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WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN ORGANIZATIONAL SUBCULTURES:
THE CASE OF MUTUA

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To my boys, Marc and Tim,
and my whole most amazing family.

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<div align="center">Thank you to all of you!</div>

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Abstract

Research in the work-life field has shown that work-life initiatives positively affect employees' integration attempts and overall well-being, when other variables, beyond structural support, are considered. Culture has been identified as a key factor for employees' work-life integration. However, even with organizational culture considered, research still falls short on being able to explain the variance in the experience of work-life balance in organizations.

This thesis combines a confirmatory and exploratory approach. On one hand, it is known that within one organization there can exist various subgroups that share the same values and behaviors, which can differ or even oppose the organizational culture. On the other hand, we suspect that organizational subcultures are the missing dimension that allows understanding the vast array of work-life experiences. We suppose that the level of work-life support can vary within subcultures and thus influence employees' work-life integration.

This thesis adopted a multi-level approach (organizational, interindividual and individual) to study the role of subcultures in employees' work-life balance in the headquarters and various branches of an insurance non-profit Spanish organization, administrating contingencies of work-related accidents and illnesses. Multiple sources of data collection were used to compile evidence, including archival research, a focus group (with the HR team), 44 in-depth semi-structured interviews and field observations.

The results show how individuals construct their work-life integration experiences within subcultures, also when influenced by different contextual macroeconomic and legal factors. The conceptual model constructed through the integration of these results shows that the immediate subculture had the strongest impact on the work-life experience and consequent boundary management and coping strategies used.

Various layers of context added to the complexity of the studied phenomenon. National context with its assumptions, encompassing the ideology of work and the gendered view of work-life issues, affected employees' "choices" around work-life integration. The macro economic and legal contexts and job characteristics represented the contextual factors that further directed individuals' decisions.

Supervisors and colleagues had a direct influence on work-life integration as they enacted the existing subcultural assumptions, directing individuals' work-life strategies by their supportive behaviors and allowance decisions. The level of job interdependence and possibility to coincide during working hours, further influenced supportive and unsupportive behaviours exhibited by supervisor and colleagues, emphasizing the importance of occupational and other contextual variables, when studying work-life issues.

Finally, individuals described their experience of work-life integration in function of multiple layers of context. This way, additionally to individual resilience and positive assessment, the study of subcultures and the multi-layered approach allowed uncovering existing barriers for work-life integration at different levels, providing suggestions for future research and practice.

Key words: work-life balance, work-life integration, organizational subcultures, social support, coping strategies.

Resumen

La investigación ha puesto de manifiesto que las iniciativas de integración de trabajo y vida personal tienen efectos positivos sobre la conciliación y sobre el bienestar general de los empleados cuando, además del apoyo estructural, se tienen en cuenta otras variables. La cultura organizacional ha sido identificada como uno de estos factores clave para la conciliación efectiva de trabajo y vida personal. Pero por si sola esta variable cultural no da cuenta de la diversidad de experiencias de conciliación trabajo-vida en las organizaciones.

Esta tesis parte de una constatación y de una sospecha: Por una parte, se basa en la observación de la existencia de subgrupos diferenciados dentro de una misma organización que pueden adoptar posiciones distintas con respecto a determinados valores de la cultura general de la organización. Por otra, se inspira en la sospecha de que las *subculturas organizacionales* son la dimensión oculta que permite explicar aquella multiplicidad de experiencias en cuanto a la conciliación. Se supone que el nivel de apoyo a la integración de trabajo y vida personal varía entre subculturas influyendo en la conciliación.

Desde un enfoque multinivel (organizacional, interindividual e individual), se ha estudiado el papel de las subculturas en la conciliación de los empleados de la sede central y de diversas delegaciones de una empresa española del sector de los seguros, que gestiona contingencias de accidentes de trabajo y enfermedades profesionales. Se utilizaron diversas técnicas cualitativas de colección de datos: investigación documental, grupo de discusión (con el equipo de recursos humanos), 44 entrevistas semi-estructuradas en profundidad y observaciones de campo.

Los resultados muestran cómo los individuos construyen sus experiencias de integración de vida laboral y personal dentro de las subculturas e influenciados además por factores contextuales macroeconómicos y legales. El modelo conceptual construido mediante la integración de los resultados pone de manifiesto que la subcultura organizacional tuvo el mayor impacto en la experiencia de conciliación, en la consiguiente gestión de los límites entre diferentes facetas de la vida y en las estrategias de afrontamiento utilizadas.

Varios niveles de contexto se añaden a la complejidad de los fenómenos estudiados. El contexto nacional con sus supuestos básicos, que abarcan la ideología del trabajo y la visión de género sobre la conciliación, influyeron en las '"opciones" que tenían los empleados en torno a la integración de la vida con el trabajo. Asimismo, los contextos macro económicos y jurídicos y las características del trabajo fueron los factores contextuales que orientaron adicionalmente las decisiones de los individuos.

Los supervisores y compañeros de trabajo tuvieron una influencia directa en la integración de la vida laboral y personal, ya que promovieron los supuestos

subculturales subyacentes, influyendo en las estrategias de los individuos mediante el nivel del apoyo mostrado y los permisos concedidos. El nivel de interdependencia laboral y la posibilidad de coincidir durante las horas de trabajo, facilitaron también las conductas de apoyo y sus contrarias exhibidas por los supervisores y colegas, poniendo en evidencia la importancia de las variables profesionales y contextuales en el estudio de la conciliación.

Finalmente, las personas describieron su integración de trabajo-vida en función de diversos niveles de contexto. De este modo, el estudio de las subculturas y el enfoque de múltiples niveles permitió descubrir, más allá de la resiliencia individual y de la evaluación positiva, barreras existentes para la integración de la vida laboral y personal en diferentes niveles, aportando sugerencias para futuras investigaciones e intervenciones.

Palabras clave: conciliación trabajo-vida, integración de trabajo y vida personal, subculturas organizacionales, apoyo social, estrategias de afrontamiento.

Resum

La investigació ha posat de manifest que les iniciatives d'integració de treball i vida personal tenen efectes positius sobre la conciliació i sobre el benestar general dels empleats quan, a més del suport estructural, es tenen en compte altres variables. La cultura organitzacional ha estat identificada com un d'aquests factors clau per a la conciliació efectiva de treball i vida personal. Però per si sola aquesta variable cultural no dóna compte de la diversitat d'experiències de conciliació treball- vida a les organitzacions.

Aquesta tesi parteix d'una constatació i d'una sospita: D'una banda, es basa en l'observació de l'existència de subgrups diferenciats dins d'una mateixa organització que poden adoptar posicions diferents pel que fa a determinats valors de la cultura general de l'organització. Per altra, s'inspira en la sospita que les *subcultures organitzacionals* són la dimensió oculta que permet explicar aquella multiplicitat d'experiències pel que fa a la conciliació. Se suposa que el nivell de suport a la integració de treball i vida personal varia entre subcultures, influint en la conciliació.

Des d'un enfocament multinivell (organitzacional, interindividual i individual), s'ha estudiat el paper de les subcultures en la conciliació dels empleats de la seu central i de diverses delegacions d'una empresa espanyola del sector de les assegurances, que gestiona contingències d'accidents de treball i malalties professionals. Es van utilitzar diverses tècniques qualitatives de col·lecció de dades: recerca documental, grup de discussió (amb l'equip de recursos humans), 44 entrevistes semiestructurades en profunditat i observacions de camp.

Els resultats mostren com els individus construeixen les seves experiències d'integració de vida laboral i personal dins de les subcultures i influenciats a més per factors contextuals macroeconòmics i legals. El model conceptual construït mitjançant la integració dels resultats posa de manifest que la subcultura organitzacional va tenir el major impacte en l'experiència de conciliació, en la consegüent gestió dels límits entre diferents facetes de la vida i en les estratègies d'afrontament utilitzades.

Diversos nivells de context s'afegeixen a la complexitat dels fenòmens estudiats. El context nacional amb els seus supòsits bàsics, que abasten la ideologia del treball i la visió de gènere sobre la conciliació, van influir en les '"opcions" que tenien els empleats al voltant de la integració de la vida amb el treball. Així mateix, els contextos macro econòmics i jurídics i les característiques del treball van ser els factors contextuals que van orientar addicionalment les decisions dels individus.

Els supervisors i companys de treball van tenir una influència directa en la integració de la vida laboral i personal, ja que van promoure els supòsits subculturals subjacents, influint en les estratègies dels individus mitjançant el

nivell del suport mostrat i els permisos concedits. El nivell d'interdependència laboral i la possibilitat de coincidir durant les hores de treball van facilitar també les conductes de suport i les seves contràries exhibides pels supervisors i col·legues, posant en evidència la importància de les variables professionals i contextuals en l'estudi de la conciliació.

Finalment, les persones van descriure la seva integració de treball- vida en funció de diversos nivells de context. D'aquesta manera, l'estudi de les subcultures i l'enfocament de múltiples nivells van permetre descobrir, més enllà de la resiliència individual i de l'avaluació positiva, barreres existents per a la integració de la vida laboral i personal en diferents nivells, aportant suggeriments per a futures investigacions i intervencions.

Paraules clau: conciliació treball-vida, integració de treball i vida personal, subcultures organitzacionals, suport social, estratègies d'afrontament.

Presentation

As things do not happen in a vacuum neither did this thesis. Several key events had to happen for this thesis to see the light of the day. Namely, the topic, people and personal experiences.

First, how the topic emerged. I first heard the term "work-life balance" when I applied for a research position at IESE Business School and was surprised to discover that there existed a vast area of research dedicated to the topic. Though enrolling in a PhD program was not even in my thoughts at that point in time, I enjoyed greatly the research and got the chance of participating in research projects looking at different aspects of work-life balance. It was while working on data collection for a business case about work-life policy implementation that one of the interviewees said: "They (policies) are not for all"[1]. This caught my attention. The person pointed to the differences in the occupational demands of sales employees compared to those in the accounting department, implying that sales people have many more problems for work-life integration. Interestingly, one employee from the accountant department thought that their work-life balance was as difficult to reach. This anecdote developed into a case and surfaced again while I was trying to narrow down my research focus and was playing with different key words like culture, occupational context, departmental peculiarities, etc. When the word subcultures emerged in one of the articles, it was like the missing piece of a puzzle that put it all together. Studying subcultures allowed looking into various realities and experiences within one organization, while exploring several levels of culture, something which seemed extremely interesting at that point in time and is still now. By diving into the research of work-life integration in organizational subcultures my goal was to understand what influenced employees' work-life experiences, what they did for a satisfactory integration of spheres and what could be done to improve it. During my PhD journey I moved from concentrating only on supervisors, to looking at different kind of cultural support, and eventually adopted a multi-level and multi-layer approach, which allowed me considering broader contextual factors. Studying the context and especially assumptions at various levels not only gave me "aha" moments when things seemed to be flowing, but also gave me the possibility to understand better the experiences at the individual level, the way employees constructed their realities and to theorize why they did it one way or another. It was a very enriching and intellectually rewarding process, which I enjoyed deeply and which also netted

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[1] Stepanova, O**.,** Poelmans, S., Segria, M. (unpublished). *Case: Implementing "24.3 WorkBetterLife" at Nike Iberia*. Barcelona: IESE Publishing.

me the insight about how much I enjoy doing research and that this PhD journey is not coming to an end once the thesis is handed in.

Second, several people were key for the birth of this thesis. Having worked in work-family research with Professor Steven Poelmans at IESE Business School allowed me to not only see the broad specter of topics studied the field, but also to participate in various projects, publish co-authored chapters, present and visit conferences and get to know the leading scholars in the field. This background allowed me moving into the doctoral studies. But it is thanks to my thesis director, Professor Josep Maria Blanch, that this journey continued, making it a positive experience. Josep Maria always supported my need to explore the topics and build my own way and process, advancing at various levels of the thesis at the same time, trying new ideas and presenting thesis advancements at the conferences. This flexibility on one hand, guidance, support and reminders about keeping in mind the big picture, while wandering into the woods, on the other hand, helped me to enjoy the studied topic and the whole process. In this regard the yearly panels within the doctoral program were very valuable for the advancement of the process and deserve a special recognition. I was privileged to attend several, though way too little, meetings of the Kofarips and Wonpum[2] research groups to present thesis advancements. The feedback and support of the team was priceless. Finally, this thesis would not see the light if it were not for Mutua and the amazing HR team, who offered constant support and opened all the doors for data collection. Special gratitude goes to Xavier, Gemma, Mari Luz, Mar, Emilio, and obviously to the 44 employees who agreed to share their experiences. The variety of ages, life situations, stories made this journey even more exciting and allowed singling out experiences, observing patterns, but most important seeing the power of individual resilience and ability to construct new and enriching meanings around life events.

Third, my personal experience played an important role in this journey. Over the last year I had the chance to experience work-life balance in practice when Tim was born. Not only he brought us as parents the most amazing feeling of happiness experienced so far, but his arrival and managing daily life also allowed putting into practice a lot of theoretical knowledge. Furthermore, it gave me the possibility to look into the data not only through the eyes of a researcher, but also as a mother, questioning statements which before could have been taken for granted. I would like to believe that this experience helped me diving deeper

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[2] Proyecto **KOFARIPS** (2008-11). *El capitalismo organizacional como factor de riesgo psicosocial.* Plan I+D+I. Referencia: SEJ2007-63686/PSIC. IP: JM Blanch, UAB

Proyecto **WONPUM** (2012-14). *Trabajar en Servicios Humanos bajo la Nueva Gestión Pública.* Referencia: PSI2011-23705. IP: JM Blanch, UAB

into the analysis and obtaining valuable insights into the studied topic and the work that follows.

Last by not least, this journey and the key events which led to its birth would not have happened without being embedded in various contexts. Nothing of this would be said or done without different people and events: my whole family, especially my parents, to whom I owe life, different opportunities and decisions that they and their significant ones took in their lives so that other opportunities and decisions could emerge in my life: traveling, searching, stretching myself, meeting people, exploring and experiencing. This to say, my gratitude goes to all those who in some way, intentionally or unintentionally, contributed to where I am now in life and will do so in the future. Special gratitude goes to my husband Marc and our son Tim, my boys and great buddies, without whom making this life journey would be half the fun and thanks to whom work-life integration is an exciting experience.

INTRODUCTION

Research over the past three decades advanced considerably in understanding the relation between work and family domains and the influence of various work-life initiatives on it (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). Many studies focused on work-life policies and their effects on employees (Grover & Crooker, 1995; O'Driscoll et al., 2003; Richman, Civian, Shannon, Hill, & Brennan, 2008; Scandura and Lankau, 1997). Research has shown that practices promoting work-life balance help attracting and employing women, reduce employee stress, burnout, and work-family conflict (O'Driscoll et al., 2004). Moreover the adoption of work-family policy bundles has been associated with a number of productivity indicators such as increased market value (Arthur, 2004); productivity (Konrad & Mangel, 2000); organizational citizenship behavior (Lambert, 2000); and perceived organizational performance (Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000). Still, research has shown that the availability of policies is not sufficient to improve employees' well-being (Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner & Hanson, 2009; Premeaux, Adkins, & Mossholder, 2007; Shellenbarger, 1992), and other variables need to be taken into account to encourage a work-life sensitive mindset in the organization.

Organizational culture has been identified as a key factor for employees' work-life integration (Haas, Allard, & Hwang, 2002; Kofodimos, 1995; Lobel & Kossek, 1996; Shellenbarger, 1992; Solomon, 1994; Rapoport et al., 2002). Moreover, underlying cultural assumptions (Schein, 1997) represent a strong influence on employees' behaviors and affect the way work is done and thus ways of work-life integration. However, even with organizational culture considered, research still falls short on being able to explain why some employees have a better work-life integration experience than others. The missing, but pertinent dimension- as suggested by previous studies- is organizational subcultures, because even within one organization there can exist various subgroups that share the same values and behaviors that can differ from the organizational culture in general or even oppose it (Van Maanen & Barley, 1985; Trice & Morand, 1991). They can be characterized by different degrees of work-life supportiveness, which affect employees' work-life integration (Detert, Schroeder, & Mauriel, 2000; Palthe & Kossek, 2002). While the construct of the wider organizational culture has received a considerable amount of research attention, there is a dearth of studies investigating the role of organizational subcultures in the work-life fiel, and particularly their role on individual work-life integration.

Additionally to organizational supportiveness existing on the cultural level, it can also manifest itself in different ways in various occupational groups and professional contexts (Johns, 2001, 2006), which could represent different

subcultures, with various degrees of offered support. Kossek, Lewis & Hammer (2010) argue that both policies (structural support) and organizational culture, encompassing informal policies, organizational, managerial and co-workers' support (cultural support) are important to assist employees in their work-life integration. Nevertheless, they are conditioned by various levels of context (Johns, 2006; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004).

To understand and research work-life integration, we should situate it in a wider global, national and cultural contexts. Particularly the organizational, interindividual and individual level variables need to be considered. At the wider macro and European level, legislative and economic conditions and specific articulation of work-life balance at the national context influence the way professional and personal life spheres are integrated at other levels (de Dulk et al., 2012; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). Research shows differences across national contexts in employees' perceptions of entitlement to using state and employer provided policies, moderated by gender, parental and occupational status and awareness of the provisions (Lewis & Smithson, 2001). Therefore legal work-life provisions, like childcare policies and finance allowances, assumptions about gender roles existing at the national level influence the level of acceptance of work-life and particularly family-work spillover at the organizational level. Consequently it creates a context for behaviours at the interindinvidual level, among supervisors and colleagues. Finally, the individual conceptualization of work-life balance and subsequent strategies are elaborated considering the broader context. Thus multiple variables and levels of context need to be considered.

The fast pace of modern working life in both the public and private sector (Blanch, Crespo & Sahagún, 2012; Blanch & Stechner, 2010; OECD, 2007), the increased level of experienced stress and its negative effects on general health and perceived well-being (Geurts et al., 2000) make the study of work-life integration an important issue. We attempt to contribute to the current work-life field, by extending the research of organizational culture, since multiple authors pointed out to its key role in individuals' conciliation attempts (Lewis, 2001; Rappoport et al., 2002). We suggest that purely cultural characteristics, such as artifacts, values and assumptions (Schein, 1997), need to be researched within the work-family culture framework. They allow going beyond individual and interpersonal behaviours (e.g. supervisor support) to tap into shared beliefs and conducts and allow for a better understanding of work-family culture and subcultures. The latter is particularly interesting and pertinent, as existing subcultures can differ in their interpretation of the work-life message transmitted by the company culture, thus clashing with it. Therefore work-life supportive subcultures are essential for employees' work-life integration efforts. Besides, the consideration of the occupational context and the work-life friendliness of

different subcultures existing within an organization can allow a deeper understanding of barriers or enhancers for individual work-life balance and reflect positively on the organizational efforts of work-life policies and program implementation. This answers to the earlier made calls for a better understanding of existing organizational subcultures (Detert & Schroeder, 2000), understanding of the influence of occupation on the supportiveness of organizational culture (Andreassi & Thompson, 2008) and the importance of considering individual and contextual antecedents for work-life balance (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). Our intention is to contribute to the research and theory development on work-life integration, by understanding better which mechanisms are involved on the organizational, interindividual and individual levels and how they support or create barriers to one's work-life balance. It is also aligned with a recent call for a better understanding of work-life "balancing" (Poelmans et al., 2008), that of which strategies, creative solutions and negotiations lead to the creation of work-life balance. Besides, by adopting a multi-level approach we answer to a call in literature encouraging the exploration of various levels of context to understand the constraints for work-life integration (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007) within a wider European context and contribute to the understanding of the role of subcultures for work-life balance.

Therefore while acknowledging the multiple levels of context, this thesis aims to understand the role of organizational subcultures in work-life integration of employees. On the theoretical level we attempt to understand the peculiarities of subcultures and mechanisms through which they influence the work-life integration process on the interindividual and individual levels.

On the empirical level, we are particularly interested in understanding how organizational assumptions translate in organizational subcultures and subsequently affect employees' work-life integration. Additionally, we are interested to understand on the interindividual level the possible barriers and enhancers for work-life issues presented by supervisors and co-workers in the process of integration. Finally, on the individual level, we aim to gain insights into the individual work-life experiences and ways in which organizational subcultures and other layers of context affect it.

A multi-level approach was adopted to study the role of subcultures in the work-life balance process. A qualitative approach was used to collect empirical evidence as it allowed a deeper exploration of new topics and the emergence of new subthemes (Creswell, 1994). Additionally, individual experiences and conceptualization of work-life balance were captured and explored in further detail. It should be noted that though subcultures are studied in other disciplines (e.g. antropology, sociology, culture studies) we will limit the theoretical and

empirical research to studies done in the fields of organizational behaviour, organizational and social psychology (Haas, Allard, & Hwang, 2002; Lok et al., 2005; Morgan & Ogbonna, 2008). Besides, though we acknowledge the role of the wider macro context and refer to it when appropriate, in this thesis we concentrated on the other levels of analysis and organized both the theoretical and empirical parts of the work accordingly.

In the first part of the work, **theoretical framework**, we introduce and review the theoretical and research advancements in the work-life interface at the organizational, interindividual and individual levels. The **first chapter** reviews conflict/enrichment perspective and the definitions of work-life balance. The **second chapter** describes the role of the wider macro and national context and presents advancement in the research of organizational cultural and subcultural support. The **third chapter** reviews the interindividual level and the role of supervisor and colleague support in work-life integration. To close this part, the **fourth** chapter looks into the individual level, specifically into boundary management and coping strategies.

The second part of the thesis present **the empirical study**, the method and the results. We introduce results according to the studied levels: organizational, interindividual and individual. The discussion of results and conclusions finalizes this thesis.

PART 1

Theoretical Framework

1. The Work-Life Interface

The integration of work and personal life has been conceptualized in different ways: work-life balance, work-family conflict, spillover, enrichment, etc. (Greenhaus & Beutell,1985; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Clark, 2000). The most common explanation of the work-family interaction is based on the *scarcity theory* of role accumulation that contends that individuals possess a finite amount of time and energy and that the accumulations of roles will mostly likely lead to overload, conflict and strain (Marks, 1977). *Role conflict* perspective, based on role theory, also posits that various roles lead to role conflict and stress (Kahn, Wolf, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Researchers have mostly used the role conflict perspective to understand the work-family interface (Eby et al., 2005; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Recent research adopted a more positive view of the relationships between the different areas of life. For example, it has been argued that active participation in a field of life can provide access to resources and experiences that contribute to individual development (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). In addition, positive experiences generated in one role can serve to buffer the negative experiences, e.g. stress, that occur in the other role (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Below we present the conceptualizations of both perspectives.

1.1 Conflict Perspective

The work-family conflict is the most widely used construct (Kelly et al., 2008). It is closely linked to the role theory and is defined as "a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p.77). Altough originally the construct has been conceptualized as unidimensional (Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly, 1983), recently it has been thought as a bi-dimensional: work interfering with family and family interfering with work (Frone et al., 1997). For instance, picking up a sick child from school during working hours will require taking time off work and might result in a family-to-work conflict; while finishing a project for a deadline over the week-end reduces time spent with the family and can lead to work-to-family conflict. Most research on work-family conflict focused on the extent of work interference with life (Kelly et al., 2008) and studies showed its bigger prevalence among employees (Eagle, Miles, & Icenogle, 1997; Frone 2003; Williams & Alliger, 1994). For instance, the review of a US large-scale surveys, conducted between 1990 and 1997 showed that between a quarter and

half of respondents experienced work-family conflict, while family-work conflict was significantly lower (around 10-14%) (Bellavia & Frone, 2005).

According to Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) there exist three types of work-family conflict: time-based, strain-based and behaviour-based conflicts. *Time based conflict* refers to situations "when the time demands of one role make it difficult or impossible to participate in another role" (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 1997, p. 4). For instance, to complete a deadline and be at a family reunion the same evening. According to these authors, s*train-based conflict* occurs "when symptoms of psychological train (e.g. anxiety, fatigue, irritability) generated by the demands of work or family role intrude or "spill over" into the other role, making it difficult to fulfill the responsibilities of that role" (*ibid*, p. 4). For example, an employee trying to prepare for an important meeting might be less responsive to her family needs. Finally, *behaviour-based conflict* refers to situations "when the behaviours that are expected or appropriate in the family role (e.g. expressiveness, emotional sensitivity) are viewed as inappropriate or dysfunctional when used in the work role" (*ibid*). For example, a sales employee, whose aggressive working style is considered to be a sign of success, yet these behaviours repeated in the home environment create a tense situation.

Recently a measure of work-family conflict was developed and validated, that included the mentioned above three-dimensions (time, strain and behaviour) and two directions of work-family conflict (work-family, family-work) (Carlson et al., 2000), thus firmly establishing the concept, its definition and measurement.

1.2 Enrichment Perspective

There exist different definitions of the positive side of the work-family interface: positive spillover, enhancement engagement, work-family enrichment and facilitation (Carlson, Kacmar, Grzywacz y Wayne, 2006; Crouter, 1984; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Kirchmeyer, 1992; Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer y King, 2002). According to Carlson et al. these concepts differ in their emphasis of received benefits, experiences, and improvement of role performance. For instance, *work-family facilitation* refers to a form of synergy, where resources from one role, like affect, skills, self-esteem, etc., make participation easier in the other role (Wayne, Musica & Fleeson, 2004). *Enhancement* is defined as social and psychological *resources* acquired through participation in various life roles (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002). Work-family enrichment points out that "*experiences* in one role improve the quality of life in the other" (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006, p. 73). Finally, positive spillover refers to *experiences*, like moods, skills, values, and behaviours transferred from one role to another (Carlson, et al., 2006).

Therefore, the positive link between work and life domains is emphasized by the transfer of resources, experiences and emotional states from one area to another, facilitating the participation in different roles and quality of life improvement.

Work-family enrichment and work-family conflict have been found to have almost no correlation and therefore should be considered as independent constructs (Frone, 2003). Therefore, positive spillover and work-family conflict can be experienced concurrently and are distinct (Frone, 2003; Grzywacz & Butler, 2005). For instance, an employee can experience negative spillover from work to family, by juggling multiple appointments, deadlines and meetings and at the same time benefit from it by transferring the learned skills of being well-organized to the family field (positive spillover).

While distinct, these constructs are similar in that they are bi-drectional, occurring from family-to-work and vice versa (Crouter, 1984; Frone, Russel, y Cooper, 1992; Frone et al., 1997). Supported by Grzywacz and Marks (2000), Frone (2003) proposes a four-fold taxonomy of work-life balance, which distinguishes between the direction (work-family or family-life) and the type of effects occurring (facilitation or conflict). Thus, a low degree of inter-role conflict and high degree of inter-role facilitation leads **to work-family balance.**

Initial research on work-family enrichment uncovered benefits obtained from multiple roles, such as role privileges, status security, status enhancement, and enrichment in personality (Sieber, 1974). Later research found that there exist several types of spillover: mood, values, skills, and behaviours (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). The mood spillover refers to the transfer of one's emotional stated fom one domain to another, while values spillover occurs when what is

valued, for instance at work (being a good problem-solver) is also demanded in the family domain, e.g. from spouse and children. According to Hanson, Colton and Hammer (2003) there exist affective enrichment (similar to the mood spillover one described above) and instrumental enrichment, that refers to skills and abilities gained in one domain and applied to another, like conflict-management skills learned at work and applied to resolving conflicts among children or family members (Kirschmeyer, 1992). Other instrumental benefits include perspective, flexibility, and psychological, physical, social capital, and material resources.

The scale developed and validated by Carlson et al. (2006) allows even further the understanding of work-family and family-work enrichment. Both directions of enrichment have three dimensions, two similar (affect and development) and differ in the third one (work-to-family capital and family-to-work efficiency). The affect dimension refers to moods and attitudes, for example work "puts me in a good mood and this helps me be a better family member". The development dimension refers to skills, knowledge, behaviour, for example, work "helps me to gain knowledge and this helps me be a better family member". The work-to-family capital dimension refers to the fact that work reinforces one's psychological resources as security, confidence and self-esteem, which benefits the family domain. While the family-to-work efficiency dimension refers to the fact that family obligations reinforce one's excellence in the work domain. For example, family obligations "require me to avoid wasting time at work and this helps me be a better worker". Research findings show that family-to-work enrichment is significantly higher than work-to family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

The multiple role participation theory (Froberg, Gjerdingen & Preston, 1986) offers insights in the outcomes of multiple roles participation. Kirschmeyer (1992) study focused on the relationship between participation in non-work domains (e.g. parenting, community involvement, recreation and positive non-work spillover). Results showed that parenting served as a buffer work problems, while community involvement led to the generation of new ideas and feeling energized and helped to disconnect from the problems. Involvement in non-work domains led to the development of delegation, teamwork, presentation and self-management skills. Greenhaus and Powell (2006) contend that participation in multiple roles leads to three positive outcomes. First, additive effects on well-being, that is being satisfied with family and work, leads to the subjective feelings of happiness and quality of life. Second, it buffers strain experiences in one of the roles, that is satisfaction in one domain can buffer the dissatisfaction in another. Third, it leads to the transfer of positive experiences between domains. For instance, employees learn behaviours in one domain and apply them to another one. Therefore involvement in multiple roles across

different domains can bring both personal and professional positive outcomes to the individual and even buffer negative experiences.

1.3 Work-Life Balance

The expression *work-life balance* has been present in academic journals and popular press since the last two decades. Nevertheless, though referring often to work-life balance, the concept has not been closely studied or defined (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003). Besides, empirical studies that often mention it, do not differentiate it from other terms used in the work-life field (Saltzstein, Ting, & Saltzstein, 2001; Sumer & Knight, 2001; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999) and there is no unanimity in what it is. Over the past years there was a change in terminology from work-*family* to work-*life* balance, thus acknowledging the importance of other spheres in life besides family and diversity of the current world, where people occupy a variety of roles and pursue a multitude of goals, which might not include that of building a family. Throughout this work we will use the term work-life balance to encompass all the range of lives one might have.

Various authors (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Kalliath & Brough, 2008) voice the importance of establishing a specific definition of work-life balance to deepen current research; gain a better understanding of its role as an outcome variable or as means of comparison of the experienced work-life balance among different groups of employees and organizations. In order to get a better understanding of the concept, we searched for the current definitions of work-life balance, presented below (Table 1).

