and family domains in career-related decisions, and are also better at negotiating custom work-family arrangements (Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014). Also, self-directedness can influence the decision to engage in a career move, and therefore moderate the relationship between work-family conflict and the mobility

event. Finally, the main predictors of work-family conflict, as outlined in the first part of this report, are included in the model. The model is presented in Figure 5. It uses the work-family conflict data from both waves to account for the initial variability of this variable; the mobility event is situated between waves 1 and 2. In the model we control for age and gender, and exclude control for educational level for parsimony reasons, as it bears no substantive influence and deteriorates the model.

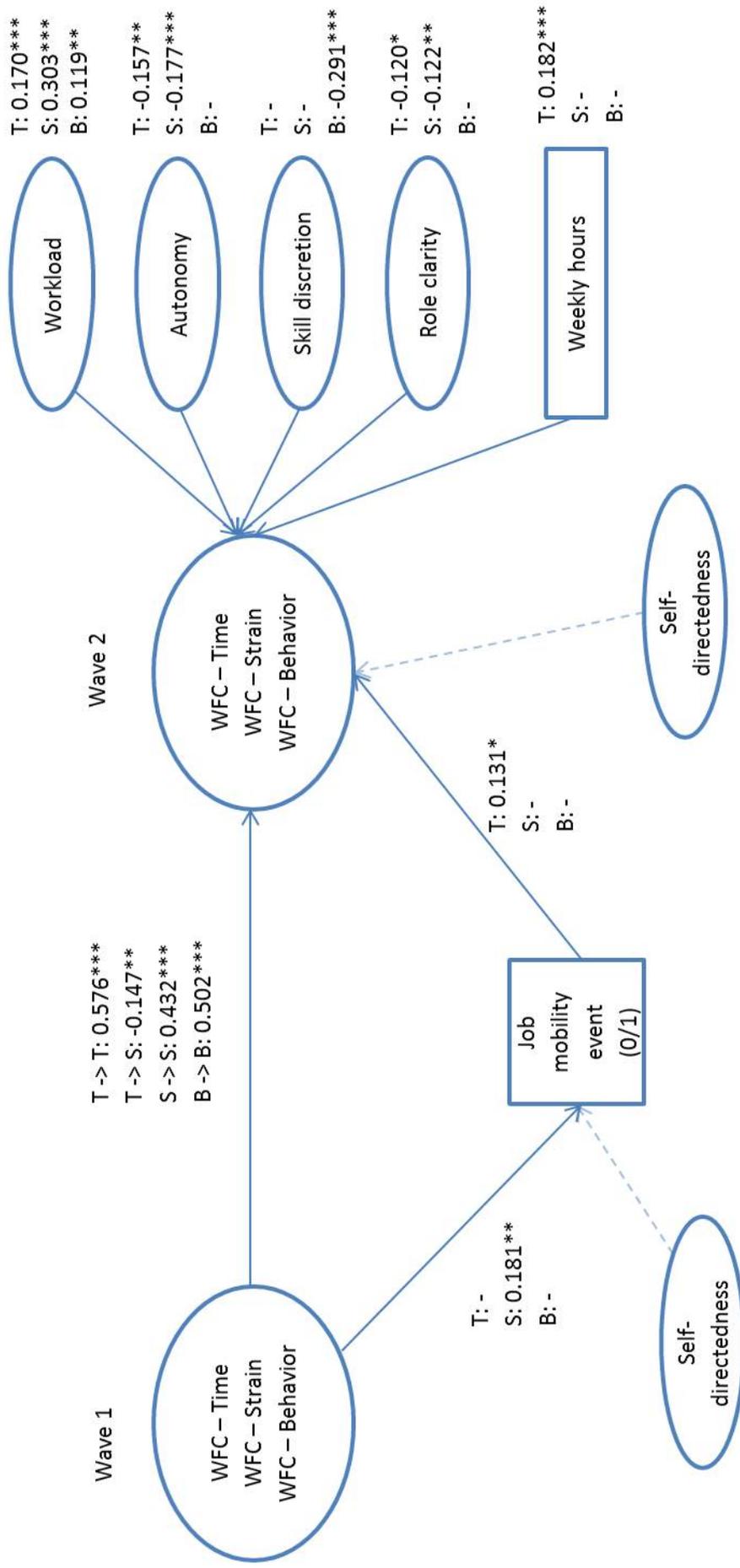


Figure 5: Career mobility and work family conflict. Model fit: CFI = 0.916, RMSEA = 0.048. Note: \*(p < 0.05), \*\*(p < 0.01), \*\*\*(p < 0.001). T = time-based, S = strain-based, B = behavior-based conflict.

