

Moving beyond work and family: A grounded theory study exploring domains relevant to inter-  
role conflict

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## Abstract

Theoretically, inter-role conflict can occur between any life domains that produce competing demands. However, inter-role conflict research has historically focused on the conflict between only two domains: work and family. Although some recent work has begun to question this focus and push for the inclusion of other life domains, little guidance exists regarding what domains life might be composed. Moreover, there is little evidence testing the assumption that work and family are the most important of these life domains. As such, the goal of the present qualitative study was to identify and define the full spectrum of life domains relevant to inter-role conflict and to explore what participants considered to be their most important life domain. Using grounded theory methodologies, qualitative interviews were conducted with 25 employees at various life stages. Upon theoretical saturation, data collection was ceased and a total of 13 life domains had emerged from the data. Results indicated that many domains other than family were important and potentially relevant to the study of inter-role conflict. The results of this study have important implications not only for the study of inter-role conflict, but also for practitioners given the popularity of so-called “family-friendly” policies that exclude other life roles.

The number of hours worked by full-time employees is steadily increasing around the world (OECD, 2010). Further, access to technology such as smartphones, widespread Internet, and video chatting has increased the amount of time spent on work even when people are not technically working (Voydanoff, 2007). As a result of these changes, employees sometimes struggle to balance work with other important life roles. The challenges employees face in this regard are referred to as inter-role conflict. Historically, the literature on inter-role conflict has primarily focused on the conflict between two domains: work and family (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). More recently, however, researchers have begun to assess conflict between work and a number of different areas of life (e.g., Keeney, Boyd, Sinha, Westring, & Ryan, 2013). However, little guidance is available regarding what life domains people actually participate in and how important these domains of life are. As a result, studies assessing domains other than family have included different sets of life roles and different definitions for life roles with the same names. Moreover, it is still unclear whether domains other than family are important enough that researchers should routinely consider them. As such, the goal of the present study will be to identify and define the full spectrum of life domains relevant to inter-role conflict and to explore their importance.

In order to accomplish this goal, first a discussion of theories explaining the underlying mechanisms of inter-role conflict will be provided. Second, we will present a brief review of the literature on work-family conflict including types of conflict and antecedents and consequences of conflict. Third, past research on inter-role conflict will be discussed. Finally, a grounded theory study that expands the literature on inter-role conflict by empirically identifying a set of life domains and clearly defining what is encompassed within each domain will be described.

The present research should contribute to the literature on inter-role conflict in several ways. First, and most importantly, this research fills a gap in the literature by attempting to represent the entirety of inter-role conflict. Identifying a comprehensive set of life domains is important because exclusively measuring family may not capture the conflict process as a whole, and measuring other life domains without understanding the holistic picture of work and life may lead to erroneous or incomplete conclusions. Second, this research will provide practical insights for the workplace because it will attempt to better represent the reality of balancing work with multiple life domains.

### ***Theories of Inter-role Conflict***

The basic premise underlying inter-role conflict is that the differing demands posed by various domains create the potential for conflict (Greenhaus & Buetell, 1985). Some of the major theories of inter-role conflict include role theory, spillover theory, and conservation of resources theory. While each of these theories broadly discusses the notion that participation in multiple domains creates the potential for conflict, each postulates different mechanisms underlying conflict.

First, according to role theory, conflict occurs as a result of incompatible pressures or expectations among domains (Greenhaus & Buetell, 1985). For example, the time necessary for a person to finish their work responsibilities may conflict with time demands from the family domain such that a person may have to work late and thus miss dinner with his or her family. Alternatively, the energy required to get through the workday may not leave enough energy left over to exercise after work. Overall, role theory seeks to explain the mechanism by which different roles may conflict by dividing life into different domains and focusing on incompatibility of the demands posed by the different domains.

Second, spillover theory posits that if a person has an experience in one domain, it is likely that experience will carry over into another domain. Two types of spillover are typically studied: positive and negative. Positive spillover occurs when one domain enriches experiences in another domain. For example, if a person receives news that makes them happy at home, they are also likely to be happy when they get to work. As another example, if a person learns computer skills at work, they are also likely to be able to use those computer skills at home (Zedeck & Mosier, 1990). In contrast, negative spillover is when experiences in one domain make life experiences in other domains more difficult (Sumer & Knight, 2001). For example, if a person has a fight with their significant other at home, that person may continue to be angry during the workday. Or, if a person is passed up for a promotion at work, the negative affect that person experiences is likely to carry over into an activity after work. Negative spillover has received much more attention in the literature, and is the mechanism proposed to underlie conflict.

Third, conservation of resources theory suggests that people have a limited supply of resources and must divide them among all of their life domains. People thus experience stress when they feel they are having difficulty reserving some of their resources for themselves and when they feel they may be losing important resources. Resources can include, but are not limited to, status, energy, and tangible resources (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Hobfoll, 1989). For example, if a person is at risk of losing his or her job, that person may experience stress because of a threat to his or her tangible resources like money and symbolic resources like status.

While each of these theories takes a unique perspective on the mechanisms associated with conflict, each is applicable to studying conflict across all life domains. As such, it is surprising that until now each has primarily been used in the context of only two domains: work

and family. Some researchers have suggested, however, these theories can and should be applied to conflict between *all* life domains (Eby et al., 2005; Zedeck, 1992). For example, conservation of resources theory may be applied to an individual's entire life and not just to work and family in that tasks related to an individual's personal life, friendships, and health, for instance, might draw upon resources and thus induce stress. Likewise, demands from all of an individual's various roles might interfere with the ability to perform in another life role and experiences in any life role could potentially spill over into any other. Thus, the mechanisms underlying inter-role conflict are applicable across a broad range of potential life domains and not just to work and family (Eby et al., 2005). However, the vast majority of research on inter-role conflict has ignored life domains other than work and family.

### ***Work-Family Conflict Research***

Given that research on inter-role conflict has historically focused heavily on conflict between the roles of work and family, research on work-family conflict has been prolific and has provided a great deal of evidence regarding associated factors in the work and family domains. In the literature conflict is typically divided into two directions: work to family and family to work. Several antecedents of work to family conflict have been identified. Antecedents with the most research support include working long hours (Jacobs & Gerson, 2001), having a heavy workload (Yang, Chen, Choi, & Zou, 2000), having an unsupportive supervisor (Tepper, 2000), and experiencing increased pressure and stress at work (Carlson, 1999; Fox & Dwyer, 1999). Other antecedents of work interference with family include unpredictability in a person's work schedule (Shamir, 1983), perceived reward inequity in the workplace (Greenhaus, Bedeian, & Mossholder, 1987), and self-employment (Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001).

Researchers have also identified several factors that are related to family to work conflict. Grzywacz and Marks (2000) found that adults who have children at home are more likely to experience family interference with work. In addition, Fox and Dwyer (1999) found that adults who worry about childcare or experience marital tension are more likely to experience family interference with work. Similarly, Carlson and Perrewe (1999) found that high family involvement and low social support from family are related to family interference with work. Overall, these research findings suggest that factors in the work and family roles representing *demands* are associated with interference between domains. Although little to no research on conflict has explored demands outside the work and family roles, it stands to reason that demands from other roles would also be associated with conflict, given the broad support that currently exists for the role of work and family demands as predictors of conflict.