Various authors attempted to categorize its different conceptualizations. Carlson and Grzywacz (2008) classify theorizing of work-life balance into three categories: equality, fit and role performance. The *equality perspective* views both domains as equal and suggest that in order to achieve the balance one should distribute his/her resources, like attention, time, psychological involvement equally between the two spheres (Ayree & Luk, 1996; Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003; Kirshmeyer, 2000; Marks & MacDermid, 1996). The *fit perspective* posits that balance does not only reflect the investments one makes, rather individuals' satisfaction with different roles. Therefore balance investment in a role is done according to one's values (Kofodimos, 1993; Lambert, 1990) and is evaluated through an individual's affective appraisal of his role performance across a variety of domains (Milkie & Peltola, 1999; Sheldon & Niemiec, 2006). Finally, *the role performance perspective* puts emphasis on the social basis of work-life balance (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). It suggests that an individual reaches work-life balance through the negotiation and agreement on expectations with both the work and home partner. Thus, they

extend the concept beyond the individual and allow for better assessment, beyond self-report, of observable behaviours.

In a recent publication Kalliath and Brough (2008) took a different approach in their attempt to understand the conceptualizations of work-life balance. They reviewed the six more common conceptualizations of work-life balance that according to them focus on : 1. multiple roles (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003); 2. equity across multiple roles (*ibid*); 3. satisfaction between multiple roles (Clark, 2000; Kirshmeyer, 2000); 4. fulfillment of role salience between multiple roles (Greenhaus & Allen, in press); 5. a relationship between conflict and facilitation (Grzywacz & Bass, 2003); and 6. perceived control between multiple levels (Fleetwood, 2007). They emphasize the positive meaning of "good balance" mentioned in the definitions, the change of level of balance over time, depending on the life stage one is in and the demands that are faced. Based on this overview, Kalliath and Brough (2008), present their own definition (See Table 1).

The overview of the definitions brings us to the conclusion that besides the mentioned above characteristics, the following is important: good performance in a role; not only time, but also energy and commitment are essential, together with reaching an agreement over role expectations with the significant others. Besides, personal freedom to decide where and how to work and the importance of following own priorities in doing so are emphasized.

Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003) found that employees spending more time on family (from the total time available) experienced a higher level of quality of life, followed by those who spent equal amount of time on both domain and finally those who spent more time on work. Therefore, the perception of balance as an equal distribution of resources between the two domains does not seem to reflect well the reality. Rapoport et al. (2002) propose to use the term work-life integration instead of balance to encompass different parts of life and their integration depends on one's priorities, which not necessarily need to demand equal amount of personal resources, as time and energy. Therefore by integrating different parts of life independent of the time allocated to them, both men and women should be able finding satisfaction about their respective lives. As this conceptualization is in line with our perspective on the concept, we will use the terms work-life balance and integration interchangeably to reflect the phenomenon in this chapter.

Table 1. Definitions of Work-Life Balance

Year	Authors	Definition
1993	Kofodimos	Work-life balance is "a satisfying, healthy, and productive life that includes work, play, and love…". (p. xiii).
1996	Marcks & MacDermid	Role balance is "the tendency to become fully engaged in the performance of every role in one´s total role system, to approach every typical role and role partner with an attitude of attentiveness and care. Put differently, it is the practice of that evenhanded alertness known sometimes as mindfulness" (p.421)
2000	Kirschmeyer	Living a balanced life is "achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains, and to do so requires personal resources such as energy, time, and commitment to be well distributed across domains" (p.81).
2000	Clark	Work-life balance is "satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict" (p. 349).
2002	Rapaport et al	Propose "Work-personal life integration" instead of balance to encompass different parts of life and their integration depends on one's priorities, which not necessarily need to demand equal amount of personal resources.
2003	Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw	Work-life balance: "the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in - an equally satisfied with - his or her work role and family role." (p.513.) Propose 3 components of work-life balance: 1. time balance. 2. involvement balance. 3. satisfaction balance.
2003	Frone	"Low levels of conflict and high levels of inter-role facilitation represent work-family balance" (p.145).
2006	Greenhaus & Allen	Define work-life balance as "the extent to which an individual's effectiveness and satisfaction in work and family roles are compatible with the individual's life-role priorities at a given point in time". (p. 10)
2007	Grzywacz & Carlson	"…as accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his/her role partners in the work and family domains." (p. 459)
2007	Fleetwood	"Work-life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work" (p. 351)
2008	Kalliath & Brough	"Work-life balance is the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual's current life priorities" (p.326).
2008	Voydanoff	"Work-life balance is the global assessment that work and family resources are sufficient to meet work and family demands such that participation is effective in both domains." (p. 48).

As for the measure of work-life balance, Clark (2001) measure of **work-life integration** conceptualizes it in terms of 5 aspects (role conflict, work satisfaction, home satisfaction, family functioning, employee citizenship). Work culture was conceptualized in terms of temporal flexibility, operational flexibility and supportive supervision. The operational flexibility is most often associated with the different aspects of work-life balance and also with work satisfaction and family well-being (*ibid*). Interestingly, this study didn't find any association between work-family balance measure as the operational flexibility explained the variance. The author suggests that the temporal flexibility consists primarily in one's work autonomy, acquired through the operational flexibility and not in one's will of deciding on the worked. Besides, none of the work culture variables affected individual's family activity satisfaction or role conflict in a significant way. That is, positive effect of operational flexibility and supportive supervision are not enough to encourage individuals to pursue rewarding family activities, though can give employees more possibilities of doing so.

It should be noted that few studies exist measuring specifically work-life balance. Grzywacz and Marks (2000), being an exception, found that work-family facilitation (both direction) were negatively related to poor mental health without gender having any moderating effect.

Therefore, more research is needed to measure work-life integration and understand its antecedents and consequences. We further discuss structural and cultural variables affecting work-life balance.

2. Organizational Structural and Cultural Support

Kossek, Lewis & Hammer (2010) distinguish between structural and cultural support for work, family and personal life. By structural support they understand all those initiatives that alter individual's time, place and amount of work done and provide additional resources to be able integrating all parts of life. Such policies as: flexible work schedule, teleworking, reduced workloads, etc. Cultural support refers to informal policies and social relationship support as shown by supervisors', co-workers and general organizational cultural norms supportive of one's personal demands. Therefore it operates on the work-group level and organizational level, encompassing cultural norms and values. In this chapter we will focus on organizational level support, specifically work-life policies and organizational culture and subculture. Work-group level, specifically supervisor and co-worker support will be discussed in the next chapter.

It would be impossible to understand the cultural and structural support, without locating it within a broader European and national contexts. Therefore, we follow the adopted multi-level framework and first discuss the European context for work-life integration. Second, the national context and the welfare policies in Spain are presented. Finally, we move to the review of organizational structural and cultural support.

2.1. The European Context of Work-Life Integration.

The work-life balance metaphor has been researched since more than five decades (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1965) and originated in the Western world as a response to dilemmas regarding work management related to other parts of life-particularly the family (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007). Along the years the way work-life issues were tackled changed. First, they were defined as a problem of working mothers and dual-earner families, then elicited concerns of burnout and stress as a result of work-family conflict showed a far broader scope of their influence (*ibid*). The definition also changed from work-family to work-life, transmitting a more encompassing view of other spheres others than family into the integration of personal and professional spheres.

A study of reconciliation of work and private spheres among 30 European countries (European Commission, 2005) showed a wide range of variability among statuary support, encompassing leave facilities, childcare services, flexible working arrangements and financial allowances. Countries differed in the degree of their implementation, prioritizing some policies over others. We won't discuss their peculiarities within this work to preserve the focus on the studied topic, rather we will give an overview of the status quo. The importance

of promoting work-life initiatives on the macro level is linked to the current low fertility rates, resulting in a reversed birth pyramid (IPF, 2007), lower participation of women in paid employment as a result of lack of childcare facilities and thus, gender pay gaps, among other reasons (OECD, 2007). By providing state support for childcare related issues and in general for work-life integration, on the macro level European countries aim for higher competitive advantage compared to other countries, and on the microlevel, individuals get a possibility to combine work and life according to their needs and priorities (European Comission, 2005; OECD, 2007)

While statuary support exists in all European countries to a different extent, the organizational and company support is almost inexistent; banks, hospitals and big industrial corporations being an exception (European Commission, 2005). The reason for policy implementation on this level could be explained by the institutional pressure that is the degree to which work-life integration is accepted and thus needs to be reproduced on the organizational level (*ibid*). This pressure varies by sector, public companies experiencing more pressure versus private, and by company size, large companies' visibility obliging them to set positive example and stay competitive (*ibid;* den Dulk et al., 2012). Besides, companies' decision is influenced by the "business case", when benefits for introducing policies outweigh the costs in terms of increased motivation, retention, improved corporate image, etc. Finally, company's policy provision also depends on its internal staff characteristics, as the amount of employees who have children.

Above and beyond the reasons for introducing policies on a wider macro level, there are assumptions that influence the way work-life integration is conceptualized, the supports that are offered at the organizational level and consequently their use, reflecting existing broader systemic issues. These assumptions are gender neutrality, individual choice and cultural neutrality (Lewis, et al. 2007). Despite the fact that in reality women are the main care-providers for children and household and users of existing policies, work-life balance is presented as gender neutral. It not only brings back the traditional distribution of tasks within the household, but also neglects men's family needs and aspirations. Besides, the changing pace of work, increased speed in work execution and global competition allows work penetrating more often and in more invasive ways into the life sphere, perpetuating the existence of the ideal worker, devoted intensely both in terms of time and effort to work (Brandth & Kvande, 2001; Rapoport et al, 2002). By offering work-life policies, companies supposedly enhance employees' choice and personal responsibility for the ways in which they want to combine work and life spheres, but ignore making necessarily changes at the level of culture, structure and practices, that affect these choices. Particularly, the intensification of work, where one shows "commitment" by working longer hours or where work spills into the private

spheres, in case of knowledge workers (Lewis, 2003) or the structural constraints of household chores all affect these "choices". The assumption of work-life balance as culture free refers to the Anglo-American origins of the concept that spread to other countries (Lewis, et al. 2007). Thus it does not acknowledge different conceptualizations of work-life integration across cultures, integrating elements or practices proper to it.

Therefore by understanding a wider context of work-life integration at the macro level, a deeper understanding of the ways work and private spheres are integrated and the existing assumptions on other levels of context provide a new vision on the issues at hand. Besides it allows moving from quick "fixes" for the achievement of a state of balance, conceptualization of work and tackling deeper sited mindset and structural changes.

Below we review the work-life arrangements existing in Spain and the underlying assumptions and cultural peculiarities that affect their use and employees' work-life balance.

2.2. National Context: Welfare Policies in Spain[3]

Spain is a conservative welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 2000) or the Mediterranean welfare regime, characterized by the strong role played by the family in the creation of welfare and distribution of income and services (Ferrera, 1995; Moreno, 2004; Salido & Moreno, 2007). The state provisions are mostly based on pensions and the level of social assistance is low and mainly directed to employees within the regular market and restricted ones to those in the non-institutional market (Ferrera, 1996). Nevertheless, the 'micro solidarity' of the family, where all incoming resources are distributed and shared among family members, allows its members to enjoy a relatively high level of well-being[4].

With women's rising educational levels and higher participation in the paid labour (52,8%, Eurostat, 2009), dual earner households emerged (Chinchilla, Poelmans, & León, 2003; Moreno, 2004), which contributed to the reinforcement of the 'family and relatives' micro solidarity' model, where family's role is key in provision of childcare and other kind of supports (Moreno, 2006; Naldini, 2003; Tóbia, 2001).

The so-called 'superwomen', the generation of women between 40 and 64, contributed considerably to the current status quo (Moreno, 2004). Their desire

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[3] A short version of this section will be published in Stepanova (2012). Organizational Subculture and Family Supportive Culture in a Spanish Organization. In: S. Poelmans, J. Greenhaus, & M. las Heras, *New Frontiers in Work-Family Research: A Vision for the Future in a Global World*. Palgrave Marcmillan.

[4] National statistics show that Spain has low levels of poverty compared to other EU countries, as families support their members. Thus there was 36% of individual poverty compared to 5 % of poor households.

to work led to their entering full-time jobs without any decrease of the household workload, which allowed the government to direct its expenditures to other welfare programs, beyond household and personal services (Salido & Moreno, 2007)[5]. This created a peculiar situation between the lack of support and absence of their social demand (Flaquer, 2000).

Over the last decades, the values system has changed (Moreno, 2004), inclining towards the individualization of lifestyles and the prioritization of professional careers. This resulted in lower fertility rates, locating Spain on the lowest spot in Europe (Salido & Moreno, 2007). These changes led to a stronger need in governmental support for those aspiring for having both a family and a career. Since 1999 a series of laws on work-life conciliation were adopted, but they did not alter the traditional roles of women and men, thus making women the primary users of these policies (Cánovas, Aragon, & Rocha, 2005). Consequently, between 2001 and 2005, several laws were introduced that provided more support for the family and culminated in the adoption of the law "For Equal Opportunities for Women and Men" in 2007 (Law 3/2007).[6] Besides focusing on equal opportunities for both women and men, this law aimed to achieve a more balanced distribution of family obligations with a focus on equal labour prospects, increased presence of women in organizations and managerial positions, improved work-family balance, better working conditions.

As for existing **legal arrangements**, leave policies, childcare services, and financial allowances are guaranteed by law; while time and place flexibility and social provisions implementation depend on the company' discretion. Maternity leave is 16 weeks, up to 10 of which can be transferred to the father, while unpaid parental leave can be extended for up to 3 years. The paternity leave was extended from 2 to 15 consecutive fully paid days that can be used on a full-time or part-time basis. Paternity leaves are so far not widely used, in 2001 only 1,8% of eligible men took advantage of them (Salido & Moreno, 2007).

An abundance of statuary provisions exist for children from the age of 3 to 6 (Martin et al., 2010; EU 2005). Nevertheless, there is an estimated shortfall of 400,000 spots in (semi-) public preschools (age 0 to 3). Therefore, parents with children under the age of three often invest in private preschools or rely on relatives for help.

Despite legal provisions, work-life integration is challenged by several factors. At the family level these are traditional gender role division, expectations that

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[5] Spain allocates smaller expenditures to family and infancy compared with other EU countries (2.7% compared with the mean 8.2% in 2000)
[6] All companies with more than 250 workers have to develop an equality plan, while it is voluntary for smaller organizations.

women are primarily responsible for the family and household duties[7] (Cánovas, Aragon, & Rocha, 2005); lack of services of the frail elderly to alleviate women's caring responsibilities (Moreno, 2004). At the organizational level, these are long working hours- 38.4 hours per week, which is 2 hours longer than the EU average (Eurostat, 2006); the importance of being physically present at work, and finally, companies' fear that work-life initiatives will undermine performance and competitiveness (European Working Conditions Observatory, 2009). A survey conducted of 124 companies from various economic sectors showed that almost half of them do not have a specific work-life reconciliation plan, but 60% report the availability of reduced working time and flexible working hours (European Working Conditions Observatory, 2008). Therefore, the legal support for work-life integration is important, but not sufficient to eliminate unequal distribution of family obligations (Haas, Allard and Hwang, 2002; Lewis, 1997) or the perceptions that policies are mainly for women (Smithson et al., 2004). Moreover, the existing family-solidarity safety net might undermine the use of certain policies and even send a signal that they are not needed. Organizational context needs to be taken into account to understand actual policy implementation.

2.3. Structural Support: Work-Life Policies

Work-life policies and benefits represent the employer sponsored benefits, designed to support employees in their life activities, while pursuing a paid work (Den Dulk, Van Doorne-Huiskes, & Schippers, 1999). Kossek and Friede (2006) suggest four types of work-life policies: 1. flexibility of working time; 2. flexibility of working place; 3. support with care responsibilities, and 4. informational and social support. *Flexibility of working time* includes reduces hours or part-time; flextime; compressed work-week; job-sharing; compensatory time (extra time gets recouped); and leaves of absence. *Flexibility of working place* refers to teleworking, that is working from another location other than the office. *The support with care responsibilities* benefits encompass child/elder care; child/elder care provider of referral service; financial support for dependent care; emergency/sock child/elder care. Finally, the *informational and social supports* include support hotlines and support groups. The Sloan Work and Family Research Network (Pitt-Catsouphes, 2002), a leading informational network in the field, complements this list *with options for maximizing time and money resources,* that encompass discount programs, assistance with preschool tuition, concierge services, etc.

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[7] In 1996 women spent on averaga 4 and a half hours more on household activites than men, which improved in 2001 with a difference reduced by 17 minutes (MTAS, 2003)

Among these policies, flexibility of working time are most often used and time tends to predict levels of job and family satisfaction over time, while the use of telecommuting, workplace childcare provision and job sharing reduce levels of work-family conflict, stress, absenteeism and turnover, and increases employees' health and satisfaction (Allen et al., 2000; Brough et al., 2005; Kossek et al., 2006; Voydanoff, 2002). The study by Richman et al. (2008) showed that even occasional use of work-life time and space flexibility, leads to increased employees' engagement and decreases the intentions of turnover.

Very often the availability of these policies is interpreted as a sign of company's work-life friendliness (*ibid*). Nevertheless, research has shown that just availability of policies does not lead to its use, which raises the need of a good implementation process, offering policies that fit to employees' needs (Poelmans, 2003), but also acknowledge the power of context and assumptions existing at the organizational level, discussed below.

2.4. Organizational Cultural Support

2.4.1 Work-Life Culture

Research findings show that work-life policies alone do not help harmonizing employees' various sides of life (Shellenbarger, 1992) . Thus, there is a need to explore the context, that is facilitators and barriers to policy implementation, and the achievement of work-life balance (Powell, Francesco and Ling, 2009). The rich concept of organizational culture offers a broad framework to understand where attitudes towards work-life balance in organizations come from. Over the last decade there has been a considerable advancement in the study of organizational culture in the work-life context. Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness (1999) introduced the notion of work-family culture as the "shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the integration of employees' work and family lives" (p.394). It was empirically demonstrated that this definition was sound and that work-family culture indeed refers to employees' shared perceptions of organizations' value and support for work-life issues (Major et al., 2008).

Employees' perceptions of organizational culture are key for the understanding of policy implementation and employees' attainment of work-life balance. According to organizational support theory, employees have a tendency to ascribe humanlike characteristics to the organization and view its actions as evidence of favourable or unfavourable treatment towards employees (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003). These perceptions result in the development of perceived organization support (POS) (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986), defined as employees' expectations that the organization will reward them for the extensive work and care about their well-being. Several authors applied the theory to the work-life field. Allen (2001) argued that there is a need to focus on the perception of global organizational support on organizational and supervisor support for specific work-life policies and introduced the concept of family-supportive organizational perceptions (FSOP). Jahn et al. (2003) introduced an analogous empirically supported construct, perceived organizational family support, which assesses employees' perceptions of organizational tangible (e.g. instrumental and informational) and intangible (e.g. emotional) support. Their study concluded that work-life program success depends on employees' perception of the offered company support. Allen (2001) found that employees' global perceptions of the work environment pertaining to family supportiveness impact their views and reactions to specific family-friendly policies and practices. That is, employees, who perceived less support from their organization, were less likely to use any of the offered options (*ibid*). These perceptions were created as a response to the messages communicated and practices used by the organization that evidence its values and assumptions. By rewarding certain

behaviours over others, the organization shows its employees what is valued (Rapoport et al., 2002). For instance, by praising long working hours, the organization recognizes the supremacy of work over other spheres of life. The study by Allen (2001) supports the idea that organizational culture is critical not only to the usage of benefits, but also to employees' general attitudes toward the organization (Galinsky & Stein, 1990; Lewis & Taylor, 1996; Thompson et al., 1992). Supportive work–family culture was related to higher levels of affective commitment, lower intention of turnover, and less work-to-family conflict (Thompson et al., 1999) and reported perceptions of the organization as family unfriendly were linked to job dissatisfaction, less organizational commitment and greater turnover (Allen, 2001). Intangible aspects of the organizational culture, comprising supervisor support and the communicated respect of employees' non-work lives at the company level affected organizational attachment and the experienced work-family conflict (Thompson et al., 2004). Therefore, perceptions of organizational actions are important antecedents of employees' response to the proposed organizational initiatives.

Besides, the POS (Eisenberger et al., 1986), other theories have been used to understand and evaluate the role of organizational culture for work-family outcomes, such as work-family border theory (Clark, 2000), and Lewis' application of Schein's theory (Lewis, 1997). We will apply Schein's theory to complement our understanding of organizational culture in the work-life balance processes. According to Schein (1990), culture operates on three levels: artifacts, values and assumptions. *Artifacts* represent the surface of culture, such as the physical environment, dress code, the way that employees interact with each other. Their peculiarity is that they are easily observable, but the meaning is not clearly interpretable. The *values* transmit norms of the groups and philosophies, based on *assumptions* that guide the way people think, feel and behave.

Culture is a powerful mechanism, regulating organizational interactions and thus may be adamant against any changes. Therefore, culture is manifested through values, behaviors, and work norms and can be observed through values, priorities and reactions to different situations exposed by leaders (Schein, 1997).

Lewis' (1997) application of Schein's theory of organizational culture (Schein, 1990) to the work-family field provides some important insights into the role of organizations in employees' *work-life policy utilization*. Lewis states that family-friendly policies are artifacts, representing company's intentions on the surface level. They are based on deeper rooted values like for instance the retention of highly trained employees or the importance of long working hours and face time for promotion (Lewis, 2001). These values in turn are based on assumptions that can act as barriers to the effectiveness of policies, like for instance the assumption that more time spent at work is related to employees'

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commitment and productivity. Lewis' theorizing is very much in line with the work of Detert, Schroeder, & Muriel (2000), who distinguished various dimensions of organizational culture that are relevant for the implementation of change and improvement initiatives, such as the nature of time, orientation to work, and control. Rapoport et al. (2002) identified various work practice norms that reflect deeper assumptions and influence employees' work-life balance: 1. *Use and politics of time*, e.g. long working hours and visibility at work are encouraged; 2. *Image of top performers*, e.g. top-performers invest many hours into work, are fully committed, and do not take into account other responsibilities; 3. *Beliefs about real work*: e.g. complacency towards clients, being always there for them and not disturbing them even if additional information is needed; 4. *Beliefs about hierarchy and control*: e.g. strict control of presence as an indicator or employee's productivity and commitment (Rapoport et al., 2002). These manifestations of culture strongly affect employee's perceptions in the organization and different departments and how they perceive work-life policies.

Moreover various dimensions of work-family culture, that influence employees' work-life harmonization, have already been proposed (Thompson et al., 1999; Allen, 2001; Dikkers et al., 2007): organizational time demands, managerial support for work-family balance and career consequences associated with utilizing work-family benefits, organizational and co-worker support. Therefore numerous dimensions of organizational work-family culture, organizational norms and assumptions can affect policy implementation and individuals' work-life balance.

2.4.2. Work-Life Subculture

Several authors criticized the uniform view of culture and disputed a heterogeneous vision on culture, arguing that it consist of various communities or subcultures with own beliefs and values (Alvesson, 1993; Martin, 2002; Morgan & Ogbonna, 2008) that emerged as a results of natural process of evolution of the organization (Schein, 1992). Morgan & Ogbonna (2008) view organizational culture as "an amalgam of many cultures" and suggest that by studying these cultures a better understanding of the organization can be reached (p. 41). Besides, various authors voiced the need to focus on the group level as the unit of analysis, looking at different values and assumptions underlying the functioning of various groups existing within one organization (Hofstede, 1998; Ogbonna & Harris, 2002; Sackmann, 1992). In the work-life field Allen (2001) encouraged for it.

Subculture is defined as the culture of groups that comprise organisational members involved in frequent interactions with one another that perceive themselves as distinct from other groups and share similar problems and an understanding of how to broach said difficulties that guides their actions (Van Maanen & Barley, 1985). *Subcultures* differ from the global *culture* in that they are diverse, yet similar cultures coexisting within one organization (Hatch, 1997). They can be aligned with the values of the organizational culture or oppose them (countercultures), thus undermining the organizational initiatives, e.g. flexible policies (Trice & Morand, 1991). They also consist of idiosyncratic values, behaviour patterns, artefacts and practices. Subcultures affect employees' attitudes and behaviours (Lok et al., 2005). Therefore it is the interaction of various cultures that lead to the pattern of values that is finally described as organizational culture (Morgan & Ogbonna, 2008).

Various researchers identified conceptually or empirically different subcultures (Hofstede, 1998; Jones, 1983), usually adopting a threefold approach. Based on the earlier distinguished six dimensions of perceived work processes (Hoftsede et al., 1990), Hofstede (1998) came up with the definition of a professional, administrative, and customer interface subcultures. His findings were aligned with the theoretical proposition of Jones (1983) concerning the existence of three organizational cultures: *production* – similar to the routine work of the administrative subculture; *bureaucratic* – being rule- and procedure-oriented, similar to the customer interface; and *professional* – grouping skilled personnel doing non-routine difficult tasks aligned with the professional subculture. According to the Organizational Culture Index (OCI), there exist: 1. *bureaucratic (sub)culture,* characterized by a power-oriented, structural and hierarchical values; 2. *innovative (sub)culture*, distinguished by its entrepreneurial style and dynamism; finally 3. *supportive (sub)culture*, a human-oriented subculture emphasizing harmonious relationships (Wallach,

1983). Lok et al. adopted these dimensions to measure organizational subcultures and their link to commitment in a hospital setting. Their study showed that subcultures affect more significantly commitment than organizational culture. Earlier studies also showed that employees identify with their immediate working environment closer than with the organization (Prestholdt, Lane, & Mathews, 1987). They conclude that when employees' perceive their subculture (culture with which they identify) to be supportive and innovative, it creates positive attitudes towards organizational membership.

In the work-life field, Haas, Allard, Hwang (2002) measured organizational culture at the work group level, focusing on the levels of father-friendliness. They also suggest three dimensions of group level culture: supervisor's support for men's participation in childcare, work group support and work group norms. Their study proved that work group support has a significant effect on fathers' policy utilization. In total, company-level and work-group level culture explained 10% of the variance of the usage of leave and its length.

Based on their study results, Thompson et al. (2004) assume that the supportive climate can enhance group norms that contribute to cooperation and group level support and work-interference-with-family. They call for qualitative research on how family-supportive climate can enhance group norms of cooperation. Detert & Schroeder (2000) also call for a deeper exploration of subcultures and the pluralistic reality of modern organizations as well as an understanding of the gaps between espoused culture and visible artifacts and behaviors.

Therefore examining the role of subcultures seems particularly valuable in the work-life context as it permits identifying existing barriers and facilitations for work-life integration.

2.5. Occupational Context

In addition to the norms, values, assumptions and practices, **context** is an important factor for understanding the situational influences on individuals' cognitive and behavioural responses (Johns, 2001, 2006). Context was defined as "situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behaviour as well as functional relationships between variables" (Johns, 2006, p. 386). Johns suggests that context can be regarded at two levels of analysis. The *omnibus level* refers to the broad context, comprising the "who", "when", "where" and "why" of the research, while the *discrete level* tackles the specific contextual factors that mediate the effects of the omnibus context and affect individuals' attitudes and behaviours. It comprises task, social and physical environments.

Andreassi & Thompson (2008) raised the question, how differences across organizations, industries and occupations affect the supportiveness of organizational culture as an important gap in work-family culture research. We suggest that it is important to pay attention to different job demands, job and work group factors existing at different job levels and within various departments that can moderate the supportiveness of the organization.

For instance, in a diary study of work-non-work event white- and blue-collar workers differed in their work patterns in a way that the former experienced time flexibility and autonomy over work-non-domain boundary and the latter had routinized work (Poppleton et al., 2008). Interestingly both groups reported the same amount of positive and negative work-non-work events (work-non work conflict and spillover), while work affected non work significantly more than conversely. While white-collar employees evoked more time-based conflict and difficulties in attending equally to their family caring responsibilities within the team, in the blue-collar group the routine had a certain preventive effect for work-non-work conflict due to its predictability. Yet, this group encountered conflict because of physically demanding and mentally undemanding job and experienced negative spillover due to preoccupations about home while working, which is explained by the nature of work that allow conversations. The white-collar group reported to be just preoccupied with work while working as their type of work did not leave space for anything else. The organizational non-supportive culture also influenced how employees drew the line between work and life. Nevertheless, if the events at home were emotionally disturbing (dealt with relationships), they were less easily forgotten and spilled over to personal life for a longer period of time. Thus, flexible work has benefits for employees, but cannot be a panacea for the work-non-work issues (Poppleton et al., 2008).

Den Dulk and Ruijter (2008) suggested the characteristics of departments as a possible explanation of managers' support for employees' policy utilization.

They argue that the size of the department and the type of work might influence their decision. In the same line Poelmans & Beham (2008) distinguish group level antecedents that influence work-life benefit allowance decisions in managers, such as the size, budget and slack of work groups, and levels of team member interdependence. The very composition of the work group or team in terms of sex, age, number of children can fundamentally change the norms and expectations in that team. In addition, historical actions and decisions of the work group manager can reinforce or counterbalance the employee norms to create a particular subculture in that team. Some authors argue that occupational conditions can be a more crucial factor for work-family conflict than the number of hours worked (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). For instance, job autonomy among men and women was associated with higher levels of work-life balance (Moen & Yu, 2000; Voydanoff, 1988).Therefore it is important to take into account the job content and personal factors and their link to spillover.

The job demands-resources (JD-R) model provides some insight into how demands and resources affect policy implementation and uptake. Job demands refer to physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that involve physical and mental efforts from the individual and thus result in physiological and psychological costs (Demerouti et al., 2001). The more an individual activates its own body resources, the more costs it represents for him, leading finally to fatigue and exhaustion. Despite the high level of experienced demands, some employees manage to stay healthy. Basing themselves on the health promotion and maintenance theory (Antonovski, 1987), Demerouti et al. argue that there exist "health protecting factors" that are job resources. They refer to different factors on the job that support the individual in reaching work goals, such as factors that buffer and reduce costs caused by the job demands and factors that encourage employees' growth and development. Among *organizational resources* the following are distinguished: job control, potential for qualification, participation in decision making, and task variety, while *social resources* refer to support from colleagues, family and peer group. The JD-R model suggests that increased job demands lead to exhaustion as a result of over-utilization of own resources (both physical and mental) (Demerouti et al., 2001). In addition, the lack of resources renders the achievement of job demands more difficult and therefore leads to withdrawal behavior. These two processes account for the development of burnout.

A survey conducted among financial professionals showed that employees with heavy job demands and besides with poorly supportive work group, felt the least able to use flexibility and other work-life policies (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2004). The heavy job demands in this case were illustrated by long working hours, which made it more difficult for employees to rearrange their working schedules and use policies. Therefore the lack of job control is a constraint for policy

utilization, despite the fact that the majority would like to take advantage of them. Besides, those employees who felt hampered in policy utilization, demonstrated less company commitment.

