Patterns of Adjustment to the Career/Family Conflict of Technically Trained Women in the U.S. and Israel

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Running Head: Career/Family Conflict

Abstract

The number of women in technical/scientific careers is still very small worldwide. The aim of the present paper is to understand how women who are already pursuing technical careers experience and reconcile the demands of their professional and private lives in two different national contexts. Participants in the study were 453 women in two countries with different socioeconomic, political, and cultural backgrounds: the United States and Israel. The cross-cultural perspective is employed here in order to better understand the universal aspects of the phenomenon, as against those that are tied to a particular situational or cultural context. Women in both countries face a practical dilemma in combining career and family as well as a femininity dilemma related to their identity as women. These dilemmas differ according to the life stage of the women, but the effects vary by national culture.

Key words: career/family conflict, women in technology, burnout, cross-cultural comparison

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this paper is to look at the way women who choose technical careers experience their professional and private lives in different national cultures. It presents data collected by the authors in studies conducted in the US and in Israel. In these studies, technically trained women - most of them pursuing non-traditional careers such as engineering and management - were investigated in order to understand how they integrate their job experience with their private life and what is the effect of this demanding situation on their well-being.

In most societies the number of women pursuing technical careers is still small (Perrucci, 1984). Sex-role socialization, often internalized, creates practical and psychological dilemmas for women who pursue technical or managerial careers. And the societal context of expectations, which traditionally has relegated women's primary role to the family, adds additional pressure (Ammos, et al., 1990). Thus, in general, combining a high level career with a family is more difficult for women than it is for men (Bailyn, 1987; Etzion, 1988).

Women in general and professional women in particular are constantly in a situation of ambiguity, vagueness, and uncertainty - the double binds and double messages that we receive from our social and cultural environment - regarding the question of integrating career and family life. Society expects them to fulfill two sets of incompatible expectations and thus places them in a frustrating "no-win" situation which causes them to burn out (Freudenberger and North, 1985). It

was indeed found in Israeli, as well as in American samples, that across every profession, women tended to be more burnt out than men. And the conflict between work and private life was associated with burnout in most of the samples, but this association was found in both countries to be stronger among women than among men (Etzion, 1987, 1988, 1989; Etzion and Pines, 1986).

Despite these general conditions, we nonetheless expect differences in the manner by which women manage these conflicts in different societies and national cultures (see Bailyn, 1991). Through the cross-cultural perspective we hope to gain a better understanding of the environmental and personal dynamics of women's struggle to integrate work and family and to be able to identify the price tags attached to the various components of this struggle in terms of burnout, enjoyment, and energy depletion.

Women in Technical and Scientific Careers and the Career/ Family Dilemma

The scientific and engineering "culture" has been identified by many researchers as having a very distinct masculine "professional ideology" (Hubbard, 1984; Robinson and McIlwee, 1991). At the same time, these professions are also believed to be "culture free" (Toren, 1984), in that professionals from different national societies express similar vocational interests and share similar professional values (Fouad, Hansen, and Galicia, 1989). This high level of cross-cultural similarity - which makes the technical professions a more desirable subject

for cross-cultural research than any other profession - is explained by the belief that technology and science deal with universal natural laws and formal logical procedures that are valid across cultures.

The most typical feature of a science based professional career in any country is the high emphasis on achievement and success at the early career stage, while people are still young and technically up to date (Bailyn, 1980; Rosenbaum, 1984). In fact, fear of obsolescence is one of the major concerns expressed by technical professionals as compared to their humanistic/liberal arts colleagues (Pazy, 1990). But, unfortunately, the first stages of one's career coincide with the biological time of starting a family (Bailyn, 1984; Sekaran, 1986; Grinker and Etzion, 1989). Thus, the enormous pressure for quick success and the widely held belief that marriage and parenthood hinder one's chances for career advancement result in a heightened level of career/family conflict experienced by most women in technical and scientific careers.

No wonder that the proportion of women in these professions is still small worldwide (Vetter, 1984; Ivey, 1988). In both the US and Israel there has been a steady rise in the number of women recruited to technical careers, but the numbers are still very small. In 1985, for example, women constituted 15% of the graduating engineering students in the US (Lane, 1988), while the figure in Israel was only 7.3% (Israel Statistical Monthly, 1986). By any standard, most of these women in both countries are still suffering from "tokenism"

(Kanter, 1977) and discrimination in promotion (NCR, 1983, 1985; Jagacinski, LeBold, and Linden, 1987).

Another difficulty encountered by technically trained women is the masculine image of their profession, which feels to many as incongruent with their sense of femininity. Beyond the practical difficulties of starting and maintaining a family, therefore, these women may be caught in a real dilemma concerning their feminine role. In light of these expected difficulties, many talented women refrain from choosing these highly demanding careers. Those who do, do not embark on these careers accidentally. They are usually very talented, love their subjects, and are very good at what they are doing. So it is not easy from them to retreat from their career choice when they encounter difficulties of integrating their careers with their private life.

These are the dilemmas that we suspect face all women, in all cultures, in high technical careers: the practical issues of combining a demanding career with a family, and the emotional need to reconcile a career typically occupied and defined by men with one's own sense of feminine identity. And yet, we also suspect that the responses to these dilemmas will differ in different countries because of cultural differences among them.

It is our intention, in this paper, to show how these highly talented women hold on to their careers and adjust to their marital and parental roles in the two countries we have studied.

