

3 Places & 2 Stages

How to Understand the Causes of and Minimize Inter-Role Conflict Through a Systematized Method of Role Categorization.

Abstract

The overall purpose of this paper is to examine the causes of inter-role conflict in order to be able to offer suggestions on how it can be mitigated and or prevented. This was done by analysing the existing body of literature concerned with role theory and work-life balance, and combine the insights drawn from these fields with the theory of the three places in order to create an overarching framework that can be used to study inter-role conflict in a more holistic way than is currently being covered by traditional work-life-balance literature. Data was collected through a qualitative study based around 20 semi-structured interviews and resulted in the creation of a framework that distinguished life-related roles after their ability to mitigate inter-role conflict.

Key Words: inter-role conflict, work-life balance, third place, role theory

Stockholm School of Economics

Master Thesis in Business & Management

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Presentation: December 10, 2018

No. of words: 17,288

Acknowledgements

The author would like to extend a special thanks to Ebba Laurin for all her help and support. Thanks for believing in me.

Adam Westergård

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0. Glossary

Work-life Balance: The balancing of time and effort between work and other parts of a person's life. It is defined as being a sort of inter-role conflict. Throughout this paper, the terms; work-life balance and inter-role conflict will be used interchangeably depending on context.

Role Switching: The act of changing into another role.

1. Introduction

According to Goode (1960), societal structures consist of roles. In turn, these roles come with demands which at times are difficult to meet. Each and every individual will hold a multitude of roles and thus face a collective set of role demands which in turn will constitute a role system that is unique to that individual. These demands are expressed both in terms of greater societal norms as well as norms integrated by the individual. When an individual is confronted with a clash between different roles, he or she will experience what is known as inter-role conflict (Wolf, 2010). When roles are competing over a person's time and attention, he or she will experience stress from trying to manage responsibilities related to work, marriage or domestic partnership and children, all at the same time (Barnett & Marshall, 1993), (Froberg et. al., 1986). Such role conflict has been known to cause a lowered sense of wellbeing (Diraz et. al., 2003) and put that person at risk at becoming burned out (Jennings, 2008).

Employees who get burned-out impose somewhere between 125 and 190 billion in medical spending on an annual basis in the US alone (Garton, 2017). Some of the effects of being burned out include insomnia, anxiety, depression, anger, increased irritability and a decrease in work-related productivity (Carter, 2013). While there are several underlying reasons behind burnout-inducing stress such as; work-overload, excessive demands for collaboration and stakeholder management, (Garton, 2017), what happens outside of the workplace also factors in (Kettunen & Salo, 2018). A key component in reducing stress and thus preventing burnouts is the ability to look at work in combination with all other part's a person's life in order to minimize inter-role conflict. It is the hallmark of a healthy work environment as well as a way for employers to maintain a productive workforce (Kohll, 2018) and reduce absenteeism (Higginbottom, 2014).

1.1 Background & Problematization

As of November 25th 2018, a Google Scholar Search query of the term; role conflict will result in 3.64 million results. If the same query is executed for the general Google search engine, the number of results rises to about 317 million. Consequently, the topic of role conflict has garnished both a general as well as academic interest. Not only has the topic of role conflict been a phenomenon studied by management scholars but also by psychiatrist and sociologists as there appears to be a broad academic interest in the subject.

A lack of role-related conflict surrounding a person's role as an employee is known as work-life balance (Vatharkar, 2017), which will be the focus of this paper. The existing body of research within the field of work-life balance has failed to construct a holistic system by which to organize roles and how they reflect onto the individual. Instead, most research assumes that roles are hierarchically ordered, and role management becomes a question of prioritization between roles rather than anything else. In addition to this, roles have been examined on an atomistic level where each role has been considered to exist in its own right as opposed to being part of an interlinking system of roles (MacDermid & Marks, 1996). Part of putting roles in a larger system is to see how and in what manner people switch between them and what affect that has on their ability to manage work-life balance. Researchers such as Andeweg (1997) have looked at role switching but not from the perspective of work-life balance. Instead the focus has been on how to manage contradicting intra-role demands when making decisions. In the case of work-life balance, the inter-role conflict is not centered around mutually exclusive decisions but rather on trying to balance time and attention between roles in order to meet both of their respective obligations. Consequently, the available body of research has not looked at role switching and the psychological effect it might have as a person switches between roles in an attempt to balance

them. Furthermore, the focus of work-life balance has been limited and failed to account for everything that constitute a person's life. The problem is that while the work-part of this field does fully describe the demands related to having a professional role, the life-part only looks at family roles and primarily the demands related to the role of father, mother and spouse. What's been missing is the inclusion of all roles played outside of these two spheres and how they impact inter-role conflict and wellbeing (Lehenchuk, 2018).

The research gap thus become two-fold. Firstly, there is no holistic system where roles outside of the home and work are accounted for. Secondly, there is a lack of research on the way roles interact with each other and with individuals when placed in a system.

1.2 Purpose

The overall purpose of this paper is to examine the causes of inter-role conflict in order to be able to offer suggestions on how it can be mitigated and or prevented. This will be done by analysing the existing body of literature concerned with role theory and work-life balance, and combine the insights drawn from these fields with the theory of the three places in order to create an overarching framework that can be used to study inter-role conflict in a more holistic way than is currently being covered by traditional work-life-balance literature.

1.3 Research Question

What are the factors that shape inter-role conflict and how can it be mitigated through a systematization of roles?

1. *Does Oldenburg's theory of the three places help to explain and improve work-life balance?*
2. *Can roles influence one another, and will this affect inter-role conflict?*
3. *What is the impact of role switching on inter-role conflict?*

1.4 Delimitations

As for the literature on work-life balance, it should be noted that the studies used in this paper such as Barnett & Marshall (1993), Beutell & Greenhaus (1985), Clifton et. al. (1996), Gutek et. al. (1991) and Pleck (1977) are mainly derived from American researchers based at US universities. Consequently, this also means that the empirical data used in those studies was collected in the US. However, the empirical data collected for this paper have been done so in Sweden whereupon they are more reflective of Swedish conditions and experiences of work-life balance rather than the ones prevalent in the US. Even though Sweden and the US are Western industrialized countries, there are differences between the two, especially in terms of work-life balance. According to the OECD (2015), the US holds the 28th place in terms of work-life balance while Sweden is the 3rd best among the OECD countries in this matter. For this paper, this creates a clear discrepancy between used theory and collected data when attempting to draw conclusions. This in turn will impact the validity of said conclusions in a negative manner.

While a certain degree of attention will be dedicated to the connection of roles and identity under sections 2.1. and 2.2. respectively, no attention will be given to identity-based role conflict.

This paper will not look at phenomenon where the traditional boundaries between work and home are crossed. This includes phenomenon such as digital nomads and home office. Digital nomads

are professionals who use IC technology to work remotely on an ad-hoc basis while they travel extensively (Mohn, 2014) and thus transcend traditional work and family-related roles. Instead, this is something best looked at in a separate paper.

When looking at roles and their expectations, it is implicitly assumed in this paper that these are clear and understood by each individual. Role ambiguity, which has shown to lead to lowered work performance and emotional exhaustion (Celik, 2013) has not been included in this paper.

2. Theory

The following section of this paper outlines research that has previously been conducted and which is of interest to the previously stated research question. The presented body of research covers several fields and theories. This includes but is not limited to the theory of the third place, role theory as well as research on work-life balance.

The first two sections, 2.1. and 2.2. Looks into how to categorize roles in a holistic way. The remaining sections are to be seen as add-ons to help further explain the concept of inter-role and highlight various aspects of it. In turn, these concepts will be related back to and seen through the lens of the main framework.

Section 2.1 covers the framework that will be used to create a dissection of roles. It starts by describing Oldenburg's theory of the three places. The latter two subsections are used to show additions that have been made to the theory since it was originally conceived and which will be included in the final framework.

Section 2.2 outline the basics of dramaturg and offers an introduction to roles and how they are played. Subsection 2.2.2. is used to showcase how the theory of the three places connects to role theory and why it can be used to categorize roles.

Section 2.3 offers insight into the existing body of literature concerned with work-life balance. The focal point is in the way having multiple roles affect people mentally and to showcase the existence of conflicting theories used to describe this phenomenon.

Section 2.4 Looks at how the basic setup for maintaining work-life balance is different for men and women, thus highlighting the fact that gender is an aspect to consider when analysing inter-role conflict.

Section 2.5. Literature on role theory looks at roles as being independent from one another (MacDermid & Marks, 1996). However, by seeing roles as a play sheet for normative action taking, we may start to compare role theory to culture study and thus use the theories in the field of culture studies to examine the way role characteristics are able to transcend between places and how that in turn affects inter-role conflict.

Section 2.6 explores separation of roles over time and place by looking at flexible work arrangements and how those either worsen or mitigate inter-role conflict.

2.1. Category Framework

Oldenburg's (1999) theory of the three places will serve as the main framework used to create a dissection of roles. Originally, the theory was not intended to be used to understand inter-role

conflict. However, it is the opinion of the author that the basic dissection it provides can be used to describe the way roles are anchored to certain spheres and how those spheres are differentiated from one another. In turn, this can serve as a basis for analysis of the role system experienced by an individual.

2.1.1. The Three Places

In broad strokes, there are three places a person will spend their time in. They are as follows; the first place, the second place and the third place. The first place relates to what is known as the home. This is where an individual sleep and interacts with his or her nearest relatives. The second place is the workplace. This is where a substantial amount of time is spent conducting paid labour (Oldenburg, 1999).

The third place on the other hand is constructed by most of the locations an individual will spend his or her time at away from home and work. This could be the local bar or restaurant, a bowling alley, arcade or something completely else. This is the place where an individual goes to interact with friends, have meaningful discussions and unwind in a recreational manner. The third place, also known as the; other place, is a place where people are able to escape the demands of work and home, and feel at ease. Not only does it act as a stress reliever for the individual, but also as an anchor for the local community. In essence, the third place is what helps create a sense of community within the community (Oldenburg, 1999), (Brisset & Oldenburg, 1982). As perhaps understood by above description, the third place can take on many forms and be anything from perhaps a café to a bar, or perhaps even a museum. However, looking more broadly, third places share several distinct characteristics that both define them as well as separate them from the first place as well as the second place. Myers (2012) describes them in the following way;

1. *“Neutral ground: a public, comfortable freely-accessible, non-obligated place, conducive to fraternity.”*
2. *“A leveling place: fostering commonality over economic or social status divisions, where formal prerequisites for acceptance or participation are low or ideally absent.”*
3. *“Conversation: typically good, playful, humorous and light-hearted, is the main but not necessarily only activity.”*
4. *“Open and accessible: it keeps long hours, is largely unplanned, and is accomodating and meeting of occupants’ needs.”*
5. *“Reservoir of regulars: who keep the place alive, who help set the place’s tone, its mood and characteristics. Also, they attract, welcome and accommodate newcomers.”*
6. *“Plain, homely and non-pretentious: accepting quality to the place.”*
7. *“Playful mood: banter and wit are common and valued. The place exists because of the ‘let’s-do-this-again’ urge that it engenders.”*
8. *“Home away from home: in terms of feelings of warmth, intimacy, possession and belonging.”*

While one might be inclined to solely associate the third place with cocktail bars or other places that in a direct manner foster personal relations, a third place can take on many shapes. One such example is McDonalds as described by Arnande (2016). For the American low-income earners, McDonalds restaurants have arisen as centers of community as people of different ages and

backgrounds spend a substantial amount of time at the tables. The recurring theme is that of people finding a place where they can sit-down, meet others, talk and in general escape reality for a while. Especially for the downtrodden, the venue is reportedly expressed a zone of comfort, more clearly than so by the following quote recoded by Arnande (2016); “...*I struggle a lot on the inside. This community here gives me the support to get by.*” The quote highlights the multifaceted nature of what a third space can be and does invite the reader to reflect on the sometimes simple and mundane manner in which a third place can manifest itself. However, this does not mean that Oldenburg (1999) believed that everything outside of the first and second place was a third place. Instead, he was restrictive in his definition of this concept and to a certain degree idealistic when it came to define the third place. He imagined the third place as having to be plain, prestigeless and primarily a place where people could come together and talk. In doing so, Oldenburg (1999) was quick to brush off some private establishments that he considered to be to profit-centered and which were focused on structured activities as legitimate third places. For instance, the cinema was not regarded as such a legitimate third place. However, Mikunda (2004) argues against these restrictions proposed by Oldenburg (1999) and instead highlights the commercial aspects of the third place and sees it not only as a place of relaxation or a place to blow off steam but also as a place where a person can indulge in their preferred lifestyle.