Besides the job demands, we suggest that also *functional demands*, such as mobility demands, clients' demands, face time demands, or the amount of meetings that are associated with specific functions, affect the ability to use policies and create a certain subculture. Applied to the work-life context, job resources can be operationalized in terms of formal initiatives (flexible work schedules and dependent care benefits) and informal practices (managerial support and career consequences of work-life balance) (Anderson et al., 2002); tangible and intangible support (Jahn et al., 2003). Anderson et al. (2002) note that more attention should be given to informal practices that affect employees' ability to integrate work and life spheres. Behson (2005) demonstrated the relative contribution of informal means of support. His study, derived from the National Study of the Changing Workforce (Bond, Galinsky, & Swanberg, 1998), showed that informal support, operationalized as job autonomy, managerial support and career impact concerns, explain a greater variance in employee outcomes than formal support (work schedule flexibility, work-family benefits). More specifically, in organizational environments that promote autonomy in work fulfillment, that do not reprimand employees for devoting attention to their family matters and encourage supervisor support, employees experience higher levels of satisfaction, lower level of stress, work-family conflict and turnover intentions. The study supports previously voiced arguments that without informal support and general concern for employees' well-being, the formal policies are not used and do not produce the desired results (Galinsky & Stein, 1990; Lambert, 2000; Lobel & Kossek, 1996).

Grzywacz & Butler (2005) found that job with a variety of resources enable work-to-family facilitation. Besides, individuals with high amount of autonomy and variety of tasks, complexity and social skills reported higher levels of facilitation. Moreover, the strength of the association of job characteristics with work-family facilitation and conflict was significantly different, suggesting that those are different constructs with a different set of antecedents.

Therefore, following the aforementioned literature and logic, it seems simplistic taking a uniform view of culture, without considering the multiple employment modes within the organization (Palthe & Kossek, 2002) and contextual factors affecting its members' functioning and interaction. Therefore we suggest that the successful promotion and implementation of policies, but most important employees' work-life integration in a company is bound to the idiosyncratic characteristics of existing subcultures, which are to a certain extent conditioned by various levels of demands and resources. Consequently we assume that various departments will have specific subcultures with various assumptions in

accordance with different contexts that can alleviate or hinder employees' work-life balance, which will be specifically researched in this thesis.

3. Interindividual Level: Supervisor and Colleague Support

Moving from the organizational level to the interindividual one, it is important to take into account supervisors and colleagues as they play an important role in individuals' work-life integration, both facilitating and creating barriers to the way they combine different parts of life. We review below theoretical and empirical advancements in this regard.

3.1. The Role of Supervisors in Employees' Work-Life Balance

Managerial support is essential to successfully integrate work-life domains (Anderson et al., 2002; Poelmans & Beham, 2008; Thompson et al., 2004). Empirical research confirms this. Thomas & Ganster (1995) proposed that a family-supportive work environment consists of two main elements: family supportive policies and family supportive supervisors. It was found that supervisor support affected employees' perception of the organization as family supportive and consequently decreased work-family conflict (Allen, 2001). The data from the 1997 National Study of Changing Workforce showed that that lack of managerial support was closely linked with the experienced work-family conflict (Anderson et al., 2002) and employees' benefit utilization (Thompson et al., 1999). If employees perceive that their organization or supervisor do not encourage benefit use, they will be less likely to use it fearing repercussions for their career (De Cieri, Holmes, Abbot, & Pettit, 2005; Thompson et al., 1999). Consequently, employees with powerful supervisors are more prone to use work-family policies as they expect their managers to buffer potentially negative career consequences (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002).

The importance of supervisory support got reflected in the recent advancement in the field and the development of the family supportive supervisory behaviour (FSSB) construct (Hammer et al., 2009). Building on the literature, the authors operationalize the construct in four key dimensions: emotional support, instrumental support, role model behaviours and creative work-family management. *Emotional support* refers to employees' perception of being able talking over work-life issues and being understood and supported by the manager. *Role modeling* reflects supervisor's display of his/her own work-life integrating behaviours through role modeling. *Instrumental support* captures the supervisor's ability to attend to employees' work-life needs on a daily basis and adapt the schedule accordingly. *Creative work-family management* is proactive, strategic and innovative in groups and departments management in introducing actions that facilitate work-life integration. The construct was validated and showed that FSSB was significantly related to work-family conflict and positive spill over, job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

From the manager's point of view, when one faces a request of using a certain policy or make particular changes, s/he encounters the dilemma whether to grant the allowance or not, which effects it will have on the productivity of the department and whether the decision will imply employees' decrease in motivation or even worse, turnover (Klein, Berman, & Dickson, 2000). That is, they have to decide whether to give priority to short-term performance goals or long-term goals by retaining valuable staff (den Dulk & Ruijter, 2008). Klein et al. (2000) found that managers exhibited positive attitudes when the requesting employee had a good performance record, was difficult to replace, had a strong internal network and threatened to leave. It has been shown that the more disruptive a request was for the functioning of the department, the less positive attitudes the supervisor displayed (den Dulk & Ruijter, 2008). Further the dependency relationship influenced the decision as well as the type of work of the department (*ibid*). A large scale study of labour well-being uncovered a variety of experiences depending on the occupational group (Blanch & Cantera, 2009). Therefore, the occupational and organizational context can have an important effect on supervisors' behaviours and exhibited support (Johns, 2001, 2006). In this research we emphasize the role of the occupational or functional context, which is the discrete context, focusing on the role of the nature of the work and job characteristics in the provision of support.

It should be also mentioned that supervisors, being employees themselves, need the support of their organization to carry out work-life integration efforts (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). Whether they receive this support or not will affect their interpretation of how important this issue is for the company. If supervisors perceive that their organization supports them, they will in turn show more assistance to their subordinates, which will influence the latter's perceived organizational support (*ibid*). Not surprisingly, supervisor support is part of the measure of work-family organizational culture (Thompson et al., 1999).

To conclude, supervisor play an important role in employees' work-life integration not only by allowing them to use certain benefits, but also showing support in an informal way, by being empathetic or role modeling, thus implicitly transmitting the message about the way work-life issues are treated on the managerial level. Context and particularly occupational demands and resources affect the way the extent of this support in organizations.

3.2. The Role of Colleagues in Employees' Work-Life Balance

Besides the supervisor, co-workers influence policy usage and work-life integration. Some authors suggest that colleagues should be viewed as potential supporters (Dikkers et al., 2007; Haas et al., 2002). Research provided evidence that co-workers' satisfaction is essential for organizational success, as employee's reactions to the working environment influence their interactions with peers and affect their performance (Fried, 1991; Liao, Joshi, & Chaung, 2004). If employees perceive that their colleagues have positive attitudes towards work-life policy usage, over time this will translate in a privately held norm (subjective norm) concerning policy usage. Frequently employees are judging each other's productivity by face time. If colleagues are leaving work to go home early they may receive cynical comments like "somebody is working part-time". Besides being the measurement of productivity for some, presence in the office gives the possibility to interact with co-workers and establish informal relationships, which would ultimately affect co-workers attitudes towards their peers using work-life benefits (Ducharme & Martin, 2000).

Co-workers can create an environment of support for policy use, which is mostly the case if they have experienced first-hand or observed the positive aspects of work-life policies. It was empirically shown that the use of policies by one's peer supports their individual usage (Kossek, Barber, & Winters, 1999; Lambert, Marler, & Gueutal, 2008). Moreover previous policy utilization by peers has a greater impact than policy use in more conventional users (women, with children, etc.) (*ibid*). Nevertheless, if employees have an urgent family matter to attend, they will probably ignore the social group pressure and put their priorities first (Dikkers et al., 2007).

On the other hand, co-workers can also generate a barrier for their colleagues' work-life integration. To start with, this can be the case if they do not benefit from the advantages of work-life policies, like spending time with their family (Golden, 2007). Second, they can experience feelings of resentment and irritation towards the benefit users if they have to assume additional workload and task coverage in the office (Nord et al., 2002; Kossek et al., 1999). Their discourse can also discourage other potential users from policy utilization (Kirby & Krone, 2002). Research particularly supports these ideas for teleworkers. A recent study by Golden (2007) suggest that teleworkers' predominance in the workplace is negatively associated with co-worker satisfaction. This relationship is influenced by the amount of time co-workers' telework, their face-to-face interactions and job autonomy. Additionally, satisfaction with co-workers proved to be negatively associated with turnover intention (*ibid*).

Therefore, on the interindividual level both managers and colleagues can be a source of facilitation and prevention for employees' strategies of work-life

integration. In the case of policy use, their subjective experiences affect the way they reciprocate their use in others, but also their response to their colleagues' attempts of combining different parts of life.

4. Individual Strategies for Work-Life Balance

Despite the different mechanisms that exist at the organizational level, individuals turn to own resources to reach work-life balance and diminish possible consequences of the conflict between different parts of life. Various boundary management and coping strategies are used, that we describe below.

4.1. Boundary Management[8]

According to the boundary theory, part of the boundary perspective, individuals construct, manage and negotiate work-non/work boundaries to make simpler their environment and thus extract sense out of it (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000). Research has identified three types of boundaries: spatial, temporal and psychological, that is mental rules by which individuals separate the appropriateness of thinking and behavioural patterns between domains. According to Nippert-Eng (1996) individuals construct mental boundaries among different domains. Psychological boundaries depend on the temporal and spatial boundaries, as well as on the environmental context one is in (*ibid*). Additionally there exist tangible boundaries that divide the time, place and people from the work and personal environments, suggested by the work-family border theory (Clark, 2000). Additionally, the level of flexibility and permeability of boundaries, that is their possibility to shrink or expand and enter another domain, affects individuals' perceptions (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Flexible and permeable boundaries are considered to be weak and therefore lead to a situation of "integration". While impermeable and inflexible boundaries lead to a situation of "segmentation" (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996).

Boundary management refers to how mental boundaries are enacted through the daily activities aimed at either separating or integrating the different domains (Nippet-Eng, 1996), taking into consideration how these boundaries are crossed, maintained or changed over a period of time (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000). Individuals can do boundary work in a proactive way (forecasting conflicting situation), active (doing boundary work on the go), and in a reactive way (rationalization of the choices previously taken) (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner & Fugate, 2000; Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr (1999). Kossek, Noe and DeMarr (1999) propose the term boundary management strategy, defined as principles by which individuals approach work and life demands and expectations: separation or integration boundary management strategies.

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[8] Part of this review was published in Poelmans, S., Greenhaus J., & Stepanova, O. (2012). The Present and Future of Work-Family Decision-Making. In: S. Poelmans, J. Greenhaus, & M. las Heras, *New Frontiers in Work-Family Research: A Vision for the Future in a Global World*. Palgrave Marcmillan**.**

In a qualitative study carried among French managers, Languilaire (Languilaire, 2009) found that most respondents reported a tendency for segmentation, conceptualized as a proactive strategy that allowed the most successful management of the work-non-work spheres and prevented their mutual negative effects. Nevertheless, at different points in time managers turned to integration of various spheres of life in a reactive way to find solutions for emerging work-life issues, but not as a long-term solution for their problems. Therefore, segmentation seemed to be a proactive approach whereas integration was a reactive approach, being a more spontaneous way of boundary role management that did not require planning or arrangements.

The study of professionals' use of telecommuting using telework options showed that employees using integration boundary managers experience higher level of family to work spillover (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006), in line with the conceptualization of Ashfroth et al. (2000). Contrary to popular belief, those employees who integrate various sides of life might experience more conflict due to the need of switching back and forth from one domain to another. Thus, if something negative occurs in one domain it would tend to spill easier on the other domain and might not be buffered by the accumulated positive events in various life spheres (Kossek et al., 2006). Therefore, the best predictors of individuals' well-being was perceived job control over where, when and how the work was done and the segmentation boundary management strategy. In line with this finding, Clark (2002) uncovered that high flexibility and low permeability of boundaries were associated with the lowest levels of work-family conflict. Still, it is important to consider two points. First, individual preferences are crucial and affect the choice of the enacted boundaries and consequent work-family assessment (Rau & Hyland, 2002). Second, though they represent an individual process, linked to one's personal and professional goals, boundary management is also affected by socio-cultural, social and contextual constraints, influenced by the work and non-work demands (Languilaire, 2007). Therefore different layers of context should be considered for a more complete understanding of the phenomenon.

Below we review other individual strategies used for work-life integration beyond the integration-segmentation continuum.

4.2. Coping Strategies

The term coping, widely studied and used in the field of stress studies (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004), refers to cognitive and behavioral efforts used by the person to deal with situations where the demands exceed the available resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identified two types of coping strategies: emotion-focused and problem-focused. When facing a problem the person first analyzes whether the situation represents a threat to his/her well-being (primary appraisal) and then assesses what can be done to cope with the situation (secondary appraisal). This assessment leads to the choice of the coping strategy: focused on emotions - the person adapts the interpretation of the situation - or on the problem - the person attempts to define the problem and reduce its origins. Research shows that active problem-solving strategy is often more effective as the person feels more in control of the situation (Kirschmeyer, 1993; Rotondo, Carlson, & Kincaid, 2003). Nevertheless, when individuals have little possibility to change this situation the emotion-focused coping is preferred (Bhagat, Allie & Ford, 1995).

Coping was also studied in the field of work-life balance, though the review of work and family research in industrial organizational psychology showed only few studies that focused only on coping (Eby et al., 2005). Hall (1972) developed a typology of strategies particularly for the work-family conflict. According to him there are three types of strategies. *Type 1* coping refers to the structural role definition, when structurally imposed expectations of others are altered. It is an active strategy that focuses on the core of the problem that once being altered leads to a decrease of the conflict. For example, changing the working hours from 8am to 3 pm while keeping a certain position. *Type 2* refers to personal redefinition of the external role demands. It means changing the perceptions of the role demand, its importance or level of priority in order to cope with a specific situation. For example, change of priorities between different fields of life, changing perceptions about what it means to be successful in the work / family field. *Type 3* -role of reactive behavior- refers to individual attempts to satisfy everyone's expectations. Instead of targeting the conflict or the related perceptions, the person tries to put more efforts to reach all objectives. Research suggests that the latter strategy is the least efficient as it does not solve the core problem and might only increase the level of stress (Kirschmeyer, 1993).

Recent research on coping in the work-life field showed that problem-solving coping was negatively related to strain-based family-work conflict, but this was not the case of strain and time-based work-family conflict (Lapierre & Allen, 2006). Besides, passive coping, like denial or disengagement, was related to higher levels of work-family conflict of all kinds, while this was not the case of active coping (Andreassi, 2006 cited in Thompson et al., 2007). Some research

posits that taking an active problem-solving position when dealing with work-family matters, leads to a more satisfactory level of coping (Behson, 2002; Kirchmeyer, 1993). Besides, positive thinking plays an important role in work-life balance as it was found that positive thinking as a coping style increased work-family and family-work facilitation (Rotondo, Carlson, & Kincaid, 2003).

Thompson, Poelmans, Allen, & Andreassi (2007) extended the Lazarus and Folkman (1984) model and developed a conceptual model that brings together different approaches to coping, reviewing personal and situational antecedents to coping specifically with work-family conflict. They suggest that when faced with a conflict between these areas, the individual passes through a three-stage process. First, the conflict is evaluated in terms of whether it is a threat or not. Second, the situation is assessed in terms of possible actions. Third, a specific method is chosen to deal with the situation, whether in terms of actions or emotional reappraisal.

Regarding the possible strategies, various classification of coping strategies were suggested. Behson (2002) proposed a typology of informal work accommodations to family, consisting of different behaviors that allow the employee to combine in an informal and temporary way personal and professional matters. He identified 16 types of behaviors that represent active coping strategies. For example, change of schedule to attend a medical appointment, switching tasks with a partner, etc. The study showed that the use of these strategies lead to a decreased experience of family-to-work conflict and stress, as long as there is a supportive organizational environment. Therefore the importance of context was important.

Drach-Zahavy and Somech (2008) introduced a bidirectional typology of coping strategies (work-family conflict and vice versa). They identified eight categories that reflect the behavioral strategies used by individuals to deal with conflict, organized by the degree of expectation the individual has regarding the performance at home or at work (good enough, super, delegation and priority). Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2007) applied this typology to measure the effectiveness of coping strategies according to sex and gender-role ideologies. Their study showed that modern women and men reconcile traditional emphasis on work (super at work) and delegating chores (good enough / delegation at home), while for women traditional and modern humans this works the other way round. Thus, the importance of paying attention to individual characteristics when studying the preferred strategies for coping was emphasized.

To conclude, the choice of coping strategies is closely linked with the individual's context, which affects the strategy the person will choose to work-life balance. Among factors that influence this choice are the level of control that the person has about a particular fact, organizational support - the support of

the organizational culture (Thompson et al., 1999; Allen, 2001), and finally job characteristics of the employee, e.g. autonomy - power to decide where and how to do the job. Therefore finding equilibrium between job demands and resources is important to buffer work-family conflict and stress.

PART 2

Empirical Study

Empirical Research Questions and Goals

In order to understand work-life integration in organizational subcultures, the main research question we are asking is:

How organizational subcultures influence employees' work-life integration?

Asking the "how" questions, allowed us to study the phenomenon at hand from various perspectives in order to understand its internal logic, main dimensions and outcomes (Yin, 2003).

Following the multi-level logic, that is organizational, interindividual and individual levels, presented in the introduction, particularly we are interesting in:

1. How organizational assumptions translate in organizational subcultures and subsequently affect employees' work-life integration?

2. What is the role of supervisors and co-workers in employees' work-life integration?

3. How do organizational subcultures affect employees' perception of work-life integration, their boundary management and coping strategies?

The **general objective** of the empirical research consists in the analysis of organizational subcultures in employees' work-life integration at the organizational, interindividual and individual levels.

Particularly**, specific objectives** encompassed:

At the organizational level:

1. the study of the existing of organizational assumptions and subcultural assumptions;

2. the role of existing assumptions at the subcultural level for employees' work-life integration;

At the interindividual level:

3. the study of existing supervisor and colleagues' support and barriers in the organizational subcultures;

4. their role in employees' work-life integration;

At the individual level:

5. the conceptualization of work-life balance and its individual assessment;

6. the study of individual strategies for work-life integration, embedded in organizational subcultures.

5. Method

In this section the methodological background, data collection process and data analysis are presented and discussed.

5.1. Methodological Background

The empirical evidence for this study was collected using a qualitative approach, specifically a case study approach (Yin, 2003). This approach was used for various reasons. First, there is little known about the role of organizational subcultures in the work-life field and qualitative approaches are ideal for the exploration of new topics (Creswell, 1994). This approach allowed the emergence of new subthemes. Second, it captured the richness and variety of employees' experiences. Third, a review of work and family research revealed the lack of studies using qualitative methods, only 1% of publications between 1980-2003 (Casper et al., 2007). Therefore this study aimed to contribute to filling both the content and methods gaps existing in the literature.

This research adopted an interpretivist approach, specifically the constructivist paradigm that assumes a relativist ontology (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The constructivist approach reflects people reported perceptions, truth, explanation of reality, beliefs and word view (Patton, 2002). This approach pretends to understand the consequences of these constructions for their behaviours and for those with whom they interact. Therefore, it captures various perspectives and views, but does not aim to label them as right or wrong. Rather it gives the possibility for comparison and insights into the point of view and perceptions of different people's and groups'.

One of the main questions asked in this approach is "How have the people in this setting constructed reality?" This question reflects both the importance of people's perception of a phenomenon and emphasizes the role of a particular context. Shadish (1995) emphasizes that social constructionism refers to the construction of knowledge about reality and of the reality by itself. Besides, individual understandings of reality are highly contextualized (Neimeyer, 1993).

Within this perspective, different worldviews and perceptions are compared. For instance, the view of the top management, middle management and employees on the work-life issues. None of the perceptions are more important than the others, but contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon. Besides, great emphasis is put on the context in which the specific phenomenon is studied. In the case of this research, the peculiarities of Spanish context were taken into account and referenced for further understanding of the data.

5.2. Data Collection

The qualitative inquiry used in this approach and followed in the present study, were semi-structured interviews. The data were collected in the headquarters and various branches of Mutua∗, an insurance non-profit Spanish organization administrating contingencies of work-related accidents and illnesses. The company was a non-profit Spanish organization, approved by the Ministry of Labour and Social affairs, assisting companies in the management of Social Security.

The choice of this company was due to different factors. First, focusing on one company allowed us to see the interplay of organizational culture and subcultures. Second, the company encompassed various professional groups working in different environments (headquarters, sales, customer visits, hospital- primary care center), which favoured the existence of subcultures. Therefore three groups were targeted for research: 1. health-care workers; 2. sales employees; 3. administrative personnel in branches, though not limiting research to them.

Following the recommendation of Yin (2003), multiple sources of data collection were used to compile evidence, including archival research, face-to-face interviews and field observations. A focus group with the HR team and 44 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted on-site from June 2009 to February 2010 in three different sized branches, encompassing in total employees from headquarters and six branches. To assure a multiple stakeholder perspective, employees with various demographic characteristics and different professional (management level) and personal profiles (caring responsibilities, hobbies) participated in the study. Thus, interviewees were chosen both from the list of branch employees provided by the HR, aiming to reach a variety of occupations, age and personal situations, through HR indication and support (top-management and employees from other branches, who volunteered for the study). Employees were invited to participate in the interview by mail sponsored by the HR director and the director of the branch, emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation. The interviews were held at the headquarters' or branch premises in a quiet room during the working hours of the interviewees. Following Strauss & Corbin's (1998) approach, the literature review informed the interview guide, which was subsequently extended and adapted during data collection. The interview guideline was structured in two parts: the general demographic information and work-life situation; specific questions on organizational culture and subculture; particular job demands and resources; work-life situation in the company: policy provision, policy use, perception

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∗ Fictional name

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about work-life friendliness; individual boundary management and spillover; personal experience of work-life balance, general satisfaction and strategies used to work-life balance. (See Appendix). The data collection ended when there was a saturation of insights into the study.

5.3. Data Analysis

The data analysis was inspired on the Grounded Theory (Strauss y Corbin, 1998) that fits both in the objectivist perspective and can have a constructivist one as well (Charmaz, 2000). The Grounded Theory approach can be associated with traditional positivism due to its perceptions of objective reality that can be discovered by a neutral observer and objective report of found data. Nevertheless, Strauss and Corbin can be placed in postpositivism, as they suggest representing the experience and voice of the respondents and its view of reality (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Charmaz builds on this proposition and proposes a new approach to qualitative research: constructivist grounded theory. Constructivism assumes the existence of multiple social realities and the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed (Guba & Linkoln, 1994). In the constructivist approach, the perception of something as real, objective or true, is based on one's perspective (Schwandt, 1994). Therefore the researcher discovers what the participants see as real and how it affects their perceptions. The study of the organizational culture, particularly of norms, values and assumptions offers a vast terrain of exploration of the organizational reality or the realities as perceived by the employees. Charmaz (2000) concludes that the Grounded Theory allows the construction of "*a* reality, not *the* reality – that is, objective, true and external" (p.523). In the constructionist approach, the researcher creates the data and analysis through the interaction with the participant that allows the emergence of reality through an interactive process that is taking into the account various contexts, e.g. cultural, temporal, spatial, etc. The conducted interviews with multiple stakeholders, the discussion of findings with the HR team and final presentation to the Company Board allowed to research the studied topic and thus a better understanding of work-life integration in different subcultures within one organization in a specific national and economic context.

The archival data was analyzed through content analysis. All interviews, which lasted up in average for one hour, were taped and transcribed in Spanish with specific quotes translated into English. To derive subcultures empirically, the definition of subcultures was used (Van Maanen & Barley, 1985). Individuals were asked to report the group they identified themselves with, its norms, practices and values, which allowed exploring the existing assumptions. Based on the literature review and our interest in the occupational subgroups, in

situations when respondents did not know how to answer, they were asked for their feeling of belonging in their professional context. Once this point was clear, they were asked for existing norms, practices and espoused values in an attempt to get a picture of the subculture and then tackle the existing assumptions.

All data were analyzed inspired in the Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) using the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti 6.2.27 (Friese, 2012; Muñoz Justicia, 2005).

First, the data was coded, using an open detailed coding approach to identify the broadest range of emerging themes. Each code was defined in Atlas.ti, which helped further refinement, collapsing or grouping of codes in different or common categories and making comparisons along different dimensions to allow the final themes to emerge (*ibid*).

Second, axial coding allowed the comparisons of broader categories (like work-life integration) to their subcategories (work-life subjective experiences, strategies, definitions, etc.) along different dimensions and on the three levels of analysis: organizational, interindividual and individual. Besides, further links to a broader national context appeared and were brought into the analysis.

Third, the search function, Query Tool, of Atlas.ti helped locating these themes in specific contexts and filtering by different categories thus providing a better understanding of the similarities or differences in studied subcultures. For example, work-life integration definition as seen by employees from the studied subcultures, by sex, or in co-occurrence with other codes, family codes or in specific groups of documents or codes, organized as superfamilies. We also used the Co-ocurrence tools, particularly the Tree Explorer, to see whether the emerging themes also appeared there. It proved to be useful to refine certain topics and look deeper into others.

The emerged themes were consequently contrasted with the literature to allow further refinement and enhance reliability (Creswell, 1994). Several presentations were made for the HR team that allowed to cross-check the findings and gain further insights. Besides coding the data, all impressions, ideas and reflections were captured in memos and observation logs in Atlas.ti and in separate Word documents, shortly after the interviews, during the process of transcription and analysis.

Consequently, networks views were used to visualize the relationships between various codes throughout the analysis and get a better understanding of the studied phenomenon. It should be noted that the process of analysis involved reading and reviewing the data on multiple occasions in order to find overarching themes and reach a higher level of abstraction.

Finally, in order to answer the main research question we revisited the findings presented in the previous part and moved from individual cases to a more abstract level to explain the work-life integration in organizational subcultures. Following the suggestions of Strauss & Corbin (1998) we conducted selective coding and synthesized the findings in a storyline, illustrated and detailed at the end of the Results. Finally, as a result of this research a conceptual model of work-life integration in subcultures was developed, presented in the discussion section.

Ethical considerations were taken into account during the research process. Before the interview, each employee was asked for the voluntary participation and guaranteed confidentiality of the obtained information. Besides, the researcher obtained a verbal audio recorded consent for recording the conversation and using data for research. In several occasions employees shared private information which they asked not to include in the final report and their wish was respected. When reporting the data, all information was kept confidential, therefore in cases when employees' identity could have been revealed we changed the position, but kept the sex and subgroup belonging.

6. Results

This section is organized in three parts, analyzing the influence of various levels on employees' work-life integration. First, we look into the organizational level and describe findings on the cultural and subcultural levels. Specifically we look into various layers of culture, that is, artifacts, values and assumptions, within the organizational culture and in the subcultures. Second, we move to the inter-individual level and analyze the role of supervisors and co-workers. Finally, we proceed to the individual level and look into the experiences of individuals, their definitions of work-life balance and chosen strategies and arrangements to reach it.

Throughout this chapter we look into the role of organizational assumptions and where possible the wide national context on individuals' integration in order to get a better understanding of the experiences and choices made. See Figure 1 below for an overview of the results section.
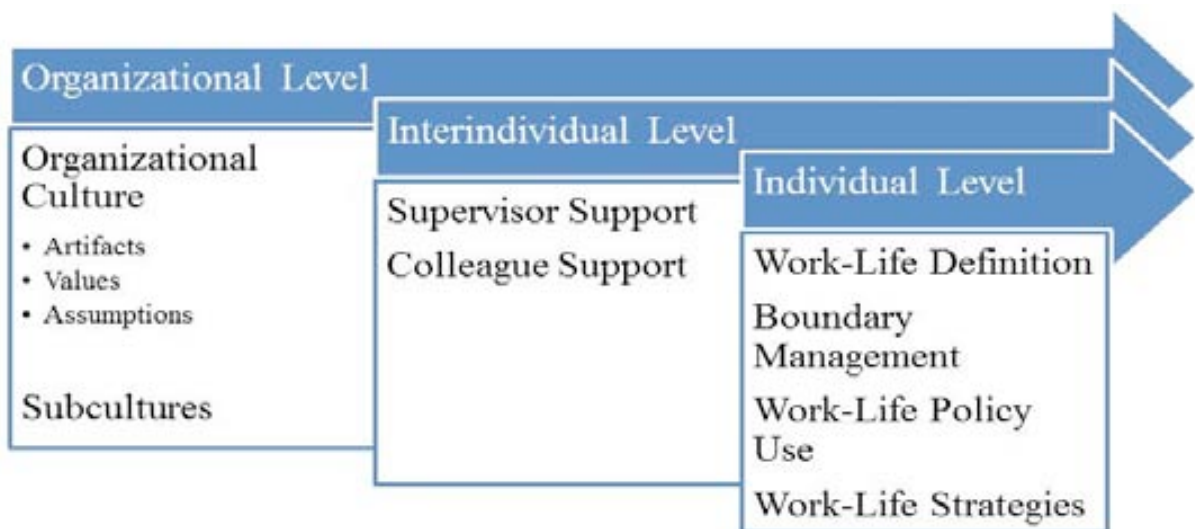

Figure 1. Results Section: the Levels of Analysis.

6.1. Organizational Level: the Company, Organizational Culture and Subculture

6.1.1. Mutua- the Company

The data were collected in the headquarters and various branches of Mutua*, an insurance firm administrating contingencies of work-related accidents and illnesses. Mutua worked with employees who suffered work-related accidents and were on a sick leave because of them. The company was a non-profit Spanish organisation, approved by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, assisting companies in the management of Social Security and whose activity was influenced by the laws of the Ministry.

Mutua's headquarters were located in Barcelona with offices situated throughout Spain. It operated in 28 provinces and 12 autonomous regions. The company existed since 80 years and was born out of the merger of various mutual funds throughout the years, the biggest merger being in 1993. It was one of the smallest mutual funds in Spain, which according to one of the top managers allowed providing more personalized service to clients. In its annual report the company clearly stated its three core values: availability- service to the needs of affiliated businesses and its employees; integrity- ethical commitment in the work; and initiative- an enterprising attitude and belief in teamwork. Mutua had a strong commitment to sustainability, reflected in its multiple activities throughout the years aimed to have an impact on people, the environment and the economy.