Comparing American and Israeli Societies

Studying the similarities and differences of behavioral phenomena among people belonging to different societies may be a vehicle for gaining a better understanding of the universal nature of human experience in that it enables us to isolate those aspects that are generic from those that are tied to a particular situational or cultural context (Berry, 1980; Poortinga and Van Vijver, 1987). But in order to be able to draw valid conclusions from such a comparison, one must first establish a reasonable degree of cross-cultural equivalence between the two societies to be compared, on a conceptual level as well as on an operational and metric level (Hui and Triandis, 1985).

Both Israel and the United States are immigrant countries with open, achievement-oriented, and democratic social systems that permit social mobility (Adler, 1986). Despite obvious geographical, economic, political, and social differences, these two societies have in common a set of basic Western values and beliefs that make a comparison between them culturally meaningful. Thus Hofstede (1980, p.334), in the final clustering of work values in his 40-nation survey, showed Israel and the United State ending up very close on the values scale, certain differences in work values notwithstanding. Israelis, for example, are higher on collectivist work-values, while Americans are more individualistic, and Israelis exhibit less "power-distance" and less "tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty" than Americans.

At the same time, life is, without question, more difficult in Israel than in the United States, physically, politically, and economically (Breznitz, 1980). Because Israel is a small country with limited resources, under constant threats to its very survival, stressors, such as political tensions, economic pressures, military service, and a high rate of inflation are more prevalent in Israeli than in American society. However, in a series of studies comparing groups of US and Israeli managers and other professionals, it was systematically found that Israelis report less stress and less burnout (Etzion, Kafry, and Pines, 1982; Etzion and Pines, 1986; Keinan and Perlberg, 1987). Further analysis of the data showed that the Israelis described their family relationships and friendships as better than did their American counterparts (Etzion, Kafry, and Pines, 1982; Lieblich, 1987). The Israelis also reported using more active and direct methods for coping with stress (Etzion, Pines, and Kafry, 1983).

It has been suggested by several scholars that the lower rates of stress and burnout in Israel stem from the fact that Israelis apparently enjoy cultural legitimation to employ assertive coping methods that are more effective in combating stress and that they are better protected by social support systems. An additional possibility is that, paradoxically, the "objective" stress of the Israeli situation is so obvious and socially accepted, that the individual has no reason to feel bad about him/herself. When the belief that the situation is to blame is shared by others, the individual can feel at ease (Etzion, 1987).

It should be stated, also, that for reasons more fully explicated in the discussion, Israel provides very progressive laws of governmental support and encouragement for raising families, which are universally applied (Richter, 1992). In addition to formal laws, Israeli society has developed a large variety of supplementary, informal arrangements for child care and domestic help, including flexibility and tolerance on the part of employers to work interruptions caused by family problems. Relative to the US and other western countries, Israel is characterized by extremely low percentages of non-married or childless people of both sexes. Mothers' work is a non-issue in most sectors of Israeli society. To work is considered an economic necessity and a contribution to the common good, as is also raising a family. But it is less socially acceptable for mothers to pursue a high-level career or to be too committed to their jobs.

In contrast, American women are protected by law to have equal pay and equal chances for promotion, but only in the pursuit of careers as defined by men - only if they conform to the rules of the game, set initially by and for traditional men. No federal law protects them from losing their jobs if they choose to raise a family, and they are provided with no guaranteed resources for maternity or parental leaves (see Antal and Israeli, 1993). In the US, women are expected to manage the career/family conflict on their own - a conflict, which in both its practical and psychological components, is generally not socially acknowledged or legitimated.

In sum, Israeli society supports women's work and values family, but women's high level careers are considered socially undesirable. In the US, in contrast, there seems to be a mixed message for women: have a career, by all means, but without any general support for also having and caring for a family.

On the basis of these differences we would expect American women to be more conflicted between career and family and to respond more negatively to this conflict. On the other hand, we would expect the underlying dynamics of career/family integration to be the same in both countries. The main source of conflict for women in both countries is expected to be the stage of family and career the woman is facing, but in a complex way: the practical side of the conflict - the *double burden* - will affect energy depletion and will be confined to women with small children. The emotional side of the conflict relating to femininity - the *double bind* - will have a lesser effect on the burnout and the enjoyment of women with families, but will be tough on single women, particularly as they progress in age. American women will be caught in this two sided conflict more than the Israelis because of their ideological and cultural context. In both countries we would expect the career/family conflict to be a major constraint on women's well-being. The purpose of this paper is to test and refine these propositions.

STUDY DESIGN

The results presented in this paper are from a study of 445 women pursuing technical and scientific careers in two countries.[1] Of these, 269 are American and 176 are Israeli.

The sampling and data collection procedures

The American data were collected by mail during 1985/6 from active members of the Society of Women Engineers and the MIT Alumnae Association (response rate: 48%). The Israeli participants were approached during 1987/8 via the personnel departments in a variety of organizations throughout the country by means of university alumnae mailing lists and by a "call for volunteers" advertised in professional magazines (response rates ranging from 18% - 67%, depending on type of approach). In each of the samples, several questionnaires were discarded because they included a large amount of missing data.

The translation procedure

As a first step in the cross-cultural research, equivalent English and Hebrew versions of the questionnaire were prepared. The questionnaire was translated from English to Hebrew and back again. The two versions were judged for item equivalence by several bilingual persons who had lived for significant periods of time in both the US and Israel.

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[1]Equivalent data were also collected in Greece by Professor Nicolaou-Smokoviti. Preliminary findings comparing all three countries are available in Etzion, Nicolaou-Smokoviti, and Bailyn (in press).