2.1.2. The Online Realm as a Third Place

The three places described by Oldenburg (1999) were all physically manifested. The home was a house, the work was a factory or office and the third place could be a bar. However, with the proliferation of internet access and online means of socialization, we must look into how much of the third place that has and can be moved to the digital realm. The locations Oldenburg (1999) described as meeting the requirements of being a third place such as restaurants, cafés, bars, etc.

still have a place in our society but the question remains how well those locations fit into the lives of younger people, most notably generation Y (Crick, 2011). Generation Y, or millennials as they also are referred to, was the generation following generation X and include in their ranks people born between 1981 and 1999 (Bolton et. al., 2013). What Oldenburg in particular failed to account for is the impact that the online environment would have on later generations in terms of what constitutes a third place (Steinkuehler, 2005), (Crick, 2011). As it turns out, online chatrooms and social networking services such as Facebook and twitter (Harrison & Thomas, 2009) and even online games (Steinkuehler, 2005) can meet the requirements of and function as third places in accordance with Oldenburg's original definition. The reason for Oldenburg not accounting for all these phenomena has simply to do with the fact that they were still in their infancy when the theory of the third place was developed but have since then come to be hallmarks of modern society. Also, at the time, Oldenburg was little impressed with what technology could offer and instead saw technology as something that would tear people apart and unsocialize them as oppose to bring them together (Anacleto et. al., 2014).

Another aspect of the online world as a third place has to do with the sort of community that said place fosters. The original use of the three place theory related to the understanding of how local communities form around public places. As a result, when Oldenburg (1999) talked about community, he was referring to the local community as in the people, business and locations around the street corner. For that reason it is easy to understand his hesitancy towards the online realm. The internet is worldwide and even as this might detether people from the community of their immediate surroundings (Gonchar, 2016), Horrigan (2001) has been able to show that despite this, the internet still has the ability to create globally spanning communities that otherwise meet

the requirements of Oldenburg's (1999) third place. For the purpose of this paper, all forms of online interaction as listed by Harrison & Thomas (2009) and Steinkuehler (2005) will be considered as valid forms of the online realm and thus treated as such in section 4 and 5.

2.1.3. The Three Spaces

A concept which could help us to better understand the social impact, not only on the community but also on the individual, of the three places, is the concept of third space. Important is not to confuse the third space with the third place as they represent separate yet somewhat overlapping theories of cultural dissection. In terms of setting, the three spaces correspond with the three places but focus on different aspects of these settings. While (Oldenburg 1999) takes time to describe the cultural importance of the three places, the main focus of analysis falls on the third place. Furthermore, while Oldenburg (1999) makes a great job in describing the cultural impact that the third place has had throughout history, for instance with the case of the cafés of Vienna and Paris during the 18-hundreds and 19-hundreds respectively, he fails to account for how a person's mind develops to account for shared cultural artefacts in a place the way that third space researchers such as Bhabha (1994) does when analysing the sociolinguistic aspects of what Oldenburg would refer to as the three places. Some researchers such as Maniotes (2005) and Skerrett (2010) also chose to focus on sociolinguistics but in relation to educational settings as a second space. In summary, Maniotes (2005), Skerrett (2010) and Bhabha (1994) look at the three places in a broad way and sees them as means of social and cultural indoctrination. They look beyond Oldenburg's (1999) idea of a place as a passive domain in favour of it being something that more directly shapes a person's character and identity.

According to Walsh (2006), the first space, also known as the home, is not merely a physical location where one places their bed and occasionally sleeps in it. Instead, the home, through the physical items present in it, acts to create a sense of belonging. The home is not only a location but it is a process. This notion is shared by Ralph & Stehlik (2011) who also takes on what can best be described as a process-view of the home, recognizing the power it has to embed people in social relations. However, the interaction between the physical and metaphysical aspects of the home are reciprocal as this exchange gives way to sensemaking, not only related to one's sense of belonging to a geographical place but also about the self, one's own self-worth and direction in life. This notion is further supported by Tolia-Kelly (2004) through her exploration of the interlinkage between the home, artefacts found in the home and identity. This is where Mikunda's (2004) idea of the third place as an integrate part of a person's lifestyle comes back. When talking about the three places in terms of being spaces, we are recognizing that there is a two-faced exchange going on between a given place and an individual. Oldenburg (1999) saw the two first places, home and work, as merely being demanding and cumbersome and the third place as where people went to shake these burdens off. These demands are only the first face of the exchange. The other side which are described by Mikunda (2004), Tolia-Kelly (2004), Maniotes (2005), Skerrett (2010) and Bhabha (1994) is how the characteristics of a place shape a person's sense of identity. While the three-space-researchers described this phenomenon from a socially progressive approach in terms of power and disenfranchisement, Mikunda (2004) saw the third place as way for a person to engage in a preferred life-style related role.

2.2. Roles & Stages

2.2.1. Introduction to Stages

One way by which we are able to conceptualize the existence of different and perhaps even conflicting roles is through the use of dramaturgy which is represented by the notion that human interactions are formed as a result of external factors. Most importantly, the location and the people there, also known as the stage and audience respectively. From this perspective, the end-game is to gain acceptance from the audience by engaging in a performance that said audience will find satisfactory, thus endowing the performer with that of an improved upon public image and status. Depending on time and place, the collective set of social actions taken, or role as it is also known as will differ. (Bleeker, 2003), (Benford & Hunt, 1992), (Clark & Salaman, 1998), (Adler et. al., 1987).

Goffman (1959) stated that there were primarily two stages. Namely, the frontstage and the backstage. The frontstage is when and where the primary role-enactment takes place. This is where the actor is confronted with the audience and consequently must bear all and any expectations of said role as well as deliver on those expectations. Backstage on the other hand is a place where no audience members are present. The only ones present are fellow actors. At this place, the actors are free to express thoughts and feeling as well as engage in behaviour which may not have been condoned on the frontstage. Entering the backstage is marked with a sense of relief as the actors are free to step out of character and partake in activities aimed not at pleasing any member of the audience but to be a bit more self-indulgent and focus on their own needs instead. Important to notice is that even though the actor is stepping out of character when entering the backstage, there is no feeling of interrupting the overall performance. The show is in a sense still going on. Goffman (1959) regarded the backstage as a place where feeling and interactions of a more genuine

character could emerge. If we thus allow ourselves to compare Goffman's backstage with Oldenburg's third place, we would notice they share one important characteristics. Namely the idea of a place where free, unburdened interactions could take place.

2.2.2. Connecting Stages & Roles to Places

It should be note that Oldenburg (1999) never spoke about the three places directly in terms of roles. However, he did describe them in terms of the demands and expectations that are asserted upon individuals once they enter the first and second place but how the third place is void of such things. This idea corresponds well with Goffman's (1959) idea of the difference between the frontstage and the backstage. A way to understand inter-role conflict would then be by seeing the roles played in the first and second place as being roles played on the frontstage while whatever happens in the third place as being backstage. To support this theoretical linkage we can look at Fisk & Grove (1983) as well as Czepiel et. al. (1985) who studied workplaces within the service industry in terms of it being a frontstage where the workers were subjected to what Oldenburg (1999) would have described as the demands of the second place.

The underlying idea is to treat Oldenburg's (1999) three places as a way to categorize stages and the roles attached to them. In the first place, the home, there will be roles to play such as parent, spouse and partner which are all connected by being played in the same place. Same thing goes for the roles of the second place which can include roles such as colleague, subordinate, executive, etc. The question that remains is how to treat the third place. Looking at it through the lens of Oldenburg's (1999) original definition would mean that its a backstage and that thus no role is played there.

However, if Mikunda (2004) as described under section 2.1.3 is correct, the third place could also be used as a stage to play a role. Looking back at Myers' (2012) eight item list under section 2.1.1, there is no item that explicitly would disqualify the idea that roles in fact could be played out in the third place. Consequently, this would mean that the third place can be divided into two parts. One part existing on the backstage where no roles are present and one part on the front stage. However, the roles played in the third place are those described by Mikunda (2004) and would thus place lower role demands on the actor than the roles of the first and second place.