Company branches had different sizes, from very small branches, which included only two people, the head of the branch and an administrative person, to medium and big ones, with various departments and health assistance services in place. Interviews were conducted in all types of branches (small, medium, big) to understand the peculiarities of the studied topic within these specific contexts (See Table 2 for interviewees' demographics). Interviews noted that the branches functioned in a kind of independent way, adapting to the peculiarities of the context and the way it was managed depended considerably from the branch manager. The sales employees had a considerable influence throughout the organization. The position of the branch director was always occupied by a sales employee. As it was a non-profit organization, the sales department was named "Business Consultant Unit", but which actually encompassed the sales functions. Same applied to the marketing department. Nevertheless, in the everyday life employees from this department called themselves "sales" employees and their functions corresponded with the name.

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* Fictional name

Table 2. Demographic Data.

	Organization (all sample)	Healthcare Subgroup	Administrative Subgroup	Sales Subgroup
Interviews	N=44	N=13	N=12	N=14
Sex	Women: 59% Men: 41%	Women:46% Men:54%	Women:92% Men:8%	Women:50% Men:50%
Age	Women:43 Men:57	Women:42 Men:51	Women: 40 Men:30	Women:44 Men:44
Personal Situation	Single: 14% Married:66% Cohabiting:14% Divorced:7%	Single:15% Married:62% Cohabiting:8% Divorced:15%	Single:33% Married:42% Cohabiting:17% Divorced:8%	Married: 93% Cohabiting: 7%
With Children	70%	85%	83%	71%
With Elderly Caring Demands	18%	38%	17%	7%

Historical context. The company's historical background provided insights into the current reality mentioned in the interviews. In 1992 various mutual funds merged, which unified not only different companies, but also different styles and philosophies. The merger aimed to integrate the best of the companies: strong presence throughout the country thus expanding branches beyond Catalonia; and a strong sales approach. That is, one company had a strong company acquiring perspective, while the other one had a stronger focus on service provision to both clients and patients, emphasizing the methodology of work, tools used and staff's professionalism. The merger allowed uniting these perspectives, though without their full integration over the years. The different philosophies standing behind these approaches were still palpable. For instance, sales employees embraced the commercial framework, while healthcare and administrative employees focused more on patient service provision. As one employee with a seniority of over 30 years mentioned, it seemed that there was a mix of quality/quantity oriented approaches, whereas the quantity approach, e.g. number increase, client acquisition, prevailed. The strong sales approach occurred historically since in the 90s the Ministry allowed mutual funds to work throughout Spain, while before only certain amount of funds could do it and the rest worked only regionally. This gave place to a strong competition among the mutual funds, to a certain extent a "commercial war", where the companies passed from attracting clients by the quality of their services and also being selective about companies they worked with (selected those with lower levels of accidents to assure that public funds were not spent in vain) to a focus on company growth through client acquisition. As the strategy of the company changed, employees' internal weight also shifted. As one of the employees said: "*In the old times, healthcare employees used to be well-seen. The profile of the orthopedist, a doctor… financial professional with*

good knowledge of the subject… Then the commercial employee started to have the priority.. even in terms of salary." (Man). With the fusion, "*…there was a value change, the emphasis shifted from quality to quantity.*" (Man).

Several structural changes occurred in management and HR team. Shortly before the data collection, there was a change in the management team, which affected the leadership style, especially in the sales area. The change was from a more aggressive client acquisition style to a more calm and analytic approach. Nevertheless, the strong sales approach still prevailed. The change of the HR director facilitated the dialogue between employees and the top-management, facilitating internal changes and the implementation of work-life initiatives.

Economic and legal contexts. Data collection occurred during the period of the economic crisis, when 20% of the population was unemployed (as of February 2010). Interviewees often referred to it when commenting on their labour situations. Besides, the Ministry of Labour and Immigration issued a streak of resolutions which reflected the movement of the sector towards the reduction of mutual funds on the market. These changes were influenced by the fact that all mutual funds managed public money, so there was no reason for them competing among themselves. The first resolution, issued in June 2009 restricted the company's new personnel hiring and encouraged the reduction of commercial positions. In January 2010 the Ministry announced that the sales activities of the mutual funds should be frozen for the following three years. Thus the sales workforce had to be partially dismissed or assigned to different tasks whenever possible. Therefore this group was supposed to go back to its origins in terms of job description. That is, they went to client management activities instead of client acquisition ones.

Artifacts- the visible part of the culture.

Following the suggestions of Schein (1998), first the artifacts, that is, visible characteristics of the culture, were explored before moving to values and assumptions. The sources of artifacts were all kind of information that attracted attentions and spoke about the studied organization, from physical context and dressing code to stories told about the company. For an overview of the company characteristics, see Table 3.

Table 3. Company characteristics.

Company characteristics	Quotes
Service orientation	*"This is a service company."* (Top manager, man). *"We never close, as there is always a patient who is on a sick leave or somebody who needs something."* (Medical worker, man)
Company peculiarity	*"This is a sector in between the public administration and private company."* (Top manager, man).
Importance of personnel and internal relationships	*"For me this was a family company, from the size… where everybody knows everybody."* (Top manager, man). *"What is peculiar about this company is definitely its people… there are high professionals, very responsible, who work with pleasure… this is the majority of employees, thanks to who the company succeeded in the last years*." (Top manager, man).
Be a leader	*"Probably, to work well, meaning productively and a lot."* (Branch head, man). *"To bring the best of you."* (Sales, man). *"Be a problem solver, know how to manager crisis, without getting overwhelmed*." (Administrative, woman).
Scarce inter-branch communication	*"Each branch is a separate world"* (Administrative, woman) "*I also believe that each branch operates a little as it can and some times in function of the people working in it.*" *(Administrative, woman)*

Office space. Offices in the headquarters and branches were a mix of open and office spaces. Employees occupying managerial positions and healthcare employees examining patients had own offices. Some employees described the company as hierarchy driven, where at the higher levels of the company it was important to have attributes of power, like business dress code, size of the office, etc. Interestingly, in the two-story building of the headquarters the company director, sales and healthcare management were situated on the second floor. Also in the branches situated on two floors, sales employees and the head of the branch were located on the second floor. Possibly these were the visible artefacts of the organizational culture (importance of hierarchy and the dominance of the commercial orientation) that got replicated in the branches.

Dressing style. Men occupying managerial positions wore business suits with or without a tie, while sales employees mostly dressed business casual. As some reported that the dressing style depended on the type of client they were going to see and sometimes casual clothes were more adequate, despite the fact that the company protocol prescribed official business attire. Those working in the office/open space, were mostly dressed casually (a mix of jeans and comfortable clothes), while medical personnel wore white medical gowns put over their clothes.

Enculturation program for newcomers. Specific attention was paid to the enculturation of the new employees. Organizing such training was a long-standing tradition in the company, which was kept after the fusion. All new hires had to go through a one-week program, where they were introduced to all of the company's activities, its history, the peculiarity of the sector and the work-related accidents, the importance of the code of ethics. They got to know all the top management. The HR department highlighted the importance of this integration program, as this training "... *creates trust and culture*", according to the HR Director. Besides transmitting cultural aspects, the program allowed employees with different profiles working in different locations to meet and build relationships that were maintained after the course.

Communication. Weekly meetings of the top management team were held and the whole organization was informed about their content and results through a weekly memorandum. Nevertheless, employees mentioned that the communication flow concentrated within HQ and branches, with little inter-branch communication. Particularly, employees who had limited interactions with colleagues outside the branch, e.g. healthcare employees, identified the branch with the company. As one of the employees said, "*Each branch is a separate world*", influenced considerably by the head of the branch and the way he ran it.

Company description. The **discourse** used by top management to describe the Mutua included "family company", a "fighter", the smallest in the sector, but agile, placing emphasis on new technologies, aiming for transparent communication and innovation. It was defined as a "service company", whose activities were directed at attending its different clients, both company and employees. Its offices were open throughout the year, offering full availability to the client. At the same time, employees at all levels portrayed the company as "human" and with high "human quality", where there was a personalized treatment of employees and concern for their well-being through the provision of various social benefits and initiatives, including the Equality Plan (*Plan de Igualdad*). One of the outstanding characteristics appearing in the employees'

discourse was the fact that many employees were studying apart from working, something that was supported by the company both through allowances and general support.

To be **considered a leader** in the company, one has to be hard-working, meaning putting effort and time into work, be problem-focused and keep calm in stressful situation. The latter was considered to be an important skill.

At the top management lever there existed an agreement between team members to work normal hours on Fridays and during the intensive hours period to keep on working the full day with the possibility of certain flexibility in case necessary. As reported by the top management team, this agreement was informal and was suggested by the General Manager, but without a strict follow up, underlying the importance that presence and work output for the top management. This kind of discourse was aligned with the values of the companies, reported in the internal documents, particularly availability to clients. Knitting and maintaining good relationships was important, which reflected the general "humane" characteristic of the company.

6.1.2. Occupational Subgroup Characteristics

The three studied subgroups had different job demands and peculiarities. The sales subgroup had a high focus on the commercial work (client attraction, number driven), but also with a focus on the service-provision (client service, problem-focused). The administrative group dedicated itself to document management and attending clients, both at the reception and per phone. Finally, the healthcare employees were in close touch with the patients and to a smaller extent were involved in the number driven aspects of the job (for details see Table 4). While sales employees mostly worked in the field and directly with the clients outside of the company premises, administrative and healthcare employees had a high level of interactions with clients and colleagues in the office. There was a certain degree of job interdependency among the groups. For instance, sales employees could inquire the administrative and healthcare staff about certain patients; companies could call the administrative staff to get some paperwork done; administrative employees could inform healthcare staff about the length of certain patients' sick leave. Despite these interactions, employees identified stronger with their immediate working environment, often coinciding with the occupational group (e.g. sales, healthcare, administrative).

Being a service company, one of the main focuses of all employees' was to attend to their clients' needs. As one of the top managers said that healthcare employees were more prone to burnout as they had to deal more often with emotionally tense situations. They originated from the need to monitor the length of patient's sick leave, by inviting them for a secondary check, which could also provide them with additional exams or visits at specialists with a decreased waiting time. Patients were not aware about these follow ups available through their labour accident insurance with the mutual fund. Thus at times they took the monitoring as a sign of distrust or questioning of their disease and therefore reacted emotionally both on the phone and during the visit, thus making the work of healthcare and administrative employees more challenging. Sales employees' work was also strongly conditioned by clients interactions and demands, at times requiring them to work fast, late or solving emerging problems, or as on of the employees said that they were *"... putting out fires"* (Sales, man). Therefore, client service and client interaction were one of the main themes mentioned across the subcultures.

Table 4. Occupational Subgroup Characteristics

	Sales	Healthcare Subgroup	Admin. Subgroup
Work Content	The job was strongly oriented to client attraction and retention and in case of small branches with little administrative support, also paper work, which was quite demanding, e.g. following up on extended sick leaves and reasons for them.	Healthcare, medical checks, analysis, emergency management. Work was distributed throughout the year; employees attended accidents, but mostly worked according to the agenda.	- Paper work, processed files; documents follow-up; follow up of sick leaves, phone and in person follow up with patients; provided with information agency managing paperwork for companies, and managed appointments. Work was distributed throughout the year. - **Job-interdependencies**: to a certain extent, mostly specific inquiries from different departments.
Time Demands	- Entry time flexible depending on client visits - Work duration: individually set ending time, often beyond the official hours - Mobility demands: within the geographic area, without overnight stays, except for regional directors who needed to visit different zones.	- **Entry time** strict, no flexibility allowed; fixed shift work (8am- 3pm; 2pm- 7pm). - **Work duration**: according to the schedule, few overtime work - **Mobility demands**: none, except for those occupying managerial positions (without overnight stays).	- **Entry time** strict, no flexibility allowed; fixed working schedule (8 am-6:30 pm) or fixed shift work (8am- 3pm; 2pm- 7pm). - **Work duration**: according to the schedule, few overtime work. - **Mobility demands**: none.
Work Peculiariti es	Peaks of work: Employees had yearly goals, therefore the peaks of work depended on the achievement of these yearly targets. Incentive bonus system.	- Follow up with employees on an extended sick leave to see if it could be shortened. - Had to deal with emotionally charged situations (dissatisfied clients with medical decisions).	- Despite routine tasks, every day was different and demanding in various ways (attentionwise and emotionally). - Follow up with employees on an extended sick leave to see if it could be shortened - Had to deal with emotionally charged situations (dissatisfied clients).
Testimonie s/ quotes	*"My job is to assess companies and manage the branch, which in terms of working hours means… working longer, as there is no end to the work…. Some-times you have company requests accumulating on top of daily tasks, which require agile response.. and these days are very busy."* (Branch director, male)	*"So they get mad at us… But we… need to monitor the evolution of the patient's disease and it might be that s/he needs to go back to work…".* (Doctor, man).	*" We do not have any flexibility here… even if I wanted, I couldn't talk about, for instance, starting at 8am and finishing at 6pm."* (Admin., female) *"The work here is everyday different… there are times when the day is filled with work and others, it is not."* (Admin., female)

6.1.3. Existing Work-Life Policies

At the surface level of organizational culture, the company had multiple work-family policies in place, including flexible work options, family and personal leave, dependent care support, conventional provisions for job quality and compensation/benefits (See Table 5). According the HR department, Mutua stood ahead of similar companies in terms of existing work-life initiatives. However, according to an internal company survey, only 27.48% of the employees were aware of their availability as they were not explicitly communicated as work-family initiatives. Nevertheless, 52.67% perceived that the company supported the work-life balance of its employees. Various flexibility options were available, though time flexibility was designed only for employees working usual schedules. All time arrangements and statutory policies were subject to supervisors' consent. According to company documents, maternity leave and reduced working schedule were availed of, while there were only few instances of paternity leave uptake, attributed to the small number of male employees who recently became fathers. Overall, the interviewees perceived staff's work-family integration positively. However, they did not only refer to the organization's role. The support of grandparents for childcare was reported in particular, illustrating the family micro-solidarity, enabling the fulfilment of both professional and personal goals (Salido & Moreno, 2007). The work-life policy use is discussed in detail in the third section, where the results at the individual level are presented.

Table 5. Mutua's Work-Life Initiatives

	Whole company	Some depart.	Comments
1. Flexible work options: time			
a. Flexible working schedule		X	Headquarters, doesn't apply to employees attending clients
b. Part-time work	X		Not many cases
c. Compressed work week			
d. Reduced work week	X		
e. Workplace leave for a family emergency	X		
f. Job-sharing		X	Health services group and administrative staff in branches
2. Family and personal leaves			
a. Childcare leaves beyond what is stipulated by the law (with salary resignation)	X		
b. Paternity leave beyond what is stipulated by the law (1 month with salary resignation)	X		
c. Other leaves (15 days for getting married; 2 days for a death in the family; 1 day for residence transfer)	X		
3. Flexible work options: place			
a. Videoconferences	X		
b. Telework			Is contemplated as an option, but not yet implemented
4. Referral services & provisions			
a. Information about kindergartens	X		
b. Sports center		X	Headquarters
c. Financial help for taking care of descendents with physical or psychic disabilities	X		Help of 300 €
e Life insurance and pension plan	X		
f. Credit card to pay lunches	X		The company takes charge of the lunch
g. Social benefits provision	X		Every employee received yearly 900€ that can be spent on pension plan, education, sports, IT equipment
h. Money advancement (2.500 € for 1 year)	X		For employees who have been at least one year with the company

6.1.4. Organizational Culture and Subculture: Assumptions and Their Display in Subcultures.

In order to understand the role of organizational level variables in employees' work-life balance, we explored deeper organizational culture and subcultures. Specifically, we examined existing values at the organizational level and their distribution in the subcultures. We further explored and derived existing assumption in the organization and subcultures. Five assumptions in total emerged from the data. Finally, these assumptions and their role in employees' work-life integration were analyzed and discussed.

6.1.4.1. Values at the Organizational Level

During the interviews an array of behaviors and valued aspects of the job emerged that allowed taking a quick "picture" of the espoused values overall in the company and particularly in the existing subcultures (See Figures 2, 3 and Table 6). These values reinforced the earlier mentioned characteristics of the organization that came through the initial discourse about the company and its artifacts. On one hand comradeship among employees and teamwork was an important part of the job, while on the other hand the way work is done was strongly emphasized. To put effort into one's work was valued, meaning to do everything in order to reach the objectives, associated also with being visible at the workplace. There was a strong result orientation, number/output driven emphasis on achieving results, and being committed to the company, that is, to its philosophy, objectives and to the importance put on work. Competency, professionalism and efficiency were praised. Not surprisingly for a service company, having a good relationship with the clients was important in all the subcultures. Certain values depicted the peculiarities of the healthcare work. Teamwork among employees who attended the patients, e.g. doctors, nurses and administrative employees, was crucial, but besides these employees felts that having a comprehensive vision of the patient was important in their jobs. That it, understanding the patient's life and work context allowed for better disease treatment and/or prevention. For instance, in case of recurring accidents or illnesses.
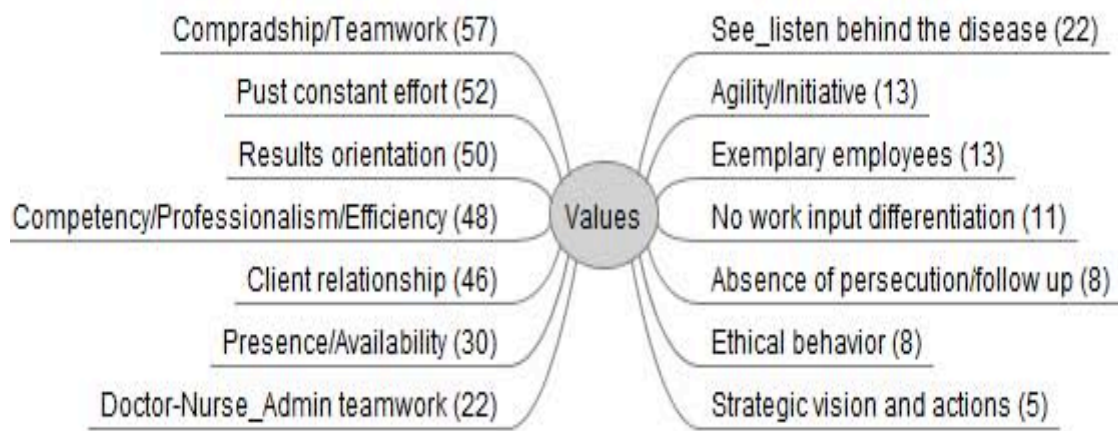
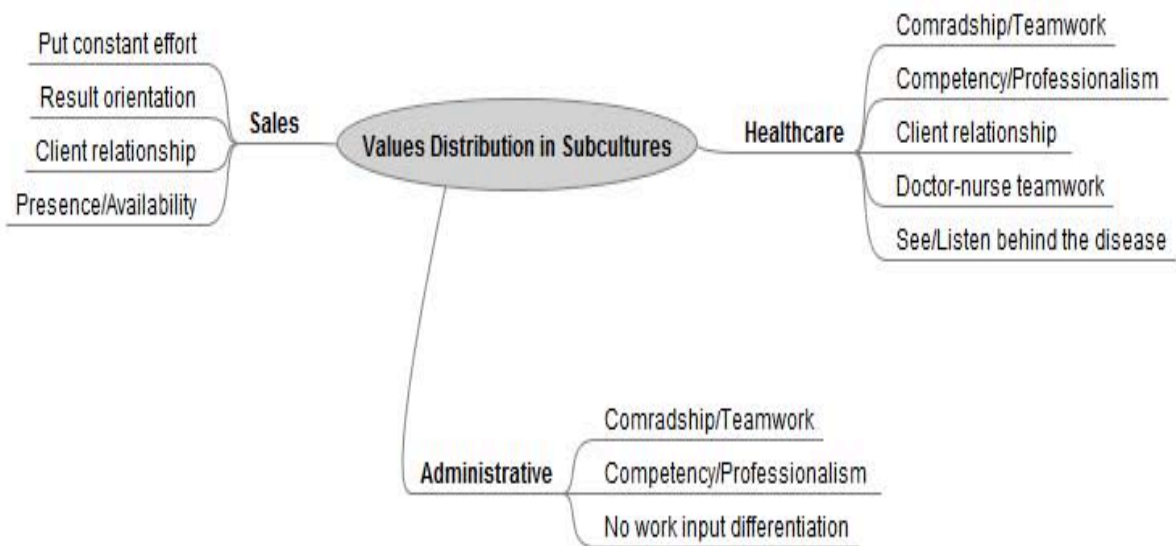**Figure 2.** Organizational Values (with the number of quotes).

Figure 3. Value Distribution in Different Subcultures

Employees in the **sales** subculture described the importance of putting constant effort, being results oriented, hardworking, efficient in the work execution and client-oriented. The latter meant being available for clients' requests, try to retain him. Thus it was important not only being a service provider for the client but also a person of trust. It was important to be seen by the clients and do well one's work, do small talk, render small favours (pick up documents, bring medicine cabinets, etc.). Presence was an indicator of productiveness, of putting effort. It did not always translate into staying longer in the office, though occasionally this was the case. It was connected rather to being there for the client, including when you were on a sick leave, maternity leave or on holidays. Such commitment to work reflected an employees' responsible attitude towards the job. Comradeship and teamwork on a daily basis were not very pronounced, but rather consisted in supporting colleagues in case of necessities.

Employees in the **healthcare** subculture felt that the most pronounced values were teamwork, being competent, efficient, maintaining a good relationship with patients. Competency and professionalism were transmitted through effective patient treatment and by being a good problem-solver. Teamwork was crucial as it allowed competent and efficient patient treatment. Additionally, colleagues were a source of support in case of emotionally stressful situations when dealing with clients or when dealing with private matters, and besides contributed for knowledge transfer and exchange among younger and older workers. Their work was client oriented. Keeping the patient informed, clarifying things, attending to requests, "surfing" through emotional tense situations caused by unsatisfied clients both per phone and in person were part of the job. Besides, this group had specific professional values. Particularly, considering the patient's life context and situation to understand the disease was crucial, and teamwork with other healthcare professionals was important.

Finally the **administrative** subculture comradeship, meaning support in work-related matters, and efficiency were important and putting effort had certain value as well as presence in the working place. Putting constant efforts meant doing well the daily work, without it being accumulated and causing repercussions for other departments' activities. Professionalism was expressed through thorough job execution, ability of managing well the client even in stressful, emotionally bound situations. Regarding client management, employees emphasized the speed and quality of service provision and management of emotionally tensed situations. Employees regretted that the amount of work they put into the job was not differentiated, creating an impression of being taken for granted.

To conclude, while the sales subculture was results and objectives driven, in the healthcare and administrative subcultures employees emphasized the procedural part of the job related to people and document management.

Table 6. Subcultures' Values

Subcultures	Values	Quotes
Sales	Put constant effort, result orientation; efficiency, professionalism; client orientation.	*"What happens is that we are always being told that we have to do more … So naturally, you perceive that you are being asked not to give 100%, but 150%."* (Sales, woman). *"It is important to be visible not only to the client, not only keeping up appearances, but also that one feels that s/he can count on you; this is the most important thing."* (Sales, woman).
Healthcare	Teamwork, being competent, efficient, maintaining a good relationship with the client; See_listen behind the disease	*"What is valued here is to see the patient, make a diagnostic, follow him/her up in such a way that this patient comes back to work the fastest possible, taking into account the medical context, that is the patient is feeling well and can come back to work."* (Healthcare, man).
Administrative	Comradeship and efficiency were important and putting effort had certain value as well as presence in the working place, though the effort one put was not differentiated.	*"We are helping each other mutually… with [colleagues]."* (Administrative employee, woman). *"I came to the conclusion that we are all valued equally, whether we work more or less…* (Administrative employee, woman).

6.1.4.2. Assumptions at the Organizational Level

Despite the company's apparent family-friendliness, seen through artifacts (employees' experiences of policy use and work-life balance reflected in the archival data and interviews), the existing values highlighted in different subcultures, revealed various implementation gaps and obstacles reflecting cultural assumptions. The mentioned above values were the backbone of the existing assumptions. That is they represented the reality according to which employees behaved and that was taken for granted within specific cultural units (Schein, 1997). As employees from different branches identified with particular professional subcultures, this allowed researching further assumptions across the organization and subcultures. Consequently, five organizational assumptions emerged: 1. Assumption that supporting work and family needs can harm organizational effectiveness; 2. assumption concerning how work is done (dedication); 3. where work is done (availability); 4. for whom work is done (client-centeredness). 5. With whom work is done (colleague interactions). Differences were evident in the manifestation of the assumptions in the identified subcultures, influenced by the nature of the employees' work, namely, their task characteristics, the size of the branch and job interdependence played a role. Thus the nature of work served as a "filter" for the expression of these assumptions. Their manifestation across the organizational culture and subcultures are discussed below. (For an overview see Table 7).

Assumption that supporting work and family needs can harm organizational effectiveness

Overall putting the interests of the company first was seen as natural. According to employees' accounts, a number of employees were denied the use of some flexibility options by their supervisor, who considered "*they were not compatible with one's work*", while others were granted permission in the same situation indicating some concern about the adverse impact on company performance and competitiveness, which has been reported in Spain (European Working Conditions Observatory, 2009).

This assumption appeared in different forms across subcultures. Employees throughout the subcultures mentioned the importance of acknowledging company interests and not giving precedence to their individual interests. For instance, prior to availing of the reduced schedule, one sales employee stated: "*It is important that you see you do not let anybody down* […]" (Sales, woman).

Table 7. The Overall Effects of Organizational Assumptions on the Subcultural Level

Assumptions on the Organizational Level	Sales Subculture	Healthcare Subculture	Administrative Subculture
1. Assumption that supporting work and family needs can harm organizational effectiveness	- Acknowledging company interests without giving precedence to individual interests.		
	- Assuring that personal arrangements do not harm effectiveness, the amount of time dedicated to work.	- Making sure that personal arrangements do not affect clients or patients. - In case personal matters interfere with work, take personal responsibility in solving the issue with minimal influence on the job.	
2. Dedication- assumption concerning how work is done	Being highly organized, solving problems, attracting new clients and pleasing existing ones; all resulting at times in extra work.	Perceived through the level of treatment and service offered to the client.	Consistent work, but the amount of effort they put into work was neither differentiated nor acknowledged.
3. Availability - where work is done	Availability traversed personal situations, time and space – being available in the office, per phone, mail, outside of working hours.	Importance of presence; strong emphasis on teamwork, colleagues could cover for emergencies.	Presence in the office, punctuality. Amount of time invested in the work was employees' responsibility, was not followed up.
4. Client-centeredness- for whom work is done	Provide good service to the clients and retain them, resulting in additional work, both in terms of time and intensity.	Dealing with clients' disrespectful behaviours and outbursts, while preserving one's professional image.	
5. Colleagues' awareness-with whom work is done	Co-workers were a source of support in specific situations, like information, advice, to pick up the slack in case of emergencies or just daily interaction when they coincided in the offices.	Colleagues were important in the daily working life, in terms of information, emotional and functional support. Importance of fair work distribution, colleague support, but without abuse of favours.	

Another administrative employee voiced the hope that her schedule reduction for maternity reasons did not affect her department or colleagues: *"I don't think I failed anybody by not being here in the afternoon…"* (Office worker, woman).

Finally, some healthcare employees perceived a distinct separation between work-family matters, as being a healthcare professional meant providing the best possible service to clients and supporting colleagues. For instance, in the case of personal emergencies, such as collecting a sick child at school, a nurse said:

"We don't do such things in our department! Of course, if it is a serious emergency, then you mention it to your colleagues, explaining that you have a serious problem, then yes. If it is necessary, I call my Dad, saying 'Please go to my place, the child got sick at school and he is going home.' I have always done it that way. I have never gone to pick him up from school." (Nurse, woman).

An administrative employee, who identified with the healthcare subculture, offered further insights, conceptualizing the separation of work and life as a matter of personal choice, whose consequences she was eager to bear: *"When I started working here, I had a babysitter coming to my place at 6.30 am. I cannot miss work for my daughter; I say it is black or white. If you want to work, then you work."* (Administrative employee, woman).

When speaking of their work-family integration, employees also reflected on their career prospects. In some subcultures, career advancement was directly linked to time dedication and visibility in the workplace.

"…if you want to be promoted or to build a career you cannot do it [use the policy] *although the law allows for it*[*], *because it is not that it is not well seen but it is considered that you devote yourself to your family and children and thus you cannot commit 100% to the company. This vision still exists in Spain; it is still believed that the person that is at work for many hours is the best worker, the one who performs best…". (Sales, woman).*

Therefore, the assumption that supporting work and family needs can affect organizational effectiveness or one's career was implicitly present in different subcultures and defined individual strategies and discourses around work-family integration.

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[*] The law provides for the possibility to avail of a reduced working schedule for a period of eight years, extended for each consequent child.

Dedication – how work is done

According to various interviewees (both in branches and headquarters) the company valued employees who were responsible, professional and dedicated, demonstrated in terms of results, perseverance and constant output.

The philosophy of the management team was: *"The most important thing is dedication to making an effort and yielding results; one cannot go without the other, results do not stand alone. The fact that one has made an effort and, what's more, visible effort is part of the organization's DNA. Results are not only important, but also the way in which they are reached."* (Top manager, man).

Visibility of the effort was perceived as important as was being humble about one's efforts both of which were discussed within a discourse of choice. Managers talked of valuing an employee who: *"knows the sector well, dedicates a great deal of time (hours) to work, but does not make it a source of pride… he* (sic) *works so much because it is his decision."* (Top manager, man).

This voluntary dedication to work implied, for example, working longer hours, coming to work earlier and reducing lunch breaks, and, checking work email outside of working hours and on week-ends. This assumption regarding dedication linked to individual agency recurred in all the subculture but was played out in different ways.

In the sales subculture, employees were valued for being highly organized, solving problems, attracting new clients and pleasing existing ones. Reaching sales goals by closing a big deal without being seen to make continuous effort was not approved by the top management, thus reinforcing the need for constant work input, and with ever-growing demands. It constituted a vicious circle for some, as even when one gave his/her best, more was expected of them. As one employee said:

"What happens is that we are always being told that we have to do more and, what's more, now that we are in the midst of a crisis [economic crisis]. *We are told that these are difficult times and we are not reaching the numbers. So naturally, you perceive that you are being asked not to give 100%, but 150%."* (Sales, woman).

This dedication was reflected in extra hours invested in the job, at times at home, possibly leading to spillover. Nevertheless, both management and employees perceived that each employee was the master of his/her time:

"It is strictly a personal matter, what one thinks that s/he has to do". (Top manager, man).