Items having specific cultural connotations were left out, even when judged to be semantically equivalent, and replaced by other items that demonstrated correspondence of meaning.

The questionnaire

Besides the demographic and background information, the questionnaire included items concerning the following topics:

Job characteristics: perception of present job (17 items).

Importance of job characteristics: the importance attributed to each of the corresponding characteristic (17 items).

Self-assessment: aptitude and attitude items (22) referring to the respondents' self-evaluation of their own competence, social skills, etc.

Career/family involvement and interaction: items such as job satisfaction, evaluation and importance of success in the work and non-work spheres, relative interest and involvement in the work and non-work spheres of life, the extent to which these spheres conflict and overlap or intrude upon each other.

Well-being was assessed by three measures: *burnout*, *enjoyment*, and *depletion*. Burnout was measured by the Pines and Kafry (Pines and Aronson, 1981) 21-item index. Enjoyment was measured by 20 items that were introduced among the burnout items in the questionnaire (Etzion, 1988), forming an index equivalent to that for burnout, but with a reversed sign. The third measure of well-being - Depletion (Garden, 1985) - is composed of 5 items: 3

measuring energy draining; one, sleep problems; and one, physical health.

Testing factorial patterns of the questionnaire's items across cultures and constructing the research indices

To test the similarity of factorial structure between the two cultures, the items included in each of the questionnaire topics were factor analyzed separately for each culture. Two methods of factor analysis, both with varimax rotation, were employed: the Principal Centroid (PC) and Principal Axes (PA2) methods (SPSS-X, 1986). The PC method yielded, in each of the cultures, 3-4 factors for each topic that accounted for 45-60% of the variance in the included items, an approximately 10% better explanation than was yielded by the PA2 method. It was, therefore, used as the basis for condensing the questionnaire's items into reliable research indices.

The factors generated showed marked cross-cultural similarity in the clustering of the items. The well-being measures, although well established as reliable measures in pervious studies, were also factor analyzed and yielded practically the same inner structure in both cultures. An item was included in a factor if and only if its loading on this factor was at least .40. The order of the factors, however, was not always the same in both cultures. For example, in regards to the 17 job characteristics, the factor "Opportunity for advancement and development of expertise" was the first to be generated in the Israeli sample and the second in the American sample, while the factor "Opportunity for social

influence" was first in the American sample and second in the Israeli one. The third and fourth factors derived from job characteristics, though the same in composition and order in both samples, explained only a small portion of the variance and failed to show a satisfactory level of inner consistency. Thus, they were omitted from the final analysis of the data.[2]

Having established a reasonable level of cross cultural similarity among the factors, we were able to use the factors as guidelines for clustering the items in each area into meaningful research indices. Items included in the same factor in both cultures were initially included in the corresponding research index. At the same time, an item was deleted from a given index if its inclusion hindered substantially the level of reliability of this index. (See Tables III & IV for the final list of indices, the number of items included in them, and their reliability coefficients.)

Sample's main characteristics

Professional distribution. The professions included in the study are various kinds of engineering, architecture, and the sciences. Our sample includes also a few economists, business specialists, and social science professionals who graduated from technical schools.

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[2]A complete report of the factor analytic procedure and results and a detailed description of the items included in each factor/index are beyond the scope of this paper. It can, however, be obtained from the first author upon request.

The professional distribution of each sub-sample was compared to available data in each country pertaining to the distributions of the total population of women in these professions at the time of the study. American data were examined against a 1985 report (NCR, 1985); Israeli data were examined against a 1987 report (Israel Statistical Monthly, 1987, 1988). In general, the two sub-samples tend to represent their national populations fairly well, although the distributions in each of the countries are somewhat different. The Israeli sample has a larger proportion of architects and computer science professionals, while the American sample has a larger proportion of scientists. Thus, we may consider the American sample as having a more "masculine" professional profile, while the Israelis are more "feminine" in their professional choice (see Jagacinski, 1987; Raviv, 1990).

Demographic data. The mean age of the sample is 36. Israelis are older than Americans (38.5 and 34.7 respectively, $t = 4.13$; $p < .001$). The percentage of Americans who were married or cohabiting at the time of the study is 61, while for the Israelis the percentage reaches 76. Also, 77% of the Israeli women are mothers, while only 32% of the Americans have children, a key distinction that is relevant to our discussion. The mean number of children per mother is similar in the American and Israeli sub-samples (2.1 and 2.2), but American mothers seem to have their children at a later age than their Israeli counterparts (compare the age of mothers in Table I).

[Insert Table I]

In Table I, the sub-samples are broken down into 4 categories of family status according to the women's marital status and age of youngest child. One can observe the striking difference between the two countries in the distribution of cases into these categories as well as in the age and rank of the women in each category. The smallest group in the Israeli sample, married/no children (7%), is the largest group in the American sample (39% of the sample). In both samples the nonmarried/no-children group (US-30%; IS-16%) is older than the married/no-children group and in the Israeli sample they are even older than the mothers/children under 6 group. The mothers/children over 6 group, in both samples, are much older than women in all the other groups. Also, both groups of American mothers tend to be older than the corresponding groups of Israeli mothers. The differences in age and rank among the groups in each culture are statistically significant, indicating that regardless of family status, the older the woman, the higher her organizational rank. In the US sample a significant difference in salary was also found, while in the Israeli sample salaries tend to correspond to age and rank, but do not differentiate significantly among the groups. We will refer to these basic demographic attributes later in regards to the main results concerning the career/family relationship.