The model confirms that strain-based work-family conflict in wave 1 is significantly related to a subsequent job mobility event, regardless of its exact nature (we will explore the properties of this event in the upcoming section). The other two dimensions of work-family conflict are unrelated to the event. The mobility event is not influenced by self-directedness career orientation, as measured prior to the event in wave 1. Contrary to the theoretical expectations, a job mobility event is positively related to time-based conflict as measured afterwards at wave 2; and bears no relationship to the other two conflict dimensions. Self-directed career orientation has no influence on work-family conflict. Job quality indicators are significantly related to work-family conflict, similar to what has been found in the first part of this report. Thus, workload is positively related to all three conflict dimensions at wave 2. Autonomy is negatively related to time- and strain-based conflict, skill discretion negatively to behavior-based conflict and role clarity negatively to time- and strain-based conflict. The amount of hours worked per week is positively related to time-based work-family conflict.

### **Are the characteristics of the mobility event responsible for increase in time-based conflict?**

In the previous section we have found that career mobility leads, on average, to higher time-based work-family conflict. The exact substantive interpretation of that relationship did not, however, follow from the model in Figure 5. It is possible, for example, that this relationship depends on the specific properties of the career transition. Individuals seeking career advancement may accept some degree of work-family conflict in order to be able to achieve their career goals. In this section we

review several transition properties that could possibly moderate the relationship between career mobility and time-based work-family conflict. The properties in question pertain to (1) change of the employer, i.e. whether the transition was internal or external, (2) did the career transition entail a career break, either full- or part-time, (3) how voluntary was the transition, (4) whether the transition entailed a promotion to a function at higher level, and (5) whether the transition entailed some degree of change in job content. The variables for external transition, career break, promotion, and change in job content were coded as dummies. Voluntariness was treated as continuous. The resulting model is presented in Table 9.

Table 9: The effects of last mobility event characteristics on time-based work-family conflict at wave 2. Model fit: CFI = 0.895, RMSEA = 0.042. *Note: some coefficients were fixed to zero based on likelihood tests.*

	Estimate	S.E.	z-value	P(> z )
Time-based conflict w1	0.551	0.052	10.557	0.000
Weekly hours	0.021	0.004	5.456	0.000
Mobility event w1-w2	0.249	0.112	2.218	0.027
Autonomy w2	-0.268	0.093	-2.898	0.004
Skill discretion w2	0.000			
Workload w2	0.250	0.080	3.137	0.002
Role clarity w2	0.000			
Age	0.000			

	Estimate	S.E.	z-value	P(> z )
Gender (women)	0.158	0.078	2.034	0.042
Education (secondary)	-0.164	0.075	-2.180	0.029
Mobility: external	-0.578	0.194	-2.978	0.003
Mobility: career break	0.000			
Mobility: voluntariness	0.000			
Mobility: promotion	0.000			
Mobility: job content	0.000			

It becomes apparent from the results that the effect of mobility on time-based conflict remains even after controlling for these particular transition properties. Moreover, with the exception of external mobility variable, these transition properties did not have a significant influence on work-family conflict. Respondents who have made an external job transition, experience lower time-based conflict, all other factors being held equal. The effect of the external transition is estimated to be larger in size than the effect of a transition as such. This implies that those who make an external transition are better off in terms of time-based conflict (total effect being negative), followed by those not making a transition (total effect being zero). Making an internal transition yields a positive effect.

## Discussion and conclusion

In this report, we have examined two types of problems pertaining to work-family conflict, which constitutes a dimension of *workable work* policy initiatives. In the first part of the report, we focused on the determinants of work-family conflict in the working population of Flanders, measured in 2011. Both work and family domain variables were considered, including, among other factors, job quality characteristics (such as workload or autonomy), flexibility measures at work (such as work-at-home programs), number of children in the household, and partner variables.

Having established the baseline model describing the entire working population, we considered several specific groups on the labor market, namely individuals with a migration background, women, those aged 50 or more, individuals without diploma higher education and single parents. We carried out a number of tests showing whether these groups differ from the rest of the working population in two respects. First, whether these specific groups differ in which factors influence the level of work-family conflict, for example, whether greater autonomy has different implications for women than for men. Second, whether the average levels of work-family conflict differ between each specific group and the rest of the working population, after having accounted for all the other factors in the model, i.e. whether there are residual differences between the groups.