In contrast, employees in the administrative subgroup perceived that dedication was valued in terms of consistent work, but that the amount of effort they put into work was neither differentiated nor acknowledged. As one employee asserted:

"I came to the conclusion that we are all valued equally, whether we work more or less. You know exactly what you give or do not give when you work and yes, in general, we are made understand that it is valued, but eventually everybody is treated equally…" (Administrative employee, woman).

As for healthcare employees, dedication was perceived through the level of treatment and service offered to the client:

"A patient who had an accident… I think that you need to treat him from a human point of view. Sometimes, behind the broken arm there are other problems…" (Doctor, man).

Therefore the importance of dedication existed both at the organizational and subcultural levels, but different aspects were accentuated. In the sales subculture, the emphasis was placed on making an effort and providing clients with good service. In the healthcare subculture, the focus was also placed on clients but while the company's needs were considered, the client's health was at heart. Finally, in the administrative subculture, dedication meant ensuring consistent work input, though it didn't seem to be differentiated.

Availability – where work is done

While importance was attached to the work output, physical presence and availability seemed to be equally important. The work of sales employees could be tracked through special applications. In addition, the company recently relaunched the clock-in/out system, designed as a time-management tool, rather than to control presence. HR admitted that this system was the inheritance of the long-existing practice and was important from the organizational culture point of view. Designed as an online application, it allowed employees to check the number of hours worked, to select holidays and to enter notes justifying their absence from the workplace if necessary, thus emphasizing employees' responsibility and choice regarding the actions taken. As the clock-in/out system had always existed in the company, it was not supposed to be an entirely new system, but as one employee from the headquarters pointed out: "*Now there is a much stronger control of presence. Actually, it was kind of a revolution in the organization, because everybody is preoccupied with the control of presence.*" The old system appeared to be a mere procedure, while the new program made employees much more accountable for the hours worked. The supervisors were

expected to monitor employees who did not fulfill their schedule and the HR department sent requests to do so from time to time.

In all the subgroups, availability was not restricted to visibility at the office. In the sales subculture, constant availability to the manager and client was thought to be part of a good service. This availability traversed personal situations, time and space, given the possibility to be connected non-stop through the BlackBerry. As one female employee recounted, on one occasion while on holiday, she called a company to avoid losing a client. She also perceived it to be entirely natural to remain connected during her maternity leave and attend several meetings as it was part of her job:

"Yes, it would have been perceived negatively [not having gone to the meetings]*, though nobody would have told me so openly…."* (Sales employee, woman).

It seems that the underlying assumption was that though the company took employees' personal situations into account personal situations of the employees, it also expected them to be dedicated and available.

Presence in the workplace was particularly important especially for employees in the administrative subculture. As some of the employees opened the branches, punctuality was important and expected. Using the clock-in/out system was a routine, but an important one, as employees became irritated when the system was down, which made them clock in five minutes later. Nevertheless, the amount of time invested in work did not seem to be important and was the employees' responsibility, reinforcing the image of a humble employee who puts in a great deal of hours of their own accord to achieve good results.

"Yes, it is true, today I came in a little bit later, but there are many days when I leave much later than normal and nobody says anything about working overtime… When I work longer, nobody congratulates me." (Administrative employee, man).

There were no strong feelings about the clocking-in/out system among the healthcare workers as it was a long-standing practice. Like the administrative workers, employees had no flexibility in their starting time; they came in early and, depending on their shift, those with children either delegated morning childcare to their partners or parents. Close job interdependence not only allowed them to provide mutual emotional support, but also to cover for one another in the case of emergencies. Nevertheless, it also reinforced the importance of presence. *"Theoretically, I have a 20-minute break for breakfast. It is relative because I do not have breakfast for 20 minutes if I have work, because I leave a colleague alone then…"* (Nurse, woman,).

Therefore, availability for this group implied full dedication and availability during working hours. To conclude, the existing organizational assumptions regarding dedication and availability affected the subcultures differently, demanding both availability and connectivity to the workplace whether in a form of physical presence or via technology.

Client-centeredness

Mutua's work was characterized by client-centeredness. As a service company, it had clients, companies that contracted its services and patients who received medical attention. One of the assumptions underlying work was that providing a good service meant addressing client requests and solving existing problems. Interviewees spoke of "being on top of their work", which meant, being available to the client, rescheduling one's day according to clients' requests, finding information and solutions, and for some, checking one's email outside of working time. This was part of the professional image they projected to the outside world:

"We are working in the day-to-day and I think that we are perceived well. In the sector, we are selling reliability, in the sense that whatever the problem is, you are seen as being on top of it." (Sales employee, woman).

Though present across the organization, the effects of client-centeredness on employees varied in different subcultures. In the sales subculture, employees not only had to provide good service to the clients, but also to retain them. This meant dealing with unpleasant emotional situations affably to avoid losing the client, provoking emotional labour and strain (Hochschild, 1983). Moreover, client and patient encounters resulted in additional work, both in terms of time and intensity.

"It is important to be visible not only to the client, not only keeping up appearances, but also that one feels that s/he can count on you; this is the most important thing." (Sales, woman).

As one sales employee mentioned, the long-standing tradition of taking extra care about clients resulted in the increased levels of demands, which caused extra work, and increased the emotional labour. Thus, the organizationally reinforced assumptions contributed to the creation of additional work pressure, which affected life outside of work.

In the case of administrative and healthcare employees, client-centeredness meant dealing with clients' disrespectful behaviour and outbursts, while preserving one's professional image. These outbursts were caused by patients'

unawareness that they were obliged by the Social Security system to visit Mutua once on sick leave. Therefore when they were invited for a visit, some took it as a personal offense and a check of whether they were really sick. Moreover, others did not accept the fact that according to medical criteria they were cured and could go back to work. Employees assumed these situations as part of their working context. It was perceived as part of the job, particularly among the medical staff, something which should not have been taken seriously. In addition, despite receiving a threat of physical assault, employees who showed concern were criticized for doing so. As one doctor claimed:

"Nobody likes to see someone's anger because he (sic) was taken off sick leave, because we have shown that they (sic) have recovered and could go back to work.... But we need to accept it; we try to be fair." (Doctor, man).

Nevertheless, at times it affected employees' wellbeing and provoked emotional spillover, which they mostly kept to themselves:

"I don't cry in public, perhaps at home. I get more nervous [in these situations] *and yes, I get a bit of tachycardia, but I take pills at home…"* (Administrative employee, woman).

It also led to a cognitive spillover, such as thinking about the patients before the visit: *"Now this person will come again, and* he (sic) *won't want to go to work. Sometimes, I think about it even a couple of days beforehand 'this person will come'… so yes, it affects me a little bit outside of work."* (Doctor, man).

Still, it should be also mentioned that many employees mentioned the gratitude patients communicated for the good service they received. In general, positive feedback for the job done was comforting for all employees. Nevertheless, across all subcultures, client-centeredness resulted in the experience of certain emotional strain and labour. While sales employees not only had to solve clients' problems, but also to ensure their retention, healthcare and administrative employees had to manage the display of negative emotions. Therefore, client-centeredness was important at the company level and within the existing subculture, leading to different degrees of emotional strain and cognitive spillover, moderated by group dynamics.

Colleagues' awareness- with whom work is done

One of the outstanding discourses within the company was its people-oriented approach. The emphasis was put not only on being "humane" in employees' treatment, but also on the interdependence of employees' and the importance of reaching the set goals by putting efforts of all of its constituents. In the sales subculture, where employee worked rather independently, co-workers were a source of support in specific situations, like information, advice, pick up the

slack in case of emergencies or just daily interaction when they coincided in the offices. According to the Commercial director, teamwork and the sense of belonging to a team was very important for the work of sales employees. This was a message transmitted from the top, however it did not come across in the interviews.

In the administrative and healthcare subcultures, colleagues played an important role in the daily working life, both in terms of information, emotional and functional support.

"We are helping each other mutually…. Sometimes they [colleagues] know things I don't know… and sometimes I know things they don't… It is mutual help.. It's as if we had a code of conduct." (Administrative employee, woman). The underlying expectation of this code of conduct was of fair job distribution, that no employee would put his/her share of work on others, accepting help in case of personal matters, but not abusing of their favours. Therefore in their discourse employees emphasized the importance of putting work-related interests before one's owns, making sure that personal issues did not affect colleagues.

Emotional strain was a constant component among the three subcultures, but was influenced by the existing teamwork dynamics. For instance, colleagues provided a social net, offering emotional support and advice. Moreover, they also helped to defuse tense situations at times. *"There were times when the nurses saved me. In one particular case, the two nurses held back the patient"* (Doctor, man).

Generally speaking, subsequent to an emotionally charged situation, the mere fact of sharing and talking over the experience served as a coping mechanism and as means of reducing the emotional spillover from work to other spheres of life throughout all the subcultures. Nevertheless, in groups that worked interdependently and in shared spaces, co-workers were attentive to other employees' work input and presence in the office that could affect dedication to the client. Such is the case of a younger employee whose work-life strategies were not approved by peers:

"For instance [you say] *'tomorrow, I will come a little bit later, because I need to go to the doctor or I need to leave earlier', and you notice that this situation is not perceived well."* (Administrative employee, branch, man).

Thus, colleagues played a varied role in the three subcultures. While in the sales subculture they were rather seen as a source of punctual support and social interaction, administrative and healthcare employees worked often in a team, which served as a source of support, but also regulator of the work-life integration.

6.1.5. Work-Life Integration Within Subcultures

The nature of work and subcultural assumptions affected employees' work-life integration in various ways (See Table 8). Work penetrated in employees' private lives both as a time and emotional resources depletion. The offered instrumental support was in general available, but depended among all the groups on the cultural support offered by the supervisor and was influenced by the assumption about the salience of company's interests. Emotional labour and dealing with emotionally stressful situations affected the mood and well-being of employees. Another cross-cutting theme was individual's responsibility for how much one worked and the existing implicit company's expectations to be dedicated in terms of time, performance or punctuality, which led to extra-hour work, cognitive spillover, or availability across time and space. Still within each group there were peculiarities of the effects of organizational assumptions on work-life integration.

The sales subculture was characterized by being commercial driven, with a large amount of client management and interactions, which resulted in work under pressure and the integration of various sides of life (long hours, being connected through Blackberry), but also in cognitive spillover (trying to solve the problems while at home, having troubles sleeping because of it). On one hand, the ingrained flexibility of the job allowed attending to family needs or events. On the other hand, the existing assumption of availability resulted in blurred boundaries between various sides of life, where one was implicitly expected to attend to work needs even when being on a leave.

The work-life integration in the case of employees in the administrative and healthcare subcultures was not always linked to conflicting time demands, though fixed entry time created occasional experience of stress. Rather emotional strain, derived from client interaction and resulting emotional spillover in general affected well-being. Particularly emotional tensed situations were unsettling in both subcultures, though it was considered unprofessional taking these cases seriously or allowing being affected by them. Group sharing was a mechanism for tension relief and group cohesion.

The fixed starting time influenced the way family care was organized. Employees working morning shifts counted mostly on the help of their network to bring children to school, which depending on the arrangements, meant rush morning hours and experience of strain. Nevertheless, shift workers had the other part of the day to take care of their personal issues, which helped work-life integration. Co-workers represented a source of support, but could also restrain one's work-life integration preferences, minding the importance of client-centeredness and colleagues' interdependence.

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To conclude, organizational assumptions together with occupational characteristics affected considerably the way employees' integrated various spheres of life and often resulted in unwanted spillover between the spheres. Supervisors and co-worker support played a significant role in the work-life balance, discussed further in the next section.

Table 8. Effects of Existing Assumptions on Work-Life Integration in Different Subcultures

How existing assumptions affect WLB in different subcultures?	Sales Subculture	Healthcare Subculture	Administrative Subculture
Overall	Individual's responsibility for how much one worked and the existing implicit company's expectations led to extra-hour work, cognitive spillover, or availability across time and space.		
	Sharing and talking over the experience served as a coping mechanism and as means of reducing the emotional spillover from work to other spheres of life.		
Dedication	Dedication was reflected in extra hours invested in the job, at times at home, possibly leading to spillover.	Emotional strain, derived from client interaction and resulting emotional spillover in general affected mood and well-being.	
Client relationships	Dealing with unpleasant emotional situations affably to avoid losing the client, provoking emotional labour and strain.	Dealing with clients' disrespectful behaviour and outbursts, while preserving one's professional image, affected employees' well-being and provoked emotional spillover.	
Colleagues' awareness	Source of emotional support and information.	In groups that worked interdependently and in shared spaces, co-workers were attentive to other employees' work input and presence in the office that could affect dedication to the client, thus affecting their work-life integration strategies.	

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6.2. Interindividual Level. The Role of Supervisors and Co-Workers in Employees' Work-Life Balance

Previous analysis clearly showed the significant role supervisors and employees played in the work-life integration. In order to uncover how specifically other employees were influenced by them we first looked into supportive and unsupportive supervisor behaviors and then analyzed these behaviors among co-workers. Finally, we analyzed and discussed the peculiarities of supervisor and co-worker support across subcultures.

6.2.1. Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviours (FSSB)

A total of 115 quotes were identified that referred to the supervisor supportive and unsupportive behaviours, mentioned by both employees and supervisors. At the organizational level, various FSSB emerged, including instrumental, emotional and role-modeling behaviours, while we did not find evidence of creative work-family management, mentioned in the literature (Hammer et al., 2009). Instead, a new category emerged, problem solving, which grouped together different examples of supervisor support, related to conflict management, advice on the improvement of one's work-life or life situation or general support. Below we present the various FSSB (See Figure 4).
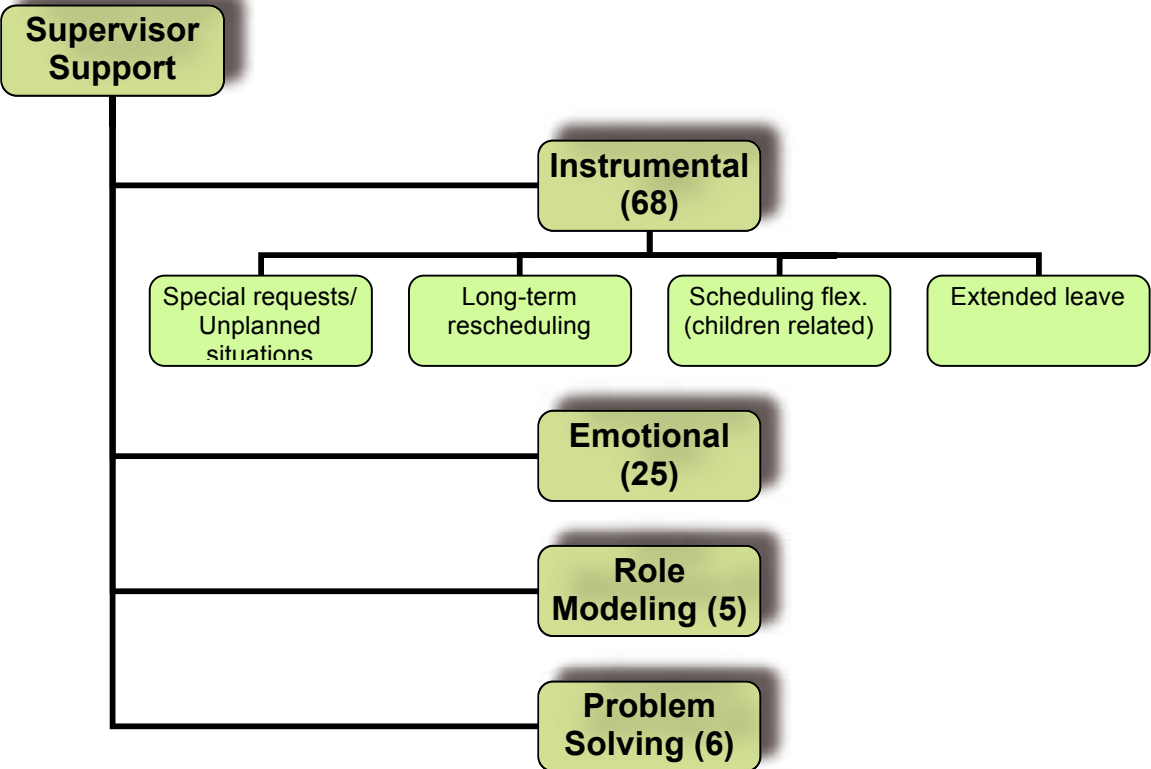

Figure 4. Supportive Supervisor Behaviors

Instrumental Support

This code encompassed cases when the supervisor helped employee's work-life integration by approving the change of the usual working time or the way of doing the job. For example, "*There is usually an agreement between the administrative worker and the head of the branch that one would make up the hours another day in case of an emergency…*" (Director, man)

As there were various quotes (n=68) accumulated under instrumental support, we looked for specific behaviours that were praised and identified four subcategories of instrumental support: 1. Support for special requests of unplanned situations; 2. Support for long-term rescheduling; 3. Support for scheduling flexibility, related to childcare; 4. Support for taking an extended leave.

Support for special requests or unplanned situations refer to the supervisors' positive response to unplanned situations or special requests. For example, the ability to alternate the usual schedule due to a special event, e.g. emergency, meeting, medical visit, which couldn't be scheduled outside of the working hours. Usually this request was granted as long as the work or service was not affected. For example:

"On December 31st I had a shift till 5pm and I planned to go out of town. So I asked the supervisor if I could make the shift of my colleague from 8 to 3, who agreed to it, and leave earlier. He told me that as long as my colleague was fine with it and the department work is covered, this is also fine for him." (Administrative worker, woman).

As a general rule, to be granted the request, employees had to negotiate it beforehand with the manager, in case necessary make up the time and assure that their absence did not affect the branch's functioning, which at times meant getting co-worker support for it.

Support for long-term rescheduling: refers to the possibility to alternate one's schedule for an extensive period of time. For example, to start working later in the morning, interchange schedules with co-workers in order to attend to work-life needs or school. For example:

"… I was allowed to adapt my working hours on particular days of the week [in order to be able bringing my child to school], so I entered half an hour later and left work also half an hour later." (Doctor, man).

Support for scheduling flexibility, related to childcare: possibility to alternate one's schedule due to childcare needs or events. For example, if the child is sick, needs to be brought up to the doctor or the parent wants to attend an event at school. For instance:

"If I tell him [my boss] that I will come later, because I need to stop by at the kindergarten or go to a school concert… there are no problems." (Top manager, man).

Support for taking an extended leave: refers to a special agreement of having an extended leave in time, beyond the one stipulated by law or company regulation in order to attend to one's personal or family needs. In this situation, besides the supervisor, the HR Director also needs to grant his permission. For example:

"There was a case of an administrative employee in one of the branches, whose Grandfather passed away and it was requested [by the branch director]for her to get more days off than are stipulated by law." (Top manager, man).

Thus overall, the instrumental support was granted, but as long as several conditions were fulfilled. For instance, it was important that personal matters had no effect on the business and that the supervisor granted the permission for a work alternation. Only in case of extended work alternations, the supervisor needed an additional consent from the HR department. Interestingly, some employees mentioned that with seniority, it was easier to get instrumental support, as the supervisor knew better the employee and the way s/he worked, which affected the perception of whether the service can be in danger or not if this alternation took place. Finally, the supervisor's personal family situation and exposure to work-life integration facilitated the understanding of similar situations in the employees and empathetic attitude towards them. As one employee mentioned:

"The director of this branch as he has children, he also understands [the changes in schedule I ask for]." (Administrative, woman).

Emotional Support

Emotional support referred to the possibility of discussing personal matters with the supervisor, voice concern, express one's feelings, and receive verbal emotional support for personal situations from the supervisor. A total of 25 quotes constituted this category.

For example, one of the department directors commented that he could talk over freely his personal issues with his supervisor. A branch director reported: *"When you see that a person is a little down or fragile due to personal issues, well… obviously, you don't ask the person to tell everything about his/her life, but you just make yourself available in there is a need and that's what I do."* (Branch director, woman).

Employees were particularly grateful for the supervisor's unconditional support and understanding of family emergencies, especially if they were repetitive. For example: "*If I had a problem with the child or I had an emergency, I just called the supervisor to notify him and he always said "No problem"… even if it was the third time that month… In this sense I never perceived any negative attitude.*" (Office worker, woman).

On the other hand, one supervisor noted that when even after showing support the employees did not show reciprocity in putting effort into work and moreover if it decreased over time, the supervisor reduced the emotional support as well. Therefore, showing understanding for personal situation and making according changes in work was acceptable, but work outcomes prevailed which affected the length of the exhibited support. In line with this assumption about work supremacy, some employees contended that it was important to consider the impact of one's personal decisions on work, even if those were such personal decisions as adoption or motherhood, because: "*…it is important that you don't feel that you let anybody down…*" (Sales, woman).

Emotional support also encompassed supervisor's proactive inquiry about how to help the employees or give space and distance when one was aware of personal issues and ability to listen to one's problems. On the other hand, as one branch director mentioned, being the "sounding board" for employees' problems can be also tiring and supervisors might also need to be supported for their issues. Therefore, emotional support for both work-family and general life spheres was widely appreciated and needed by both employees and supervisors.

Role Modeling

Role modeling - refered to supervisor's behaviour demonstrating alignment between work and life. For example, start and leave work in time, absence of message, requiring employees to stay longer. In total 5 quotes reflected this category.

One branch manager contended that it was important for her to do the same things that she required from the subordinates, for instance starting working time. Another manager mentioned that one of the situations he wanted to avoid was employees' feeling obliged staying overtime if the manager did so. Therefore, his strategy over the intensive summer schedule when employees worked from 8am to 2 pm, while management stayed longer, was: "*…. to leave for lunch at around 2:30-2:45 and when I come back, around 3:45, everybody has already left. If I need to stay, I do it, if not, I go home*". (Department head, man).

Interestingly, role modeling was only mentioned by the management level employees, while it did not surface across other groups, which could indicate

either the lack of managers' role modeling or the absence of its effects on employees.

Problem Solving

Problem solving - referred to supportive behaviours that helped employees managing interpersonal, social interactions or life situations, beyond working schedules. For instance, conflict resolution, reference to services that would support the person, for example, counseling services, lawyer office, banking (loan) services, etc. In total 6 quotes reflected this category.

For example, a medical worker said: *"When I need something or if I have any problem I talk about it to the director and there is no problem."* (Healthcare, employee).

Particularly, in a case of divorce, a person got offered personal contact information from a lawyer's office and the possibility to get financial help from the organization. In another situation of death of multiple family members, the supervisor sought psychological support for the employee and assured that the person got adequate help.

Therefore, this category encompassed all kind of support, not included in the company's arrangements, being often at the manager's discretion. It seemed an important source of support for the employee that also put forward managers who excel in work-life integration.

6.2.1.1. Unsupportive Supervisor Behaviours

Among the unsupportive behaviours appeared three main categories: denial of work-life requests, poor examples of role modeling, and the absence of emotional support.

Denial of work-life requests, a total of 14 quotes, referred to the situations when employees made request concerning some work-life accommodations and were refused their use.

For example, an administrative worker said: *"I recall once I asked the branch director…. I told him, I start studying a course and I will exchange my working hours with Maria (a colleague), who agreed to it. …. So I will exchange my working hours with her on these days so that the department work gets covered and I'm able to attend the course. And he said, "No." Without further explanation."* (Administrative, woman).

Poor examples of role modeling. This category encompassed self and other people evaluations of the degree to which a person exhibits poor role modeling in work-life related topics. This category contained 13 quotes. For example, a sales employee mentioned: *"We've got this director supervisor that it is the type of people who goes to work on Saturdays and Sunday and is on top of it, is proud of himself for doing so."* (Sales, woman).

Interestingly, like with the example of supportive behaviour, the majority of the quotes were evoked by employees occupying managerial positions.

Absence of emotional support – refers to instances when the supervisor did not show any emotional support towards the employee in work-life related situations. In total 5 quotes reflected this category.

For example, a sales employee who worked in a branch, who was going through difficult times said: *"Obviously, if there was somebody from the top management from Headquarters who'd come to us [to the branch] and asked how we were doing… this would have been nice…to have some emotional support."* (Sales, woman).

Another employee added: *"It might seem baloney from the supervisor's point of view, put from the employee's perspective, it [emotional support] is often appreciated."* (Administrative, man).

Overall, the denial of work-life arrangements was perceived most negatively as probably it interfered with employees' most salient needs, while the lack of role-modelling and lack of emotional support did not seem to be so critical for the employees, but still an appreciated gesture towards their work-life integration.

6.2.1.2. FSSB in Various Subcultures

As part of our research questions, we looked into the experience of FSSB within different subcultures in order to identify whether there were significant differences in the types of support evoked by the interviewees and the possible reasons for it. (See Figure 5, for an overview).
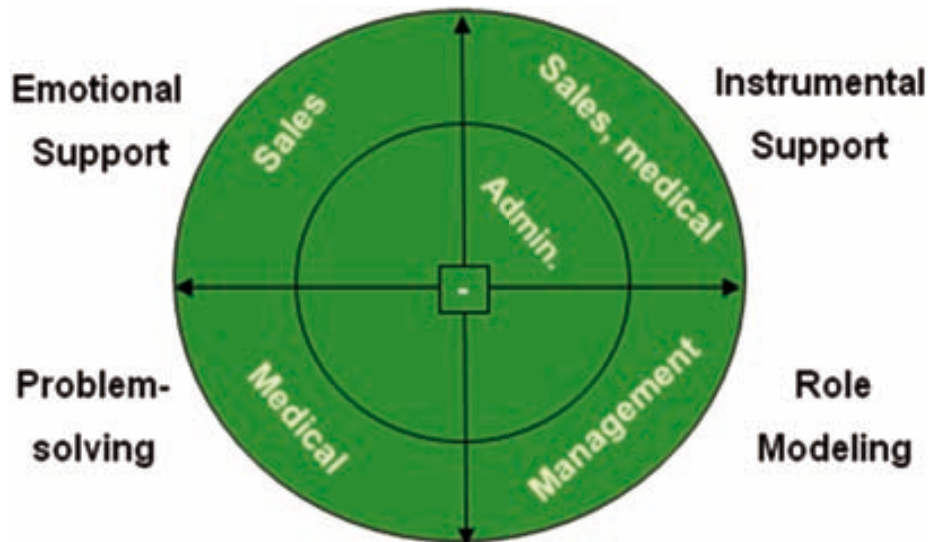

Figure 5. FSSB in Various Subcultures.

Instrumental support was the most mentioned by all groups, particularly medical and sales subcultures referred to it. In general, employees from all subgroups evoked the possibility to alternate their working schedule in case of family emergencies or visits to the doctor, relying on the supervisor's agreement.

In the medical subculture employee mentioned the importance of employees' responsible attitude towards one's job, which assured supervisor's support for various requests. Responsible attitude encompassed ability to manage one's personal life with its interference in the professional sphere on specific occasions. For example: *"[If the employee] says now I need to stay home, because my Grandma is unwell, now I need to stay because another family member is sick and this continues over weeks and months, obviously… one has obligations in the job s/he must fulfill."* (Administrative, woman).

In the sales subculture there was also an allusion made towards the importance of employees' responsible attitude towards job fulfillment, which granted him/her easier supervisor's support. This could reflect the existence of an organizational assumption- the importance of dedication to work, which affected the arrangements that one could use to accommodate one's personal situation. In the case of administrative subculture, dedication was manifested through

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consistent work. Besides, in interdependent jobs, which required interactions with clients, colleagues played an important role as they backed up the service and permitted work alterations, which consequently made supervisor's support easier.

Overall, employees mentioned that the company was "human" and with "human quality", as there was a personalized treatment of employees and concern for their well-being through the provision of various social benefits and initiatives. This gave the possibility to attend to family emergencies and make arrangements for work-life integration. Still, one theme emerged across all subcultures, that of the importance of assuring the least possible disruptions in the service provision. This could represent an underlying assumption that supporting work and family needs can harm organizational effectiveness and therefore the latter has to be taken into consideration when bringing in personal matters to work. Besides, client-centeredness, that is addressing all of the clients' requests, could also play a role. Therefore supervisors' consent to attend to employees' personal needs could affect the service offered to clients and consequently endanger one of the pillars of the organization. This could explain the unsupportive supervisor behaviours.

Interestingly, **emotional support** was mostly evoked by the sales subculture, while other subgroups referred to it only on few occasions. This group encompassed several branch directors which explained the emotional support they offered to their subordinates, like informal talks, going out for lunch and having the possibility to discuss various things. One of the sales employees mentioned a way of dealing with work pressure was talking to the supervisor.

Hence, particularly these groups, healthcare and administrative, experienced one of the most intense situations of emotional strain and labour, when dealing with unsatisfied clients. Further data exploration showed that in these cases instead of relying on their supervisor, they rather turned to colleagues and overcame intense emotional situations by discussing them. This fact does not necessarily speak against the supervisor, as the job context might condition the distribution of support. The branch directors were sales employees and used to visit clients on site, therefore being not always available in the branch. Besides, healthcare and medical employees interacted on a daily basis, also sharing working tasks, which contributed to the emotional support exchanged among the co-workers. While the emotional needs were fulfilled, the supervisor might have been not fully aware of the negative effects these emotionally charged episodes had on the employee and thus wouldn't have been able offering corresponding support. It could be also due to the fact that supervisors' weren't exposed either to emotional support. As one branch director explained: "*You all come to me with problems, but there's no one who takes care of me!*" (Branch director,

man).Therefore, emotional support was needed and appreciated at all levels of the organization.

When employees took work-life related decisions and came to discuss them with the supervisor, again the importance of taking the company's needs was considered.

Besides, the supervisor has the final word in deciding whether the person can use or not certain arrangements or alternate work schedules. In situations when the employee did not receive either emotional or instrumental support for his/her personal needs, s/he did not turn to the HR, as maintaining good relationship with the supervisor, even despite the lack of support, seemed more important. Therefore emotional support is a very important factor as it is a precursor for a good communication, ability to understand the other person's position and find a win-win solution (Rapoport et al., 2002).

One employee from the administrative subculture particularly emphasized the ability of the supervisor to put himself in the people's place, which was appreciated and also attributed to his personal family situation and acquaintance with work-family integration. *"I think the fact that his has children also affects it [his behaviour], and his ability to put himself in our place… and he always does it [supports us], while he can."* (Sales, woman).

Therefore, emotional support was not equally distributed and requested among the subcultures, which could be explained by the peculiarities of the work context and implicit arrangements that emerged in each subculture.

Overall, there were very few references to **role-modeling**, mentioned only by employees in managerial positions (middle and top management) and mostly describing their own behaviours. In the case of **problem-solving,** mostly employees from the healthcare group referred to this kind of support as there were personal situation (divorce, emotional breakdown), which accounted for it.