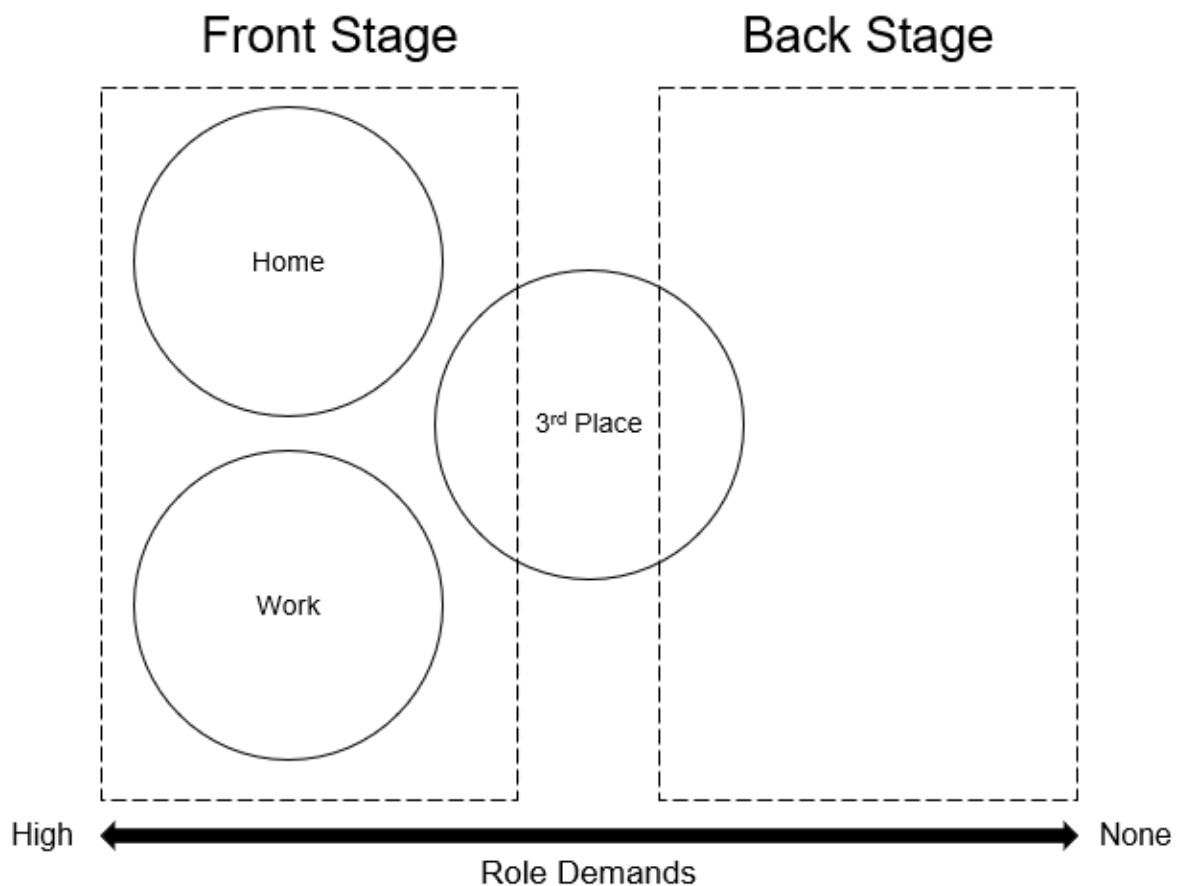


Fig.1

2.3. Work-life Balance

2.3.1. Trading Work for Home

For most working professionals, the sense of relief derived from coming after a long day at work, kicking one's shoes off and relaxing in front of the TV might seem quite familiar. It should be noted that "a long day at work" has become a more frequent occurrence as the average American added an entire extra month worth of annual work hours between 1969 and 1987 (Schor, 1994). However, according to Harper & Lawson (2003 pp.261-267), this might not be entirely categorized as an adverse development. Instead, they found that the traditional roles of the home and work had shifted where the work place was seen as the home and the home was seen as work in the sense that workers felt more at ease at the workplace than at home. Furthermore, Harper & Lawson (2003 pp.261-267) state that an increasing number of employees were actually putting in extra work hours as a mean to avoid time at home. This begs the question what the reason behind this might be. Could this be the case of the second place acting as a retreat, thus to a certain degree mimicking the function of the third space as a location where one would feel more at ease. This notion is supported by Schulte (2014) who argues that between the first and second place, the role of the worker can actually be less demanding than the roles associated with the home.

2.3.2. Theories of Mental Energy

Building on the concept of inter-role conflict between the role as a family member in the home and that of an employee at the workplace, it should be noted that there are varying views on the subject matter. The so called; scarcity hypothesis states that an individual possess a limited amount of energy as well as time whereupon any extra roles or burdens will result in the creation of tension, stress and the feeling of inter-role conflicts. On the other hand, the competing notion of the so called; expansion hypothesis states that rewards related to holding several roles at the same time

offsets any potential psychological losses as an individual gain more self-esteem from holding several roles (Barnett & Marshall, 1993), (Froberg et. al.,1986). In reviewing the available body of literature on the subject of these competing hypotheses, Marks (1977) was able to find empirical support for both the scarcity hypothesis as well as the expansion hypothesis as there always seemed to be different observable reactions for people, even when exposed to similar sets of roles. Furthermore, he also noted a skew among researchers of the scarcity hypothesis. According to Marks (1977), the scarcity hypothesis is based on the notion that the energy level of an individual as well as their time follows that of the laws of thermodynamics where energy is limited, cannot be created and only transferred. Worth noting is that energy in the context of the psyche relates not to the physicists' idea of energy but rather to the concept of mental energy. As described by O'Connor (2006), mental energy can be described as a mood. In essence, it means that an individual feel energized as opposed to fatigued regardless of any actual metabolic processes.

In opposition of the scarcity hypothesis, Marks (1977) argues for a social constructivist view on energy as being expandable where multi-role playing is able to act as an energizer. However, the expandable properties of this sort of mental energy are not unlimited and also dependent on the characteristics of the role as some roles are considered to be more cumbersome than others. Yet, Verbrugge (2010) argues that objectively observable role characteristics in terms of cumbersomeness are not the reason why multi-role management causes stress and or depression. This goes against Marks' (1977) perspective of looking at roles as being universally comparable where a role experienced to be cumbersome for one person should be cumbersome for another person as well. Instead, Verbrugge (2010) argues for it being the satisfaction level with said roles that determine their outcome, thus supporting the notion that the self is more important than any

external factors. Satisfaction in this case does not relate to role performativity, or how well role demands are met but how on much a person wants to play said role.

2.3.3. Multi-role Management

Verbrugge (2010) was able to link multi-role-playing to improved wellbeing in support of Thoits (1992) and Hong & Seltzer (1995) notion of having multiple roles actually being positive for a person's mental wellbeing. The idea that holding several roles would improve a person's wellbeing extends beyond the scope of home and work, and into roles relevant to the third space as well. Hong & Seltzer (1995) looked at roles endemic to the first and second place but also at other miscellaneous roles belonging to the third place and claimed that an increase in the number of roles currently possessed leads to lower amounts of depression. While Hong & Seltzer (1995) did look at roles outside of the home and work place in order to understand inter-role conflict, they treated all roles as being equal and on the same spectrum. What was missing was a dissection of the various roles they studied that could be used to create a framework.

However, in contrast to Hong & Seltzer (1995), Thoits (1992) argues that simply adding what in a sense could be described as leisure roles will not completely solve the issue of inter-role conflicts. For this purpose it becomes imperative to organizing the roles in a hierarchy and thus setting clear priorities between them. In turn, this is supportive of the scarcity hypothesis. Going back to Harper & Lawson (2003 pp.261-267), we are able to shine a bit more light on the occurrence of workers increasingly, and on their own accord, trading time spent in the first place with time spent in the second place as a result of perhaps not merely an occurrence of escapism but as perhaps a consequence of Thoits' (1992) idea of role priority. MacDermid & Marks (1996) on the other hand

argues that a more optimal approach in terms of overall life satisfaction and thus wellbeing would be by balancing roles more equally as opposed to putting them in a hierarchy.

2.3.4. Roles & Identities

Toit's (1992) notion about voluntary role engagement coincides with the conclusion drawn based on Mikunda (2004) under section 2.1.3., about individuals seeking out roles to play for their own personal benefit. In turn, a role taken-on voluntarily should be a role that a person is satisfied with whereupon Verbrugge's (2010) arguments of the connection between role satisfaction and role outcome are further substantiated. The conclusion drawn from this is that roles played in the third place that cater to a person's perceived identity and wants will mitigate the negative effects of inter-role conflict between the first and second place. However, holding Marks' (1977) statement about the limitations of the expansion hypothesis true, this suspected mitigating effect should be marginally declining.

As already discussed under section 2.1.3., a space can hold the power to assign meaning to an individual (Ralph & Staehli, 2011), (Tolia-Kelly, 2004). What this would imply is that individuals don't only spend time in a role and place as a consequence of either meeting expectations as believed by Thoits (1992) or in order to escape expectations as might be theorized after reading Schulte (2014), but instead as a way to define the self and act-out one own's perceived self-image. As a consequence, places, spaces and the roles attached to them become not only demands that need to be met by also something a person would voluntarily engage in order to play the role they actually want to play. This relates to Thoits (1992) who states that voluntarily taking on low expectation roles is related to lower amounts of mental stress.

P1: *Taking on roles in the third place that caters to a person's perceived self-identity will have a positive impact on that person's wellbeing and mitigate existing inter-role conflict to a greater extent than if the same third place did not act as a provider of identity.*

2.3.5. Monochronic V. Polychronic

Expanding on Marks' (1977) critique of the scarcity hypothesis, we are able to use chronemics to look conceptually at time through the social constructivist lens in order to further support his notions. The perception of the nature of time differs between individuals and can be categorized along a continuum between; monochronic and polychronic (Haal, 2000, p.313). For the monochronic, matter that needs attending should be attended in its given time and in an orderly fashion and without interruptions. In a sense, time is limited and daily life, both privately as well as professionally are dictated by it. For the polychronic on the other hand, time is what has to give way for everything else. The polychronic is better at managing multiple things at the same time and more able than the monochronic to adapt to changing circumstances (Bluedorn et. al., 1992). If perceiving the nature of a person's mental energy and perception of time to be in accordance with the social constructivist perspective, any impact on well-being will not only be derivative from external role-related factors but also from psychological traits endemic to the individual in question. This naturally adds an extra layer to the analysis of how individuals are able to balance roles as well as changing between them.

P2: *An individual who is polychronic is able to better balance several roles and be able to smoothly shift between them at will. Such an individual is more likely to experience the effects of the expansion hypothesis rather than that of the scarcity hypothesis. The opposite*

then applies to an individual who is monochronic as limited time and attention result in limited mental energy and a greater risk for inter-role conflict.

2.4. Roles & Gender

2.4.1. Gender & Inter-role Conflict

Further exploring the existence of inter-role conflict between the first and second place, we should be made aware that there are competing views on what causes this. According to the rational view, any and all conflict between home and work is simply a function of the time spent in each domain. This function is a linear one and makes the implicit assumption that a person simply needs to balance the time between these two domains in a more balanced manner (Gutek et. al., 1991). The notion of time balance is supported by MacDermid & Marks (1996). In essence this idea shares certain similarities with the scarcity hypothesis described under section 2.3.2. However, according to the gender role perspective, the work-home relationship also has a gender aspect attached to it as circumstances are different for men and women (Gutek et. al., 1991). The rational view is indirectly expressed by Beutell & Greenhaus (1985) to be quite prevalent in the existing body of research on the subject matter regarding conflicts between work and family roles. While this academic focus might well highlight the nature of reality for how men and women dedicate their time and effort in one place trying to meet the expectations of a given role, it fails to account for how well men respective to women are able to balance these roles and transcend between them and the third place.

2.4.2. Role Prioritization

The extent to which the boundaries between the first place and second place are permissible for cross-section differs between the sexes. For instance, the degree by which men are permitting

themselves to have the role related to the first place interfere or affect the role of the second place is too a much smaller degree than it is for women (Tenbrunsel et. al., 1995). The reason for this, according to Pleck (1977) is because that men and women are exposed to different societal expectations about how they should act-out and prioritize between the roles respective to the first place and second place. In consequence, this means that the baseline for potential inter-role conflict is set up differently for men and women. One way this difference manifest itself is that women too a larger degree than men are expected to fulfil the role of keeper of the home and as a mother. Any other roles are viewed as being add-ons. Men on the other hand are expected to bear the primary role as family provider through paid work and would thus experience the domestic role of the first place as secondary (Cannings & Konrad, 1997). In consequence, this does validate Thoits' (1992) idea of role hierarchies but with the added addition of how they, just like role expectations in general, are endowed to an individual differently based on their gender.

If roles between the first and second place are prioritized differently for men and women, does this also mean that the third place is prioritized differently on the basis of gender? In this case we lack enough theoretical understanding to form a proposition of if and how gender would impact time spent in the third place. Instead, we will rely solely on empirical data to try and answer this question.

2.5. Roles Affecting Other Roles

2.5.1. Role Expectations as Norms & Culture

In reviewing the existing body of literature on role theory such as Goffman (1959), Verbrugge (2010), Thoits (1992) and Hong & Seltzer (1995), a common theme keeps occurring. Namely, that roles are treated as being static. They exist independently of one another and the prevailing level

of analysis is atomistic (MacDermid & Marks, 1996). This paper aims to do more than simply look at how different roles interact to affect an individual but also at how roles affect each other. This is part of a greater effort to understand roles as being interlinking and part of a common system where one part (role) of the system is able to affect another part (role), and whether that in turn has an impact on inter-role conflict.