In the second part of the report we examined the relationship between career mobility and work-family conflict. For this purpose we adopted two approaches. First, we focused on workers who have made a family-related career move prior to wave one,

and made a comparison of various job characteristics before and after the move.

Second, we used data from both waves of the survey, seeing whether a career move between the two waves made a difference in terms of work-life balance, controlling for most important factors discerned in the first part of the report, given the availability of their measurement in wave two. Subsequently, we focused on the possibility that not only a career move itself, but also its properties are relevant to the outcome. A simpler model was then examined that allowed introducing the transition property variables and peruse their effects.

**Age and gender** It became apparent from the distribution of work-family conflict scores on all three dimensions, that workers between about 30 and 40 are most at risk for work-family conflict in general, without looking at specific determinants. This implies that this age category is a potential target group for eventual policy measures that aim to mitigate work-family conflict. A stark contrast between men and women was to be noted in regard to the dominating type of conflict, both at that age period and in general. For men it was the time-based conflict that was most pronounced of all three dimensions, whereas for women it was strain-based conflict. Consequently, attention needs to be paid to that difference between men and women, when designing eventual interventions.

**Behavior-based conflict** It can be noted as an aside that time- and strain-based components are included in the measurement of work-life conflict as a part of workability monitor (*Werkbaarheidsmonitor*), whereas the behavior-based conflict is not.

The latter dimension becomes of relative importance in later life stages, after the age of 45-50, which means that 50+ workers may require a different policy approach in regard to work-family conflict, especially considering their vulnerable labor market status. It may also be advisable to include the behavior-based component in the monitor, given its importance for older workers.

**Determinants of work-family conflict** The baseline (population) model makes it apparent that work-domain variables bear the most weight in explaining work-family conflict. This is consistent with earlier findings on the subject. Workload, amount of hours worked per week as well as emotional demands are important predictors for multiple conflict dimensions. Family-domain variables also play a role, especially factors related to children, such as having children in the household, age of the youngest child and the amount of hours dedicated to childcare. An important mitigating factor for work-family conflict pertains to social support, both from co-workers and the supervisor. These findings imply that simply improving job quality as such has a beneficial side effect of improving work-family balance as well.

Contrary to the expectations based on theory, flexibility measures at work showed almost no relationship with the three dimensions of work-family conflict. A notable exception are work-at-home programs, which mitigate behavior-based conflict, but had no discernible relationship with the remaining two conflict dimensions. This might be potentially to a low number of respondents making use of the flexibility measures (aside from overtime recuperation, which was used by almost a half of all respondents). Additional research is required to investigate the relationship between

work-family conflict and the use of flexibility measures on the Flemish labor market.

**Worker groups** Tests of differences for specific labor market groups suggest that the population is relatively homogeneous in respect to the determinants of work-family conflict, as well as in respect to mean differences with population in general. For workers with lower education, the difference pertained to a lower (aggravating) effect of weekly hours and higher (mitigating) effect of having no children in the household, comparing to workers with higher education. For men, the effect of workload on work-family conflict is more pronounced. At the same time, women score higher on strain-based conflict than men, having controlled for other factors in the model. Workers over 50 experience more strain-based conflict when supervising other employees, an effect absent for other workers. The same goes for the impact of full-time equivalent of partners of workers over 50. An increase in family income had a positive effect for workers with migration background, while this is not the case for other workers; potentially a consequence of lower average income in this population stratum. For working single parents, job autonomy aggravates strain-based conflict, as opposed to other workers, for whom autonomy has a mitigating effect on that dimension. Aside from the gender groups, no residual differences in either of the three dimensions of work-family conflict have been found. These results suggest that factors responsible for work-family conflict exhibit similar dynamic in the entire population, with only minor deviations from the general pattern in the specific labor market groups. They also suggest, insofar the evidence in our research can demonstrate, the uniformity of eventual policy measures.

**Job changes for family reasons** In regard to the relationship between career mobility and work-family conflict, our results indicate that job transitions for family reasons are more likely to occur at the age period between 30 and 40, the age group that also experiences more intense work-family conflict (cf. supra).