Taking into the account the limited reference to the last two types of support, it seems difficult drawing conclusions on their occurrence in specific subcultures. Still it is interesting to observe that role modeling was reported only by management, which could be due to various reasons. It might suggest that employees do not observe this type of behaviours among their supervisors or since the majority of employees work fixed schedules, the time managers finish their working did not affect them. Besides, in the sales subcultures, employees were accustomed managing their mail in non-working hours and so were the managers, which probably didn't leave room for role modeling. This might suggest that role-modeling though it seems an obvious supportive behaviour is not always easy to achieve and additional training for managers might be necessary (Kossek & Hammer, 2008).

Therefore, FSSB were evoked differently in various subcultures. While instrumental support was mentioned by all employees, it was closely linked to the underlying organizational assumption that personal matters should not affect organizational outcomes and the importance of dedication to one's work and client-centeredness. Continuous emotional support from the supervisor was also related to the importance of fulfilling organizational objectives with a minimal interference with personal life. Thus, wider organizational assumptions implicitly affected the manifestations of supervisor support and its perception by employees in different subcultures (Lewis, 1997; Rapoport et al., 2002).

6.2.2. The Role of Colleagues in Employees' Work-Life Balance

Employees in Mutua spoke very highly of their colleagues. Many have worked together for many years and built up close relationships, as one person said "*we are a family*". Employees described their good relationships in terms of sharing a good and trusting atmosphere in the working place, being able to ask for help. Co-workers were a source of support and information, warning if one of the patients was moody; sharing knowledge on topics of their expertise. Despite the apparent personal closeness, employee clearly stated that their interaction with colleagues did not transcend the work space and there were very few and outstanding situations when there were out of the work social gathering, like going for drinks or dinner. Besides, though support for personal situations was valued, it was well-seen to keep private matters in private. In addition, when the private sphere interfered with the professional ones, those were the colleagues who indicated about the boundary trespassing and showed their discontent about the matter.

6.2.1.1. Suppportive Co-Worker Behaviours

The description of supportive co-worker support allowed singling out several categories of supportive behaviors: instrumental, emotional support and the context for providing those. The same titles were used as in supervisor support category and the descriptions applied.

Instrumental support referred to situations when employees supported their colleagues in different life situations by alternating their work schedule or taking on some of the co-worker work. This category had 26 quotes. "*Well, if there is an emergency, one takes on the colleague's work… In this department things are getting done among us all*" (Administrative worker, woman). The specific life situations encompassed the long absence of leave due to an illness, death in the family, unexpected leave and accompanying a child to a visit at the doctors.

Besides personal situations, this code also included daily support. For instance, saving a colleague a visit to the client by bringing necessary documents, while being in the area, or by giving advice on how to deal with specific patients, or by adapting working hours or alternating hours on specific days to help colleagues to attend to personal needs. The level of support depended also on the personal relationships one established in the workplace.

Emotional support was provided by listening, empathizing with somebody else's difficulties, being attentive and concerned about the other person's well-being. This category had 19 quotes. Emotional support was provided in stressful

situations with patients, deaths in the family, and just for boosting the morale; often just by sharing similar experiences, e.g. being a mother.

Context of help. Despite the general good attitudes of employees to each others' life situations, there were several conditions that were important in order to receive support. This category included 9 quotes. It was important not to abuse the help and it was general knowledge that "*one day I help you the other day you help me*" (Administrative employee, woman). For instance, when prevented of doing their work, those that received support, made sure to explain that they made up for the help by doing other tasks.

If employees had to dedicate time to personal matters, but did it in a discrete way, without the need to have their work backed up, it was accepted. For example, to check the bank account statement on the web. Nevertheless, if personal life intervened in the professional one with some regularity, this was less accepted, reflecting the existent organization assumption that personal matters can affect negatively work. *"If in the last moment you have to be the one going to pick up your child at school, because the designated person could not do it... well, we will figure it out at work... but you cannot do it every day... because at the end somebody will get mad... It is ok to do it one day, but not every day!"* (Healthcare, man).

Thus, though it was natural to be helpful, employees were conscious about the priority of work and the importance of fulfilling it. At the company level, it was perceived that these behaviors were taken for granted as teamwork was part of the culture, it was normal that employees backed up each other. Still by picking up one's slack, the person's own **workload** increased and the way this would be managed was his/her responsibility.

"It is not valued in case one day the receptionist, for instance, needs to leave earlier because her daughter got sick or because she has a course to attend in Barcelona, and I am the one who needs to stay at the reception the whole day." (Sales, employees).

6.2.2.2. Co-Worker Support in Various Subcultures

Various types of support were mentioned in all the subcultures, but the discourses reflected both the points in common and the peculiarities of each of them.

Instrumental support. Employees in administrative and medical subcultures shared similar experiences. Instrumental support was mostly referred to in terms of covering up for somebody in case of unexpected personal situations related to family or life emergencies and health. Help was provided to direct colleagues or team-mates. In the administrative subculture, employees spoke mostly of long term arrangements, where co-workers initially asked for colleague support or negotiated arrangement before proceeding with official requests with the supervisor. Overall, interviewees mentioned that picking up one's slack did not present a problem, as tasks were shared. *"What I'm doing is shared work ... in all the departments that are shared, you always know that there is somebody who could offer support."* (Administrative, female).

In contrast, sales employees spoke about helping direct colleagues in daily tasks, like bringing in documents, in order to save time on traveling, helping employees from other groups in smaller branches or about helpful colleagues in different subcultures. Interestingly, there was a preoccupation voiced that by substituting somebody, one's own work was accumulated and results were affected, something not considered by the company. *"So what happens that on this day when I do somebody's else work, I'm not working on my objectives, because I do not visit the clients nor go other places.. So this is not valued."* (Sales, woman).

Therefore, in interdependent work positions that were specific for the administrative and medical subcultures, colleague support was taken as normal as tasks were shared and the "favours" of substituting somebody could be reciprocated in the future. This reflected the existent assumption of awareness with whom work is done. In contrast the work of sales employees was more independent, which would explain the absence of colleague support for personal life related matters. The professional aspect was underlined, particularly the goal orientation.

Emotional support. Interestingly in the sales subcultures only one person referred to emotional support, which she received from branch colleagues and from her direct peers, in case of a death in the family and when she provided support to some of these colleagues in situations of stress or personal distress. Therefore direct colleagues did not seem to be an important enough source of support for sales employees to appear in the discussion, while sharing office

space provided more opportunities for sharing daily life, which netted the necessary support. Personal characteristics probably also played a role. *"I got support from my supervisor and all of my colleagues came [to the funeral]… and I got very impressed by this, because all of them came to see me, all colleagues, even the doctors."* (Sales, female).

In the healthcare subculture emotional support consisted in sharing stressful situations with colleagues on one hand and caring for their well-being on the other. For instance, preventing a pregnant colleague from doing certain tasks and in case of stressful situations with patients, attempting to reduce the tensions by talking to them, cracking jokes, etc. As one doctor said: *"I'm sure more than once the nurses saved me from getting hit."* (Doctor, male).

In the administrative subculture being able sharing stressful moments was important, but even more by sharing everyday life and experiences that others could relate to, e.g. motherhood, netted a sensation of being "a family" and being able to attend to emergencies with no negative consequences. *"If you are able going without the pressure, knowing that this "[emergencies]" won't affect you negatively, you go more calmly."* (Administrative, woman). Hence, this was especially true for situations when one's job was independent from others and the alternation of working schedules did not have repercussions for others. Nevertheless, employees emphasized the importance that personal mattes did not affect professional life. E.g. if a child was sick and needed to be picked up, mothers working reduced hours tried to avoid cutting on their hours if the child was not too sick or tried pick him up from the kindergarten and if possible get help for babysitting, showing a high level of work consciousness. This reflected the existent assumptions of primacy of work, value put on dedication and the concern that personal matters can affect negatively work.

To conclude, colleagues supported each other in a variety of life situations, which helped them attend to personal matters at hand. Hence, the proximity of the working space (shared office) gave more opportunities to share daily professional and personal life situations and consequently comment on them and receive support. This could explain the fact that sales employees did not emphasize specific cases of support. Various organizational assumptions emerged through the discourse. Namely that professionalism was mostly valued, that is dedication and that supporting work and family needs could harm organizational effectiveness.

To conclude this chapter, supervisor and colleague support were essential for the work-life balance of employees. While supervisor's instrumental support allowed introducing changes to employees' work-life organization, the help of colleagues, both in terms of emotional support and picking up the slack, made

these changes possible. In subcultures were work was more shared and interdependent, both the emotional and instrumental support was evoked, e.g. in administrative and medical subcultures. Interestingly, the level of job interdependence reflected the degree to which emotional support was valued. Employees in the sales subculture working mostly independently, were emotionally supported by the supervisor, and did not mention emotional support from colleagues. While in the healthcare and administrative subculture the opposite was true. This finding indicates the importance that job interconnectedness had on managing emotionally coloured personal or professional situations.

Organizational assumptions created a specific context which affected work-life integration. In some subcultures, for instance, healthcare, colleague awareness affected the way employees managed their professional life when it came in touch with the professional one, thus emphasizing the role organizational culture and subculture played in the process of work-life balance. The organizational assumption that life matter could affect negatively the organizational efficiency was present throughout in examples of putting personal matters in the background, being responsible and not abusing the received support and being professional. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in situations of emergency, personal matters came in the first place and all subcultural and organizational influences moved to the background.

6.3. Individual Experiences of Work-Life Balance

The organizational and inter-individual level of analysis allowed understanding the role of organizational culture and subculture, supervisors and co-workers in the integration of work and life spheres. By moving to the individual level of analysis, we obtained further insights into what work-life balance meant for employees and their perceived level of balance. Besides, we looked into the way they integrated different parts of their lives both conceptually and in practice. Therefore, first, we present employees' definitions of work-life balance. Second, we analyze work-life balance assessment. Finally, the boundary management and consequent coping strategies are discussed.

6.3.1. What does work-life balance mean for Spanish employees? Work-life balance definition.

Employees used various key words of various grammatical forms to define what work-life balance meant for them. Among them were: ability, possibility; general state of balance; collaborate; to feel good in both worlds; good relationship; availability, etc. The definitions encompassed three big themes, coded accordingly: 1. general view of work-life balance as an integration of both personal and professional lives (36 quotes); 2. Expected outcomes of work-life balance (10 quotes); 3. Strategies for reaching it (5 quotes). Cultural and labour context appeared as an important explanation of employees' individual work-life practices. (See Figure 6).
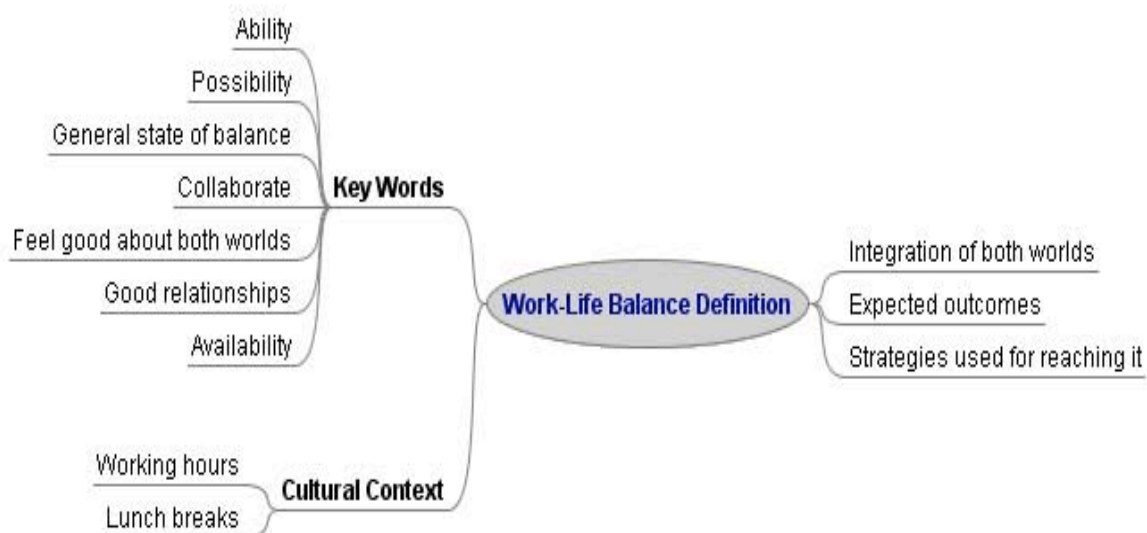

Figure 6. Work-Life Definitions

Work-life balance as the integration of both worlds. These definitions encompassed such descriptions as capability to combine work and life matters according to own judgment and freedom to decide the time one dedicated to each field. It also meant getting support from one area of life when the other area was affected, e.g. get spousal support for work-related matters and being able mentioning family-related issues at work. In this regard, supervisor support was one of the prerequisites for making the necessary arrangements.

The scope of work-life balance varied: for some it meant strictly managing work and family spheres, while for others it also meant having time for oneself whether one had family or not. Some people operated based on the reduced definition of work-life balance, that it the combination of work and family life, and not personal life in general. As one employee mentioned speaking about a colleague: "*She lives with her partner, does the same work schedule as the colleague [intensive schedule] and in general does not have any [work-life] problems, as she has no children….*" (Doctor, man).

Some went in their definition as broad as the ability to be in balance with life itself, with one's environment, with the surrounding people.

"*[Work-life balance] means to have the possibility that both work and family life can.. go along… that nobody makes it more difficult for you… if you need to leave work one day earlier that you could do it.*" (Administrative worker, woman).

Finally, work-life balance was also the possibility to get more time for oneself, leisure and hobby activities one enjoyed: "*…would be good after the working day to have some time for yourself, to be able studying, to be able doing different things, like reading, painting, things that you like and for which you don't have time.*" (Sales, woman).

Expected outcomes of work-life balance. Employees underlined the importance of minimal interference between the various parts of one's life. Particularly the least possible negative mood and strain spillover between the spheres were valued. Meaning that the mood in which the person came home or the stress s/he experienced did not affect the relationships at home. Moreover, employees underlined that work-life balance meant the absence of sacrifices that would impair either sphere.

"*Work-life balance means to come to an equilibrium between professional and personal life… that there is the minimum of interferences between the two…so that one does not have to make sacrifices that would not be acceptable either for one part of life or the other... especially sacrificing really important things.. that*

would prevent you from living either part of life fully." (Administrative worker, woman).

Strategies used to reach work-life balance. Some of the definitions suggested strategies for this objective. On one hand it implied the separation of the two spheres. The least they were connected, the better it was. On the other hand, it meant reducing working hours and getting external help for taking care of the household chores or hiring babysitters to watch children while at work.

"*Balance means trying to manage [both worlds] the best way possible… obviously not to mix… For me it also means trying to separate the two.*" (Sales, woman).

Separating the two worlds was not always easy, but something to aspire to and in case of some employees an appreciated skill, which was not yet mastered

"*.. well, there are moments when you mix the two… there is no other way but mixing them. It depends on each person… Some people say 'the moment I leave work… I forget all work-related problems'. I have not managed to do that. I admire people who had.*" (Nurse, man).

National Context. Several employees referred to the national context to explain their experiences and definitions. Particularly, the long working hours and the working schedule with late ending times influenced the fact that there was less time for the family sphere. "*The problem is that we dedicate few hours to the family… The working hours are very extensive during the day and it is difficult to be in two places at a time [both at work and with the family].*" (Sales, man).

One of the employees mentioned that it would have been better having the "European schedule", when one would have a short lunch (in one hour instead of two) and be home earlier to have dinner at 7 or 8 in the evening (instead of 9-10 pm). This would have given employees more time to spend with their respective families and moreover would be beneficial for the company. "*… because employees would have been much more agile till the end of the working day.*" (Sales, director, man).

When filtering the definitions by sex, family situation and subcultures, no particular message came out stronger than others. Among all subcultures combining work/life was conceptualized in terms of sufficient time for all spheres of life, work, family, leisure, and oneself. The following quotes captures the general message employees sent: "…*one needs to work in order to live... but not to live for the sake of work.*" (Nurse, man).

To conclude, though there was a broad vision of work-life balance among Mutua's employees, the definitions in general turned around work-family sphere and strategies for a most balance and peaceful co-existence of the two, whether it meant their separation or integration. Besides, cultural context allowed for further insights into these definitions.

Table 9. Work-Life Definitions.

Work-Life Balance Defined as:	Characteristics	Quotes
The integration of both worlds	Capability to combine work and life matters according to own judgment; freedom to choose where and when to do what; get support from work or life sphere for the issues in the other one (work support for personal matters and vice versa); have more free time for oneself.	*"[Work-life balance] means having the possibility that both work and family life can.. go along... that nobody makes it more difficult for you... if you need to leave work one day earlier that you could do it."* (Administrative worker, woman).
Expected outcomes of work-life balance	Minimal interference between the various parts of one's life; reduced mood and stress spillover; absence of sacrifices.	*"Work-life balance means to come to an equilibrium between professional and personal life... that there is the minimum of interferences between the two...so that one does not have to make sacrifices ...."* (Administrative worker, woman).
Strategies used to reach work-life balance	Sphere separation; get external help; reduce working hours.	*"Balance means trying to manage [both worlds] the best way possible... obviously not to mix... For me it also means trying to separate the two."* (Sales, woman).

6.3.2. Work-Life Balance Assessment

In order to understand better the work-life balance experiences, employees were asked to assess their individual work-life integration and also the way they perceived others managed the various spheres of life.

Individual assessment. As part of the interview guide, employees were asked to evaluate the current perception of their work-life balance on a scale from 1 to 10, from min to maximum. The majority assessed their work-life balance in the upper range, from 8 to 10, while few placed it between 5 and 7 and below 4.

Those who evaluated it as **four or below** explained it by the lack of contact with the family, particularly with children, the need to hire extra help to care for them; additionally that their pace of life was very fast, things needed to be done in high speed, which provoked stress. Consequently, there was higher propensity for negative mood spillover.

"*I would rate it at four… Because we got accustomed to come home late, we got accustomed to have people helping us by paying for it, which is a lot of money on a daily basis…. We got accustomed to rush… to be in a bad mood… .*" (Sales, man).

Those who were **satisfied in average or more**, talked about a lack of time in general due to long working hours and in particular for spending time with their partner and for doing things of personal interest, like hobbies. Nevertheless, some employees spoke about the intent of making room for own plans, which suggested the importance of individual agency in this process. "*During the week I have really little time for private life…. So it's a 5… because from Monday to Friday I only think about work.*" (Sales, woman).

Those employees who were **satisfied** with their work-life balance exhibited content about their current situation. They valued the possibility of spending time with children, possibility to work hours that allowed them seeing them and have the support of family members for working. Some mentioned that they were in a life phase when things were good and this made work-life balance good. They mentioned that in the free time they tried to dedicate time to things they liked, though it was at times difficult, especially for those with children, as they spent most of the time with them.

"*At the moment it [work-life balance is very good].. 8 or 9… because I can work the hours that allow me being with my daughter and I can balanace both things [work and family] very well.*" (Sales, woman).

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Multiple interviewees referred to the importance of spending quality time with their children and being available for them, whether in person or if not, being accessible per phone. Building a good relationship with children while they were little and having common time was beneficial for future parents-children relationship. Hence, the transience of certain experiences was emphasized and the fact that life was made of stages that did not last forever, affected the experience of work-life balance.

"*I am telling everybody, 'enjoy your children now, while they are little, enjoy the common time with them because soon it won't be possible… If you enjoy it now, you will enjoy it in a different way than later'. … Because also the schedules, the schedules also change… when they are little, they have one schedule and then another… .*" (Administrative worker, woman).

Several employees clarified that their appraisal was of the situation in the current point in time, that it could change or that compared to past experiences it was better. It reflected the volatility of work-life balance and the fact that it was not made in stone and could change together with the life circumstances. This perception provided insights into the general view of work-life balance, but also on professional decisions one made of how much dedication one wanted to give to the work and to the life spheres. As one sales employee said: "*I wouldn't work for a company which didn't allow me this [time to be with my daughter, work a reduced working schedule]. …A job is a job, and I might have many of them, to work during your whole life for one company as it used to be 30 years ago in Spain, this does not exist any longer.. We know that there are cycles… But my daughter is for a life-time.*" (Sales, woman).

Several employees confessed that prioritizing work over family life, particularly time spent with children, caused them remorse, which still hurt in the present. In one particular situation the employee saw his conjugal relationship deteriorating considerably due to the workload and multiple occasions of shift work. In the case of a nurse, leaving small children in the kindergarten in order to be able going back to work was a traumatic experience, which even after more than two decades she could not forget. Interestingly, not a single interviewee mentioned a case when prioritizing family had such deep negative perceived consequences. It could be hypothesized that over a life time there are various opportunities for professional development and if one is missed, one can actively seek another one or learn a lesson and not repeat the mistake. Besides, family experience could compensate for the "loss" and be fulfilling. When having children it seemed impossible to recreate particular stages of life, therefore missed opportunities hurt more and could bear lifelong consequences.

To conclude, employees saw their work-life balance as poor, when children were affected by the existing arrangements, while their assessment raised to average, when partner or leisure time were concerned. They reported satisfaction with their current integration when they enjoyed their work and could do it without sacrificing their parental obligations and besides getting support from their family. It also involved time necessary for personal matters.

Work-life balance in others. Employees were asked their perception of other employees' work-life balance. Most perceived that their colleagues had a good work-life integration, whereas some saw cases of average or lack of it.

The *negative perception* was attributed partially to professional characteristics. For instance, in the case of sales employees their work demands implied they did not have a fixed schedule and client visits, so they were not always punctually home, compared to administrative employees, whose work was much more regulated and some even went home for lunch. Nevertheless, from the administrative point of view, more flexibility was wished, particularly getting the chance to shorten the lunch break and leave earlier, possible in case of those who did not face clients. Therefore, as a saying goes "the grass is always greener on the other side", and that each group of employees could see things that could be improved in their schedules.

In general, there was a differentiation between company and supervisor support. At the company level there could be policies in place, but when there were punctual cases of work-life integration needed, the possibility to attend to them depended on supervisor's support. Situations when employees were denied the use of some policies created a particular negative perception of the company's support. Thus there was no uniform support across the organization.

"*In my particular case, it [work-life balance] is very high [rated at 10], but I know that in other positions it is not the case and that's what I think needs to be worked on.*" (Sales, woman).

Employees' work-life balance was assessed *positively* because in the case of sales employees, there was the flexibility. In the case of the healthcare subgroup, they had the possibility of fixed schedules and compared to those working in hospitals, finished work at a reasonable hour. Besides, the Friday's schedule from 8am to 2 pm and the intensive summer schedule also gave considerable possibilities for making time for both home and work. Additionally, the company's general positive and supportive attitude was valued. Employees felt that in case of personal emergencies they would be supported. Nevertheless, work-life integration depended on each particular situation, both professional (work schedule) and private (children and parents' caring demands).

"*I think it [work-life integration] depends on each person's schedule… and the personal situation at home.*" (Nurse, woman).

Therefore, employees spoke about satisfactory work-life integration, which was tainted by work-related characteristics which made it more difficult.

6.3.3. What Do Employees Do to Reach Work-Life Balance? Boundary Management and Work-Life Strategies.

Employees used a variety of ways and strategies to manage the various facets of their lives and the boundaries between them. There were both preferences of integration and separation, but often spillover occurred between different life spheres, which resulted in an involuntary integration. Below we describe first the boundary management, the occurring spillover between various sides of life and finally the singled out barriers and facilitators for work-life balance.

6.3.3.1. Boundary management.

Employees combined various facets of their lives in different ways. Two types of boundary management emerged from the data analysis: *integration*, that is combining various types of activities, and *segmentation,* that is separating professional and personal matters. Besides, some employees described a certain *transitioning* between these two boundaries, used in order to move from one activity and settle into the other one. Employees preferred using segmentation (61 quotes), followed by integration (37 quotes) and mentioned several types of transitions (6 quotes).

Segmentation. Employees segmented their life in a variety of ways. Some linked it to the preferred way of getting organized, adopting temporal and spatial segmentation. For instance, some looked at the separation during the day, while others had an overview of the week. During the day it meant clear separation of working time and home-time, where personal matters were strictly forbidden, but which also meant that no work was brought home in the evening. If one adopted a week perspective, no work was allowed over the week-end, though during the week it depended on the workload. In one of the branches, a strict segmentation was instituted by the director of the branch, who broke the habit of employees calling up colleagues during holidays, unless it was an emergency.

For those in favour of segmentation, personal matters were banned from the agenda, only work-related meetings and to-do lists were welcomed. Thus, life only entered the work sphere in case of emergencies, while all life related issues, like errands, were kept outside.

"*What I do is ... Saturdays and Sunday I try to disconnect completely and I never take my laptop home.*" (Top manager, man).

"*If I do sports or going playing paddle with friends, I always try to do it in the evening or in the night, when children are already asleep.*" (Top manager, man).

Segmentation meant also disconnecting mentally. Some employees felt that work matters affected them in the personal life, and that's why they tried to draw the line, using psychological segmentation. "*Well, some issues affect me…I admit that it [work] can affect me and I try to disconnect from work… and unless it is a serious topic… I try that it has no repercussions and that they [work and life] are two different worlds.*" (Nurse, female).

Interestingly, segmentation not only applied to the way employees organized their work, but also the way they managed relationships. Some banned work-related topics from discussions with the partner to avoid having a continuation of the working day at home. Besides, social life in general was meant only for the personal sphere. Interactions with colleagues outside of the working place were limited and employees consciously made a distinction between colleagues and friends.

Therefore for employees with this boundary management preference, there was a conscious intent of separation of work and life spheres. "*I'm lucky in this job, it is the first time that I manage to cross the entrance and leave all the problems behind… and tomorrow, at 7:30 am, when I will start working this will be a new day.*" (Administrative worker, woman).

Still, it should be noted that when emergencies happened or work or family were a source of preoccupation, employees admitted that keeping this separation was difficult. As one nurse said, "*It's every time less and less that I bring [mentally] patients home.*" (Nurse, woman).

Integration. The daily life of those who preferred the integration style looked opposite to the segmentors's one. Their agendas allowed both private and professional appointments cohabiting. They used technology to advance in their work and personal matters at hours that suited them. Several top managers mentioned using laptops during holidays to be available for the staff. They mentioned that this was also a personal strategy to decrease the level of work accumulated over the holiday time, so that the first day after being back to work was not too stressful. Nevertheless, it could be also an echo of the assumption of dedication to work and that personal matters should not be affecting professional life.

Both private and professional calls were accepted at different times of day crossing any stipulated boundaries. Some employees opted for an extreme

integration. One person kept a notebook on the night table to be able writing down ideas which occurred to her during the night.

Personal life was also allowed in small portions as long as it did not undermine the professional one. Employees could run very quick errands (stop by at a fruit shop when visiting the clients) or check up something in the internet. Partner's support in work-related matters, whether it was giving an advice or just listening was also helpful to solve problems and served as a source of inspiration. Besides, having the possibility to share work issues at home was comforting. Still it was not done on a daily basis, only occasionally as "*My wife and I, we are already the whole day away ... and what we cannot do is when we are all together, in the evening or during the week-end, we cannot talk about work at home...*". (Sales, director, man).

In general, work related topics entered all life spheres easier. "*Sometimes when I'm driving, I get ideas... so I write it down in my notebook... During the night, while I sleep, it happens to me, if there is a topic that worries me and I cannot sleep, if I get an idea, I get up and write it down... because next day I won't remember it.*" (Sales, woman).

Therefore, the integration of professional and personal lives did not occur on equal terms. Work entered easier the private sphere and occupied more time, space and employees´ mental resources.

Transition. Several employees mentioned that in order to go from one side of life into the other, they passed through a certain transition from work sphere to personal life. Some were organizing the last to-dos while driving back home in the car. Others mentally made an overview of their day to see what was done and achieved. Still others took a small walk before diving into home chores or homework with children. Finally one person mentioned that on Friday just by changing into more casual clothes and heading for grocery shopping or preparing something different for dinner with the partner, was a sign that the working week was over.

To conclude, the interviews showed that though employees mention one or other preferred boundary management style, life was more complex and it was difficult to bring complete attention to one of its parts while "switching off" from the other as very often spillover in between the two occurred.

Spillover or the unplanned integration. Mutua's employees experienced spillover from one sphere of life into the other, but to a different extent. Personal matters spilled over into the professional life only occasionally, in form of phone calls, when there were personal, health related issues with children or

parents. Besides, mental spillover occurred. Employees thought about their children when they were sick, and also about home related matters, like mentally making notes of grocery shopping, etc.

Home-work spillover occurred mostly in women. The spillover from work to family life was also much more common among women and was mostly of cognitive nature. Employees kept their mind spinning around work issues, especially if there were problems at work. Some thought about the job, making a mental to do list and they noted that they made a conscious attempt that this did not stress them.

Many times cognitive spillover triggered emotional reactions and consequent emotional spillover, as by thinking over a certain problem the person was also getting worried and emotionally strained. This resulted in bad moods, sleeping problems and crossover effects for the partner.

"*Unfortunately, I bring many of my work problems home… and to whom do I tell it? To the poor girl, my wife.*" (Nurse, man).

Employees seemed to be especially affected in an emotional way when clients or patients were disrespectful to them or they had a conflict with them. After a situation when an employee got threatened, he mentioned avoiding going on week-ends to the town where he worked not to meet with patients.

As one doctor said in case of a conflict with a patient: "*… who did not want to get back to work [because of his health condition]… I said, "ok, take four more days off." Sometimes I'm waiting for the forth day, thinking how I am going to tell him to start working… I must admit that this affects me a bit outside of the work.*" (Doctor, male).

Thus, despite voicing specific boundary management preferences, different life spheres in form of thoughts, moods and various emotional and mental states crossed the borders, leaving employees dealing with the consequences. Various factors, both professional characteristics and personal choices, created barriers and facilitators that influenced the way work-life was managed and the extent of spillover experiences.

6.3.3.2. Boundary Management Across Subcultures

In all subcultures, employees emphasized the preference towards segmentation. Nevertheless, there were peculiarities of boundary management and reasons for the experienced spillover, as well as what facilitated and created barriers for work-life balance.