Further inspection of the demographic data indicates that the American women were brought up in larger families (3.2

siblings in the US vs. 2.4 in the Israeli family) and show less intergenerational mobility regarding their professional choice than do their Israeli counterparts. Thus, 63% of the American but only 37% of the Israelis have a father in the same profession. Also, over half of the women in our two samples are first-born children (US-52%, Israel-62%), a feature that conforms with what has been found in other studies concerning the personal background of women who choose non-traditional careers, and shows that our two samples are typical in this respect (Fitzpatrick and Silverman, 1989; Lemkau, 1983). The majority of the married or cohabiting women in both sub-samples have partners who are themselves engineers, managers, or top professionals. This percentage is somewhat higher for the American women than for their Israeli colleagues (US-88%, Israel-66%).

[Insert Table II]

Table II shows that 39% of the American women and 35% of the Israeli women define themselves as having a dual high-level career relationship while only 6% of the Americans but 21% of the Israelis define themselves as involved in a dual moderate-level career relationship. Only 5% of the Americans, as against 14% of the Israelis define their male partner as having the central career and 10% of the Americans and 7% of the Israelis see themselves as having the central career. The two groups, however, do not differ so much in the ideal

family/career combination they prefer. Over 60% in both samples prefer the dual high-level career combination and around 20% prefer the dual moderate-level track. It is worth noting that 5% of the American women prefer, as their ideal situation, to stay single and work, while no Israeli woman chose this combination as her ideal.

Organizational data. The majority of women in both sub-samples are employed by organizations in the private sector, either by business enterprises (US-49%, IS-30%) or professional offices (US-14%, IS-22%). Another 23% of the Americans and 18% of the Israelis work for scientific and research institutions. Only 9% of the Americans and 17% of the Israelis work for public and government institutions. The least frequent category in both countries is of women who are self employed (US-5%, IS-13%). Over 50% of the respondents in both countries have no subordinate. Those who have supervisory responsibilities have an average of 9-10 subordinates reporting to them. The American women rank higher in their organization than do their Israeli counterparts (averages are 2.4 and 2.2 on a 4 point scale, as ranked by two independent judges, $\underline{t} = 1.97$; $\underline{p} < .05$). The organizational data further reveal that more American than Israeli women consider themselves climbing the managerial ladder (32% vs. 19%), while approximately 45% in both countries consider themselves advancing on a technical ladder. A substantial percentage of people (20-30%) either did not know or could not define any ladder in their organization. When asked to state their preference of ladder, only 28% of

the Americans and 22% of the Israelis preferred the managerial ladder; all the others preferred either a technical ladder or no ladder at all, just challenging projects.

Initial Differences

These sample characteristics show many similarities between the two groups, as we would expect. Nonetheless, the differences that do exist confirm some of our initial expectations. More of the Israeli women are married and many more are mothers. In fact the smallest group in Israel, those married with no children, is the largest in the US, indicating, perhaps, the greater difficulty American women have in combining a high level career with children. Further, the American women tend to be higher in their organizations and more likely to be on managerial career paths.

These basic distinctions get corroboration from a comparison on some of the self appraisal and attitude items on the questionnaire, as shown in Table III.

[Insert Table III]

The first 4 indices relate to the way women in the two countries perceive their jobs and to the importance they attribute to job characteristics. One can see that the Americans, as compared to the Israelis, perceive their jobs in a more favorable manner, namely, as giving them significantly more opportunity to advance and develop their technical skills as well as a chance for social influence. Israelis, however,

attribute significantly more importance than the Americans do to the opportunity to advance and develop on the job, while American women attribute higher importance to social influence.

Four self-appraisal indices are presented in the third sector of Table III. They were derived from the questionnaire's self-assessment items and tell us how the women in our sample perceive themselves in relation to their jobs. The Israeli group scores highest on the "tolerance and people orientation" index, which includes items such as the ability to collaborate, communicate, tolerate other people's views and criticism, and gain self-insight. The Americans tend to assess themselves higher than the Israelis on "leadership and achievement orientation," which includes willingness to compete, a desire to lead, to be responsible for others, and to exercise authority. The two groups score similarly on "competence and self confidence" and the Israelis have a slight edge on "certainty in their career choice." Thus we see that American women seem to pick up the more achievement oriented aspects of their culture, without, however, being more self confident or more certain about their career choice.

But our main hypotheses concern the reactions to this situation, and we turn now to our main results.

RESULTS ON INVOLVEMENT, CONFLICT, AND WELL-BEING

[Insert Table IV]

Table IV presents the main research variables: 3 career/family indices and 3 measures of well-being. There are no significant differences between US and Israeli women in terms of career and family involvement and C/F conflict when the means are tested. However, as we get into a more detailed analysis of these variables, we see differences in their distribution and in their association with other variables, which sheds light on the different manner in which women from the two countries adjust to their career/family condition. But first let us inspect some of the items that comprise these 3 indices and highlight certain facts of interest. Americans and Israelis report the same high levels of success at work, and outside of work. However, the importance attributed by respondents to different aspects of their life seems to be culture bound. In most of the items referring to the attribution of importance, a significant effect for culture is found: Israeli women consider success both at work and outside of work as more important than American women. Also, Israeli women consider success in private life and family relations to be highly important (the means being 6.7 on a scale of 1-7), significantly greater than the corresponding means in the American sample. Personal relations in the work place are also considered more important by the Israeli women than by their American counterparts.