In response to experiencing conflict, research has established that people may suffer consequences in their work domain, their family domain, or personally. With respect to the workplace, researchers have found that conflict is associated with decreased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceptions of career success as well as increased intentions to turnover and burnout (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Peluchette, 1993). With respect to family, Allen et al. (2000) and Bedeian, Burke, and Moffett (1988) found that conflict had negative effects on life and marital satisfaction. With respect to personal consequences, Allen et al. (2000) found that conflict was associated with increased general psychological and physical strain, increased alcohol abuse, and increased depression. Several other studies have found similar mental and physical health consequences due to conflict (Schmitt, Colligan, & Fitzgerald, 1980; Sparks, Faragher, & Cooper, 2001), and other studies have found that alcohol consumption increases as conflict increases (Burke & Greenglass, 1999; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1997).

Given the large amount of research on the topic, it is clear that when people experience conflict between work and family, they may experience work, family, or personal consequences as a result. Although each of these results discusses conflict outcomes as a result of work-family conflict, it seems highly likely that conflict between work and any life role may lead to these outcomes. Complicating this issue is the fact that within the work-family literature, the definition of family has been somewhat unclear. For example, in their literature review Eby et al. (2005) note that the assumed definition of family in the work-family literature is generally in line with Piotrkowski's 1978 definition as "two or more individuals occupying interdependent roles with the purpose of accomplishing shared goals." However, very few researchers actually specify the definition of family that they are working from within their research, and still fewer provide a definition of family to participants completing their surveys. Thus, there has been a lack of a consistent and specific operational definition in the literature.

Perhaps as a result of this, researchers have often used measures that potentially assess conflict with life domains other than family, while still using the term "work-family conflict" to describe those measures. For example, work-family conflict surveys developed by Kopelman, Greenhaus, and Connolly (1983) and Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000) both contain questions about friends, personal interests, and personal time (e.g., "On the job I have so much work to do that it takes away from my personal interests") yet are often used by researchers to assess work-family conflict. Similarly, other researchers have used the term "work-life" when referring to measures that assess only the family domain (e.g., Brummelhuis & Van der Lippe, 2010; Hill, Erikson, Holmes, & Ferris, 2010; Reynolds, 2005).

This lack of clarity in the measurement and definition of family is likely a consequence of the fact that there is little guidance regarding what a domain of life is, and how domains of life

are defined. Many researchers acknowledge the need to address life domains outside family (e.g., Hall, Kossek, Pichler, Briscoe, & Dee, 2013; Kossek, Baltes, & Matthews, 2011) however, no framework for deciding what is and what is not family, and what might exist outside family, yet exists. Thus, there is a need to study and define the domains of life outside of work in order to fully understand the ways in which work and life can conflict.

### **The Present Study**

The above review of the literature suggests that the theory of inter-role conflict is currently in its nascent stages such that there is no set of theoretically or empirically defined life domains. Although there is a great deal of research addressing conflict, the quantity of research in an area is not necessarily indicative of the maturity of theory (Edmonson & McManus, 2007). In order to develop mature theory, there needs to be an understanding of the underlying phenomena. In addition, as has been discussed, current research has focused on a limited subset of domains potentially relevant to inter-role conflict. Qualitative research is focused on examining and explaining the qualities of a phenomenon in the context in which it occurs, and thus it is well suited for situations where theory is under-developed (Gephart, 2004). It is inductive and interpretive in comparison to the mathematically based quantitative study. As Gephart (2004) describes, qualitative research is useful for understanding social processes. In addition, qualitative research allows conclusions to rise from the data, which should be ideal in a situation where little is currently known. Another advantage of using qualitative research is that it yields rich data with detailed descriptions of the phenomena in question, allowing it to generate data both at the micro and macro levels of analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). As a result, qualitative methodology is highly suited for the present study.

In order to establish a set of life domains, this research subscribed to an epistemology consistent with the goals of this research. Although each epistemology takes different perspectives on knowledge, it is important to note that in each stance, theory building and method are intertwined. The current research will use postpositivism as an epistemological paradigm. The focus of this theoretical perspective is on objective reality: that there is a reality outside of the mind and this can be reflected using scientific inquiry. This perspective seeks to discover this truth, and recognizes that theory can never reach total verification. Rather, postpositivism falls in line with empirical thinking in that it proposes that the nature of knowledge consists of nonfalsified hypotheses rather than verified facts (Gephart, 2004). This perspective posits that results are uncovered as more knowledge is collected and organized into functional categories. Importantly, the method accompanying this perspective method must be rigorous to promote internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. Without these criteria, postpositivists assert that no accurate inferences can be made from data. The goal of postpositivist research is thus to build theory that can be used in the future under experimental methods to advance the maturity and complexity of the theory (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). Thus, postpositivism provides a rigorous, empirical background with which to identify and define a comprehensive set of life domains.

### **Methods**

Consistent with the practice of grounded theory, participants were sampled based on comparative groups of interest. As can be seen in Table 1, these comparison groups included age, gender, partner status, and whether the person has children. The three age brackets chosen were intended to roughly capture three stages of life and are based on data reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2009. First, the age range 20-35 was meant to capture individuals just entering

the workforce, typically before starting a family or in the early stages of doing so. Second, the age range 36-51 was meant to capture people who are in the peak of their careers, and for those with children, where the children are school-aged. Third, the age range 52-67 was meant to capture people who were in their pre-retirement years. For individuals with children, the children might still be living at home or may have moved on to college or to jobs and families of their own. Each person in the sample was selected to represent one of these categories, and ultimately the goal was interview at least one person in each category.

Overall, nearly every category was filled with at least one participant. However, some groups, such as unmarried males ages 52-67, were difficult to recruit. As such, a larger sample of married men in this age group was recruited in an attempt to represent each age group. Table 1 also shows the actual distribution of participants across categories.

Participants were recruited through advertisements in campus electronic newsletters and received a \$20 incentive for their participation. The final sample included 25 full-time employees at a large urban Midwestern university falling into one of the groups of interest identified in Table 1. Overall, there were 11 male and 14 female participants, 12 participants with children and 13 participants without children, 16 participants with a partner at home and 9 without a partner at home. Ten participants were in the 20-35 age group, 8 were in the 36-51 age group, and 7 were in the 52-67 age group. Twenty-four of the 25 participants identified themselves as white, and 1 participant identified as being Black or African American.

Interviews consisted of several open-ended, previously determined questions which were followed up with improvised questions focusing on elaboration or clarification of information previously offered. Importantly, the interview guide was revised throughout the data collection process where questions were added, removed, or edited based on their usefulness. Refining the

interview questions allowed the research to become more focused throughout the process. In total, there were 6 versions of the interview guide.

After the initial set of interview questions, participants were asked to identify their set of life domains by completing an exercise requiring them to identify their life domains visually. This activity involved participants drawing circles representing life domains inside a larger circle representing life as a whole. Following this activity, participants were asked another set of questions regarding the decisions they made in order to create their domains and the relative importance of the domains. Both the question portion of the interview and the exercise were used to gather information about life domains. During the interview, the researcher took field notes in addition to the voice recording. This additional data included observations about the participant, the environment, or the interview process itself (Crabtree & Miller, 2004). These notes were important to identify unique aspects of each particular interview and help the interviewer to remember ideas for future questions. The drawings created during the life domains activity were kept in both their original and an electronic form, so that they could be compared to one another.