In the **sales subculture**, integration and segmentation approaches co-existed. On one hand some employees drew a line between work and home, trying to concentrate on the tasks at hand, without mixing the two, particularly strongly separating working days from the week-end, as Monday through Friday work interference was more permitted. One employee mentioned that she had to drive so much during the week that at some point they stopped using the car with her family so tired she was of being at the wheel. On the other hand, work characteristics, like access to working data, and the subcultural values of putting constant efforts, being results oriented, client conscious and available prompted employees to integrate work and life. It was done by following up calls from home, answering mails, advancing on reports. It also contributed to the existing cognitive spillover in these employees. They not only thought about work at all hours of the day, but also dreamt about it or could not fall asleep, while trying to solve mentally an issue with a client.

Having autonomy, flexibility and control over one's schedule was very valued, but only mentioned by top management, reflecting the restricted availability of this resource for work-life balance to other groups of employees.

In the **administrative subculture**, employees preferred to divide their personal and professional space and were quite successful in it, having situations of work-life integration only punctually in case of own or child sickness or visits at the doctor and punctual phone calls. Though their working hours were restricted to the presence in the office space and no work could be taken out, cognitive spillover still occurred. Those were specific cases of anticipating situations on which employees felt they had little influence. For instance, facing a negative reaction from a patient or meeting patients with whom one had an intense encounter, thinking of especially stressful days ahead. Also, specific issues or mistakes done at work occupied their thoughts. In all cases, since little could be done while outside of the office, employees had to postpone any actions till the next day or deal with their emotions, if actions were not possible, usually by focusing on other things. These situations of spillover reflected to a certain extent the underlying assumption of dedication and the importance of dedication to work and its importance in employees' lives.

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Finally, in the **healthcare subculture**, work characteristics, that is, working shifts represented a barrier for work-life balance, as work required physical presence that did not allow attending to other needs. Nevertheless they preferred putting clear boundaries between personal and professional spheres, drawing strongly on the values of their groups and assumptions. That is, strong emphasis on competency, professionalism and relationship with the patient. Besides, comradeship played a strong role, as allowing their private life enter work could result in putting more weight on their co-workers, something what was not acceptable. Even in cases of emergencies linked to children, if the child got fever and had to be picked up at the kindergarten, if the fever was not too high and there were just few hours left before the end of the working day, the employee preferred staying at work, explaining that within this hour and a half nothing could happen to the child and work could be advanced.

The spillover also occurred among these employees, also of cognitive nature, making them think of ways of treating a wound, or thinking of stressful situations as a result of conflicts with patients.

A source of facilitation for such situations was experience. Experience prevented cognitive spillover and decreased emotional labour while dealing with clients or patients. It was especially pronounced in the administrative and healthcare employees for whom previous experience and putting things in perspective allowed to disconnect or manage better emotionally strained situation with patients.

"*As I have quite some years of experience, I graduated from university 26 years ago and I saw all kind of situations…. Usually, when I arrive home I try to forget and take to my private life and take to my private life and that's it.* " (Doctor, man).

Therefore, work characteristics, available technology contributed to the smaller or bigger extent in which this sphere penetration occurred. Technology facilitated the possibility to advance work when at home (BlackBerry, use of laptops), but also contributed to boundary integration. Across the subcultures mental and emotional spillover occurred, as a result of specific job demands, but also was influenced by the existing values and assumptions.

6.3.4. Work-Life Policies Use

Another way of integrating work and life spheres was the use of organizational policies. When talking about work-life policies employees spoke not only about their experiences of policy use, but also about policy availability and other related topics. Overall, reduced working schedule was the most used policy, though intensive working schedule, maternity leave, flexible starting and ending time were also mentioned, however without generating any particular insights into their use.

The general discourse of younger and older employees around work-life policy use allowed getting interesting vision on the matter. The older generation of employees (starting from 44 years old, the so called "superwomen generation" (Moreno, 2004) raised their children without access to any policy and kept their jobs by getting support from baby-sitters. Therefore they took the complaints of modern mothers about the difficulties to integrate both worlds with surprise and some even indignation. Their solution for work-life balance was getting organized, getting some help and sacrificing yourself, without striving for free time. "*Nowadays people want to go out more, they want to have time to go for a walk… I think it [work-life balance] means getting organized… and sacrifice a little bit yourself… What people say nowadays, 'you cannot work [when you have children]. This is nonsense! You can work, you find an agreement with your husband… you divide the work.*" (Sales, woman).

While the older generation spoke about sacrifices of leisure time, younger employees also talked about sacrifice, but conceptualized it in terms of sacrificing professional life. One employee told about his wife working part-time while their children were little as a professional sacrifice she made considering her educational background. This was a common decision, a strategy to accommodate the family in a specific phase of life. "*We came to an agreement, that during the first years, while children were very small, she made the sacrifice… Luckily her job allowed her working part-time… despite her studies, which allow her to be well-placed in the workplace.*" (Administrative, man).

As one of the employees, occupying a managerial position stated that if one was to take up the work schedule reduction, granted legally, which was up to 8 years, it would be incompatible with any career aspiration. Therefore, it seemed that both in the earlier times as of now, women being the primary carers for children had to find a solution in order to combine various sides of life, whether it meant reducing time spent with children or time devoted to work. This also pointed to a deeper sitting assumption on the cultural level, that it was impossible to work-life balance without bearing consequences on either the personal or professional

side and that it was part of the national context. Moreover, another assumption concerning work consisted in undervaluing part-time work as not equal in quality to the full-time, while the difference should be only on the quantitative level. Nevertheless, it was the way individuals constructed the meaning for their actions which gave a positive or negative shade to the way they balanced their life. This could be seen in the discussion of policy use.

Reduced working schedule. Reduced working schedule was the policy mentioned the most by employees, accessible to all professional profiles and the only one which brought insights into the studied topic.

When speaking about the possibility to use the policy, those employees who used the policy expressed their gratitude towards the company that allowed them balancing both personal and professional lives and did not take it as a legally granted right. While those employees who never benefited from its use had a general and vague impression that it was available to all employees, which also reflected a certain absence of wide knowledge about work-life policies on the company level.

"I'm working from 8 am till 3 pm. I asked for a reduction of one hour and could choose the schedule that fitted me better for my daughter… and my suggestion got accepted. I am very happy, because I understand that this does not happen in many places… " (Sales, woman).

In reality, the request had to pass through an internal procedure, where the HR department who received the application checked with the head of the branch or the supervisor whether it did not create any major or unsolvable problems and then it was granted. Nevertheless, supervisors were the ones who had the last word about policy use and there were cases when the person was denied its use as it was perceived as incompatible.

Employees' discourse also reflected the preoccupation about the company's functioning when using the policy, which pointed to the existing assumption that supporting personal matters could harm organizational effectiveness. Besides it reflected the major focus that some of the employees put into the professional life versus the private one. As one employee spoke about her maternity and the policy use experience, working from 8:30am till 3:30 pm:

"I enjoy the contact with the company and people and I got back to work slowly not to be totally separated from work … and to give some support to the branch as now this is the time when we need to adapt the most and put maximum efforts in order to keep the office afloat and if moreover it fitted with my schedule [daughter goes to the kindergarten], then it's even better." (Sales, woman).

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This focus put on the professional life allowed it to slip into the personal area and was taken as normal, while the other way around did not happen. As one sales employee mentioned that she was taking calls and checking mails in the afternoon, as it didn't occupy much of her time "*only two or three hours*".

To conclude, the use of work-life policies, even those granted by law, potentially implied negative effects either for personal or professional life and was labeled by some as sacrifice. In order to avoid these negative consequences work-life boundaries were blurred and work entered easily private spheres. The underlying assumptions at the national level, that work meant long working hours and at the organizational level, that private matters could harm organizational effectiveness came across employees' discourses.

6.3.5. Work-Life Strategies

Besides organizationally provided support, employees used a variety of personal strategies in order to integrate professional and personal lives. The most used were organization, having a positive attitude and disconnect through activities. It was followed by partner childcare sharing and getting external help, having own objectives, an agreement with the partner and own practices. These strategies could be by convention divided into four subgroups: *cognitive*, when one changed the assessment or perception of the situation; *action-oriented strategies*, when employees acted upon the reality at hands by ways of getting organized or disconnecting through activities; *self-oriented*: by focusing on own projects helped reaching general work-life balance; finally *childcare focused strategies*, whether sharing the workload with the partner or getting external help was also beneficial for individual balance. (See Figure 7).
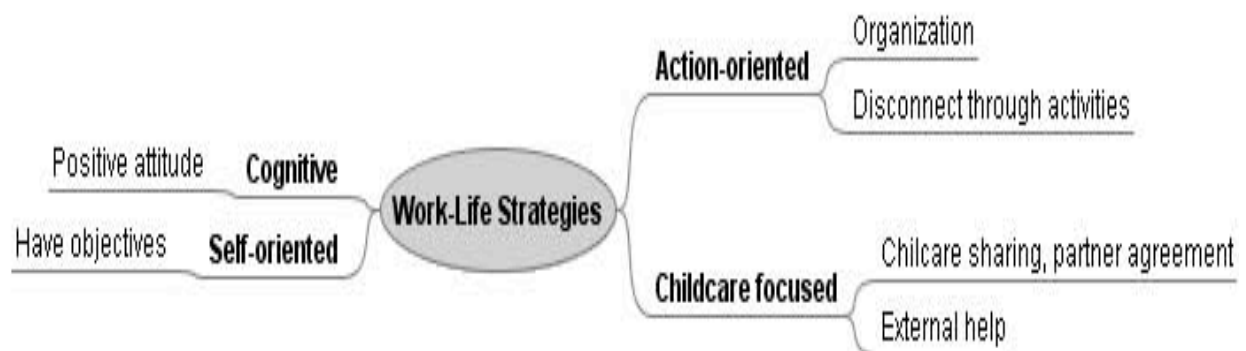

Figure 7. Individual Work-Life Strategies.

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Action-Oriented Strategies

Organization. The most used strategy for managing all sides of life was organization, encompassing employees from all subcultures and all kind of life situations (single, married, divorced, with or without children). Getting organized meant having all family-related, household processes organized, like coordinating schedules, especially if children needed to be brought or picked up from school, but also household chores.

"You get the dishwasher ready in the evening and you put it on after breakfast... At lunch time, since I come home for lunch, I would hang the clothes that got washed and get dinner ready ... depending on the extra curriculum activity of my daughter [wouldn't have time doing it then]." (Administrative worker, woman).

But besides organizing the home side of life, the work side was also trimmed. Some employees prepared their clothes the previous day and mentally put up a plan of things they would do the next day, to be able anticipating the unexpected workload and get ready for it.

One employee made a mental overview of her day, highlighting what went well, but also thought about the day ahead: *"I think I will do this and that, will get things ready, how I would present this idea, how I would formulate it...and I do it all during the 45-minute drive back home."* (Sales, woman).

Those who had access to Outlook outside of working hours and liked integrating used technology to get organized, others relied on an agenda or notebook, or used post-its and also prioritized things. Besides, it was important to be flexible, to go things on the go.

This way personal and professional life were constantly interwoven and entered each other's terrain in different ways and to various extent and had some positive spillover from one to another. As one employee mentioned, getting well organized at home influenced positively the family life, by spending more time with the family and avoiding conflicts in the couple.

"What helps me a lot in work-life balance is getting well-organized at work, that is planning your work is essential for being able getting things done during the working hours...and this means also being punctual at home... because home demands you the same punctuality that you are required at work... because when you are not punctual at home this could cause problems with the partner." (Sales, branch director, man).

Disconnect through activities. Going to the gym or doing sports, meeting people outside of work to talk about non-work related matters was another way of actively finding an optimal state between all spheres of life for many employees. Some employees changed their daily routines, or went to bed early to get energized for the next day. But one of the most common way of disconnecting from one area was getting connected in the other one. As a nurse said that she disconnects by: "*By having a lot of work. As you have work, I suppose that this in itself helps you to disconnect and you take it all out of the head.*" (Nurse, woman).

Also by runnig errands and advancing things during the lunch break helped disconnecting from work and thus the person did not spend the whole day in the office.

Cognitive Strategy

Positive attitude. Employees referred to positive attitude when they had difficult situations in personal or professional life, whether it was stress at work, problems with children and tried to put them in perspective, adopt a more relative approach, expecting things to improve in the future. It was a cognitive strategy to put oneself in a positive state of mind, to bring attention to things one liked and to commit to doing the job eagerly in order to experience it. As one employee said it meant creating a nice working environment, putting personal fotos, plants and enjoying what one was doing. "*It means to enjoy what you have [work, life] with the available resources at hand.*" (Administrative worker, woman). Additionally, it meant also enjoying everyday life and making one's life better by doing things one liked.

In situations of stress, this meant to have an internal dialogue with oneself, putting things in perspective. As one administrative employee mentioned: "*Sometimes you get nervous, because there are 7 or 8 people at the reception… so I think, 'Calm down, at 8 pm we will close the entrance door and we will attend them...' That is, I solve it myself.*" (Administrative worker, woman).

Therefore, it seemed to be a useful strategy which was always at hand no matter through what situation employees went through.

Childcare-Focused Strategies

Partner childcare sharing. This code reflected an agreement between husbands and wives, where household chores related to children and childcare were shared. Most of the times, the husband would bring the child to the kindergarten, while the wife would pick him/her up. In one case the agreement also included taking care of the evening routines (bathing, dinner preparations) several times a

week, so that the other person could devote time to other activities. In this case, it was going to the gym. In general, both men and women commented that sharing childcare activities helped dealing better with family-related workload and stress.

"*When you have children, in the evening there is a lot of work, because they are tired, you need to wash them, feed them. The woman works and she is also tired, we are all tired… and this is a little difficult to handle it all by yourself, whether you are the mother or the father. … The fact that both parents are at home at around this time, to have a common dinner and till children go to bet, makes it much easier… Though making it possible [being at home in time] is also at times difficult.*" (Sales, branch director, man).

Besides, by having support from the partner, women had more possibilities to have own free time, devoted to herself and in case of men, they could dedicate themselves to hobbies.

Finally, sharing childcare responsibilities (dinners, evening care), when father was the main carer during a specific period of time, had positive spillover effects on the father-children relationship.

"*Now he [my husband] is much more active with children… He goes playing soccer with the little one and they've got this complicity, a very nice one between father and son, something they did not have before, when I used to take care of everything.*" (Sales, woman).

External help. In order to integrate both sides of life some employees used external help, mainly babysitters, but also grandparents. The external help mainly took care of the children, giving them breakfast, lunches and dinners, picking them up from school or kindergarten and spending afternoons with them, while the parents worked. As one employee mentioned, it was particularly important in case of women allowing oneself to ask for help and not playing the superwoman.

"*For women, especially for women of my age [around 38] it is very typical to say ΄I can manage everything, I am the superwoman, I will be able to balance work and life and on top of it look great, be dressed fashionably, have a perfect hairstyle and be a top professional. Besides I will take of my daughter, and have the house in perfect conditions, and I will be able doing it all, and by myself…` Well, this is not true, we need to ask for help…* ". (Sales, woman).

Self-Oriented Strategy

Own objectives. By having plans, activities outside of work and having objectives at least on short terms, was an appreciated work-life balance strategy

"*I think that the best is to have objectives outside of the work environment… And there are many things which I like… I like literature, cinema and theatre a lot… By having a variety of activities, by having objectives, this at the end fives meaning to life in total.*" (Doctor, man).

Therefore, employees used a variety of strategies to live in a balanced way. To summarize, the "magic formula" was to have a very clear work and family related tasks that one needed to do and execute them; get your partner involved in childcare responsibilities, as not only it alleviated the workload, but also contributed to good relationships between parents and children and gave more free time to partners. If the partner was not available, referring to external support was the best strategy. Finally, it was important using internal resources to feel balanced. That is, keeping things in perspective and adopt a positive attitude, but also get own projects, objectives where one could enjoy and draw the attention to in case of a need for disconnection.

6.4. Results Overview. Work-Life Integration: the Implicit Influence of Organizational Subcultures

On the surface level, Mutua's employees enjoyed their work-life integration, praising company support, good working hours and general positive experiences. Nevertheless, employees' discourse was peppered with references to situations of stress and negative work-life spillover.

Specific occupational characteristics, like job demands, working schedules, tasks accounted to some extent for the experienced workload and situations of work-family conflict. Still, the existing assumptions and the implicit importance of certain behaviors and ways of being were what affected individuals' work-life integration transcending organizational, interindividual and individual levels. Looking at the data through the organizational culture and subcultural lenses with their values and assumptions offered a layer of complexity and allowed the emergence of other variables. Moreover, existing assumptions at the wider national level about the integration of work and life spheres for men and women and the organization of work in general allowed understanding individual experiences and coping strategies for work-life balance.

At the organizational level the five identified assumptions[9] created a general setting of what was important in the company: dedicated work, availability to clients and the importance of the human factor presented in form of good relationships with clients and colleagues. These organizational level assumptions were tailored and pronounced to different extent in the subcultures, constituted around the occupational context. The most pronounced assumptions in each subculture affected implicitly the way individuals approached work-life integration. Their effects were implicit, because they formed part of the existing reality and were interiorized in form of "own choices". For instance, assumptions like dedication, client-centeredness and priority put to work, bundled together made employees integrate their work and personal lives despite the preferred segmentation of spheres and structural possibility of doing so, e.g. being on a maternity leave or working part-time.

Overall, a general premise that supportive personal life needs could harm organizational effectiveness allowed a limited entrance of life sphere into work. In situations of work-life spillover, employees either explained its minimal role or did everything possible that the interruptions were kept to minimum.

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[9] The five organizational assumptions were: 1. Assumption that supporting work and family needs can harm organizational effectiveness; 2. Assumption concerning how work is done (dedication); 3. Where work is done (availability); 4. For whom work is done (client-centeredness). 5. With whom work is done (colleague interactions).

Below we explain the role of subcultures for work-life integration at the studied levels. Figure 8 provides a more detailed illustration of the links between the organizational, interindividual and individual levels, discussed in this section.

In the sales subculture, being dedicated to work that is being result-oriented, available, and client-centered, influenced considerably the individual ways of work-life balance. Dedication and availability resulted in longer working hours that transcended all borders, leading to considerable work-life integration, as it was important to get things done and keep the client happy. The ingrained job flexibility allowed easier adaptation to emerging personal demands and reduced the strain experienced in case of punctual work-family conflict situations. The importance of attracting and retaining clients led to the experience of different degrees of cognitive and mood spillover. Those who reported a high degree of spillover experienced stronger consequences on both individual and family levels. That is, sleep problems due to cognitive spillover and tense mood brought to home in the evening after a stressful day at work. Nevertheless, these situations were part of the working routine and when speaking about work-life balance most employees did not refer to them, which reflected the mental separation of the work and life spheres.

Supervisor support or its lack was central to employees' work-life integration in all subcultures. This was particularly the case of instrumental support. In case of sales employees, additionally emotional support was underlined, as many of them had limited interactions with colleagues and having shared their personal problems with the supervisor they felt supported. Nevertheless, employees noted the importance of not abusing this help. From the supervisor's side, there was an implicit expectation of reciprocity in efforts put into work in return of the support, thus reflecting the role of the assumption of work and life separation and dedication. Across all subcultures employees' seniority and both employees' and supervisors' family situation (e.g. marital status and presence of children) procured more support.

The colleague awareness was not very pronounced in this subculture. Colleagues were a source of information and sometimes of emotional support. Situations of co-worker support for work-life matters were not mentioned, as employees' worked individually and the job flexibility and mobility demands allowed the integration of punctual life interferences into work. Still, in small branches sales employees could sometimes need to back up colleagues from other subcultures, which would result in the increase of their own workload and preoccupation with reaching the objectives.

In the healthcare subculture, personal and professional spheres were mostly two strangers who when they met, greeted each other in a well-educated manner, but watched thoroughly that their passes crossed the least. The underlying

assumptions of negative life-work spillover, dedication and client-centeredness influenced the clear establishment of boundaries between the spheres. When preference was given to personal matters (like picking up phone calls) or the negative effects of work on personal life were mentioned, it was negatively perceived by colleagues as it touched upon the professional image and the code of conduct. Besides, colleague awareness assumptions and the importance of not overloading co-workers by private matters reinforced the segmentation of spheres and the chosen strategies for work-life balance which replicated this boundary management logic. Still the negative emotional spillover between work and life was not a result of extra sensitivity of some employees. Tense situations of various degrees with clients happened repeatedly and required extensive internal and external emotional management and emotional labour, resulting in the experience of strain and stress. Here again the professional image and colleagues played an important role, this time by alleviating the negative feelings, putting things in perspective, airing the distress and in case of nurses, mediating the conflict between the doctor and patient. Thus, the role of colleagues' awareness assumption and the professional image were twofold, serving both to relieve situations of stress, but also to watch the boundary between personal and professional lives. Besides, co-workers' behaviors could be also understood in light of the assumptions, as a way of preventing life affecting negatively organizational outcomes. It also reinforced work-life segmentation in this subculture since talking over problems at work and airing the tensions prevented this part of life penetrating into the private sphere.

Supervisor support was important in cases of adapting one's working schedule or emergency cases. Still employees' professionalism was reflected in consciousness about cases when life sphere needed support from work, that is, real emergencies or specific situation, like maternity leave, qualified for life-work boundary crossing.

In the administrative subculture, the fixed working hours and absence of flexibility options demanded a good level of self and home organization from employees and at times caused strain and rushing at the start and end of the working day, when employees had to take care of personal matters. This led to work-family conflict when unplanned situations emerged. The work demands which required at times quick work and good problem solving skills usually did not lead to cognitive or emotional spillover, as work could not be taken home and thus matters had to be resolved at work. This served as a good barrier for spillover, particularly for back office employees who had limited or no direct contact with patients. Nevertheless, those employees who worked at the front desk or contacted with clients and patients per phone, occasionally dealt with negative emotional situations, resulting in emotional strain, negative effects on health and cognitive and mood spillover. Colleagues helped alleviating these

negative effects after they occurred, which also diminished the degree of consequent spillover.

Supervisor support was key for all kind of instrumental support, while employees' underlined the importance of minimal disruption for services offered. In case of the absence of work interdependence with colleagues, it was easy to do all kind of arrangements as no favours or spillover of work overload onto others was necessary. Otherwise, colleagues picked up the slack, which was taken as normal, as long as it did not mean working extra hours. Still, the extra work done and efforts put were not perceived as valued or recognized by management, which was a matter of concern for administrative employees. It affected work-life integration of some employees who worked extra hours to finish the work, probably influenced by the assumptions of dedication. In cases when there was a lack of supervisor support, employees did not recur to HR for help as they considered that maintaining a good relationship with the supervisor was more important.

Therefore, among all subcultures there was considerable spillover between the spheres, work spilling over more often to personal life than vice versa. Employees dealt with it in various ways, depending on their subculture and assumptions pronounced in it. Still there were no specific differences in the **definition of work-life balance** among the subcultures, conceptualized along the temporal dimension. For Mutua's employees work-life integration meant having enough time for all life spheres: work, family, leisure time and oneself. When looking in retrospective on work-life issues, employees emphasized the importance of spending time with children, especially when they were little, as it not only affected the parents-children relationship on the long-term, but also caused remorse about missed opportunities. Something that did not emerge in regard of work.

Employees discourse pointed out to other important variables to be taken into account when reflecting on work-life integration. It was particularly important to keep in mind the fact that life had different stages when some things had priority over others and that these life cycles change and so did one's priorities, strategies and boundary management. For instance, taking care for small children or being fully devoted to the career could be a temporarily role or state.

Despite the fact that employees' gave preference for work-life segmentation, integration of various aspects of personal and professional life was the reality at hand. Emotionally stressful situations affected the most work-life balance and their effects were moderated by experience, attitude, among others and also individual strategies, like having objectives, etc.

The wider **national and economic contexts** influenced the perceptions and assessment of employees' work-life integration. The economic crisis that left

many people jobless was referred to on multiple occasions and helped employees putting work-related issues in perspective, giving them less weight and highlighting the fact that they had a job. The conceptualization of work-life integration and in general work-life issues at the national level had also its effects on other levels. The culture of long working hours created a general acceptance that work could and would spill over into private matters, though employees did not like it. Besides, it reinforced the assumptions that time put into work was an indicator of the quality of work. Therefore part-time work was regarded as unequal to full-time work not only in terms of time, but also output. This had effects on work-life integration in the following way. Since women were perceived to be the main care providers for family-related issues, legally they were provided the possibility to reduce their working schedule up to the children's eighth birthday. This gave great opportunities for those who did not have high career aspirations, while for employees focused on continuous professional growth it meant "choosing" to take up the policies for a certain time, as long as it had no negative effects for the career. Otherwise, it was perceived that the opportunities of career advancement would decrease. These fears proved to be grounded in the past as the generation of "superwomen" directly prioritized work over family during regular working hours. This was also possible thanks to the micro solidarity of the family which offered a net for childrearing and upbringing. Something modern parents also relied on if they had a chance. Still employees were happy about the offered opportunities and referred to other companies where taking up policies and career advancement would not be possible. Therefore social comparison contributed to the perception of one's individual experience. Employees constructed a positive perception of their situation, contrasting it with the general economic situation, professional contexts (no need to work late shifts, no need to travel) or past experiences (now more time with children, etc.), which led to a positive evaluation.

Employees' perceptions of work-life as satisfactory showed that despite existing difficulties it was possible constructing a positive perception, which we consider should be respected. Nevertheless, the fact that individuals prove to be resilient and adapt to difficult conditions does not mean that this should be the norm. Thus it is important to identify areas were theoretical gaps could be filled in and practical implications considered to improve employees' integration when they would be ready for it. We discuss this further in the next section.
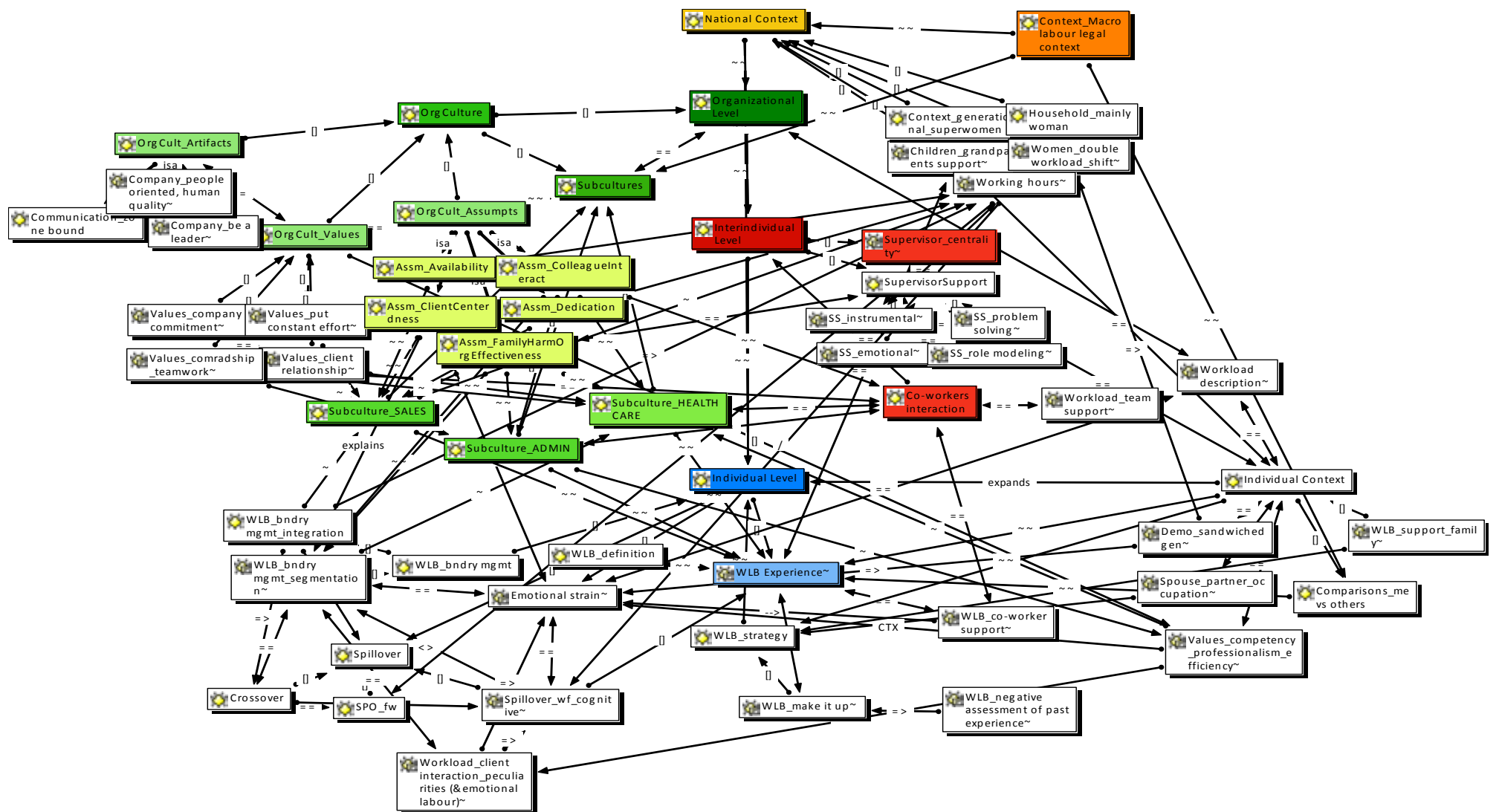
Figure 8. A Multi-Layered View of Work-Life Integration: Results Overview

DISCUSSION

Previous research showed the importance of both cultural and structural support for employees' work-life integration (Kossek et al., 2010). Particularly the organizational culture with its underlying assumptions influenced the integration process (Bailyn, 1993; Rappoport et al., 2002). Given the existence of multiple contexts within one organization (Martin, 1992), employees within various subcultures experienced the work-life integration process differently. We adopted a multi-level approach and explored specifically how organizational subcultures influenced individuals' work-life integration, taking into account organization, interindividual and individual factors embedded in a specific national context. Thus we attempted to contribute to the body of knowledge on work-life integration, extending it beyond the usual conceptualization of culture and to the less studied European context (Lewis & Rajan-Rankin, 2012). Besides, the conceptualization of subcultures around the occupations allowed gaining insights into work-life balance within specific professional contexts.

The results show how individuals construct their experiences of integration of various sides of life within subcultures when influenced by different contextual factors, from the broadest macroeconomic and legal context to the particular individual one (See Figure 9). The conceptual model constructed through the integration of these results contributes to the existing body of literature by showing specifically how assumptions existing on the organizational level manifest themselves within subcultures. Assumptions represented the collective understandings based on which the group of employees forming a subculture acted (Van Maanen & Barley, 1985). This study showed that it is particularly the implicit assumptions present in subcultures that affected employees' behaviours at the interindividual and individual levels resulting in various degrees of work-life integration, from extreme integration to complete segmentation. We discuss below the conceptual model and theoretical and practical implications of this study.