When asked to choose between work or private life as the main focus of interest or importance, the professional women in this study tend to show, in general, a fairly balanced attitude. At the same time, the American women, more than the

Israelis, consider work as the central interest of their lives, report a higher experience of conflict between work and private life, but less invasion of work into their private lives.

Finally we turn to the 3 measures of well-being presented last in Table IV: Burnout, Enjoyment, and Depletion. In this study, burnout does not differ across cultures, and enjoyment is even significantly higher in the American sample, which is contrary to earlier findings in most of the studies on stress and burnout in Israel and the US and may be attributed to specially stressful conditions for certain sub-groups within the Israeli sample at the time of the study.[3] On energy depletion, however, Americans score significantly higher than Israelis.

Table V shows the correlations of the six main research variables with Salary and Rank, variables that indicate career success objectively. One can observe significant positive correlations between these two indicators and career involvement, as well as significant negative relations of these variables with family involvement. These rather expected

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[3]During the time the study took place in Israel, government declared its intention to shut down a large engineering project in the defense industry, which meant a massive lay-off of engineers from related industries all over Israel. The immediate response was anxiety and low morale in the engineering community and extensive rumors as to who will be the first to go. The most vulnerable groups were believed to be women who are the second bread-winner in their families and older people close to retirement.

In a prior analysis of burnout and enjoyment rates in a subset of Israeli and American matched pairs women and men engineers as against technical-non engineering pairs, Raviv (1990) found, indeed, that burnout was higher in the Israeli sample only for engineers and more so for women engineers. In the other groups of men and women, Israelis were less burnt out, as expected.

relationships are valid in both countries. There is in both countries also a significant direct relationship between the two success measures and the women's experience of C/F conflict. The higher they climb in their organizations and the more they earn, the more conflicted they feel.

[Insert Table V]

An interesting finding and first hint at the dynamics of the differences between the samples comes from the association of Burnout and Enjoyment with Rank and Salary. American women are less burnt out and experience more enjoyment the higher they climb the organizational ladder, while Israeli women show a reverse trend. As more of the Israeli women in our sample have children, we suspected that the difference between the two samples is associated with children restricting the women's ability to enjoy their upward mobility in the work area.

[Insert Table VI]

Table VI supports this conclusion, though in a somewhat more complex way. It shows, for each of the cultural groups, the association of the 3 well-being measures with organizational rank for women with and without children. The table reveals that for American women with children there is no relation between their rank in the organization and either burnout or enjoyment, while for those without children the

negative correlation with burnout and with depletion and the positive correlation with enjoyment are significant. Israeli women with children experience significantly higher burnout and lower enjoyment at high organizational levels, but not so Israeli women without children. Both may be responding to the practical problems of combining career with family, but in different ways: American women benefit from the emphasis on career over family in their culture, and pay less of a price than the Israeli for not meeting family expectations.

Table VII presents the intercorrelations among our main research variables. It shows that in both countries, career and family involvement are not related and constitute independent factors. While career involvement (CI) has a substantial and significant positive correlation with C/F conflict (CFC), as could be expected, family involvement (FI) has no association with conflict in the Israeli sample, and only a much smaller correlation (negatively) in the American sample. We return to this unexpected relation in Table VIII.

[Insert Table VII]

One can also observe in Table VII the relationships between the C/F variables and the well-being variables (which are themselves highly intercorrelated). In general, in both samples, involvement in one's career or one's family seems to have a beneficial relationship to burnout and enjoyment, and even the relationships with depletion, which are marginal or non significant, are mainly in the same direction. However,

C/F conflict is significantly and positively associated with burnout and depletion, and negatively with enjoyment, only in the American sample. These relationships are only marginal for the Israelis.

A better understanding of the relationships among the career/family (C/F) variables comes from looking at those people who are clearly reporting high conflict (over 5.0 on the index's 1-7 scale) and seeing what their proportion is in each of the samples. We found, as expected, that the overall percentage of high C/F conflict in the American sample is significantly higher than that of the Israeli sample (26% and 15% respectively, t=2.8; p<.01). The question then arises in what family and career involvement combination these highly conflicted women are more likely to be entrenched. Table VIII shows the percentage of American and Israeli women with high levels of C/F conflict in each combination of high (H) and low (L) CI and FI.

[Insert Table VIII]

Two basic features of this table are important. First, from the marginal figures of Table VIII, one can see that in both countries there is no statistically significant difference between the HFI and LFI groups in regards to the % of people with high levels of CFC. The HCI groups, though, include a higher percentage of highly conflicted women than the LCI groups. The difference is particularly large in the Israeli sample (in the US 32% and 22%, t=1.81; .05<p<.10; in

Israel 27% and 8%, t=3.55; p<.01). Thus perceived conflict is more responsive to career involvement than it is to family involvement, a finding that reflects the intercorrelations among these variables already observed in Table VII.

A second finding rests on an unexpected interaction. In both countries the most conflicted combination (38% of HCFC cases) is the HCI/LFI combination. In this group, the Israeli women are just as conflicted as the American, though they are considerably less so in all the other groups. Perhaps it is not the double-burden of combining C/F demands that is the hardest for women in our samples to cope with, but rather the emotional femininity dilemma that feels unresolved. Women highly involved in family issues seem to be in some way immune to or buffered against the conflicting effect of HCI on their sense of femininity (Barnett and Baruch, 1987). It is women with low family involvement who are the most vulnerable. On them, HCI casts the highest emotional toll, and this toll is particularly hard on the Israeli women (see Westman and Etzion, 1990).