Once each interview was completed, it was transcribed by one of the authors or a trained undergraduate research assistant. All transcriptions were checked for accuracy by at least one person other than the transcriber. Following transcription, the authors coded the data using a qualitative data analysis program called Atlas.ti. Importantly, the coding process, from the first interview all the way through the end of data collection, was not linear. Rather it was a circular process in which new data were constantly being compared to previously collected data. This allowed the researchers to look back at previously collected data and make sense of situations that were previously unclear.

During the data analysis, data were coded by breaking down the transcription into units of information and assigning an active name to the information described in that unit. Each unit was assigned to one or more category, depending on the complexity of the thought expressed in each unit. These major categories were the units of information that developed into the set of life domains. For example, some of the categories included helping others, which eventually became community involvement, and traveling, which became part of the domain recreation. Importantly, during the coding process, categories were compared to one another. This way, as similar codes emerged, they were combined together to create more comprehensive category names and use consistent categories for similar findings in the data. This organizational system helped to identify holes in the data and thus edit the interview guide to address the gaps and questions that arose in the data.

In order to further understand the meaning and components of the categories that emerged in the data, the organization and focus of the data were advanced by creating codes within each category. This process involved identifying repeating codes, sifting through large amounts of data, and applying appropriate analytic names to similar data within each category. The goal of this process was to identify the most appropriate code names. Ultimately, the quality of categories is linked to the fit between codes and categories (Locke, 2002). These codes developed into the activities and reasons for participating in each life domain. This system of organization also helped to identify what kind of data needed to be collected next, because as organization increased, holes in data became more apparent.

In order to develop a full understanding of categories as well as to define relationships between emerging categories, this research used a process called theoretical sampling. As mentioned earlier, data organization revealed questions that needed to be answered to fully

understand the categories. Thus, near the end of data collection, new participants were interviewed for elaboration on the categories that had emerged in order to answer these questions. The interview questions used during the theoretical sampling phase of data collection were more specific and directive than those used earlier in the process. Overall, the intermediate phase of data collection allowed for organizing data and following-up on emerging patterns in order to create a structural framework for the domains that emerged.

When the study reached the point of theoretical saturation, it transitioned into the final phase of data collection and analysis in which the names for all codes and categories were finalized and the construction of the set of life domains was finished. In order to finalize, there were four steps. First, the data were re-examined to ensure best fit between data, codes, and categories. Second, the findings were examined for ways in which they could be challenged or extended. In order to stretch beyond my personal view of the data, a team of research assistants also examined the data, codes, and categories and identified confusing or unclear information, as well as gave suggestions about their interpretation of the data. Third, the inevitable remaining data that did not seem to fit into the framework was examined. In the end, the data that did not fit into the categories as was assigned N/A and was saved to examine from other perspectives at a later date. Finally, once the framework was stabilized, the process was complete. Importantly, a grounded theory perspective states that the framework is never completely solidified; rather it is considered a living structure affected by its greater environment. As such, this set of life domains is applicable in the present, but is certainly not a permanent framework for all populations and throughout time.

Throughout the data collection procedure, memos were kept. Memos are essentially a research diary where ideas for new interview questions, ideas for categories and what they

meant, and problems in the research collection process were recorded. Memos are an important part of the data collection process within grounded theory, as they provide another perspective and source of information on the data (Charmaz, 2004). For this project, there were two types of memos: one for methods and one for analyses. The methods memo kept an active version of the interview guide, a record of changes to questions, and organized participation table. The analyses memo recorded the details of categories, the progression of code and category names, ideas about the underlying framework of the set of life domains, and any notes from the interviews themselves. Thus, the memos helped to maintain the cyclic process of data collection and analysis and help progress data toward the development of a comprehensive set of life domains.

## **Results**

This section will present the results of the data analysis in three sections. First, an overall discussion of the life domains that emerged from the data will be presented. Second, more specific details of each of the domains will be discussed. Finally, there will be a section detailing supplemental data analyses.

### ***Life Domains***

The first major finding of this study is that although it does appear possible to identify a number of life domains, where a domain is an identifiable chunk of activities and/or people, these domains tend not to be entirely separable from each other. That is, life domains tend to overlap where activities or people fall into more than one domain. Moreover, these overlaps occur in different ways for different people. For example, although the domain of friends and the domain of family may be distinct, for some people close friends are considered family, and for others particular family members may be considered friends. These overlaps may also occur based on activities that fulfill the goals of more than one domain (e.g., exercising with friends or

caring for children while performing household duties). As such, it is not proposed that the life domains discussed below are separate from each other in all ways or for all people; merely that they are identifiable, internally cohesive chunks of life.

Given this, in our analysis a total of 13 life domains emerged. These 13 domains were family, work, recreation, friends, home, caretaking, self, exercise, significant other, community involvement, pets, religion, and education (each domain will be described fully below). All participants did not necessarily have to participate in a domain in order for it to be included. However, participants did engage in an average of 9 domains, and even the domain with the least participation (education) was participated in by nearly a quarter (24%) of participants. Table 2 displays each life domain and the percentage of participants who participated in that life domain.

Similarly, one of the purposes of this research was to identify the importance of the life domains explored. To do so, we asked participants to indicate which of the domains they participated in was the most important to them (see Table 3). Although it does not provide for a relative rating of each domain's importance, this method does provide data on whether domains outside work and family are ever considered to be most important. Given the emphasis on work and family in the current research literature, we felt this was an important point. Perhaps not surprisingly, we found that the majority (56%) of participants considered family to be the most important life domain. Interestingly, however, although 16% of participants indicated that work was their most important life domain, the same percent (16%) also indicated that the significant other, self, or friends domain was most important. Moreover, some participants (4-8%) indicated that other life domains (pets, caretaking, religion, recreation, or exercise) were most important. Overall, 10 of the 13 life domains were indicated as being most important for at least one participant. This finding indicates that although work-family research has identified two of the

life domains most likely to be of highest importance to participants, many other life domains considered to be most important at least to some individuals are generally overlooked.

Importantly, while researchers have previously examined some of these life domains (e.g., recreation, friends, religion, and education) most have not previously emerged in other analyses (e.g., pets and exercise) and the sheer number of domains represented here is far more than has been considered in most past research. Altogether these results indicate not only that there are potentially a great deal more life domains than just work and family, but also that people tend to participate in many more domains than most previous research has considered. Although the measure created by Keeney et al., (2012) is a notable exception including 8 life domains, most research considers only two or three domains at a time.

### *Details of the Domains*

**Family.** One hundred percent of participants identified family as a life domain. Specifically, frequently mentioned under the heading of family were extended family, significant other, children, and some friends and/or pets. For example, one participant mentioned several of these things when defining family:

Family, because I am single, pretty much includes my parents. I have two sets of parents and several siblings that are scattered everywhere so for me...that encompasses all of my siblings, my parents, my nieces and nephews, all of that for me is family...You know, and I have extended, like aunts and uncles and cousins, but that core group of us, to me, is family.