If we wish to study how a role might affect another role, we have to look beyond the scope of role theory and into the study of culture. Fisk & Grove (1983) and Czepiel et. al. (1985) stated that roles are defined by expectations. In turn, role expectations are what guide role behaviour (Biddle, 1986). There is an interlink between how one is expected to act and how that person in turn acts. If we start to look at role expectations as a set of norms, we are able to make comparisons between role theory and culture studies. In the end, both are systems of tacit rules that tell people how they should act. Consequently, we can then start comparing these two concepts and start looking at roles from a cultural perspective. Looking back at the eight item list presented by Myers (2012) under section 2.1.1, these bullet points don't just describe characteristics, they describe the culture that is prevalent at the third place. Why culture studies are of interest to this paper is because they could help us understand if and how roles played in one place are able to impact the roles played in other places.

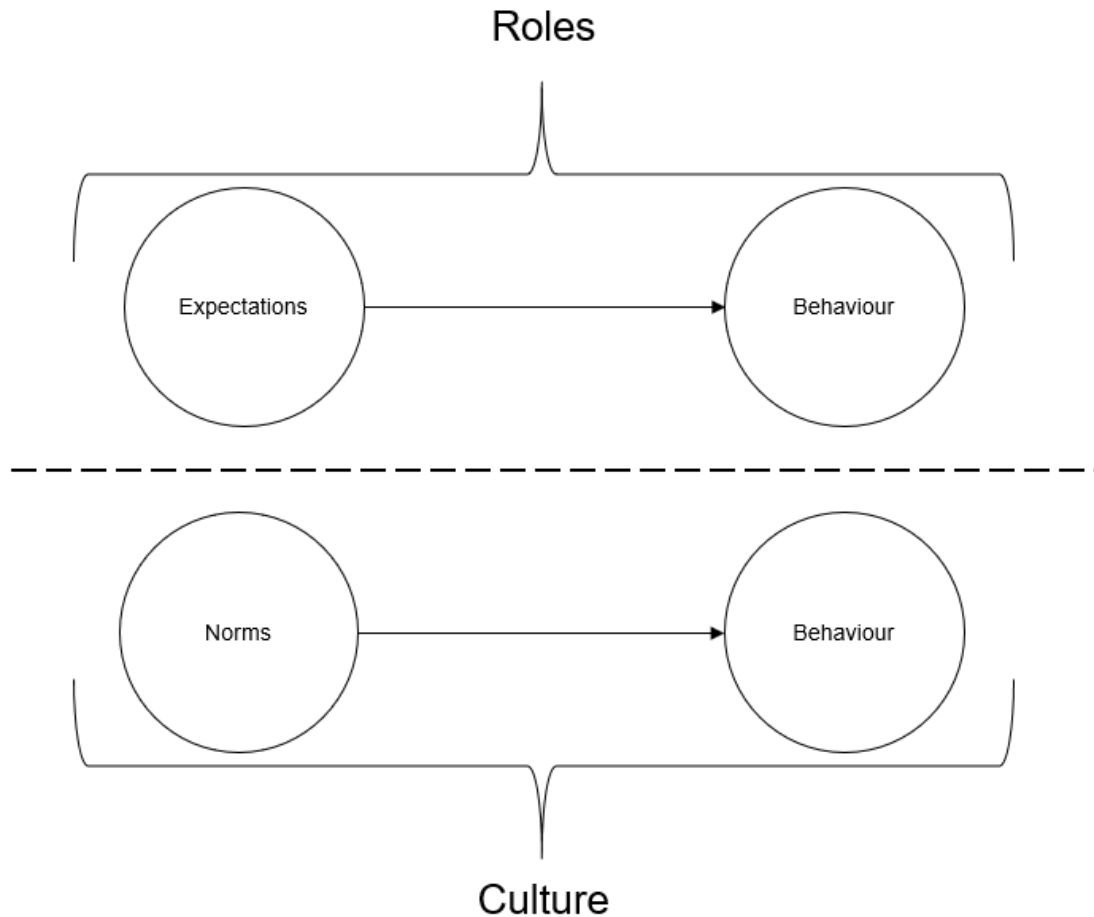


Fig.2

2.5.2. Culture in one Location Affecting Culture in Another Location

Kanter (1977, pp.42-43) states that an occupation is able to enforce cultural characteristics upon an individual that are then carried over to other cultural spheres. In the case of Kanter, this sphere is the home, or what Oldenburg (1999) would have referred to as the first place. Kanter (1977, pp.42-43) looked at how authoritarian structures at the second place, the work, impacts behaviour and values in terms of roles endemic to the home such as the role of a parent and spouse. Menghan & Parcel (1993) conducted research along similar lines and found that parents will interact with each other and foster their children in accordance with what values are most likely to help their

children advance in their profession. Blue-collar parents are more likely enforce strict rules and engage in forms of physical punishment. White-collar parents on the other hand would emphasize less direct parenting (Newland, 2015). The idea that what happens in the second place is able to influence what happens in the first place is supported by Kohn & Schooler (1982) who argue that there is a correlation between workplace structures and bureaucracy, and personality traits outside of the workplace as well as domestic behaviour. Seen from a dramaturgical perspective, the transfer of values between the second place and the first place as described by Kanter (1977, pp.42-43), Menghan & Parcel (1993), Newland (2015) as well as Kohn & Schooler (1982) could be perceived as an individual's inability to psychologically separate roles between different stages. Thus suggesting the presence of some sort of role elasticity or constant lingering role-related residual. So far, roles have been treated as being separate from the individual. They have almost been treated as a coat, something one puts on and then takes off at will. If we instead look at roles as a cultural phenomenon, we see that there is a risk that parts of the coat sticks when transitioning between stages. There is theoretical support for the notion that roles can intertwine with other roles. However, there is no available literature to rely on in order to determine what effect this will have on inter-role conflict, and will thus have to be examined solely from an empirical perspective.

P3: *Role characteristics related to a specific role and place has the ability to be transferred to another role and place.*

2.6. Flexible Work Arrangements

The last topic of interest for this paper will be to study the manner in which people move between Oldenburg's (1999) three places and thus switch roles. This will serve as a partial answer to MacDermid's & Marks' (1996) critique on the lack of a holistic way of analysing roles. This

section will look at what happens when a person is able to switch between roles and places in a dynamic way as a result of flexible working hours, how this will impact inter-role conflict as well what happens when the work role is able to take place at the first place as a result of E-work.

2.6.1. Generational Divide & Increase in Dynamics

Looking back in time, how people transition between places and roles has changed from being done in a fixed and predetermined way to being flexible and dynamic. One way to illustrate shifts in how time is distributed among the three places is by analysing traffic patterns. During the 80s we could see how the boomer generation would congest into traffic jams at 8am and 5pm as they moved between the workplaces in the city and their homes in the suburb. This commuting behaviour was dubbed the classic diurnal flow and was a hallmark of the commuting pattern of the post-war era. However, by the mid-2000s, we start seeing a change in this pattern. Unlike the previous era where traffic was concentrated to rush hour, the movement of people now started to stretch further into the day. This new daisy-chain pattern extends throughout the day as workers drop their children off at school, visit the gym or other locations of interests (Pisarski, 2006). The take-away from this analysis of traffic patterns is that the rigid time slots that used to exist which dictated when a person would be at a certain place and thus engage in a certain role, has become more loose. Consequently, workers now have to shift between roles more often and less consistently during the course of the day than they had to during the 80s. The reason for this comes down to two underlying factors, technology and flextime (Pisarski, 2006).

2.6.2. Technology & E-work

During the 50s and even 80s, the lack of portable communication technology made it difficult to stray from the office for prolonged periods of time. Most forms of communication was face-to-

face or over non-portable landlines, fax machine, telegram or letter. Consequently, not being physically present at the workplace meant being unable to access information, take part in discussion or even fulfil work-related duties. However, with the rise of information technology, workers are less tethered to a desk and able move more freely during what used to be traditional work hours. Thanks to inventions such as the mobile phone and mobile data, workers are able to remain connected as they move from one location to the other during the day (Kuehn, 2018).

In turn, this has given rise to what is known as e-work where workers are able to use ICT to work remotely (Grant et. al., 2013). This means that the role of the second place no longer is location bound and is able to infringe upon the first and third place. Grant et. al. (2013) states that the impact of e-work differed between individuals in that some experienced it as helpful as it allowed for greater flexibility in managing the work role. However, others experienced stress from having the first and second place overlap by working while at home.

2.6.3. Flextime

As the boomer generation started to retire, employers had to replace these workers with much younger ones (Al-Masri, 2018). A way for employers to stay competitive on the work market and attractive to new talents was by offering flextime as this was something that the younger generation of workers increasingly came to request from employers (Peretz, 2017), (Wallace, 2018). In turn, this changed the time slots workers had to be at the office and thus when they could arrive and leave.

Flextime is defined as including a core period where workers are required to work and physically be at the office. This core period differs between places of work but typically stretches between

11 a.m. and 3 p.m. All hours outside of this predetermined time slot is known as flexible time and is the time during a day where workers are free to construct their own schedules. However, this comes at the requirement that the worker meets his or hers bandwidth which represents the total allotted hours a worker must commit themselves to actually work as part of the contract between employer and employee (Owen, 1977), (Bonnie & Shaffer, 2001).

Flexible work arrangement have been shown to increase employee wellbeing and reduce inter-role conflict. It has also been shown that flextime is more effective than e-work in doing so (Hayman, 2010). This shows that role flexibility, or the ability to dictate when to change between roles lowers the risk of inter-role conflict. However, this does not answer the question of how one type of role flexibility can be more effective than the other in preventing inter-role conflict. One possible explanation can have to do with the connection between roles and places. Under section 2.2. The argument was made that roles are attached to stages and that stages in turn can be categorized into places. Goffman (1959) was clear on the connection between a given stage and a given role. The question is then what happens when a role is played on the “wrong” stage.

P4: *If a role is played in a place where it originally was not intended to be played, the mismatch between role and place will mitigate the positive effect of role flexibility.*

3. Methodology

The following sections discuss the scientific research method used, the design of the study and reasoning behind methodological choices. Section 3.1 focuses on the broad aspects of methodology such as research type and ontology. Section 3.2 deals with the manner by which

existing literature has been treated and section 3.3 describes how the study was conducted. Section 3.4 deals with questions related to the quality of the study while section 3.5 discussed research ethics.

3.1 Research Method

3.1.1. Method of Inference

This paper has followed that of an inductive inference method of reasoning. This means that the analysis conducted and conclusions drawn under section 6 have been based on theoretical reasoning as opposed to being based on empirical findings or a combination of the two (Bryman & Bell, 2013).

3.1.2. Methodological Fit

For this paper, a qualitative research method was preferred over a quantitative method or hybrid method as a qualitative method had the best fit with the state of prior research. A field that is in a nascent state is characterized by theoretical discord. In such a case, when the available body of theory is contentious, a qualitative method is preferable. The goal with a qualitative method is not to either prove or disprove theory, but rather to explore a given phenomenon. This is done through an open-ended inquiry after which the researcher engages in pattern identification and thematic coding of collected data. (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007).

As showcased under section 2.3, there exists contentious theory in the field of role theory that would classify it as being in a nascent state. However, by combining theory from other fields, this paper is able to create new constructs and form new propositions. This in turn is more characteristic of research taking place in an intermediate field whereupon a hybrid method should be most suitable. However, there is no clear cut line between a field being nascent as oppose to

being in an intermediate state. Instead, they are parts of the same continuum (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007). Due to the combination of theories and prior research from several combined fields, the a priori that this study is based on would fall somewhere between a nascent and intermediate state of development. It was decided to pursue a qualitative method in order to create a general understanding of the theoretical connections explored under section 2 which later can lay the groundwork for future studies. In doing so, this paper aims to provide a theoretical contribution best fitted for a nascent field (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007).