Table IX looks at this conflict for the four marital/children status groups we presented previously in Table I, and also presents distributional data on burnout, depletion, and lack of enjoyment.

[Insert Table IX]

The marginal totals in Table IX show that the American women are not only more conflicted but also more depleted than

the Israeli. It seems that in the US the most conflicted are the married/no-children and the mothers with children over 6 groups, but the most depleted is the group of mothers with small children, as expected. In Israel, too, the mothers with children under 6 show relatively high depletion. The Israeli married/no-children group is very small and very young. It seems to be a group of women in a transitional stage, ready to move into motherhood (see again the demographic properties of this group in Table I). In contrast, the unmarried/no-children group in the Israeli sample is older and established. It is a small group of people who seem to be stuck in this life condition and exhibit, relative to the other Israeli groups, the highest percentage of people who are highly conflicted, burnt out, depleted, and suffer from low enjoyment. The percentages of conflict and depletion in this group are very similar to those of the corresponding American group.

Mothers of all ages in the Israeli sample are in much better shape than mothers in the US sample, in terms of well-being and conflict. In both countries the group of mothers to children over 6 years of age, although better off in terms of well-being, are more conflicted than mothers of children under 6. Further disaggregation of this group shows that this conflict is particularly high among American mothers of children 6-15 (39%), whereas in Israel the greatest conflict (22%) occurs among mothers with children over 15.[4] In both

[4]See note 2 for a possible explanation of this finding.

countries, though, depletion decreases with the age of the child.

These findings fit the expectation that depletion is a function of the practical difficulties of combining work with young children. Conflict, however, may be more of a reaction to the emotional concerns that may arise when children are older and show more independence.

DISCUSSION

The women in the American sample have fewer children than the Israelis. The Israeli sample is characterized by an extremely low percentage of single women, as compared to the American group, and by a higher percentage of dual-career families where both husband and wife have middle-level careers. Further, the American women have a higher percentage of high-level jobs, including management, which in US ideology is the "success" position. In contrast to the Israeli women, these US professionals seem to compete somewhat more successfully in the work arena, but at the expense of the family, whereas the family seems to play a more important role in the Israeli sample. Though the Israeli women in technical careers do not sacrifice the family, they do compromise their careers, at least until their children grow up. The price they pay as they rise in the organizational ladder is an acceleration of the burnout process.

These differences can be explained by an understanding of the two cultures in which these women live. The State of Israel was established as a highly egalitarian society with

the founders sharing a strong, almost utopian, socialist ideology. Women's equal rights were self-evident in such an ideology. It was espoused in the declaration of independence in 1948, but could not always materialize in the unfolding reality of the new born state (Hazelton, 1977). In practice, this ideology immediately clashed with Jewish heritage which emphasizes the centrality of the family and a traditional, gender-based role division within the family and outside of it. These two opposing forces are still salient in Israeli society today.

In the area of equal rights for women, the clash between these opposing forces resulted in progressive legislation coupled with very slow and clumsy enforcement. In the area of family privileges (maternity and parental leaves, preservation of mother's employment position, etc.), both these forces pushed in the same direction, resulting in progressive laws and informal supports for women who work. In fact, some Israeli feminist scholars argue that working women in Israel have too many privileges and that this, according to their opinion, strengthens the anti-women stereotypes in organizations while lowering women's own sensitivity to sex discrimination. Indeed, the feminist movement in Israel is very weak and unpopular (Lieblich, 1987), and the perception of sex-role differentiation is wider than in the US (Williams and Best, 1982). Also, Etzion and Blitz (1985) found that Israeli female managers who espoused a high ideological commitment to gender equality felt less supported at home and

in their work place and were more burnt out than their more traditional female colleagues.

Further, the term Career in Hebrew has a connotation of egotistic, self-centered motivation that is socially undesirable (see discussion of the meaning of career in different cultures in Schein, 1984). It is looked upon, especially with reference to women, as a human vanity that should rather be underplayed. In many of the interviews conducted by the first author with women engineers in Israel, when asked to described their career, their reaction was: "It is not a career, just an interesting job" (see corroborating evidence on women in management in Lieblich, 1987). In sum, the general "cultural message" to young professionally trained women in Israel is to contain their career involvement and keep the balance between work and family (Richter, 1992).

American women, in contrast, face a very different situation. They have come a long way in the past few decades. Although many claim, as in Israel, that the myth of women's equal opportunity and equal pay still does not match reality (e.g. McAfee, 1984), there is, in the US today, a steady progress toward enforcement of equal rights and affirmative action. Another typical feature of American society, which does not find its parallel in Israel, is the largely shared feminist awareness and the strong feminist lobby which help transform espoused ideological commitments and legislation efforts into real action in every day life.

Under these circumstances, American professionally trained women find themselves, as men do, in an extremely

competitive, individualistic atmosphere in a society that puts high value on career involvement, success, and achievement. It is a culture that legitimates personal ambition and views the individual as bearing the sole responsibility for his/her decisions. In accordance with these deeply rooted American values, no national or governmental concern is paid to how people conduct their private lives, and children, in particular, are seen as entirely a private choice and not subject to social or organizational concern (Auerbach, 1988). No special allowance is given to American women to help or encourage them to combine their careers with family life. So far, there is no government responsibility for maternity and/or parental leave or to ensure that employment rights exist for women after having given birth (Antal and Israeli, 1993).