Interestingly, the data revealed that family has different definitions for different people. For example, 48% of participants defined family as including people with whom they were related as well as those with whom they had the strongest affective connection. In other words, almost half of participants included their closest friends as part of their family. Further, 36% of participants indicated they included pets as part of their family. This finding emerged originally when

participants described conflict between different parts of family. Upon further questioning on the subject, these participants described these different parts of family as different pieces falling under one umbrella, or similarly, different pieces of the same puzzle. From this it became clear that the term family as it is commonly used did not have one simple meaning, but rather could be broken into subcomponents. Thus, this finding shows that different people seemed to have different scopes in their definition of family. This is important because it suggests that examining family as a singular life domain may be a deficient strategy for understanding the entirety of work-family conflict, and that measures assessing work-family conflict might actually be measuring different things for different people. Given this finding, it would seem prudent for future researchers to provide a definition for what should be considered family when participants fill out measures. Otherwise, participants' idiosyncratic definitions of family will result in a great deal of noise in the data.

Also interesting were the activities people described engaging in within the family role and how they described what the role meant to them. From the analysis of the interview data concerning family, 11 codes describing family emerged. These codes described the main activities people engage in with family as well as what role family plays in their lives. These codes emerged by grouping all of the data from the text that fell into the family category into smaller similar units of data. Further, these smaller units were compared to the life domains drawings for consistency. These codes included: prioritizing family, spending time with family, taking care of each other, taking responsibility for each other, sharing a special bond together, spending time together having fun, gaining personal identity, sacrificing other things for family, juggling family with other roles, prioritizing other responsibilities above family, and adjusting to changing family dynamics.

From this data, it became apparent that more women than men gain identity from family, or define who they are as a person by their family role, while more men than women gain identity from work. Specifically, 50% of women and only 27.3% of men indicated they gained identity from family, but 72.7% of men and only 42.9% of women indicated they gained identity from work. This finding is also consistent with what traditional gender roles might suggest. Further, there was a difference in family participation between people with and without a partner such that those with a partner reported spending time with their family more often than those without a partner. Finally, there seemed to be a trend in the data such that participants ages 36-51 reported sacrificing other things for family, juggling family with other roles, and adjusting to changing dynamics more so than people in other groups. This seems to suggest that the most stressful family situations may occur during the ages 36-51, presumably when people with children would be raising children and potentially helping care for elderly family simultaneously.

**Work.** Similar to family, 100% of participants spent time during the interview talking about work. For this study, work was defined as any activity for which a person regularly receives pay. It is not surprising that all participants were involved in paid work, since this was a requirement for participation in the study. Eleven codes, or aspects of the work domain, emerged from the analysis of the work related data. These include: taking up a lot of time, gaining personal identity, doing it out of need, maintaining life balance, providing for self and others, draining personal resources, making friends, volunteering time, not having control, causing stress, and behaving professionally. In this context, draining personal resources refers to work taking up resources like time and physical, mental, or emotional energy. Interestingly, many of the codes that emerged from the work data were framed negatively. Specifically, 5 codes: taking up a lot of time, doing it out of need, draining personal resources, not having control, and

causing stress were discussed as a negative experience or aspect of work life. The work domain contained far more negatively framed codes than any other domain that emerged from this data set. For example, one participant describes how work can make it difficult to find the energy to participate in other life roles:

So the last few days I was here for twelve hours so I didn't get home until like eight-thirty last night...so I just wanted to decompress and sit on the couch and almost fell asleep on the couch then just went to bed, probably before nine o' clock because I was just exhausted.

These results are interesting because they suggest that many people may have generally negative feelings about the work domain when comparing it with other life domains.

Importantly, the fact that 100% of participants engaged in both work and family suggests that if researchers only examined the work and family roles, they would likely be assessing domains of life that are universally applicable to participants. However, even though every participant reported participating in these domains, many other domains emerged as important to and heavily involved in by participants. Thus, although work and family do seem to be relevant to almost everyone, almost everyone also participates in other important roles.

***Recreation.*** Recreation was amongst the most discussed life domains, with 96% of participants incorporating it into their discussion. This domain emerged as a collection of activities people engage in for enjoyment, leisure, and entertainment. For example, one participant described recreation as: "Hanging out with the dogs at home, playing music, a little bit of Facebooking... watching movies every now and then. Definitely reading - love to read." Recreation contains a broader number and array of activities than the other domains. A total of 17 codes emerged from the recreation data, including creative activities, traveling, outdoor activity, movies and TV, relaxing, sports, playing on the computer, reading, spending time with other people, exercising, going out, eating, music, gaining personal identity, gardening, playing

with pets and shopping. Further, creative activities served as a general code for participants who partook in activities geared toward originality and self-expression. In this study these activities included, but in the future would not be limited to: cooking, crafting, acting, wood working, painting, drawing, writing, watching independent and foreign films, and drinking craft beers. This grouping of activities emerged by examining the drawings and text analysis and observing that participants grouped all of these activities together, often under the name recreation, and sometimes under similar names such as “fun”. Further, when asked if these activities are all grouped together or fall under different life domains, participants suggested these activities were all similar in that they were a form of enjoyment, expression, or relaxation.

Another interesting finding concerning recreation was that people those without children tended to participate in a wider variety of activities for fun than people with children. For example, only people without children reported participating in exercise and gardening for recreation, and over 50% more participants without children than with children reported engaging in sports, playing on the computer, reading, and watching movies and TV for recreation. The fact that almost all people reported engaging in recreation is interesting because it suggests that leisure and enjoyment are an important part of almost everyone’s lives and thus should be taken into consideration when considering how work interacts with the rest of people’s lives.

***Friends.*** Eighty-four percent of participants discussed friends as being a relevant life domain. When asked to define how participants think of their friends, they described them as people to whom they have the strongest affective connection. As one participant defined friends: “friends are people who both give and receive into your life making you better and helping them become better.” For the most part, these people are not related by blood, however there were

several participants who reported that cousins or siblings fill both a family and a friend role. Thus it seems that friends can include peers related by blood. Seven kinds of activities emerged from the conversations about friends, including spending time together, looking out for each other, building relationships, going out together, (parties, bars, etc.) exercising together, keeping in touch, and traveling together. Also, 55% of participants who talked about friends said they have friends they consider to be family because of the close affective connection.

Interestingly, there were a few differences between demographic groups in regard to participation in a friends domain. First, a difference emerged between people with and without children such that more people without children reported spending time engaged in building relationships with friends than people with children. This suggests that people with children may have more difficulty maintaining friendships than people without children, perhaps due to the time required to raise a family. Also, another interesting difference with regard to friends was between people with and without partners, such that those without a partner more frequently reported spending time with friends. This may indicate that those with a partner rely more on that person for their social interaction and those without partners rely more on friends. Finally, in terms of age groups, there seemed to be an overall trend such that the older the participants were, the less frequently they reported participating in a friends domain. This is a particularly interesting finding because it suggests that people have a strong inclination to engage in important and meaningful relationships with people outside of the family role, and that these relationships thus play a part in the balancing act between work and non-work activities in life.

**Home.** Eighty percent of participants reported taking part in a home domain. This domain was categorized by activities required to keep and maintain a place of residence. For example, the home domain was described by one participant as:

Home maintenance, grocery shopping, cleaning, making sure you know, all the bills are paid or you know, just having everything on one accord, so I don't have to stress about anything.