3.1.3. Ontological Stance

The data interpretation has been done through an interpretative research lens. This term is used to describe a collective set of ideas relating to research methodology in manners of ontology as well as epistemology. The former term, ontology, refers to the very nature and existence of any given subject or phenomenon while the later term, epistemology relates to how we learn about said phenomenon. In essence, ontology is about how we perceive our reality while epistemology is about how we learn about said reality. To study work-life balance from an interpretative stand-point would mean that the researcher recognized that the phenomenon is a construct of the research subject and thus makes an effort to try and understand said phenomenon from the perspective of the research subject as opposed to construct statistical models (Edirisingha, 2012), (Hatch & Yanow, 2005 pp.63-79).

3.2. Study of A Priori Research

3.2.1 Intertextual Coherence

The intertextual coherence of this essay has been constructed based on a synthesized coherence.

As described by Locke & Golden-Biddle (1997), this is done by seeking to create connections

between non-related fields by arguing that there is in fact an underlying theme connecting several theories across separate scientific fields. The main fields that make up this paper is management, psychology and sociology. The connector between these fields is their focus on human behaviour and the human psyche which was what allowed for theories from each field to be combined to study roles and its relation to work-life balance.

3.2.2. Literature Review

The theories and other works presented in this paper have been collected from a multitude of physical as well as digital sources. This includes but is not limited to among other things, books, online depositories, journals as well as news articles. The method by which these were collected was through what is known as a narrative literature review. As described by Bryman & Bell (2013), a narrative literature review could be considered to be direct opposite of what is known as a systematic literature review. While both methods are valid forms of reviewing literature, it should be noted that a narrative literature review tends to be premiered when conducting a study of a qualitative nature, as opposed to a study of a quantitative nature.

A systematic literature review consists of establishing a broad overview of all available studies that could be of relevance for a given paper. After that is done a set of criteria are set in order to establish a formal threshold in regard to which studies and sources of information are qualified to be included in the paper. The criterion can take on a multitude of forms and can include but is not limited to; a certain set of search terms, premiering certain kinds of studies over others such as preferring to look at meta studies as oppose to studies of a more empirical nature, only look at articles that have been quoted a certain number of times given a certain time period, epistemological philosophy, methodological approach, only looking at articles published within a

certain time period, etc. While a systematic literature review is based on formalized process and criteria, a narrative literature review is exploratory in nature. The goal is to allow for the literature to take the author to new and unexpected places. Naturally, this more free-form method risks leading to confirmation bias or so called cherry-picking of data. It should however be noted that a systematic literature review risks falling in exactly the same trap as just described. The reason why this might happen has to do with the fact while there is a general idea that the criterion set should be objective and allow the author to easily focus his or her attention to what is perceived to be the most relevant and trustworthy content, this might not be the case. Once again, simple, human bias could influence what criteria are set and thus introduce an endemic bias to the data and theories used while any bias affecting a narrative literature review would tend to be more ad-hoc in nature (Bryman & Bell, 2013). During the course of the study, attention was made to make sure that the literature used in the writing of section 2 was selected without any forms of bias, meaning that the theories used were representative of the field as well as relevant to the research question as opposed to merely being supportive of any predetermined conclusions.

3.3. Study Design

3.3.1. Collection of Empirical Data

Collection of the empirical data took place through a series of twenty semi-structured interviews. The first two interviews were conducted in person while the remainder of the interviews were conducted over the phone. The interviews were based on an interview guide originally containing a set of 39 numbered questions related to the findings and theories presented under section 2 of this paper. However, after the first three interviews, this list of questions was shortened down to just 22 in order to focus on the key aspects of this paper. The questions removed were mainly concerned with offering contextual information regarding the personal circumstances in order to

be able to put the answers provided into a broader context. However, this context was not fully lost as the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for probing questions that did allow for contextual gaps to be filled. The removal of general questions about context has the impact that it could reduce comparability between the first three interviews and those 17 interviews that came later, thus distorting pattern recognition. However, the upside from this approach is that it allows the researcher to focus on the most relevant contextual aspects as opposed to merely listing factors that the researcher self believes would be of help when interpreting the collected data.

The interview followed general guidelines on how to conduct a semi-structured interview. This means that while the questions were presented in an internal order, said order was on multiple occasions abandoned in order to allow for the interviewees to be able to speak as freely as possible while pursuing their own relevant trains of thought. Instead of maintaining strict discipline over the questions asked, focus was instead put on free exploration and instead reigning the discussion back to the questionnaire whenever the topic of discussion started to extensively deviate from the studied phenomenon. Consequently, instead of running through the questionnaire in an expedited manner, attention was given to ask for clarifications, ask probing questions as well as follow-up questions (Balkissoon, 2014). In summary, this resulted in each respondent being exposed to a unique interview that in turn risks affecting the comparability between the responses gathered during the study.

In order for a study to establish credibility, it is expected to be both valid and reliable which can be difficult when conducting semi-structured interviews as they are to a certain degree dependant on so called; good informers. However, there are also upsides from this method of data collection

as it allows for the exploration of beliefs, attitudes and values to a greater extent than a structured interview or a questionnaire. (Louise-Barriball & While, 1994). Why a semi-structured interview format was preferred over a structured interview format has to do with the fact that the research topic about roles and work-life balance is highly individual (Biddle, 1986). For that reason it becomes important to allow for individual flavours and unexpected points to be made visible in order to capture as much information about the subject as possible. In turn, this could help us to either find a deeper understanding of the theory presented under section 2 as well as allow for new theories to be formed.

No formal pre-study was conducted before the series of twenty interviews took place. Instead, the questionnaire was tested on the first three respondents and consequently altered. While this might qualify as a pre-study in its own right, it should be noted that these three interviews in question did become part of the main data set and were thus treated like the remaining 17 interviews. Even discounting the first three interviews, the remaining 17 interviews did manage to achieve saturation. Saturation is a state where no new themes become emergent and the utility of interviewing more respondents becomes increasingly diminishing. There is no way to quantify such a state. Instead it is up to the individual researcher to use good judgement in order to conclude whether that is the case (Berglund, 2010). However, there is the possibility that by interviewing people that are significantly different from the current set of respondents, new themes and insights would emerge. Nonetheless, this cannot be said with certainty.

3.3.2. Data Processing

The manner in which the collected empirical data has been managed and organized for analysis is as follows. Firstly, the collected responses were fine combed in order to distinguish what could be

considered to be the mayor relevant factors from or background factors as well as non-relevant factors. The latter two of these run the risk of being hard to distinguish from one another whereupon a large degree of caution is advised in order to neither overestimate the impact of certain factors or remove relevant information for that matter. The second step in the process consists of structuring the data in a way which allows for categorization and recognition of themes and underlying meaning of the collected responses. For this purpose, such efforts have been conducted in the manner described by Pietkiewicz & Smith (2014) who opted for a three stage approach as follows. Step one include the researcher to make multiple reading of the material as well as taking extensive notes in order to get a sense of the context surrounding each and every interview. Step two is about taking said notes and use those to develop predominant concepts as well as themes. Third and last step includes looking for and labelling relationships by clustering themes in order to reveal larger patterns.

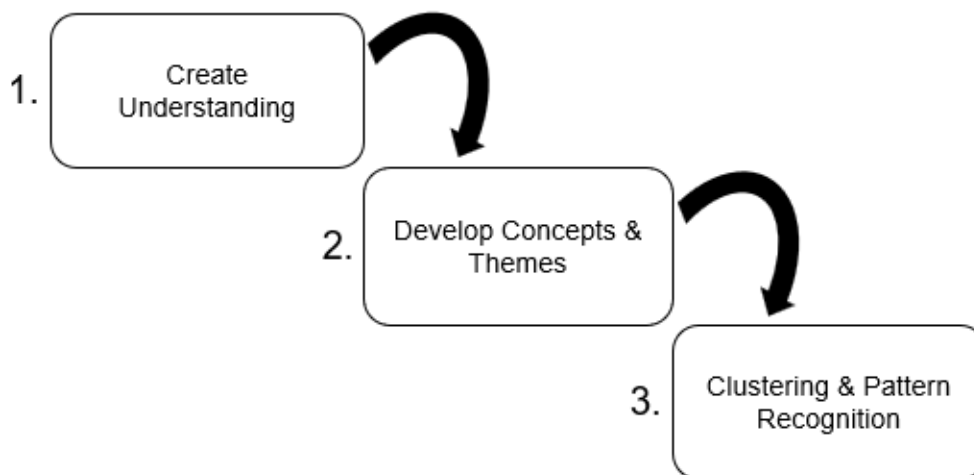


Fig.3

3.4. Research Quality

3.4.1. Internal Validity

A study's internal validity refers to the extent by which it has been conducted without error and by which measurements collected are the result of the factors studied. In other words, it relates to whether the results are representative of the sample (Bryman & Bell, 2013). In the case of this paper, frequent pre mortems were performed in order to help determine what factors might affect the results. Other methods of ensuring internal validity include triangulation, participatory research and respondent validation (Bryman & Bell, 2013). Due to time constraints these techniques could not be utilized.

3.4.2. External Validity

External validity relates to whether the results can be inferred, and thus would be representative of a larger population (Bryman & Bell, 2013). The empirical data collected is based on an opportunistic selection process of interviewees. This sampling method is convenient as it allows the researcher to quickly find respondents. However, it risks creating a bias as the sample risks becoming unrepresentative of the general population (McLeod, 2014). This in turn would imply that the study suffers from low external validity (Bryman & Bell, 2013). The selection process included both open advertising to participate where the researcher was contacted by individuals willing to participate as well as the researcher actively contacting individuals whom would be potentially willing to participate. Also, some respondents were able to refer to other individuals who would potentially be willing to participate in the study. There was an aim to include individuals of varying gender, socio-economic background, professions and general life experiences in order to collect a data sample that was as broad and representative of the general population as possible. This diversity in the data sample is expected to increase external validity

when examining work-life balance for the general population. However, there could be large differences between various professions, ages or any other factor that would make it unwise to study work-life balance on a general basis as opposed to focus on one single prevailing factor.

3.4.3. Replicability

In order to ensure that a study has been properly conducted and that the data collected is reflective of the true nature of the phenomenon studied, it becomes imperative to be able to replicate the study. With the ability to replicate a study, it becomes possible to either prove or disprove the results of said study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). For that reason, information regarding data collection and data processing has been provided together with the questionnaire which is found under appendix 8.1.

3.4.4. Response Bias

Response bias is when the respondent answers a question untruthfully. This include socially desirable responses which is when the respondent tries to make something look better than it actually is, and its opposite which is when the respondent depicts something as being worse than it actually is. Response bias can also include yea-saying and nay-saying which is the tendency to always agree or disagree with the interviewer, respectively (Furnham, 1986). Knowing whether a respondent is being truthful is not easy. However, by being aware of this possibility when interviewing and later analysing data, the researcher can take on a critical stance when drawing conclusions.

3.5. Ethical Consideration

3.5.1. Ethical Standards

Ethics are “...*norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.*”

However, ethics are not only a set of agreed upon rules one has to follow, they also serve clear and tangible purposes in research. First and foremost, research ethics promote the aim of research which is the quest for knowledge by setting rules against fabrication and misrepresentation of data. Secondly, they promote values such as trust, fairness and mutual respect that are essential to cooperation between researcher. Thirdly, research ethics hold researchers accountable to the public by setting rules on how to handle conflicts of interest and safeguard the interest and health of research participants. Lastly, ethics help build public support for research by establishing integrity as well as trust in its quality (Resnik, 2015). For these reasons, maintaining an ethical standard when conducting a study is not only something that affects a single paper, but the research community as a whole.