Thus, the American woman gets a very mixed message about how to manage her life. She can compete in the work arena, the law ensures her equal pay and equal rights for promotion. But this presumed equality exists in a work world initially designed by traditional men with family support at home. The woman, however, is also expected to be married and have children, even though no formal or informal infrastructure is available to enable her to do so (Ammos et al., 1990; Barnett and Baruch, 1987). For a young American woman, committed to her career, the general "cultural message" is nondirective and unclear. On the one hand, she is at liberty to choose to remain single or childless. These "alternative life styles" are much more acceptable in the US than in Israel. On the

other hand, "family values" are displayed as claiming the woman's dedication to her home and children. This implies no compromise between career and family and confronts the professional woman with an "either/or" dilemma and an emotional double bind (Freudenberger and North, 1985).

To sum up the comparison: It seems that for Israeli women, raising a family is a given ("the default") and they accommodate their investment in their careers according to family condition and life stage. For American women, particularly those, like our sample, with technical education, pursuing a career is almost given, while when, where, and whether to have a family depends on their ability to fit it into their career condition and stage.

These differences in cultural context[5] help explain the differences we found in our main research variables. We expected, generally, the American women to have more career/family conflict and to have more negative responses to this conflict. These expectations were confirmed. And we expected these reactions to vary by career/family stage, with mothers of young children showing the greatest depletion (indicative of the practical problems associated with the double burden) and single women showing the greatest emotional conflict in response to the double bind of femininity. The former was confirmed in the American but not in the Israeli sample. The latter was confirmed only in the Israeli sample.

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[5]Differences in cultural context and ideology have also been found to affect the way organizations respond to the work/family needs of their employees in a comparison of the US, the UK, and Sweden (see Bailyn, 1991).

In both samples, however, we found that career involvement is associated with the greatest conflict when accompanied by *low* family involvement. We interpreted this interaction to mean that the emotional femininity dilemma, exacerbated among those with low family involvement, takes a high toll, particularly among Israeli women. In contrast, when Israeli women are mothers, which presumably eases this emotional burden, they are considerably better off than are their American counterparts.

Thus we see that there are dynamics common to all the women in our sample. They all face both practical and emotional issues in combining a career commensurate with their education with a private family life. But in Israel, it seems that the femininity dilemma makes it particularly hard for those women who are not married and not involved with families. This result fits the family emphasis of Israeli society. In the US, in contrast, the double burden seems more critical, which matches the greater career oriented focus of this society.

These results indicate that government legislation supporting both caring for a family and equal rights policy is essential to ease the practical side of the work/family conflict and to make a social statement concerning the legitimation of women's full involvement in professional life. But it is not sufficient as long as the rules of the game in the work place do not change, and as long as the domain of family remains the province only of women and is not equally shared by men.

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Table I: Means of Age, Rank[1] and Salary[2] of American and Israeli Women in Four Categories of Family Status

	AMERICANS					ISRAELIS				
Family Status	**N**	**%**	**Age**	**Rank**	**Salary**	**N**	**%**	**Age**	**Rank**	**Salary**
Unmarried/ no children	81	30%	31.8	2.2	34.6	28	16%	36.3	1.8	16.2
Married/ no children	104	39	30.7	2.4	37.6	13	7	29.6	1.7	12.4
Mothers/child 6 or less	37	14	35.2	2.5	38.9	63	36	34.0	2.2	18.0
Mothers/child over 6	47	17	48.3	2.7	47.8	72	41	44.8	2.5	18.6
TOTAL	269	100%	34.7	2.4	38.5	176	100%	38.5	2.2	17.5
F			63.5***	3.6*	6.8***			33.4***	6.2***	2.0
eta^2			.42	.04	.08			.37	.10	.04

* $.05 < p \leq .10$

* $.01 < p \leq .05$

** $.001 < p \leq .01$

*** $p \leq .001$

[1]Rank was coded by two judges on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest)

[2]1985-7 salaries in thousands of $

Table II: Relationship between Career and Family as Stated by American and Israeli Women Now vs. Ideal (in %)

	Americans (N = 269)		**Israelis** (N = 176)	
Career/Family Condition	**Now**	**Ideal**	**Now**	**Ideal**
Single and working	37%	5%	16%	0%
Married/Male has central career	5	6	14	6
Married/Female has central career	10	2	7	1
Married/Both have high-level careers	39	62	35	65
Married/Both have mid-level careers	6	21	21	23
Other	3	4	7	5
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table III: Background Indices: Reliabilities and Comparison of Means between Women in the USA and Israel

	USA	ISRAEL			
N	(269)	(176)	t	Cronbach's	# of items
Job Characteristics:					
1. Opportunity for Advancement & Expertise	5.0	4.7	2.28*	.75-.80	(6)
2. Opportunity for Social Influence	4.5	4.0	3.71***	.75-.73	(5)
Importance of Job Characteristics:					
1. Importance of Advancement & Expertise	5.9	6.1	-2.87*	.69-.70	(6)
2. Importance of Social Influence	5.0	4.7	2.61**	.72-.82	(5)
Self-Appraisal:					
1. Competence and Self Confidence	5.6	5.6	-.83	.72-.84	(9)
2. Leadership and Achievement Orientation	5.1	4.9	1.77ª	.77-.84	(6)
3. Tolerance and People-Orientation	5.2	5.5	-3.46***	.64-.79	(4)
4. Certainty in Career Choice	4.9	5.2	-1.85ª	.75-.76	(3)