There were 6 activities discussed as being part of the home domain: cleaning, house maintenance (repairs), shopping (grocery, home improvement), yard work, finances, and cooking. For most people, these activities emerged in response to the question “what activities do you do just because you have to do them,” indicating many of these activities are viewed as an obligation. In order to establish home as its own domain apart from self, family, and other domains that typically occur within the home, participants were asked how they grouped the different activities in which they participated inside the home. Through this, the data supported the idea that home maintenance and care was its own domain apart from other things that happen inside the home. Interestingly, more men than women reported participating in the home domain. However, some women combined activities in the home domain with activities involving caretaking (i.e. caring for children in the home), suggesting that for women, these two domains may overlap more than for men.

***Caretaking.*** Eighty percent of people reported taking part in some sort of caretaking activity. From the data, the definition of caretaking emerged as taking responsibility for and/or looking after another person. As defined by one participant:

To me [caretaking] means the people I'm responsible for. Being kind of the guy, who's the dad and the husband and everything, I feel responsible for my family. I feel responsible for their happiness sometimes. So if they're unhappy... It makes me unhappy. So it just means providing for everyone since I'm kind of like the sole income for our household.

From the caretaking data, 9 caretaking activities emerged: helping care for elderly family, taking care of children, prioritizing people who need you, caring for animals like they are children, giving up your time for others, keeping things going, checking in and helping out with adult

children, figuring out what to do, and using volunteer work to fill a caretaking void. In this context, “keeping things going” refers activities such as to making sure everyone is where they need to be and making sure there is food in the house. The “figuring out what to do” code emerged as more focused on analyzing problems that arise and determining the best way to get through them or the best decision to make in that situation. Importantly, only those without a partner at home engaged in this code, potentially indicating that caretaking is more challenging without someone else at home helping with these responsibilities. Interestingly, 15% of participants who spoke about caretaking considered it to be an obligation in their lives rather than something they would choose to do on their own. This is particularly important in support of the idea that family related activities are not the only domains participants engage in outside of work. Finally, more women than men reported participating in the caretaking domain, however this is not necessarily surprising given that caretaking responsibilities have often been traditionally female.

*Self.* Eighty percent of participants reported themselves as an important life domain independent of any other domain. From the data, the self domain was defined as activities people engage in for their own benefit. For example, one participant said of her self domain: “well you can't really take care of anyone else or be there for other people if you don't kind of commit to yourself and make sure you have all of the resources you need.” These activities included looking out for self, relaxation, spending time alone, having control, self-care, self-development, and preparing for the future. The looking out for self code deals with making sure a person has their own needs met before they look to meet the needs of others. Having control specifically refers to the idea that while participating in a self domain, a person can control the activities he or she decides to participate in. This is important because often times participants reported

feeling they didn't have control in other life domains. Self-care refers to spending time taking care of hygienic and cosmetic needs and wants, as well as activities to improve health conditions such as physical therapy or other doctor's appointments. This code does not include exercising for health purposes because no one indicated exercise as part of their self domain. Self-development focuses on time where participants reflect on their lives and who they are as a person and think or discuss ways to improve themselves. Preparing for the future refers to participating in activities such as financial planning or exercising to improve health for long-term benefit. These codes emerged from probing participants about the various activities they engage in for themselves, and how those activities differ from those relevant to other domains. Overall, the finding that self has its own life domain is interesting because there has not been a lot of discussion in the literature about the possibility that people in a self domain or what that might mean in terms of inter-role conflict.

***Exercise.*** Seventy-two percent of people reported exercise as one of their life domains. In this context, exercise included all physical and athletic activity participants engaged in intentionally. Thus, exercise does not count activities like walking at work for people in professions like nurse, doctor, etc., but would count taking a walk intentionally. As one participant described the types of activities he engaged in for exercise: "well I try and work out Monday and Wednesday, Friday is dodge ball, Thursday I play tennis." Since there is such a diverse number of activities people engage in for exercise, the codes for this life domain focus around the *reason* people participate in exercise rather than *how* they participate in exercise. Six reasons people exercise emerged from the data: enjoyment, getting in shape, getting social interaction, gaining personal identity, self-growth, and improving self-image. Exercising for self-growth deals specifically with exercising to gain new skills (like a person proving he/she can run

a marathon). The presence of this exercise domain is interesting because it suggests that for many people, exercising may play an important role in the balance between work and life activities; however, it seems that the reason for exercising may not be the same for each person.

*Significant other.* Seventy-two percent of participants also reported including a significant other domain in their lives. This domain was characterized by activities someone does with and/or for his/her husband, wife, boyfriend, or girlfriend. Six activities emerged from the data analysis: prioritizing and valuing each other, spending time together, supporting each other, having fun together, developing the relationship, and having difficulty prioritizing each other. For example, one participant said the following in regard to the importance of making time for her spouse:

I told my yoga teacher that I would lead something next Thursday, and then I realized that no, I had told my husband that I was going to go to that show so I was going to miss class. So, then I had to go back to her and say 'No, I'm sorry. I'm not going to be there actually. I can't lead.

Importantly, the significant other domain was not limited to the people who were categorized as having a partner, because the partner categorization was limited to people who lived with a partner, while this domain was relevant for anyone with a significant other in their life. Also important to note was that the significant other domain was separate from the family domain. As described in the family domain section, many people described their family as having many different pieces, significant other being one of them. Further, an interesting difference emerged between people with and without children with regard to time spent with significant others such that more people without children reported spending time engaged in building relationships with their significant other than people with children. This might suggest that having children in the home makes it more difficult to make time for a significant other, as having children requires a

large time commitment. Thus, overall, while significant others are generally considered to be family, this role seems to play a separate function in people's lives than family in general.

**Community Involvement.** Sixty percent of participants reported taking part in community involvement. This domain was defined as work a person does without pay in order to improve or contribute to society. As one person described their participation in community involvement: "I see that as like a social responsibility." Similar to exercise, there were so many different ways people participated in community involvement that the codes for this domain are the *reasons* people participate in volunteer work. From the data, 6 reasons why people volunteered emerged: having a responsibility to help, doing something fulfilling, giving back to society, doing something enjoyable, getting social interaction, and helping out where you can. Having a responsibility to help differed in the data from giving back to society in that having a responsibility to help dealt more with participants feeling as though it is their duty to give back, while giving back to society dealt with participants who volunteer because they wanted to. Helping out where you can, then, dealt more with wanting to volunteer because a person wants to help make the world a little better. The finding that community involvement is a life domain for so many people is interesting because it suggests that many people experience a need to contribute to society outside of their gainful employment, and thus must balance this need with the other many demands in their lives.