It has been the aim of this study to be in compliance with ethical standards and thus conduct ethical research. For that reason, it proves helpful to rely on established frameworks in order to get an objective point of view on what constitutes as ethical research and make sure that nothing is missed or overlooked. Consequently, this study has been conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines set by the Academy of Management as well as the core principles formulated by the Economic and Social Research Council. The Academy of Management (2006) stipulate several rules and standards to adhere to. A small selection of these include the responsibility to “...*promote accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness in the science... and practice of their profession.*” It also includes that a researcher should respect the people’s rights and dignity. This particularly applies to the right to “... *privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination.*” There are also several criteria

regarding accurate reporting, remuneration, how conflicts of interests should be handled, how research shall be conducted not for personal gain but for a greater purpose, that discriminatory practices are not to take place in research, that exploitative behaviour is prohibited, how information is to be treated, etc. For a more extensive review of the guidelines as well as explicit rules stipulated by the AOM, of which the presented study has adhered to, a link to the document in question has been provided in the bibliography.

The Economic and Social Research Council, stipulate six core principles for ethical research. These are as follows, (ESRC, 2018);

1. *“Research should aim to maximise benefit for individuals and society and minimise risk and harm.”*
2. *“The rights and dignity of individuals and groups should be respected.”*
3. *“Wherever possible, participation should be voluntary and appropriately informed.”*
4. *“Research should be conducted with integrity and transparency.”*
5. *“Lines of responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined.”*
6. *“Independence of research should be maintained and where conflicts of interest cannot be avoided they should be made explicit.”*

During the course of the study, all six principles have been adhered to and followed.

3.5.2. Anonymization of Data & Respondents

The pre-formulated question set found in appendix 8.1 is void of questions that in any direct way could incite the respondents to expose sensitive corporate data, be in any way self-incriminating

or risk violating any non-disclosure agreement. However the respondents are asked to provide personal details about their life and habits. Some of the questions touch upon sensitive subject matter such as family relations. All in all, the study asks of the respondents to open up and disclose private matters which could be perceived as being embarrassing or perhaps even frowned upon and stigmatized by their friends, families and or colleagues. There are an infinite number of examples of pieces of information that would be highly relevant to the study but which could lead to the respondent experiencing reprisals if said information ever was made public. One example of such an instance could be if a respondent talks about how they dislike their place of work and their colleagues, and how this dissatisfaction affects his or hers daily life. Another example could be of a married person experiencing domestic problems. Before any interview commences, it will be difficult to predict what twist and turns the discussion and what sort of personal information is revealed.

The reason to anonymize the respondents was two-fold. Firstly as a measure to safeguard their wellbeing and privacy. This in accordance with the rules of ethics stipulated by the Academy of Management. Secondly, to make sure that the respondents would feel comfortable and safe in speaking honestly about their experiences. The assumption was that the respondents would feel more compelled to speak the truth about their experiences and even disclose compromising details if the interview was confidential. The respondents were anonymized so that their identities cannot be directly distinguished. How the anonymization process was carried out as well as communicated to each respective respondent was as follows. Already before the interview took place, the respondent was informed that any and all participation in the study would be completely

anonymous. Once the interview was set to take place, the respondents were once again informed about the details regarding the anonymization process.

4. Empirical Findings

The collected empirical data is primarily presented in a summarized manner. This is though with the exception of some individual descriptions that were of certain interest as well as a multitude of quotes in order to showcase the data. These quotes were originally expressed in Swedish but have been translated to English.

4.1. The Three Places

4.1.1. Where to Unwind

Most respondents were able to provide one or more examples of locations they frequent outside of the home which qualified as third places. These included among other; bars, cafés, sport arenas, internet cafés and gyms. At each of these locations, the respondent stated that they felt like they could be themselves and that they felt that no external demands were being placed on them.

“It helps to have this outlet. You don’t have to be a daddy or husband. You can just be yourself.”

In turn, these respondents concurred in that spending time away from the home and work allowed them to blow off steam, and that this was something which helped them perform better, both at work and at home.

“It makes it easier to be good at work and at home”

“It's nice to have a change of scenery. You kinda need it.”

Some of the women that were married with children did provide examples of activities they engaged in to relieve themselves of stress but which did not correspond to the definition of the three places. These activities included solitary walk and car drives and visiting members of the extended family.

“Sometimes I just get in the car and drive”

Regardless of whether the method used to relieve themselves of stress was in coherence with the definition of a third place, the fact that such a method was used was enough to be of relief and allow the respondents to better deal with the roles of the home and workplace. A key aspect was the ability to get alone-time and not feel any present role responsibilities.

4.1.2. The Online Realm as a Third Place

There were generational differences in regards to the usage of online forms of communication. All respondents who stated that they did engage in online forums or other equal forms of public discussion online did belong to the millennial generation. Respondents in the age-span of 30-50 however did not. While all respondents did use some form of online communication tool such as Facebook Messenger or Instagram, the communication that took place over these channels were private peer-to-peer discussions as opposed to being public and thus qualify for taking part in the third place.

One respondent was a passive participant in female support groups on Facebook and stated that she liked to come and read what other people wrote but that she never engaged in the content. She further stated that this activity did not in any way allow her to unburden herself and that she mostly did it out of simple curiosity. On the other hand, those respondents that did engage in conversation on online forums did state that it had a recreational effect similar to that of a “traditional” third place and was seen as leisure as exemplified by;

“It’s kinda nice. You just sit there and write whatever you want.”

4.1.3. Third Place & Identity

There was a low degree of self-identification with the third place among the respondents. However the gym proved to be an exception. Two of the respondents stated that going to the gym was their primary form of activity outside of the home and workplace. In turn, they both agreed that it was an integral part of their respective identities. Physical exercise was something they cared about and shaped their identities around. Furthermore, going to the gym was considered to be an outlet that helped both of them to increase their respective work-life balance. In comparison with other respondents however, their ability to maintain work-life balance did not differ from that of the other respondents. Furthermore, neither respondent experienced any role demands or feeling of playing a role when using the gym as an identity-provider.

4.1.4. Third Place & Gender

There was a consensus among the respondents that women had a greater level of domestic responsibility and faced higher demands in the home than men.

“You do feel more responsible for the home.”

Furthermore, on the question whether men or women had it easier to leave the home in favour of any third-place engagements, most respondents agreed that women had it tougher to do so.

“As a man you do have less to do at home, so it is easier to get away.”

“Husbands can just go. Women on the other hand have more pressure at home.”

“It is more difficult. Family is priority.”

However, on the question of role priority between the home and work, the data set was unable to correlate prioritization to gender. Still, the data showed that women felt more responsible for the home than men did.

4.2. Work-Life Balance

4.2.1. Role Prioritization

With the exception of one respondent, inter-role conflict between work and home was reported to be minimal or non-existent among respondents with children. These respondents all stated that in terms of role priority, they put home and family before work as well as before any third-place engagements. In turn, this way of prioritizing was stated as being an effect of having children.

“Yeah, I used to focus a lot on work but that changed when [child] came”

“Family comes first, work comes second.”

Regardless of profession, managerial level and responsibilities, age or gender, those respondents who stated that they put the first place before the other two experienced no to minimal level of inter-role conflict. The respondent with children who did experience such conflict had the following to say;

“I do what benefits the family. Work is something that in the long run befits the family indirectly.”

He was also the respondent who worked the most hours by a wide margin as he would frequently spend evenings and weekends at the office.

Respondents in domestic relationships and without children were the ones that felt the most pressure from inter-role conflict, more so than the respondents with children.

“Hard to make time for everything. There is always something you can’t do and you have to choose”.

“I mean, it would be sweet to have more hours.”

These respondents did state that they prioritized their partners over work. However the way this was expressed was with a different tonality than the respondents with children. The respondents with children would answer the question about a second quicker and in a more affirmative manner than the respondents without children. The difference can be exemplified as;

“Family is first. Without hesitation. Work, friends, all that comes second.”

“I work and try to do other stuff but still try to prioritize [partner].”

Furthermore, the respondents without children expressed third-place engagements as being something they struggled to find time for and which added to the feeling of inter-role conflict. This despite spending more time in the third place than the respondents with children. Even though the respondents without children did state that the home was their first priority when asked, they still tended to describe home, work and the third place as being something that required equal amounts of attention.

4.2.2. Unpredictability of Demands & Roles

For respondents without children, the question on what was the easiest to manage, the role of the first place or the second place, the answer was always the first place. For respondents with children on the other hand, the responses varied in favour of one or the other. However, a pattern did emerge where respondents with a high level of predictability in their work role experienced the work to be more easy to manage than work.

“There are a lot of musts at home. At work you know what is expected.”

“You have a clear role and clear expectations [at work]. It's all clear. No surprises.”

Whether the work role was considered to be easier and less strenuous than the home role was not related to sheer work hours or work demands but to work variability and unpredictability. Respondents with children who had jobs where they continuously had to respond to changing circumstances experienced their work role as being more strenuous than the home role. Vice versa applied for respondents who had work duties that were predictable. The underlying assumptions for this claim is that the home roles for these respondents were equal. In other words, the roles of parent and spouse were treated as comparable constants across respondents in trying to explain why work could be seen as easier to manage than the home. In reviewing the background factors for the respondents, no single factor becomes apparent which could indicate that one respondent would have domestic roles that would be in any way more demanding or unpredictable than that of any other respondent. Examples of factors that were examined and which were expected to have had the potential to change the predictability and demands of the domestic roles are; financial difficulties, chronically ill or disabled family member, and divorce or other domestic disputes.

4.2.3. Chronemics & Mental Energy

As part of the interview, each respondent was probed in order to determine their chronemic state. Once it had been established whether a person was mainly monochronic or polychronic, this information was then compared to the effect of role demands on mental energy. In reviewing the empirical data, no patterns became apparent whereupon proposition No.2 cannot be substantiated.

4.3. Role Spillover

A majority of respondents stated that their behaviour and the way they conducted themselves in their professional role differed from that of their domestic role. In turn, respondents with work roles that involved low to no level of directing stated that they had no problem keeping their work behaviour at the workplace and not have it affect their behaviour in the first and third place. However, respondents whose work role included high levels of directing such as assembly instructor, store manager, traffic director and maintenance planner all stated that they brought their work behaviour with them outside of the workplace.

“Happens often but I’m no longer a boss when I get home.”

“I think so. I take with me a lot of my behaviour home. You become a lot less lenient when you are used to be in charge”

“Many times. I’m always the one to tell everyone of my friends what to do.”

The respondents who did exhibit role spillovers were already aware of its occurrence and stated that they did not experience any adverse effects from it in terms of their ability to carry out their roles in the home or act in the third place. Neither did the data support that role spillover increase or decrease the feeling of inter-role conflict.

4.4. Flexible Work Arrangements

4.4.1. Flextime

Half of the respondents did have a job which offered the ability for flextime. In all those cases, this added flexibility was stated as being helpful in maintaining work-life balance. The reason for this was because it made it easier to plan for and minimize the number of times there would be a scheduling conflict between commitments between any of the three places.

Furthermore, no respondent stated experiencing any discomfort or feeling of inter-role conflict when having to quickly switch from one role to another.

4.4.2. E-work

In total, five respondents had the ability to do E-work (work remotely). However, while all respondents who had flextime made use of it, only two out of the five mentioned respondents ever utilized the possibility to work remotely. In fact, there was an outspoken unwillingness to do so.

“I never even tried it. I would probably just feel bad if I did it. There is something about coming into to the office.”

“I don’t like it. It’s no good. When I’m home, I’m home. I put all that away.”