ª $.05 < p \leq .10$

* $.01 < p \leq .05$

** $.001 < p \leq .01$

*** $p \leq .001$

Table IV: Main Research Indices: Reliabilities and Comparisons of Means between Women in the USA and Israel

	USA	ISRAEL			
N	(269)	(176)	t	Cronbach's	# of items
Career and Family Relationships:					
1. Career Involvement	4.9	4.8	.65	.81-.77	(11)
2. Family Involvement	5.1	5.2	-1.17	.60-.60	(8)
3. C/F Conflict	4.3	4.2	1.04	.74-.60	(4)
Well-being:					
1. Burnout	3.2	3.2	.04	.93-.93	(21)
2. Enjoyment	4.9	4.7	2.27*	.87-.92	(20)
3. Depletion	3.3	3.0	2.43*	.69-.72	(5)

* $.01 < p \leq .05$

Table V: Indices' Correlations with Respondents' Rank[1] and Salary[2] for Women in the US and in Israel.

	RANK		SALARY	
Country	**USA**	**ISRAEL**	**USA**	**ISRAEL**
N	(268)	(165)	(252)	(142)
Career Involvement	.20**	.23**	.09[a]	.24**
Family Involvement	-.16**	-.21**	-.19**	-.17*
C/F Conflict	.14*	.33***	.11*	.22**
Burnout	-.16**	.11[a]	-.17**	-.02
Enjoyment	.18**	-.09	.19**	.07
Depletion	-.09[a]	.03	-.04	-.08
SALARY	.62***	.44***		

[a] $.05 < p \leq .10$

* $.01 < p \leq .05$

** $.001 < p \leq .01$

*** $p \leq .001$

[1]Rank was coded by two judges on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).

[2]1985-7 salaries in thousands of $.

Table VI: Correlation of Organizational Rank[1] with Burnout, Enjoyment, and Depletion for Women with and without Children in the US and Israel

			r with rank		
Country	**Children**	**N**	**BRNT**	**ENJ**	**DEPL**
USA	with	84	.00	.12	-.01
	without	185	-.24**	.20**	-.13*
ISRAEL	with	135	.15*	-.14[a]	.01
	without	41	.00	.14	.04

[a] $.05 < p \leq .10$

* $.01 < p \leq .05$

** $p \leq .01$

[1]Rank was coded by two judges on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).

Table VII: Intercorrelation among Main Research Indices for American Women (top) and Israeli Women (bottom)

	AMERICANS (N = 269)					
INDICES	**CI**	**FI**	**CFC**	**BRNT**	**ENJ**	**DEPL**
Career Involvement **(CI)**	---	-.05	.24***	-.16**	.30***	.01
Family Involvement **(FI)**	-.09	---	-.11*	-.17**	.25***	-.08[a]
Career/Family Conflict **(CFC)**	.33***	-.07	---	.24***	-.13*	.27***
Burnout **(BRNT)**	-.35***	-.11[a]	.10[a]	---	-.85***	.62***
Enjoyment **(ENJ)**	.35***	.23**	.04	-.81***	---	-.51***
Depletion **(DEPL)**	-.13*	-.09	.10[a]	.59***	-.50***	---
	ISRAELIS (N = 176)					

[a] $.05 < p \leq .10$

* $.01 < p \leq .05$

** $.001 < p \leq .01$

*** $p \leq .001$

Table VIII: Percentage of American (A) and Israeli (B) Women with High Levels of Career/Family Conflict in Four Combinations of High/Low Career and Family Involvement.[1]

		FAMILY INVOLVEMENT		
A. AMERICANS		High	Low	TOTAL
Career Involvement	High	27% (N = 64)	38% (N = 56)	32% (N = 120)
	Low	21% (N = 87)	23% (N = 62)	22% (N = 149)
	TOTAL	24% (N = 151)	30% (N = 113)	26% (N = 269)
B. ISRAELIS		High	Low	TOTAL
Career Involvement	High	18% (N = 34)	38% (N = 29)	27% (N = 63)
	Low	8% (N = 64)	7% (N = 42)	8% (N = 106)
	TOTAL	11% (N = 98)	20% (N = 71)	15% (N = 169)

[1]Note: The cutting point between High and Low of all variables in this table is 5.0 (on a scale of 1-7): High > 5.0; Low ≤ 5.0.

Table IX: Percentage of American (A) and Israeli (B) Women Reporting High Levels of Career/Family Conflict[1], Burnout[2], Lack of Enjoyment[3], and Depletion in Four Categories of Family Status Groups.

A. AMERICANS	**N**	**% High CFC**	**% High BRNT**	**% Low ENJ**	**% High DEPL**
Not married/no children	81	20	16	12	23
Married/no children	104	32	12	4	29
Mothers/child 6 or less	37	19	16	8	38
Mothers/child over 6	47	30	11	6	19
TOTAL	269	26%	13%	7%	27%
B. ISRAELIS	**N**	**% High CFC**	**% High BRNT**	**% Low ENJ**	**% High DEPL**
Not married/no children	28	21	19	15	23
Married/no children	13	8	8	0	0
Mothers/child 6 or less	63	13	15	12	21
Mothers/child over 6	72	17	6	6	13
TOTAL	176	15%	11%	9%	16%

[1] High C/F Conflict = over 5.0 on an intensity scale of 1-7

[2] High Burnout/Depletion = over 4.0 on a frequency scale of 1-7

[3] Low Enjoyment = under 4.0 on a frequency scale of 1-7