**Pets.** Sixty percent of participants reported having pets, or animals that live in or immediately outside a person's home, as an important part of their lives. Importantly, although pets overlap in the family and recreation domain, time with pets is listed as a separate domain because so many people listed pets as a separate domain from family and recreation. Further, people discussed pets in a similar manner to the way they discussed friends in that they described

activities they did with and for their pets, not just spending time with pets in context of recreation. For example, as one participant discussed spending time in the pets domain, “It takes about half an hour in the morning to do all the things I need to do for my cats: feed them, clean out their litter pans... I have a room specifically for the kittens I foster, clean out the kitten room.” Further, pets seem to be very important to many people. As one participant discussed the importance of pets in her life: “The dogs are a big part of our lives because we call them our daughters. Now that the boys don’t live with us any longer it’s the girls do and they’re our girls.” From the conversations surrounding pets, 6 major activities emerged as activities people do with and for their pets: taking care of them, caring for them like family, using them for companionship, talking about them, enjoying them, and spending time with them. The finding that pets have their own domain for some participants is interesting because there is not a lot of research in the inter-role area about why people might value pets this way or how this interacts with other life domains.

**Religion.** Thirty-two percent of participants reported religion as one of their life domains. From the data, the religion category is defined as any spiritual activity, both in and outside or organized faith. As one participant describes the role of religion in her life domains: “Church. It helps me put life into perspective.” From the conversations about religion, 4 major types of activities emerged: being involved in the church (attending regularly, working in a nursery, playing in the church band, etc.), developing spiritually, gaining personal identify, and volunteering with religious groups. It is interesting that so few people reported religion as its own life domain, as religion has often played a large part in people’s lives throughout history. Further, it is interesting to consider how religion might interact with other life domains, as

organized religious activities normally occur over weekend time, while work and many other competing domains mainly occur during the weekdays.

***Education.*** Twenty-four percent of participants reported participating in formal education through taking classes. The main reasons for continuing a formal education as a full-time employee were for enjoyment/fulfillment, and for self-improvement. Importantly, the self-improvement category included examples of participates on degree and non-degree tracks. Further this domain includes organized creative arts classes as well as academic classes. As one participant described the role of education in her life: “I really like taking classes because you can always learn something.”

In sum, the domains that emerged were both numerous and complex, and these findings are consistent with the idea that research should move in the direction of examining inter-role conflict from a broader perspective, looking into the complexity that occurs in people’s lives as they attempt to balance work and non-work life activities.

### ***Supplemental Analyses***

During the interview and activity process, participants were asked if they experienced conflicts between roles, where in their lives they experienced conflict, and what the consequences of that conflict were. This data was then analyzed to examine in which domains people experienced conflict, and what the consequences of that conflict were. While originally these questions were meant to help participants describe and define their life domains, the answers revealed interesting information about conflict, and thus were analyzed separately.

The domains in which people experienced the most conflict were recreation and family, however, the data revealed that participants experienced conflicts in every life domain. Importantly, most of the conflicts reported involved work. For example:

[I would like to] work out, get back into a gym, have a trainer again, definitely because this recliner thing is killing me. I understand people are like ‘well you work 70 hours a week’, I know, but again I put myself in that position.

However, there were also many conflicts reported that included two or more domains not including work. For example, many participants reported family and caretaking roles conflicting with friends and recreation roles:

I want to go out with my friends more. My kids are always there. I want to go boating more. I’d like to take my wife to Florida. Just because of our kids being there, we haven’t been able to.

Thus, this data suggests that in reality, people may experience inter-role conflict between work and different domains, and also between two or more non-work life domains.

Another interesting finding to come out of the analysis of the inter-role conflicts is that even when inter-role conflicts don’t directly include work, work often ultimately seemed to be the source of the conflict. For example, one participant described a conflict between exercise and caretaking that ultimately stemmed from work:

I have done several mini marathons, and frankly one of the first things to go when I had kids was that running activity because it’s very difficult to carve forty minutes out of a day just for that.

In this situation, this participant reported giving up running when he had children because he couldn’t find the time to run and take care of his children after he had met his work obligations.

In another example, a participant talked about work draining all of his personal resources:

Work depletes my mental energy. I go home physically tired and emotionally spent...I’m pretty secure in it, my job’s not going to go away, but the emotional and physical strains I think are taking a toll.

Overall, there were a total of 124 conflict situations described, with every participant identifying at least one conflict between life domains. Collectively, these data suggest that the demand work puts on life may be the source of much of people’s inter-role conflict either directly (work

conflicting with a life domain) or indirectly (work demand leading to conflict between other life domains due to limited resources).

Consequences of the conflict described by participants included not being able to participate in a life domain, physical or emotional strain, and damage to interpersonal relationships. For example, for multiple participants the consequences of work and caretaking taking up most of their time was they could not maintain and develop relationships with friends or a significant other. For others, having to work nonstandard hours kept them from participating in education or community involvement. Many more indicated they didn't have the energy after working all day to engage in activities that were important to them, such as creative activities or exercise. Overall, these results indicate that people experienced negative consequences of inter-role conflict across a multitude of different life domains outside of work, and that family is not the only life domain impacted by the demands of work.

This examination sheds light onto the process of conflict; how people actually think about and experience domains conflicting with one another. Further, these results provide evidence that researchers should address inter-role conflict in its entirety, because each life domain can separately conflict with other life domains. Together, this data indicates that it is relevant and important to study inter-role conflict from this more inclusive perspective, because just as people report participating in several life domains, they also report experiencing conflict between those domains, and ultimately negative consequences because of that conflict.

## **Discussion**

### ***Overview of Results and Suggestions for Future Research***

A number of interesting findings arose from the data within this study. In the following section, these findings and their theoretical implications will be discussed. First, our data

indicated that although there do appear to be identifiable “domains” of life, where a domain is defined as an internally cohesive chunk of life, these domains are not necessarily separable from each other consistently across all people. That is, when domains of life are conceptualized as circles, these circles often overlap where activities or people fulfill or are involved in more than one domain. Moreover, these overlaps seem to occur in different ways for different people. For example, some people consider their pets as family, others consider them as friends, and still others consider them to be a domain of life unto themselves. The finding that life domains overlap is not necessarily new. For example, boundary/border theory (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000) notes that life domains may be more or less separate from each other depending upon the nature of the boundaries between them. However, the evidence collected here is the first to address directly when, where, and how these overlaps occur for different people.

The implication of this finding is that the nature of conflict or enrichment among domains may be different for different people, depending on how their life domains overlap. For example, a person for whom family and work overlap significantly (e.g., who works at home or in a family business) may have a very different perception of questions about how these two domains of life conflict with each other than someone for whom the domains are entirely separate. A fundamental assumption behind most current research on inter-role conflict is that life domains are separate or that participants can mentally separate their life domains and report on how much one conflicts with the other. However, our findings suggest that the ability to separate various life domains may differ greatly among participants, and that the meaning of inter-role conflict items may also differ greatly. Considering only the most commonly assessed life domain, our data certainly indicate that participants had widely varying conceptions of what constitutes “family”. Given these results, further exploration into the content and definition of life domains

is needed, particularly since the definition of domains like family has often been taken for granted in research and measurement thus far.

Second, our data indicated 13 life domains total, where on average participants reported engaging in 9 of these 13. Not surprisingly, all participants reported engaging the work and family domains, and the majority of participants reported partaking in a recreation, friends, home, caretaking, and self domains. Even the least participated-in domains were engaged in by approximately a quarter of participants. Overall, these findings suggest that people do engage in many other roles outside work and family. The specific life domains we found within this study line up well with those assessed by the Keeney et al., (2013) measure. In fact, the domains of family, work, friends, community involvement, recreation (leisure), home (household management), significant other (romantic relationship) and education are included in both. However, given that most past research has assessed only the conflict between work and family, or conflict between work and a vague “life” domain, our results indicate that most inter-role conflict research may be missing a very large portion of the domains people actually participate in.