A comparison of job characteristics before and after a job change indicated that workers who switched jobs for better work-life balance did so more voluntarily than other workers and had a greater reduction in work hours. Yet at the same time, workers who moved for this reason, scored negatively in comparison with other movers in terms of changes in salary, skill discretion, autonomy, job content variation, possibilities to take initiative, and pleasure in the job. This may indicate that workers seeking better work-life through a job move, find themselves in a trade-off between having a lower work-family conflict on one hand, and keeping a level of job quality on the other. This suggests that the quality of part-time jobs should be made a focal point of public policy determined to improve work-life balance.

**Transitions and work-family conflict** Career transitions can play an important role in moderating work-family conflict. First of all, workers who experience higher levels of work-family conflict (more specifically, on the strain-based dimension) are more prone to job changes, possibly aiming to diminish the conflict. This is in line with existing research on the subject ([De Hauw, 2014](#)). However, our model suggests that such career moves entail another kind of trade-off, similar in nature to the one we have discussed above. While movers seeking to decrease work-life conflict may achieve the desired effect by reducing their working hours or workload, or by increasing

autonomy in the job, in relative terms the effect of changing jobs on work-family conflict (more specifically, on the time-based dimension) is adverse. This means that for equal amount of working hours, levels of workload, skill discretion, role clarity and autonomy, those who have made a job-to-job transition experience, on average, a higher level of time-based work-family conflict after the transition.

It is necessary to note that the increase in time-based conflict holds for internal job-to-job transitions, but not for external ones. An external move can actually have a beneficial effect on the time-based dimension of work-family conflict. These results suggest that stimulating labor market mobility may have positive implications for work-family conflict, provided that respondents are able to transition to jobs of adequate quality. More research is required to explain the causal dynamic behind this phenomenon.

## **Implications for policy**

The results outlined above can inform public policy aiming to reduce work-family conflict, in several ways. First, our descriptive analyses suggest that there could be an additional benefit in targeting workers aged between around 30 and 40. This group stood out in the results in terms of higher work-family conflict intensity, both on time- and strain-based dimensions. The same group had a higher propensity to have had a recent career move due to work-family balance issues. Both items suggest that these workers are in a higher need of support in terms of balancing work and family, especially with regard to career transitions, some of which may entail undesirable job

quality trade-offs. In addition, workers with two children or more should be targeted specifically in regard to reducing time-based conflict.

Second, we have found that the most important antecedents of work-family conflict are job domain variables, which suggests that work-family conflict can in general be reduced by improving job quality across the board. The data suggest that implementing policy measures to improve social support in the job may be a plausible approach to this problem, for example by supporting corresponding HR initiatives on the organizational level. Social support appeared to be a strong mitigating factor for work-family conflict on both time- and strain-based dimension. Influencing other relevant factors, for example, decreasing workload or reducing emotional demands in the job, might be more difficult to influence.

Only minor differences were found between the specific worker groups in terms of work-family balance. With the exception of women, for whom strain-based work-family conflict was higher than for men, no other differences could be established between the groups regarding the conflict levels. In other words, aside from a few exceptions, the worker population is relatively homogenous in regard to work-family balance, which may suggest that a unified policy approach is to be advised, as opposed to targeting specific vulnerable groups. This recommendation is, of course, limited to the groups involved in the between-group comparisons in our analyses.

The most notable exceptions to the said homogeneity pertains to the already mentioned age group (workers between around 30 and 40) and women, who have higher strain-based work-family conflict. This suggests that women may be targeted specifically in the context of policy improving work-family conflict.

Third, the analysis of the relationship between work-family conflict and career mobility has indicated that job moves are indeed being used to reduce the discrepancy between the two domains. At the same time our results suggest that the overall outcome of such mobility is rather ambiguous. Thus, the switch may often entail accepting a lower quality job in exchange for a reduction in working time. In addition, the decrease in work-family conflict following that reduction is less than proportionate, when internal job mobility is involved. These results implicate that job mobility might not be an optimal instrument to achieving a better work-life balance, and alternative ways of reducing work-family conflict might prove more efficient. More research is, however, required to unravel the underlying causality of the phenomenon.