There were two reasons for not wanting to conduct E-work. The first reason was because respondents preferred to conduct work at the workplace in the presence of their colleagues. The second reason has to do with the separation of roles. There was an expressed desire to keep work at the workplace and away from the home in fear that work would infringe on the home.

For the two respondents who did occasionally work remotely, E-work was seen as a way to improve work-life balance. The respondent who worked remotely on a continuous basis was unable to see any downsides with E-work. However, the second E-work user who only did it occasionally on some weekends did admit that working remotely sometimes made him feel that work was infringing on the home.

5. Analysis

In this section of the paper, the empirical findings presented under section 4 will be analysed from the perspective of the theories described under section 2. The primary purpose of this section is to answer the main research question as well as its attached sub-research questions found under section 1.4. Furthermore, there will be an attempt to either confirm or disprove the four propositions presented throughout section 2. The order in which concepts are analysed follow the internal structure of section 2, thus starting with the three places and ending with flexible work arrangements.

5.1. Framework for Role Categorization

The overarching idea and assumption behind using the theory of the third place as a mean to understand and manage work-life balance is that life can be divided into two subsection; the home and the third place. These two spheres are different from one another in terms of activities, demands, and roles played. Furthermore, according to Oldenburg (1999), the third place has two very special functions. Firstly, it acts like a valve. It allows people to relax, blow off steam and relieve themselves of stress and demands. The assumption is that this will be like entering one of

Goffman's (1959) backstage. Being allowed to step out of the roles related to the home and work in order to relax will in turn allow people to regain their energy so that they may go back to playing their roles with renewed vigour and increased levels of mental energy as described by O'Connor (2006). The second function, is that it acts as an anchor of the community, bringing people together. However, For the purpose of this paper and subsequent analysis, only the first function is of relevance.

5.1.1. Online

The question whether the online realm has a place in Oldenburg's framework when examining work-life balance is whether it is able to provide the function of relief. Based on the empirical findings under section 4.1.2, it does. Furthermore, it does so in accordance with the characteristics of the third place found under section 2.1.1. Only those respondents who used the online realm for public conversation and exchange did experience it as having a relaxing effect. Those who used it in a private manner or without engaging with other people did not experience this effect. For that reason, it is possible to conclude that the third place does in fact extend into the digital realm and is not confined to the physical world in support of Steinkuehler (2005) and Crick (2011).

Furthermore, the empirical data did support Crick's (2011) claim of their being a generational divide between generation X and Y in terms of the usage of the online realm as a third place. Consequently, if the theory of the third place is to be used to study inter-role conflict, the importance of the online realm as part of this framework will increase as generation X continues to become displaced by generation Y in the workplace.

5.1.2. Identity in the Third Place

P1: *Taking on roles in the third place that caters to a person's perceived self-identity will have a positive impact on that person's wellbeing and mitigate existing inter-role conflict to a greater extent than if the same third place did not act as a provider of identity.*

Out of the 20 respondents interviewed, only two stated that the third place was used as a means of self-identification. The question though is whether this process of self-identification increases a person's ability to manage their work-life balance to any greater extent than a person who merely visits a third place but without identifying with it. Looking at section 4.1.3, there is no data to support that such a process would lead to any increases in work-life balance. For that reason, proposition No.1 cannot be supported.

A key connection that this paper examines is the connection between Oldenburg (1999) and Goffman (1959), and in turn the third place as a backstage. However, there are already other theories that have been connected to Oldenburg's (1999) third place that does create a theoretical baggage. This is something which cannot be ignored when trying to establish new connections such as the one with Goffman's (1959) stages. There was an attempt made under section 2.2.2 to try and reconcile the existing "baggage" of Mikunda (2004) and third space with Goffman (1959), and see how they could coexist in a joined framework. However, the empirical findings under section 4.1.3 are unable to support any existing connection between identity, roles and work-life balance as discussed under section 2.2.2 and 2.3.4 respectively. This means that the division of the third place as illustrated by fig.1 is unsupported. In turn, the model illustrated by fig. 4 should in response thus be altered to the following;

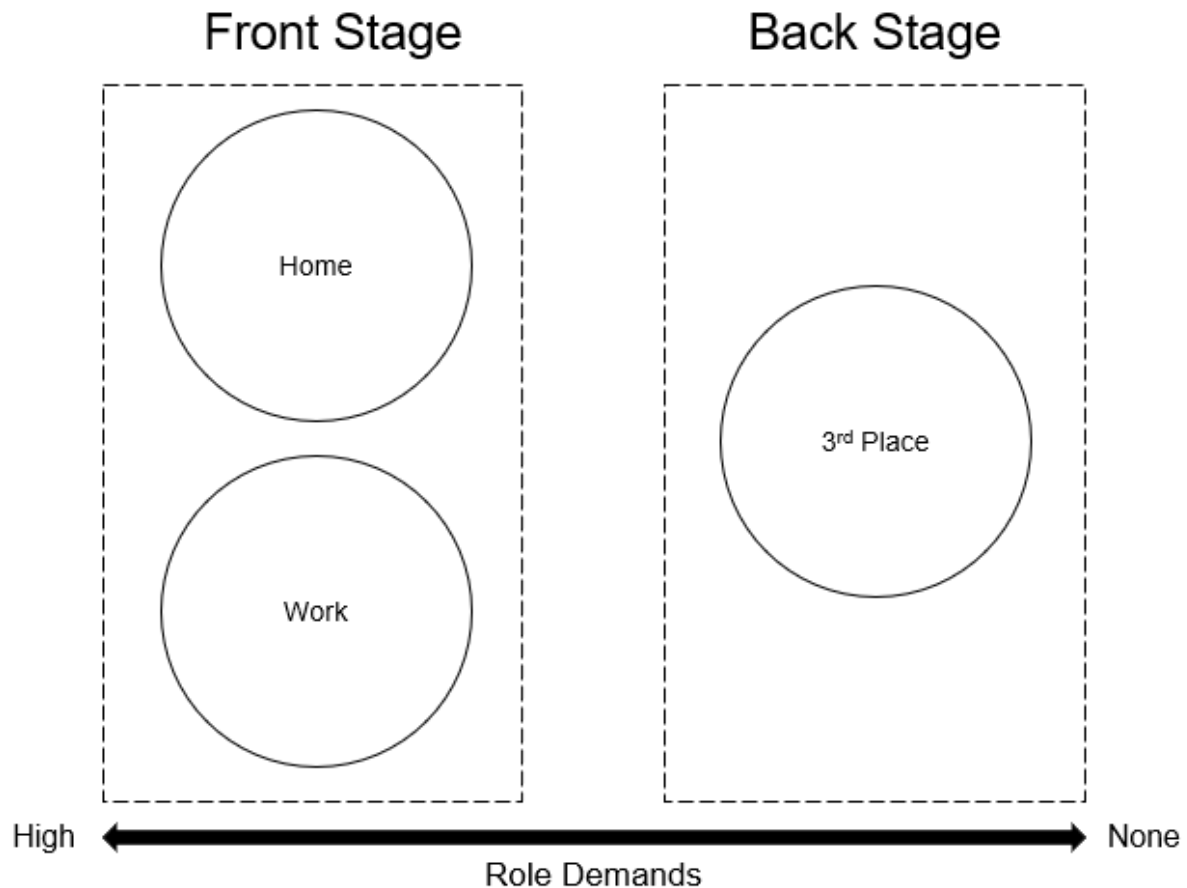


Fig.4

5.1.3. Gender in the Third Place

The existing body of literature on how role responsibilities and role prioritization differs between genders show that women bear a greater responsibility for the home and would prioritize it higher than men (Cannings & Konrad, 1997), (Tenbrunsel et. al., 1995), (Pleck, 1977), (Guterk et. al., 1991). This in turn is supported by the empirical findings presented under section 4.1.4. However, the question still remained on how these differences would translate into prioritization and time spent in the third place as previous theory only compared the roles of the home and work but not the third place.

Even though role prioritization remained the same between genders, women were pointed out as facing higher levels of demands and responsibilities in the home. In turn, this translated to women feeling less able to spend time in the third place. In section 4.1.1. We saw that women were more likely to prefer solitary forms of relief as opposed to men who were more likely to prefer social activities. In turn, these social activities do require planning to execute. Scheduling an activity like going to a sports game with friends requires that the person in question stays committed to attend whereupon other commitments might have to give way. Activities that are performed alone can be done so on an ad-hoc basis when no other matters are present. This difference in how men and women relieve themselves of stress becomes reflective of how men allow themselves to make greater commitments to the third place than women.

5.1.4 Third Place as a Demand

When collecting the empirical data, it was assumed that the respondents with children, especially small children, would experience inter-role conflict to a greater degree than the respondents who did not have any children. From the perspective of the scarcity hypothesis described by Barnett & Marshall (1993) and Froberg et. al. (1986) under section 2.3.2, this should be the case. After all, having children adds the role of parent to the home as well as a number of new demand and responsibilities. However, in comparing parents with non-parents, the data found under section 4.2.1 showed that the parents in fact experienced less inter-role conflict than their childless peers.

While respondents with children on average were older than the respondents without children, there is no data to support that age would have a direct effect on work-life balance. Instead, the proposed explanation relates to role management. The literature is in disagreement on what is the best strategy to manage roles in order to minimize inter-role conflict. MacDermid & Marks (1996)

argues for the need to weight all roles equally and avoid creating fixed rules of prioritizations between them. Thoits (1992) on the other hand argues for just that, the need to set clear priorities between roles in a hierarchical manner.

According to the data, the respondents with children firmly and clearly prioritized the home over the other two places. The respondents without children on the other hand instead tried to balance the three places in equal measures. While both groups agreed to the positive effect that spending time in the third place had on work-life balance, the respondents with a clear role priority only described the third place in positive terms and never as something that needed to be managed. For the respondents without a clear priority of roles, the third place was described in terms of demands and musts.

In turn, this reveals a new finding that has not previously been described by the literature on Oldenburg, which is the fact that the third place has the potential to act as a stressor and impair work-life balance. It seems that once a person perceives spending time in the third place as a must, and thus a demand, it has the ability to increase inter-role conflict. According to Oldenburg (1999), what separated the third place from the first and second was the absenteeism of demands. Once that distinction disappears, it becomes similar to the first and second place. In turn, this shows that the third place is not a universal solution to inter-role conflict and does require the right approach.

5.1.5 Conclusion on the Theoretical Usability of the Third Place

Sub-RQ 1: *Does the Oldenburg third place theory help to explain and improve work-life balance?*

When examining work-life balance, it has proven useful to separate the life-part into two distinct spheres, home and third place. Furthermore, the empirical data under section 4.1.1 does support the notion that a third place resembles that of a backstage, thus emphasizing the connection between places and roles, or in this case, the absence of them. Furthermore, the data is clear on the importance of spending time away from home in order to maintain work-life balance. However, the empirical data under section 4.1.1 showed that a location does not need to meet the strict criteria of a third place in order to have positive effect on work-life balance. Instead, the important aspect was that the location in question did provide the same function as a third place, which was the ability to allow for people to unwind and escape demands. The data is insufficient to determine whether a “true” third place actually will have a greater positive impact on work-life balance than any other backstage location. Instead, this will have to be the topic of a future study.

In conclusion, the answer to sub-research question No.1 is that Oldenburg’s theory of the third place does help us to better understand the dynamics of work-life balance and does prescribe how it can be improved upon.