Figure 9 shows the conceptual model of the work-life integration in subcultures. The central category around which the model is build is **dedication to work**, that is, what constituted a well done work: dedicated time, effort, service provision (interaction with clients) and effectiveness, emphasizing work precedence over life issues. It encompassed various aspects of other assumptions discussed in the results section and proved to be central, as the degree of its presence in the studied subcultures explained the variation of data (work-life balance experiences). Besides it was often referred to in the data and allowed other major categories to be related to it (Strauss & Corbin,1998). The model captures the effects of multiple layers of context on the studied phenomena and

serves as a basis for the discussion of theoretical and practical implications of this thesis.

As shown in the model, two **causal conditions** emerged from the data, related to the central category that affected work-life integration experiences. The assumptions present in the organizational culture and on the national context, about how work and life are related (whether it is women's or shared domain, separated or part of the working life), what constitutes real work and how it should be done, influenced the assumption of dedication to work, whose intensity varied across the subcultures. Dedication to work affected how work-life integration experiences were distributed on the integration-segmentation continuum. It varied from extreme segmentation, when even in case of emergencies work was given priority, to extreme integration, when work entered life during hours of rest.

Two **contextual factors** appeared to affect work-life integration. The macro economic and legal contexts, like the economic crisis and changes in the legislation affected the perceived need to show additional dedication to work through extra hour work or entered employees' thoughts, leading to different degrees of integration of work and life spheres, mostly work invading the private space. Besides, structural job characteristics, like mobility demands, fixed or flexible entry and leave hours, job demands and resources, created conditions for integration and separation. Therefore, though on the surface level the way one combined work and life spheres was a personal choice, in reality, the decision for the degree of integration and segmentation was influenced by the assumptions existing on the immediate organizational and also wider national contexts.

Other **intervening conditions**, that is, broad categories that affected the work-life integration, encompassed both organizational and personal factors. At the personal level, the availability of a family network, that provided support for family matters gave employees the possibility to concentrate on work when working and decrease the level of unwanted integration. The life stage in which employees situated themselves, giving priority to personal or professional matters (be a Mom or a top manager) had its effects on the way work-life spheres were experienced. Moreover, past experiences, particularly negative ones, and comparisons to colleagues, influenced employees' choices of how work and life were incorporated. For instance, little time spent with children in their childhood influenced clear segmentation of spheres during the week-end in order to "make up" for the lost time. On the organizational level, the degree of supervisor and colleague support, both instrumental and emotional support, affected the experience at hand. Supervisor's allowance decision was critical in case work-life arrangements needed to be used. But as important was colleagues' support. Their backing up in case of emergencies or emotional
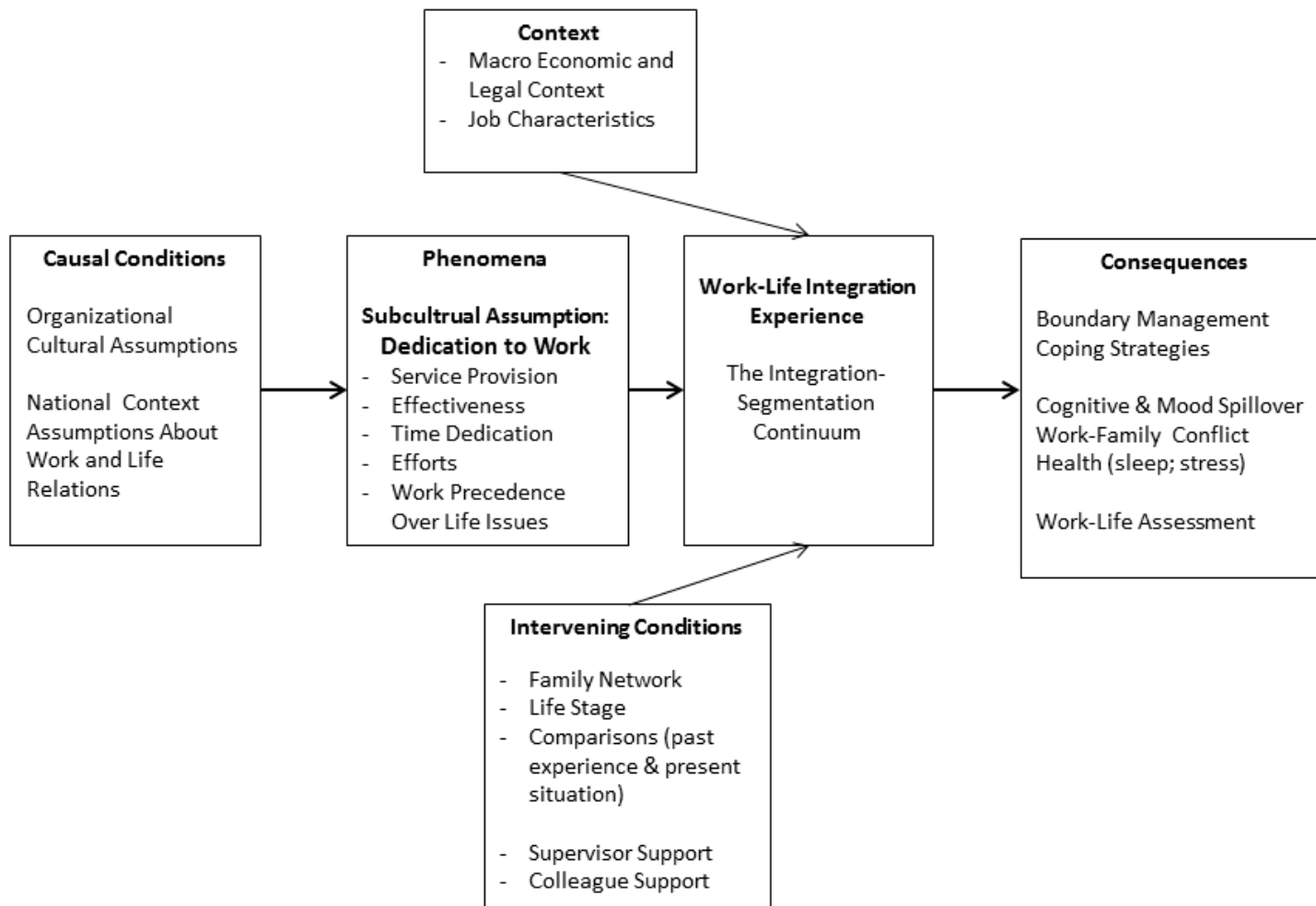
Figure 9. Conceptual Model of Work-Life Integration Experience within Subcultures.

support buffered negative effects of work, and allowed for those who preferred to separate the sphere do so, and for those who integrated, minimized the level of sphere overlap.

Finally, depending on the work-life integration experiences, employees recurred to specific boundary management and coping strategies. They influenced in turn the experienced mood and cognitive spillover, which had effects on health and experienced work-family conflict and consequently on subjective assessment of work-life integration.

Our findings, illustrated in the model, show that organizational subcultures with their ingrained assumptions are key for the understanding of the work-life integration experience. Earlier studies looked into the role of assumptions for the understanding of work-life issues (Baily et al., 1993; Lewis, et al. 2007; Perlow, 1998), but currently few studies give them a central role. We suggest that it is important that the notion of organizational work-family culture encompasses subcultures with their implicit values and assumptions, thus extending the existing conceptualizations (Thompson et al., 1999; Allen, 2001) and acknowledging the multiple work-life discourses existing within one organization. Besides, the current study allows extending the application of Schein's theory to the work-life field (Lewis, 1997) by bringing in the importance of subcultures and the need to foster supportive environments (Lewis & Rajan-Rankin, 2012).

The model illustrates earlier research findings that individual choices are contextually constrained (Lewis & Guillari, 2005; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). They are affected by the implicit assumptions at the national and organizational levels about ideologies of work: how work should be done, the time dedicated to it and presence, uncovered in other studies (Holt & Lewis, 2011; Perlow, 1999; Rapoport et al., 2002) and contexts (Lewis & Smithson, 2001). The value of these specific work characteristics could be explained by the neo-liberal influences, spilling over from the private to the public sector, particularly in the academic and healthcare institutions (Blanch & Stechner, 2009, 2010; Blanch, Ochoa & Sahagún, 2012). For instance, the new public management approach influenced by the market rules brought into public sectors the notions of competitiveness, cost reduction, effectiveness increase, leading to the introduction of organizational capitalism in the public sphere with detrimental effects for employees' well-being (Blanch & Stechner, 2010; Blanch, Crespo & Sahagún, 2012). The Mutua was also a good example of a company that combined the private and the public sector philosophy, which at times resulted in a conflict on an individual level: the importance to work fast and produce results, while preserving good quality. Therefore, considering assumptions constructed on the national level and around occupations and what it means to

be a professional seems to bring further insights into the understanding of the studied topic.

The general discourses on the organizational level and the view of arrangements supporting work-life integration as favours led to acceptance that life and career cannot be combined, reflecting the normative male model of work that lead to a low sense of entitle for policy use (Lewis & Smithson, 2001). Therefore the discourse of those in power has direct consequences on individuals' choices (Borrás, Torns & Moreno, 2007; Torns, 2005). For instance, in Spain the construction of personal life problems and policies as employees' individual concern and moreover women's issues solved within the family domain, might lead on the long term to the existence of balancing initiatives just for the sake of being politically correct (*ibid*). Besides the view of men as "the bread winner" leads to the acceptance of work occupying the majority of time, leaving women to the traditional role of being responsible for the personal domain – household and children (Torns, 2005). Even though this means double shift work, also reflected in the present study. This situation affects negatively not only women, but also men as it restricts their possibilities to use work-life arrangements or bring personal matters into the professional sphere (Brandth & Kvande, 2002; Ladge & Harrington, 2009). Moreover, the instability of the labour market puts the emphasis on the preservation of jobs and negotiation of other benefits, like salary (Borrás et al., 2007), pushing work-life issues to the background. This might be particularly an issue in the current context of economic crisis.

Besides the job characteristics, like fixed working hours, mobility demands and the nature of work affected the integration experience (Andreassi & Thompson, 2008; den Dulk & Ruijter, 2008). As also shown in other studies (Poppleton et al., 2008), employees with fixed working hours and shift work, particularly where it was impossible to bring work home, had a clearer time separation between the spheres than those with flexibility options. Nevertheless, it also made it more difficult for them to attend in person to unexpected family needs. Besides, even in case of structural barriers between work and life spheres, work spilled over in form of thoughts and moods, blurring the established boundaries (*ibid*). Furthermore, the occupational context and what is considered to be professionalism among different groups also affect the support that is demonstrated to the life spheres and whether it is allowed to enter the professional one or not. We consider that this is an important point to be considered in the work-life research.

Additionally to the causal conditions and contextual factors, the intervening conditions play an important role in the integration process. At the interindividual level, supervisors and colleagues reflect the existing assumptions on the national and subcultural levels directly influencing the degrees of individuals' integration or segmentation. Particularly, the age of male employees

was negatively linked to the amount of help offered at home (older employees showed little participation in the household), also found in other studies (Torns, 2005).

Though instrumental supervisor and colleague support are essential to implement both planned and unplanned arrangements, particularly regarding family needs, emotional support is as important. Employees in both managerial and non-managerial positions voiced the need to share existing concerns or preoccupations, even if it did not lead to desired structural changes. Particularly, top managers experienced a lack of emotional support, as they were the ones solving problems and accompanying employees when needed. This lack of support on top managerial levels reflects a potential deficiency of job resources, that if not replenished could lead to potential burnout (Blanch, Crespo & Sahagún, 2012; Blanch & Stechner, 2010; Demerouti et al., 2001).

Subcultural values and occupational characteristics affected the manifestation of emotional support by supervisors and colleagues. Jobs where there was little interaction with colleagues due to mobility demands highlighted the importance of supervisor support. In interdependent jobs, colleagues played an important role in buffering negative emotional experiences, while the supervisor was called upon only in cases of policy use allowance. Besides, sharing the workspace allowed asking for favours as they could be reciprocated in the future. Nevertheless, colleagues could also affect employees' behaviors by supporting or opposing their work-life strategies (Ducharme & Martin, 2000) or just by commenting on them (Kirby & Krone, 2002). For instance, when negatively evaluating someone's reception of phone calls, which eventually signaled that this behavior was not welcome. Still, it should be mentioned that in case of emergencies, individuals ignored all subcultural norms of behavior and gave priority to their personal matters, also found in other studies (Dikkers et al., 2007). Therefore, when studying work-life integration experiences, research should rather focus on daily and routine behaviors within subcultures and organizational cultures as those are the ones that reflect the reality experienced by employees and allow identifying barriers and enhancers for work-life balance.

Finally, as "choices" are not made in vacuum, nor individuals exist in one. The personal family situation, the available family network and its participation in childcare affect employees' work-life experience. Moreover, the comparisons individuals make with other employees and to their own past situations, explain their behaviours in the present moment. This is a new finding, which shows that importance of social comparisons and the importance of work-life issues through the life course (Herman & Lewis, 2012; Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Particularly, the life stage explained the variety of definitions of work-life balance and the variable nature of the work-life relationship. Individual

definitions and needs varied across different life stages (Chatrakul & Lewis, 2010), and could be characterized by the need to devote more time to hobbies, young children, adolescents, care of elderly or various things at a time. Overall, the importance of quality of life was underlined (Dallimore & Mickel, 2006). This explains the differences in boundary management and coping strategies used.

Interestingly, despite the voiced preference of separating various life spheres, life showed its complexity by integrating work, family and other parts. Despite the erected boundaries and walls, work and life interacted through cognitive, emotional and mood spillovers, which not only created tension, but actually were beneficial on some occasions, bringing skills learned in one sphere to the other (Poelmans, Stepanova, & Masuda, 2008). Employees also disconnected from one area to the other and voiced the importance of own goals and projects as a work-life strategy. This brings attention to the consequence of individual work-life strategies for the overall quality of life. Finally, when family life was concerned, common time spent with children was essential across the life span and had effects on short- and long- term. On the short term, it meant special bonding between parents and children, which brought joy and satisfaction. But on the long-term, whether one managed to build and maintain this relationship affected the overall life quality, work-life assessment and general life evaluation. Therefore, when thinking of work-life matters it seems crucial talking about the quality of time, relationships and interaction in various life spheres and not only as a way of fulfilling professional and personal obligations, as they have important effects on life in general.

Therefore in order to help individuals' work-life balance, it is critical that work-life arrangements are built not around the amount of time one devotes to work or where the working process takes place, but around specific measures that would alleviate the double workload that work and life spheres can represent in individuals' lives (Borrás et al., 2007; Chatrakul & Lewis, 2010) and that would contribute to work-life experiences lived in the most fulfilling way. For this to happen implicit underlying structures and assumptions need to be tackled, so that considering getting support from colleagues and supervisors and/or using available arrangements could be considered to be an option. Thus, it is important to acknowledge the various layers of context influencing the study of work-life integration and move from the assumption of universality of effects across national and organizational settings (Stavrou & Kilaniotis, 2010; Lewis & Rajan-Ranking, 2012).

This study is not without **limitations**. A case study approach was adopted, with data collection and analysis inspired in Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This approach is appropriate for this study as we explored a new topic and aimed to contribute to theory development (Yin, 2003). This thesis

illustrates some processes whereby various levels of context, national, organizational, subcultural, interinvidual and individual levels intersect, with implications for work-life integration experiences, contributing to future research and theory. It should also be mentioned that the distinction between occupational subgroups and whether they form subcultures is an empirical question and the distinction might be blurred at times. Nevertheless, throughout our analysis we followed closely the definition of subculture and rendered values, assumptions and practices of specific groups, individuals identified themselves with, thus aiming to minimize the confusion between subcultures and subgroups.

Future research could explore subcultures in other occupational contexts and subcultures formed around other criteria, like interests, family situations, hobbies, to explore further their role for work-life integration. Furthermore, the study of various levels of context embedded in different national environments could provide ground for comparison of various subcultures within a multi-national context. Particular attention should be given to the exploration of assumptions existing at various levels that affect considerably individuals' experiences. Particularly, the exploration of European and non-European context and a more diversified approach to the studied family and life issues, could contribute to extending the body of knowledge beyond the highly studied US context (Lewis & Rajan-Rankin, 2012).

On the interindividual level, the lack of observed supervisor role-modeling suggests and interesting area of future research. That is, to explore how supervisors conceptualize and assesses own role modeling and compare it against employees' perception to understand the way role modeling is constructed among employees and which effects it has on their supportive and non-supportive behaviours. In addition, attention could be given to the exploration of the new FSSB- problem solving and its pertinence in various organizational and individual contexts. Besides, further exploration of coworker support in various occupational contexts could shade light on the barriers and enhancers existing in different professional groups.

Finally, on the individual level, taking into account the positive effects of coping strategies enhancing resilience and positive construction of work-life experiences, research should build on the advancement of positive psychological scholarship to define what could consolidate and extend these enriching experiences (Culberston, Mills, & Fullagar, 2012; Rothbard & Wilk, 2012). Hence, in order for real change to take place, it is rather important that future research addresses barriers, ingrained in assumptions about work and work practices, than focuses on training employees on the use of different strategies, no matter how useful they are (Kosser, Lewis, & Hammer, 2010).

This thesis has also some **practical implications**. This research shows that work-life integration is a far more complex phenomenon that cannot be tackled by "quick fixes". Even though some companies show examples of "good practices" of work-life integration and even get awards for being a "conciliating company" due to the policies available to their employees (Shellenbarger, 1992; Torns, 2005), it is important that such visible success is backed up by real practice. It is important to acknowledge the existence of subcultures, differences in managers' understanding of work-life issues and provided support (Hammer et al., 2007) and contradictory messages existing on the organizational level, something often overlooked by employers (Lewis & Rajan-Rankin, 2012).

Additionally, it is essential that all types of workers have a chance of integrating various sides of life. This makes it more difficult for the HR function to attend to work-life needs with usual tools, policies, and requires deeper changes. For this to happen, work-life issues should be viewed as a business need and not a social one (Kossek & Friede,2008; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). Far often companies take the issue on the surface level, as reflected in the work-life programs described on their website (Mescher et al., 2010), while these assumptions could be viewed in the national, organizational and subcultural discourses about work-life issues to help identifying potential barriers for work-life.

Therefore if organizations are truly interested in the well-being of their employees and the achievement of higher levels of performance and decrease in turnover, a collaborative approach should be used. For instance the dual agenda approach advocates for the implementation of work-life initiatives and contexts that benefit both the employer and the employees (Rapoport et al., 2002). This approach emphasizes the exploration of existing assumptions both work and gender related existing at the organizational level (Kolb & Merril-Sands, 1999). We would suggest exploring both organizational and subcultural assumptions in order to tackle possible cultural and subcultural barriers for work-life integration. Further design of specific actions that would favour employees across different life situations, stages, priorities and professional positions, would allow the design and implementation of tailor made programs leading not only to personalized work-life support, but also marking the path for organizational change (Kossek, Lewis & Hammer, 2010). Therefore the organizational and individual level would be addressed.

As for the interindividual level, accounting for the occupational context differences and cultural and structural support, will allow organizations and particularly supervisors offering their employees more idiosyncratic solutions and support, going beyond the existing work-life policies (Major & Lauzun, 2010). When promoting supervisor's support, it seems important to root it into a specific context and acknowledge that while different dimensions of FSSB are important for the workforce, some of them need more reinforcement than others

in certain contexts. From our findings, it seems that instrumental and problem solving support are essential in order to manage emergencies, while role modeling and emotional support could be a source of constant support for employees, that could affect their work-life integration efforts in a more discrete way. Therefore, training managers in family-friendly behaviours (Kossek & Hammer, 2008) and the use of a collaborative approach acknowledging the links between work-family balance and workplace effectiveness and the importance of considering the subcultural contexts, may enable managers to design more effective solutions, benefiting all parties (Lewis & Cooper, 2005; Rapoport et al., 2002). Moreover, Major and Lauzun (2010) suggest not only training managers in certain family-friendly behaviors, but to go further and motivate them in the development of reciprocal high quality relationships with the subordinate.

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis explored the role of organizational subcultures in employees' work-life integration. The review of literature and research on work-life balance has shown that organizational culture was a central element for individuals' work-life integration, though it did not explain the variety of individual experiences within one culture. Therefore the study of organizational subculture could shed light on the studied topic. Our empirical study confirmed the central role of organizational subculture in the work-life balance and allowed reaching the set objectives on the specified levels. It showed that employees' work-life integration experience is influenced by organization, interindividual and individual factors embedded in a specific national context. Organizational culture and particularly the subcultures with their underlying assumptions had a key role in the way employees conceptualized work-life balance and integrated various parts of life. The results showed that a multi-layer approach provided insights into the studied phenomena, and served its further understanding. By tackling the degree of presence of the central assumption (dedication to work) in the subcultures, and taking into consideration the wider contextual variables, individual work-life integration process could be understood better, with its positive and negative outcomes.

This thesis came up with the following main findings, contributing to the work-life literature on organizational culture, boundary management and coping. National context with assumptions, encompassing the ideology of work and the gendered view of work-life issues, affected employees' "choices" around the way work and life had to be integrated. The macro economic and legal contexts and job characteristics represented the contextual factors that further directed individuals' "choices". For instance, structural job characteristics, like mobility demands and the context of the economic crisis with the emphasis put on the availability of job, affected how and to which extent life is allowed into the professional sphere.

Organizational assumptions, but most importantly the central assumptions of dedication to work, conceptualized in terms of time, efforts and interactions with stakeholders, present in subcultures to different degrees, had a direct influence on work-life integration experiences, locating employees on the extremes of the integration-segmentation continuum. Therefore, despite the general influence of organizational culture on employees' work-life balance, it was the immediate subculture that has the strongest influence on the work-life experience and consequent boundary management and coping strategies used.

Supervisors and colleagues had a direct influence on work-life integration as they enacted the existing subcultural assumptions, directing individuals' work-life strategies. The level of job interdependence and possibility to coincide

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during working hours, influenced supportive and unsupportive behaviours exhibited by supervisor and colleagues, emphasizing the importance of taking into account the occupational and other contextual layers, when studying work-life issues.

Finally, individuals constructed their experience of work-life integration in function of multiple layers of context. It should be acknowledged that though their experiences have often shades of gray, individuals overall assessed them as positive, constructing personal meaning around it. This should be respected on the individual level, but on a more abstract level this information signals areas of improvement on the studied levels of context. Therefore, this study contributes to the earlier little developed area of research of subcultures and their role in individuals' work-life integration experiences.

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APPENDIX

The Interview Guide.

Introducción[10]

- **Confidencialidad**: los datos estarán presentados de forma anónima. En caso de que se necesite citar alguna información que le podrías identificar a la persona, se le pedirá el consentimiento.
- **Grabación**: se usará sólo para fines de investigación.
- El **objetivo** es la investigación. La empresa tomará en consideración los resultados, pero estas entrevistas no estarán directamente ligadas a un plan de acción.

I. Censales
1. Cuál es tu **situación personal**:
    1. Estado familiar: vives sólo o en pareja:
       soltero   casado   divorciado   pareja de hecho
       otro_____
    2. Tu pareja: Edad___ ; Trabaja: Si___ No___; Ocupación_____
    3. Tienes hijos?
       Si___ No___; Cuántos?: 1 2 3 4; Edad: 1___ 2____ 3___ 4____
    4. Tienes a alguien que necesita cuidado continuo? (padre, hijo, pariente)
       Si___ No___;
      - Cuantas horas a la semana te toma su cuidado? _____
    5. Quién hace las tareas de casa? yo   pareja   persona externa   otro _____
    6. Cuánto participas tu? _____horas al día _____ horas a la semana
    7. Quién te ayuda con el cuidado de los hijos/parientes? _____
 2. **Situación laboral**:
    8. Describa por favor tu entorno físico del trabajo?
       oficina individual   espacio abierto   otro _____
    9. Cuántas horas a la semana sueles trabajar? 40h o _____
    10. Cuáles son tus demandas de trabajo en términos de desplazamiento de la oficina
       viajes   visitas a otras oficinas   a clientes viajes a la sed corporartiva
    11. Tiene picos de trabajo? Si___ No___;
       De qué dependen? _____
3. **A qué te dedicas fuera del trabajo? Tienes alguna afición?**
    12. Qué cosas importantes tienes fuera del trabajo?
       (o/y cómo sueles pasar tu ocio)

II. Preguntas Abiertas/ Profundidad
1. **Contexto Personal**

Describe como es su **día y semana en función de diferentes obligaciones**: trabajo y familia (llevar niños al cole, ir a jugar basket, viajara a visitar clientes.)

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[10] This is the final interview guide, which encompasses all questions that emerged during data collection, extending the original one.

2. **Contexto Ocupacional/ Funcional**

1. Cuenta, por favor, **tu día a día laboral**
2.1. Describe tu rutina (entrada, salida, interacciones)
2.2. Qué se espera de tí en tu trabajo? Cómo hay que hacer el trabajo? Qué tareas son claves en tu trabajo? Porqué?
2.3. Cómo evalúas tu carga de trabajo (**escala de 1 a 10**).
2.4. Qué tipo de emergencias tienes en tu trabajo? Cómo te afecta? Piensas en ellas luego?.
2.5. Qué valoras de tu trabajo?
2.6. Cuéntame, por favor, sobre el sistema de fichar. Qué te gustaría mejorar/cambiar?
2.7. Hasta qué punto tu jefe es exigente a la hora de cumplir los horarios? (**escala de 1 a 10**).
2.8. Tuviste alguna vez una conversación con él/ella sobre esto? Porqué? Cuál fue el mensaje?
2.9. Cómo tu grupo ocupacional se distingue de los demás grupos dentro de la empresa? Porqué?

3. **Subcultura (values, practices)**

3.1. Si hablamos de tu entorno laboral, con quién sueles interactuar más a menudo en el trabajo? Porqué?
3.2. Consideras que hay un grupo con cuál compartes más cosas en común? Qué te hace pensar así?
  • Si es así, cómo es? Qué te distingue a este grupo del resto de los empleados?
  • Si no, la gente de tu perfil ocupacional se distingue del resto?
3.3. Cuáles son las normas/reglas escritas de tu trabajo? Porqué están allí?
3.4. Qué tipo de conductas se valoran en el trabajo? Y cuáles no? Porqué?
3.5. Hay una diferencia entre los tipos de conductas valoradas de manera formal como opuesta de la manera informal?
3.6. Cómo se evalúa tu trabajo?
3.7. Qué tipo de conductas muestran competencia? Porqué?
3.8. Cuáles son las oportunidades de demostrar competencias?
3.9. Cómo se gana el respeto de los colegas? Y de los supervisores?
3.10. Cómo lo que se valora en el trabajo afecta tu vida personal? (Escala de 1 a 10).
3.11. Qué persona son unos ejemplos de como tiene que ser un buen empleado dentro de tu grupo y de la empresa? Porqué?
3.12. Qué estilo conversacional se considera normal dentro de tu entorno? Cuál no?
3.13. En qué términos se describe el compromiso con esta empresa?
3.14. Cómo es la práctica?
  Hay alguna diferencia entre lo que se dice y lo que se hace?
  Qué es lo oficial y qué lo real?

4. **Cultura Organizacional (normas, prácticas)**

4.1. Y cómo es la empresa en general en términos de normas y de valores?
  Si interactúas con los empleados de otra mutua, qué es diferente en su Mutua al compararla con otra? Qué la distingue en aspectos laborales?
4.2. Qué se requiere para ser un líder dentro de esta empresa? Porqué?
4.3. Quiénes son los ejemplos de lideres de esta empresa?
4.4. Hasta qué punto está esto alineado con la visión y la misión de la empresa? (ahora o en el pasado)

5. Conciliación → Grupo, empresa

5.1. Qué políticas hay? Cuáles usas?

5.2. Has trabajado alguna vez dentro de esta empresa a tiempo parcial? Cuál fue tu experiencia? (desde que lo pediste, durante, después).

5.3. Cómo está percibido la conciliación trabajo-familia en tu grupo? Qué pasa si le privado interviene el lo profesional? Te ha pasado?

- Cuál es el papel del jefe en tu conciliación? (EJEMPLOS)
- Qué conductas suyas facilitan o dificultan la conciliación?
- Y del colaborador (EJEMPLOS)
    o Qué conductas suyas facilitan o dificultan la conciliación?
- Qué te gustaría cambiar en términos de conciliación trabajo-vida personal en su grupo? Porqué?

5.4. Cuáles son las actitudes en la empresa hacía la conciliación trabajo-familia?

5.5. Cuál es la percepción en general? Cuáles son los facilitadores/obstaculizadores? (EJEMPLOS)

6. Spillover

6.1. Piensas que tu vida profesional entra en lo personal y vise versa? Cómo? Porqué?

6.2. Sueles pensar en el trabajo estando en casa? Y al revés? En qué piensas? Cómo afecta tu vida profesional y personal?

6.3. Dedicas tiempo durante la jornada laboral a las tareas personales (llamadas, etc)? Y en casa, las de trabajo? Qué tipo? Con que frecuencia lo haces? Cómo reaccionan tus familiares?

6.4. Si lo notan los demás en el trabajo, cómo reaccionan? Está mal/bien visto coger llamadas personales en el trabajo?

6.5. Se comparten cosas personales en el trabajo? Y en casa?

6.6. Te suelen llamar a casa fuera del horario laboral? Hay contacto con compañeros fuera del trabajo?

7. Conciliación → Individual: definición, prácticas, trucos.

7.1. Cómo definirías la conciliación? Qué significa para ti?

7.2. Cómo evalúas tu conciliación **(de 1 a 10)**
Y tu satisfacción con la vida en general **(de 1 a 10).**

7.3. Qué haces para llegar a hacerlo todo (conciliar?)

7.4. Qué factores limitan o facilitan tu conciliación? Por favor, describe una situación específica sin mencionar nombres.

7.5 Qué cosas son fáciles/difíciles de conciliar para tí? Porqué?

- Qué tipo de políticas, herramientas están puestas en marcha dentro de la empresa?
- Qué se podría mejorar en la empresa para ayudarte a hacerlo?

8. Sugerencias

8.1. Qué prácticas que utilizas podría aplicar la empresa para ayudarte a ti y otros empleados?

8.2. Te gustaría añadir algo para que entienda mejor cómo se lleva la conciliación en esta empresa, cómo lo llevas tu o cualquier otro comentario?