# Bibliography

- Allen, T. D., Cho, E., and Meier, L. L. (2014). Work–Family boundary dynamics. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1(1):99–121.
- Arthur, M. B., Inkson, K., and Pringle, J. K. (1999). *The new careers: individual action and economic change*. SAGE.
- Arthur, M. B. and Rousseau, D. M. (1996). Introduction: The boundaryless career as a new employment principle. In Arthur, M. B. and Rousseau, D. M., editors, *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era*, pages 3–20. Oxford University Press.
- Ashkenas, R. (1999). Creating the boundaryless organization. *Business Horizons*, 42(5):5–10.
- Bakker, A. B., ten Brummelhuis, L. L., Prins, J. T., and van der Heijden, F. M. M. A. (2011). Applying the job demands–resources model to the work–home interface: A study among medical residents and their partners. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 79(1):170–180.

- Baruch, Y. and Bozionelos, N. (2010). Career issues. In Zedeck, S., editor, *APA Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, volume 2, pages 67–113. American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.
- Beck, U. (2000). *The brave new world of work*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Bourdeaud'hui, R., Janssens, F., and Vanderhaeghe, S. (2004). Nulmeting Vlaamse werkbaarheidsmonitor: Indicatoren voor de kwaliteit van de arbeid op de Vlaamse arbeidsmarkt 2004. Technical report, SERV, Brussel.
- Briscoe, J. P., Hall, D. T., and Frautschy DeMuth, R. L. (2006). Protean and boundaryless careers: An empirical exploration. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69(1):30–47.
- Briscoe, J. P., Henagan, S. C., Burton, J. P., and Murphy, W. M. (2012). Coping with an insecure employment environment: The differing roles of protean and boundaryless career orientations. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(2):308–316.
- Byron, K. (2005). A meta-analytic review of work–family conflict and its antecedents. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 67(2):169–198.
- Carlson, D. S. (1999). Personality and role variables as predictors of three forms of Work–Family conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 55(2):236–253.
- Carlson, D. S., Kacmar, K. M., and Williams, L. J. (2000). Construction and initial validation of a multidimensional measure of Work–Family conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 56(2):249–276.

- Chen, Z. and Powell, G. N. (2012). No pain, no gain? A resource-based model of work-to-family enrichment and conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 81(1):89–98.
- Clark, S. C. (2001). Work cultures and Work/Family balance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 58(3):348–365.
- Clarke, M. and Patrickson, M. (2008). The new covenant of employability. *Employee Relations*, 30(2):121–141.
- De Hauw, S. (2014). In search of work-home balance: a study on individual and contextual antecedents and career outcomes.
- De Vos, A. and Segers, J. (2013). Self-directed career attitude and retirement intentions. *Career Development International*, 18(2):155–172.
- De Vos, A. and Soens, N. (2008). Protean attitude and career success: The mediating role of self-management. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 73(3):449–456.
- Dikkers, J. S. E., Geurts, S. A. E., Kompier, M. A. J., Taris, T. W., Houtman, I. L. D., and van den Heuvel, F. (2007). Does workload cause work-home interference or is it the other way around? *Stress and Health*, 23(5):303–314.
- Direnzo, M. S., Greenhaus, J. H., and Weer, C. H. (2015). Relationship between protean career orientation and work–life balance: A resource perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 36(4):538–560.

- Eby, L. T., Casper, W. J., Lockwood, A., Bordeaux, C., and Brinley, A. (2005). Work and family research in IO/OB: content analysis and review of the literature (1980–2002). *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 66(1):124–197.
- European Commission (2015). Employment and social developments in Europe 2014. Technical report.
- Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., and Ashforth, B. E. (2004). Employability: A psychosocial construct, its dimensions, and applications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65(1):14–38.
- Giddens, A. (1993). *The transformation of intimacy: sexuality, love and eroticism in modern societies*. Stanford University Press.
- Goode, W. J. (1960). A theory of role strain. *American Sociological Review*, 25(4):483–496.
- Greenhaus, J. H. and Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *The Academy of Management Review*, 10(1):76–88.
- Greenhaus, J. H. and Kossek, E. E. (2014). The contemporary career: A Work–Home perspective. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1(1):361–388.
- Greenhaus, J. H., Parasuraman, S., Granrose, C. S., Rabinowitz, S., and Beutell, N. J. (1989). Sources of work-family conflict among two-career couples. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 34(2):133–153.