5.2. Factors Affecting Inter-role Conflict

5.2.1. Role Cumbersomeness

According to the scarcity hypothesis, inter-role conflict is a result of a person being over encumbered by the burdens of the roles he or she has to play (Barnett & Marshall, 1993), (Froberg et. al.,1986). Furthermore, Schulte (2014) state under section 2.3.1 that the roles of the home and work could vary in terms of what burdens they imposed on a person which in turn was supported by Marks (1977). However, there was still missing an explanation to what exactly makes one role

more cumbersome and thus more difficult to manage. The empirical findings under section 4.2.2 showcased one possible explanation by looking at the level of predictability of a role. The data supported a correlation between role unpredictability and the extent to which the role was considered to be cumbersome. Unpredictability in this context relates to the extent by which an individual in advance knows what will happen and what actions that needs to be taken accordingly. The level of role burden thus becomes less about meeting demands as opposed to knowing what demands to meet.

5.2.2. Chronemics

P2: *An individual who is polychronic is able to better balance several roles and be able to smoothly shift between them at will. Such an individual is more likely to experience the effects of the expansion hypothesis rather than that of the scarcity hypothesis. The opposite then applies to an individual who is monochronic as limited time and attention result in limited mental energy and a greater risk for inter-role conflict.*

In order to answer the research question on what factors shape inter-role conflict and how it can be mitigated, section 2.3 examined theories related to the psychological responses people experienced when exposed to roles and demands, and in turn how these psychological responses would either act to increase or decrease inter-role conflict. The main focus was on mental energy as an enabler to manage roles. However, the available body of literature was contentious on the matter of how to treat mental energy and failed to provide a single theory on which to rely on. Based on Verbrugge's (2010) idea that roles are not universally comparable and that roles should be viewed from the perspective of the individual, an attempt was made to find a theory which

could explain how differences in personal factors could reconcile the contending theories of mental energy which according to Marks (1977), both had managed to garnish empirical support. The theory of chronemics as described in section 2.3.5 appeared to offer an answer. However, the empirical findings under section 4.2.3 failed to show a correlation between chronemics and mental energy whereupon we are unable to substantiate proposition No.2.

5.3. Role Spillover

Sub-RQ 2: Can roles influence one another, and will this affect inter-role conflict?

P3: Role characteristics related to a specific role and place has the ability to be transferred to another role and place.

The empirical data under section 4.3 did support proposition No.3 in accordance with the manner described by Kohn & Schooler (1982) under section 2.5.2. This means that roles don't only affect the individual, they also affect one another. However, the data only supported that it was the work role that was able to influence the way other roles were played. Even then, the data only supported this exchange when the work role included high levels of directional behaviour. The data does support the fact that roles can influence other roles, but there appears to be limitations on how and in what regard this is possible. Even so, this does still answer the first part of sub-research question No.2. However, the empirical data is not supportive of role spillover having any effect on inter-role conflict. Nonetheless, there is the possibility that roles are able to influence other roles in ways that were not examined in this study, which in turn could impact inter-role conflict.

5.4. Flexible Work Arrangements

Sub-RQ 3: What is the impact of role switching on inter-role conflict?

P4: If a role is played in a place where it originally was not intended to be played, the mismatch between role and place will mitigate the positive effect of role flexibility.

A key question for section 2.6 was what sort of impact increased role switching would have on inter-role conflict. Would people be able to move between locations and easily switch between roles in an effortless way, or would many and sudden role switches be straining and lead to a perceived feeling of inter-role conflict as people were forced to constantly change their manners and tend to new demands? Empirical data under section 4.4 was unable to support the notion that the act of changing roles, not matter how quickly or often, had any impact on inter-role conflict. This in turn answers sub-research question No.3.

Important to note is that role switching and role flexibility are two different concepts. The first term relates to the act of leaving one role in favour of another one, thus having to mentally reset and be ready to manage different demands. Role flexibility on the other hand relates to the degree which it is permissible to switch between roles when needed. Furthermore, the data shows a clear preference among respondents for flextime over E-work. This is in turn is in line with Hayman's (2010) statement about flextime being better than E-work at reducing inter-role conflict.

proposition No.4 becomes relevant when examining the nature of E-work and its impact on inter-role conflict. The empirical data does show weak support in favour of proposition No.4. The

problem though is that most of the critique on E-work was hypothetical and responded to an expected effect rather than a realized effect. For that reason, we are unable to draw any definite conclusions on whether proposition No.4 holds true or not. However, the mentioned critique does highlight what can be an important aspect of how to analyse roles in relation to the three places dissection. The data hinted at a need to compartmentalize roles. For one respondent it felt better conducting the work role at the workplace. Another respondent expressed that he didn't want to carry out work at home. This does highlight a preference for keeping roles separate from one another and keep them bound to a specific place. Compare this with the original usage of role switching as described by Andeweg (1997) under section 1.1. The need for role switching was based on the need for compartmentalization by only playing one role at a time as it otherwise would have been difficult to manage competing role demands. It is possible that this idea can extend into the topic of work-life balance, though this would require further research.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Paper

In order to study inter-role conflict in a holistic manner and thus respond to the critique of MacDermid & Marks (1996), this paper has come to touch on several aspects of role systems and examined a wide range of theories from different fields. This wide theoretical scope is this paper's greatest strength as well as weakness. It's a strength because it has allowed for the creation of a comprehensive overview of inter-role conflict. Even so, it comes at the expense of focus and sometimes depth. However, in relation to the research question, such an approach was warranted for.

6.2. Theoretical Contribution

This paper has contributed to closing the research gap that it originally set out to close in section 1.1. In direct response to MacDermid & Marks (1996), this paper has connected theories, formed proposition and provided empirical data on how roles relate to each other as parts of an interlinking system as a mean to understand work-life balance. Also, it has examined whether role switching has an impact on work-life balance. Furthermore, this paper has also provided a theory on what drives role cumbersomeness and thus inter-role conflict. Lastly, it has been able to provide a new theory on how to examine and understand work-life balance by introducing the dissection of the three places to the field or role theory.

6.3. Managerial Implications

As described under section 1, employees experiencing inter-role conflict is bad for productivity and the bottom line. Hence it is in the interest of the manager to help mitigate any such conflict. As described under section 2.6.3 and 4.4.1 respectively, the introduction of flextime is a simple yet effective measure that can be taken in order to help employees improve work-life balance. Another measure could simply be by informing employees of the need to spend time on a backstage.

6.4. Limitations

It should be noted that the study conducted was an explorative study. The aim was not to confirm or validate theory but to provide suggestions for theory which later can act as a springboard for future research. Furthermore, the study and all its conclusions was based on a small sample size of just 20 respondents. In turn, this small sample size risks not being enough to create inference. While a conscious effort was made to make the sample as diverse as possible, there could be large

differences between different sub-groups that are not visible in the sample. Since the study was of a qualitative nature, there was a need to interpret some of the data in order to look for hidden meanings. This is a process that is easily affected by bias from the researcher whereupon the data risks becoming corrupt. Since the study dealt with sensitive and personal topics, it is also possible that not all respondents were completely truthful in their answers.

6.5. Recommendations for Future Research

The proposed dissection of roles is a theory in its early stages. The empirical data collected for this paper was supportive of it but the theory still needs to be properly validated using a larger sample. Looking at section 5.1.5, the question whether there is a difference between “true” third places and other backstage locations in terms of their ability to mitigate inter-role conflict remains to be studied.

The theory of what causes role cumbersomeness is another theory in need of validation. Such a study should be a quantitative one in order to determine the impact of role unpredictability in relation to other plausible factors that could explain this phenomenon.

Section 5.4 introduced the concept of compartmentalization as perhaps a relevant concept for the study of the demarcating of roles, responsibilities and the stages they are played. It would be of interest to study what sort of effect this would have on inter-role conflict.

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8. Appendix

8.1 Questionnaire

- a. Where do you typically go to relax and unwind?

- i. How do you act there?
 - ii. Do you feel you can be yourself there?
 - iii. Is it easier to be there than at home?
 - iv. Do you ever feel that demands or expectations are placed on you outside of the work or home?
- b. To what extent are you in contact with other people on the internet, and how?
 - i. Does this make you feel that you can unburden yourself?
- c. Do you ever feel that managing work is easier than managing family?
- d. Do you ever feel like spending extra time at work in order to not having to come home?
- e. Do you typically feel exhausted or energized when you feel that you are facing demands from different directions?
- f. Does this feeling change depending on where these demands are coming from?
- g. Do you ever prioritize between roles, and if so, how?
- h. Do you ever go somewhere in order to get to behave in a way that you usually don't behave?
- i. How do you feel when you quickly and often have to shift between roles?
- j. Would you say you prefer when there are clear norms on how to act in a certain situation or do you feel more at ease making your own rules?
- k. Describe the roles you have in your life.
- l. Do you ever experience that one role is in conflict with another one?
- m. Do you ever feel that you are bringing traits of how you behave in one role and place with you and that then affect how you behave in another role and place?
- n. Do you feel that this makes that role easier or more difficult to perform?
- o. As a man/woman, do you feel that you have it easier or more difficult to do something outside of your home or place of work?
- p. Do you have flextime?
- q. Do you have the ability to work mobily?
- r. Do you feel that this contributes to your ability to balance your life or that this flexibility makes work intrusive on the private aspects of your life?

8.2 List of Respondents

#	Gender	Age	Relational Status	Kids	Occupation	Industry	Location	Mode	Date	Duration
1	Male	24	Domestic Partnership	No	Tele-marketer	Insurance	Stockholm	In person	22-Nov	01:12
2	Male	24	Domestic Partnership	Yes	Media Consultant	Media	Stockholm	In person	22-Nov	01:33
3	Female	22	Single	No	Traffic Director	Transportation	Stockholm	Phone	24-Nov	00:52
4	Male	47	Married	Yes	Painter	Construction	Södertälje	Phone	26-Nov	00:31
5	Male	39	Married	Yes	Assembly Instructor	Manufacturing	Södertälje	Phone	27-Nov	00:35
6	Female	33	Married	Yes	Store Manager	Retail	Södertälje	Phone	28-Nov	00:41
7	Male	36	Married	Yes	Logistician	Manufacturing	Södertälje	Phone	28-Nov	00:32
8	Female	41	Married	Yes	Sales Manager	Retail	Södertälje	Phone	29-Nov	00:39
9	Male	47	Married	Yes	CEO	IT	Södertälje	Phone	29-Nov	00:53
10	Female	38	Married	Yes	Dental Hygienist	Healthcare	Södertälje	Phone	29-Nov	00:38
11	Male	23	Domestic Partnership	No	Case Handler	Social Services	Stockholm	Phone	29-Nov	00:35
12	Female	23	Domestic Partnership	No	Store Clerk	Retail	Stockholm	Phone	30-Nov	00:29
13	Female	43	Married	Yes	Dental Hygienist	Healthcare	Södertälje	Phone	30-Nov	00:41
14	Male	24	Domestic Partnership	No	Event Manager	Beverages	Stockholm	Phone	30-Nov	00:31
15	Female	35	Married	Yes	Maintenance Planner	Manufacturing	Södertälje	Phone	01-Dec	00:28
16	Male	23	Domestic Partnership	No	Consultant	Management Consulting	Gothenburg	Phone	01-Dec	00:43
17	Male	35	Married	Yes	Quality Assurer	Manufacturing	Södertälje	Phone	02-Dec	00:42
18	Female	22	Domestic Partnership	No	Medical Secretary	Healthcare	Gothenburg	Phone	02-Dec	00:27
19	Male	24	Single	No	Programmatic Coordinator	Media	Stockholm	Phone	03-Dec	00:34
20	Female	23	Single	No	Store Clerk	Retail	Stockholm	Phone	03-Dec	00:28

8.3 List of figs.

Fig. 1: Main Framework

Fig. 2: Roles & Culture

Fig. 3: Methodical Proceeding

Fig. 4: Revised Model