Moreover, every participant reported partaking in domains outside of work and family. Specifically, nearly every participant reported engaging in recreational activities such as outdoor activities, creative activities, reading or spending time with other people. Further, the majority of participants reported conflicts between life roles other than family and work. This finding indicates that inter-role conflict for the average person likely includes more than just the roles of work and family. In addition, for many participants work and family were reported as being the most important life roles. However, for many more other roles such as friendships, recreation, or romantic relationships were considered to be most important. This finding indicates that for some

participants, research assessing only work and family conflicts is actually missing the life domains considered to be most important to them. As a result, conflict research aimed at assessing the full picture of participants' inter-role conflict must begin to include other life domains outside just work and family.

Although we had not intended to assess inter-role conflict, our data clearly indicated that participants were experiencing conflicts among their various life roles. Moreover, participants most often reported that work was the source of such conflicts, either directly with a particular life domain (in the fashion typically considered by work-family conflict research) or indirectly (by reducing available resources and forcing people to choose where to spend their remaining resources among the other life domains). It is not surprising that participants perceived much of their conflict to arise from work, as past research has found that people tend to blame work when conflict occurs (Poposki, 2010). However, the notion that work can actually cause conflicts among other life domains indirectly by reducing available resources is novel. This type of conflict might not be well assessed by current measures, and thus this finding indicates that researchers might do well to reconsider how conflict actually occurs and specifically to begin considering these indirect types of conflict.

Finally, this data also showed a few interesting differences between demographic groups. For example, the data showed that while men tended to gain their identity from work, women tended to gain their identity from family. Also interesting was the finding that people with children spent less quality time with friends and significant others, as well as engaged in fewer recreational activities. Further, people without a partner at home spent more time with friends, while people with a partner at home spent more time with family. Finally, people ages 36-51 reported struggling to balance the demands in their lives more than people in the other age

groups. Collectively, these data indicate that depending on a person's characteristics and home situation, people seem to choose to engage in different activities. This finding indicates that research into inter-role conflict may want to consider these demographic differences when attempting to evaluate conflict. Overall, our results indicate that the domains of life are complex, overlapping, and variable among people. They also indicate that when attempting to consider the full spectrum of inter-role conflict, researchers must consider domains outside just work and family.

In terms of practical implications, our data suggest that organizations concerned with supporting the nonwork lives of all their employees must begin to consider domains outside family as well (e.g., Kossek, Lewis, & Hammer, 2010). It has long been known that childless employees or those without a typical nuclear family at home feel disenfranchised by so-called "family-friendly" policies (e.g., Burkett, 2000; Flynn, 1996; Grover, 1991; Harr & Spell, 2003). Our research provides support for the notion that other life domains are in fact important, even to employees who do have nuclear families at home. As a result, organizations would do well to broaden their consideration of life domains when making policy decisions to support the nonwork lives of their employees.

### ***Limitations***

This study is not without its limitations. First, even though specific methodologies and perspectives were used to shape the data collection and interpretation, it is always possible that the perceptions of the authors influenced the results in some way. However, it is important to note that several steps were taken to minimize this effect on the data such as utilizing research assistants to gain additional perspectives on the data, attempting to stay in an open frame of mind while collecting and coding the data, and discussing with others to encourage different

interpretations of the data. In addition, this criticism is not unique to the present study, as the opinions and perspectives of the researchers undoubtedly shape the course of the research in all studies, both qualitative and quantitative.

Second, although qualitative research samples are generally substantially smaller than those of quantitative studies, the small sample of this research may affect the generalizability of the present findings. Although there is ample evidence in this data supporting the presence of the set of life domains, it is less clear whether these life domains would also be present in the population at large. In addition, since there were only 25 participants total the groups examined here (gender, children, partner, and age) all contained a very small number of participants. Thus, even though some interesting trends emerged from the data, much larger samples would be necessary before claiming these results to be representative of any population. Further, all of these participants worked for the same Midwestern educational institution, thus, these results cannot necessarily be generalized to other industries and locations at this point. However, given that the purpose of this study was to make an initial foray into the identification and definition of life domains, its strength lies more in its detail and richness than in its broad generalizability.

Third, this sample contained very little ethnic diversity. In fact, only one of the participants was part of an ethnic minority. As the study was volunteer based, and race was not one of the categories included in the recruitment strategy, there was no way to determine in advance how diverse the sample would be. Thus, these findings cannot claim to be representative of people from all races unless more work is completed with more diverse populations. However, increased diversity in participants would likely result in finding *more* life domains rather than less, which aligns well with the main finding of this study (that many more life domains than just work and family should be assessed).

## *Conclusion*

The goal of this research was to identify and define the full spectrum of life domains in order to better represent the construct of inter-role conflict and to identify whether life domains other than family and work are considered highly important. Qualitative data collected herein revealed that people do in fact participate in many life domains, including and expanding beyond work and family. As a whole, our results suggest that the current views of inter-role conflict may be too narrow and may actually overlook important domains and conflicts experienced by some people. Clearly there is much more to learn going forward about the complexities of how people balance their work and non-work activities, and our hope is that these findings can serve as an impetus for the broadening of inter-role conflict work in the future.

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Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		
	Children	No Children	Children	No Children	
20-35	1	2	1	2	Partnered
	0	2	1	1	Unpartnered
36-51	1	1	2	1	Partnered
	0	1	1	1	Unpartnered
52-67	3	0	1	1	Partnered
	0	0	1	1	Unpartnered

*Note:* The number in each cell represents the number of participants who actually fell into each group.

Table 2

*Participation in Life Domain by Group*

<b>Domain</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>NC</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>NP</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>20-35</b>	<b>36-51</b>	<b>52-67</b>
Family	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Work	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Recreation	96%	100%	93%	92%	100%	100%	94%	100%	88%	100%
Friends	84%	81%	86%	92%	75%	89%	81%	90%	100%	57%
Home	80%	100%	64%	85%	75%	78%	81%	80%	88%	71%
Caretaking	80%	67%	86%	69%	92%	78%	81%	70%	75%	100%
Self	80%	82%	79%	85%	75%	78%	81%	80%	88%	71%
Exercise	72%	64%	79%	77%	67%	78%	69%	60%	88%	71%
Significant Other	72%	73%	71%	69%	75%	44%	88%	80%	75%	57%
Community Involvement	60%	55%	64%	62%	58%	78%	50%	40%	63%	86%
Pets	60%	73%	50%	77%	42%	56%	63%	60%	50%	71%
Religion	32%	36%	29%	31%	33%	33%	31%	40%	13%	43%
Education	24%	18%	29%	15%	25%	44%	25%	20%	38%	14%

*Note.* T = Total, M = Men, W = Women, NC = No Children, C = Children, NP = No Partner, P = Partner. Totals add up to more than 100% because all participants reported engaging in multiple domains.