- Greenhaus, J. H. and Powell, G. N. (2006). When work and family are allies: a theory of work-family enrichment. *The Academy of Management Review*, 31(1):72–92.
- Greenhaus, J. H. and Powell, G. N. (2012). The family-relatedness of work decisions: A framework and agenda for theory and research. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(2):246–255.
- Gummesson, E. (2002). Relationship marketing in the new economy. *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, 1(1):37–57.
- Gutek, B. A., Searle, S., and Klepa, L. (1991). Rational versus gender role explanations for work-family conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76(4):560–568.
- Herremans, W., Vanderbiesen, W., Rober, A., Vansteenkiste, S., Neefs, B., Theunissen, G., Sels, L., and Sourbron, M. (2015). Terugblik op de Vlaamse arbeidsmarkt. ontwikkelingen sinds de jaren tachtig. Technical Report 2015-1, Steunpunt Werk en Sociale Economie, Leuven.
- Hornung, S., Rousseau, D. M., and Glaser, J. (2008). Creating flexible work arrangements through idiosyncratic deals. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(3):655–664. PMID: 18457493.
- Jansen, N. W. H., Kant, I., Kristensen, T. S., and Nijhuis, F. J. N. (2003). Antecedents and consequences of work-family conflict: a prospective cohort study. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 45(5):479.
- Kossek, E. E., Pichler, S., Bodner, T., and Hammer, L. B. (2011). Workplace social support and work-family conflict: A meta-analysis clarifying the influence of

- general and work-family-specific supervisor and organizational support. *Personnel Psychology*, 64(2):289–313. PMID: 21691415 PMCID: PMC3116443.
- Kovalenko, M. and Mortelmans, D. (2014). Does career type matter? Outcomes in traditional and transitional career patterns. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 85(2):238–249.
- Lewis, J. (2001). The decline of the male breadwinner model: Implications for work and care. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 8(2):152–169.
- Marks, S. R. (1977). Multiple roles and role strain: Some notes on human energy, time and commitment. *American Sociological Review*, 42(6):921–936.
- McNall, L. A., Nicklin, J. M., and Masuda, A. D. (2010). A Meta-Analytic review of the consequences associated with Work–Family enrichment. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(3):381–396.
- McQuaid, R. W. and Lindsay, C. (2005). The concept of employability. *Urban Studies*, 42(2):197–219.
- Mesmer-Magnus, J. R. and Viswesvaran, C. (2005). Convergence between measures of work-to-family and family-to-work conflict: A meta-analytic examination. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 67(2):215–232.
- Michel, J. S., Kotrba, L. M., Mitchelson, J. K., Clark, M. A., and Baltes, B. B. (2011). Antecedents of work–family conflict: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 32(5):689–725.

- Muffels, R. (2008). *Flexibility and employment security in Europe*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Perrons, D. (2003). The new economy and the Work–Life balance: Conceptual explorations and a case study of new media. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 10(1):65–93.
- Poelmans, S., Greenhaus, J., and Stepanova, O. (2013). The present and future of Work-Family decision making. In Poelmans, S., Greenhaus, J., and Maestro, M. L. H., editors, *Expanding the Boundaries of Work-Family Research: A Vision for the Future*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Raemdonck, I., Tillema, H., Grip, A. d., Valcke, M., and Segers, M. (2012). Does self-directedness in learning and careers predict the employability of low-qualified employees? *Vocations and Learning*, 5(2):137–151.
- Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., and Crant, J. M. (2001). What do proactive people do? A longitudinal model linking proactive personality and career success. *Personnel Psychology*, 54(4):845–874.
- Sennett, R. (2011). *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Shockley, K. M. and Allen, T. D. (2007). When flexibility helps: Another look at the availability of flexible work arrangements and work–family conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 71(3):479–493.

- Sieber, S. D. (1974). Toward a theory of role accumulation. *American Sociological Review*, 39(4):567–578.
- Standing, G. (2010). *Work after globalization: building occupational citizenship*. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA.
- Sullivan, S. E. (1999). The changing nature of careers: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Management*, 25(3):457–484.
- Sullivan, S. E. and Arthur, M. B. (2006). The evolution of the boundaryless career concept: Examining physical and psychological mobility. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69(1):19–29.
- van Veldhoven, M. J. P. M. and Beijer, S. E. (2012). Workload, Work-to-Family conflict, and health: Gender differences and the influence of private life context. *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(4):665–683.
- van Veldhoven, M. J. P. M., Meijman, T. F., Broersen, J. P. J., and Fortuin, R. J. (2002). Handleiding VBBA.
- Voydanoff, P. (1988). Work role characteristics, family structure demands, and Work/Family conflict. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 50(3):749–761.