Table 3

*Most Important Life Domain*

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Importance</b>
Family	56%
Work	16%
Significant Other	16%
Pets	8%
Caretaking	4%
Self	16%
Friends	16%
Community Involvement	0%
Religion	4%
Recreation	4%
Home	0%
Exercise	4%
Education	0%

*Note.* The total exceeds 100% because some participants indicated more than one domain as being most important.

## Appendix A

### Initial Interview Guide

*This study involves a lot of interaction. I will ask you a series of interview questions and then we will do an activity together, and then I will ask you a few more questions about the activity.*

*In this study, I am researching what people identify as the various domains in their lives. A domain would be an area of your life defined by participation in certain types of activities. I am going to avoid giving you any examples, because I don't want to bias your thinking or point you in any specific direction – I want your answers to be specific to you. People think about their life domains differently, and so any one person's domains may be more narrow or more broad than another person's. In addition, different people may be involved in different life domains due to differences, age, interests, background, or other characteristics. One way to think of holding multiple life domains is to think of yourself as wearing many life hats, and when wearing each of those hats, you are participating in different life domains. Each hat represents a different domain in your life, and people sometimes juggle each of the different hats to attempt meet the demands of each domain. The purpose of this study is to determine what different hats people wear.*

#### Part I

1. What kinds of things do you spend most of your time doing outside of work?
2. What kinds of things do you do for enjoyment?
3. What are your major responsibilities in your life outside work?
4. What hobbies do you have?
5. Are there particular topics you enjoy surfing the internet for or reading about?
6. Who do you spend time with?
  - a. Are there relationships you spend time maintaining?
  - b. Who are the important people in your life?
  - c. Are there individuals for whom you have care taking responsibility?
7. Tell me what you did yesterday (or last Friday) after work?
  - a. Another night this week?
  - b. What do you plan to do tonight?
  - c. Last weekend?

8. What kinds of things do your friends and family do for enjoyment?
9. When engaging with someone for the first time, can you give me a work and non-work related example of, what information would you share about yourself?
  - a. (What parts of your life does each of those titles refer to)? [as a follow-up if necessary]
10. Do you have activities that you would like to do but can't because work prevents you from doing them? If yes, what activities?
11. Do you have activities that you would like to do but can't because some other nonwork activity prevents you from doing them? If yes, what activities?
12. Can you think of a time when you experienced a conflict that does not include work?
13. Based on our conversation so far, what would you say are your major domains in your life?
14. Follow-up question to be asked at any time → in that example, can you tell me what labels you would put on the two activities you just identified?

## Part II

15. How did you decide what size to make your circles?
16. Create a list of your domains in order from the domain you spend the most time participating in to the domain you spend the least time participating in.
17. List these domains in order of importance to you.
  - a. What did you think of when you put them in this order?
18. List these domains in order of how much you value participation in each domain.
  - b. What did you think of when you put them in this order?

19. List these domains in order of the priority of each in your life. (maybe same as importance)
20. List these domains in order of your commitment to each domain?
  - c. What did you think of when you put them in this order?
21. Which, if any, of these domains overlap?
  - a. Can you explain to me the ways in which these domains overlap?
22. Which, if any, of these domains conflict with one another?
  - d. Can you explain to me the ways in which these domains conflict?

## Appendix B

### Final Interview Guide

*This study involves a lot of interaction. I will ask you a series of interview questions and then we will do an activity together, and then I will ask you a few more questions about the activity.*

*In this study, I am researching what people identify as the various domains in their lives. A domain would be an area of your life defined by participation in certain types of activities. I am going to avoid giving you any examples, because I don't want to bias your thinking or point you in any specific direction – I want your answers to be specific to you. People think about their life domains differently, and so any one person's domains may be more narrow or more broad than another person's. In addition, different people may be involved in different life domains due to differences, age, interests, background, or other characteristics. One way to think of holding multiple life domains is to think of yourself as wearing many life hats, and when wearing each of those hats, you are participating in different life domains. The purpose of this study is to determine what different hats people wear.*

### Part I

1. What do you spend your time doing when you're not at work?
  - a. What do you mean by X/ What does X mean to you?
2. What are your favorite things to do outside work?
3. What are your least favorite things to do when you're not at work?
4. What are your major responsibilities in your life outside work?
  - a. Are there individuals for whom you have care taking responsibility?
5. Who are the important people in your life?
6. What sorts of things do you do that you just have to do?
7. Tell me what you did yesterday (or last Friday) after work?
  - a. Last weekend?

8. What are the first things you would like someone to know about you?
  - a. Why? What do these things mean to you?
9. What do you participate in that gives you a sense of self-worth? Where do you find personal reward?
10. What in your life gives you a sense of identity?
  - a. How much time do you spend participating in that/those activity(s)?
11. Do you experience work/life conflict?
  - a. How so? Can you give me examples?
  - b. Are there consequences for having this conflict?
12. Do you experience conflict between things you participate in outside of work?
  - c. How so? Can you give me examples?
13. In what ways does work impact the personal resources you have to give to other parts of your life?
14. What are the most important things to you?
15. What do you value the most in your life?
16. What are you most committed to in life?
17. What is your biggest priority?
18. Based on our conversation so far, what would you say are your major domains in your life?
19. Follow-up question to be asked at any time
  - a) In that example, can you tell me what labels you would put on the two activities you just identified?
  - b) Why do you participate in X domain?

## Part II

20. How did you decide what size to make your circles?
21. Does work conflict with any of the other domains of your life?
  - a. Which areas? Why/how?
  - b. What are the long term consequences of this?
22. Which, if any, of your other domains conflict with one another?
  - a. Can you explain to me the ways in which these domains conflict?
  - b. What are the consequences of this?
23. What, if anything, about work makes it different from the other roles in your life?
  - a. Would you call it the source of your conflict?
24. How do you think about your conflict experiences? Do they look like one of these models or something different altogether? → SHOW MODELS
25. Which domain do you spend the most time participating in?
  - a. Why? What are the details that make this a reality?
26. Which domain is the most important to you?
  - a. Why? Details?
27. Which domain do you value participating in the most?
  - a. Why? Details?
  - b. If different, what makes that different from the previous answer? What does this mean to you?
28. Which domain is the biggest priority in your life?
  - a. Why? Details?

- b. If different, what makes that different from the previous answer? What does this mean to you?
- 29. Which domain do you have the largest commitment to?
  - a. Why? Details?
  - b. If different, what makes that different from the previous answer? What does this mean to you?

## Appendix C

### Life Roles Activity

*Now that you have thought a little about what your life domains might be and include, I would like to do an activity in which we will create a visual representation of your life domains. This can help to give you a visual representation of your life. For this activity, think of your life in terms of being a sphere. Each of your domains represents a smaller sphere inside that larger sphere, and each of those domains contains life activities. Each domain may be a different size, and contain a different number of activities. Some activities you do in your life may contribute to your participation in one or more life domains. You can have as many or few life domains as you feel is appropriate.*

*I am going to give you the tools to create a two-dimensional version of your life domains. The large circle will represent the entirety of your life. The smaller circles will represent life domains. You can choose what size you would like each of your domains to be. You can write the heading or title of each of your domains on the smaller circles and place them in the “life” circle. Inside each of the smaller circles, you can list the activities do while participating in that life domain. Again, activities can be represented in more than one domain if appropriate. Below is just one example of how you might start off creating your life domains diagram.*

