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Spillover and work-family conflict in probation practice: Managing the boundary between work and home life

WESTABY, Chalen, PHILLIPS, Jake and FOWLER, Andrew

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Abstract

Based on the close relationship between social work and probation practice this article uses and develops Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) work-family conflict model to understand the spillover from probation work to practitioners' family lives. We examine the ways spillover affects practitioners' family lives and show that these conflicts stem from desensitisation and the work being community based. They also arise in more imagined ways which we describe as altruistic imaginings and darker imaginings. The article concludes by highlighting the need for organisations to acknowledge spillover and its effects and makes suggestions around the provision of organisational policies. We conclude by considering what probation providers, as employers might do improve the situation as well as some reflective tools that practitioners might use to consider their own work-life balance with a view to improving staff wellbeing as well as effective service provision.

Key words: probation practice; spillover; work-family conflict;

Introduction

This article explores the causes and ramifications of the spillage that occurs between probation practitioners' work and private lives. The article begins with a review of the relevant research from probation and social work literature before focusing on the work-family conflict (WFC) model developed by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). With the exception of a small amount of research very little is known about how probation work affects practitioners' lives outside the work place although there is evidence that this occurs in similar professions and occupations such as the police, social work and prison (Crawley, 2002; He et al., 2002) Armstrong et al., 2015; Kalliath and Kalliath, 2015) . Thus, in order to make sense of the way in which probation work seeps into practitioners' family lives, we analyse data which was generated in interviews with 18 probation officers in England

Our data suggest that work-family conflict occurs in the context of probation work. In many respects, work and home life are seen as mutually exclusive and problems only occur when aspects of one life impinge on the other; where the expectations, experiences and behaviours

of one sphere transcend the boundary into the other. Practitioners described the way in which being a probation officer had given them a 'skewed view' of the world, and that they struggled to know how or whether to act on the information they had obtained through being a probation officer. Importantly, the possession of such information had led them to change their parenting practices in ways that they were not confident were appropriate. We then move on to discuss the potential ramifications of the various forms of WFC that we identify before commenting on what might need to change in order to ameliorate the potentially negative effects of this aspect of probation work.

Spillover and Work-Family Conflict

Spillover theory maintains that 'despite the physical and temporal boundaries that exist between work and family, behaviours and emotions from one domain spill over to the other. Spillover can occur from work-to-family contributing to WFC and from family-to-work contributing to FWC' (Staines 1980 in Kalliath and Kalliath 2015: 244). This provides a theoretical underpinning for how work-family domains become intertwined and interdependent. In social work (Kalliath and Kalliath 2015; Kinman et al 2014), ,prison research (Armstrong et al 2015; Lambert et al (2006)) and policing (Burke 1988; He and Archbold 2002; Lambert et al 2016), 'spillover' has been researched in some depth. It is recognised that such work impact upon the lives of practitioners outside of work:

> Most social workers cannot simply go to work, do their job, and then leave their thoughts and feelings about work at the office when returning home. They may try to keep their professional concerns separate from their other roles and responsibilities but the nature of their work makes this difficult. (Scheafor and Horejsi 2008: 17)

Spillover can be understood to have both positive and negative implications for practitioners (Staines 1980). Spillover has received less attention in the context of probation work (although see discussion below on Petrillo (2007) and Morran (2008)). This is despite Crawley (2002: 285), drawing upon the idea that prison work is 'dirty work' (Hughes, 1958) asking whether the similarities between the prison and probation work means that it might 'be reasonable to suggest that spill-over and feelings of moral contamination are problems experienced by probation officers too?' Spillover theory posits that one's professional life can affect one's personal life. It is possible to break this down further by making use of Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) model of Work-Family Conflict (WFC). In their metanarrative of quantitative research into work-family conflict Greenhaus and Beutell

(1985) conceptualise WFC as bidirectional in that work impacts on family life and vice-versa. However, in this article we are focusing on the way in which work impacts on family life. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) identify three types of conflict that underpin this interaction between work and private lives: time-based conflict; behaviour-based and strain-based conflict (see also Kalliath and Kalliath 2015).

Time-based conflict occurs where time at work results in the inability to satisfactorily perform a role outside work; 'not enough hours in the day, with both work and home draining a necessarily limited resource' (Duschinski et al: 2016: 130). Such conflict can have serious ramifications for practitioners' life satisfaction. For example, Leineweber et al (2014) found in their research on nursing, that long hours, working nights and shift work can impact on family or marital life.

Behaviour-based conflict arises where the behaviour that is required by one's professional role is regarded as inappropriate in a non-work setting. For example, Crawley (2004: 239) describes situations where prison officers come to rely on 'routines, timetable and procedures' in their private lives where this is unnecessary and, to a degree, inappropriate. Moreover, Crawley found that prison officers were described by their spouses as being generally more 'intolerant, cynical and suspicious' as they progress through their career (Crawley 2004: 236). Elsewhere, Petrillo (2007), in her research on probation officers who work with high risk violent and sexual offenders, found that participants became increasingly aware of the risks posed to their own children as a consequence of the work. Interestingly, it is suggested by Kinman et al. that 'this type of conflict is generally more common in jobs that involve taking responsibility for others, and where employees are required to interact with uncooperative, hostile or aggressive people' (Dierdorff and Ellington 2008 in Kinman et al 2014: 37).

Strain-based conflict relates to the (in)ability to switch off from work when outside of work time. It arises when experiences at work make 'it difficult for individuals to meet the demands and expectations of roles' outside of work. For example, Kinman et al (2014: 36) note that 'working on complex and emotionally sensitive cases and dealing with hostile service users can lead to social workers feeling anxious, distracted or irritable outside work'.

There is, we would argue, potential for significant levels of spillover in the context of probation. However, spillover has rarely been examined in the context of probation and a specific framework of analysis, such as that of the WFC model, has not been deployed. That said, the probation research that covers spillover reflects some of the ideas presented above.

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Morran's (2008: 147) research with probation practitioners facilitating domestic violence offender programmes found that probation work affects intimate and platonic relationships; one's perception of self; and results in a heightened awareness of potential 'abusive and oppressive behaviour'. In Petrillo's (2007) research on women probation officers supervising high risk offenders she found that probation work spilled over in terms of a heightened level of awareness in relation to vulnerability especially in terms of risks to their own children; the impact of exposure to harrowing material in decreasing one's faith in humanity; and platonic and sexual relations outside of work. In order to fill this gap and to better understand probation practice, this article uses the WFC model to explore the concept of spillover from work to home life. In doing so, we draw on a range of other concepts such as 'dirty work' (Hughes, 1958), disjuncture and edgework to explicate and analyse the ways in which spillover in probation manifests.

Methods

The data used were generated as part of a project in which we use emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) to understand probation practice. Following a pilot study we carried out the research in the form of semi-structured interviews. The research we conducted is therefore qualitative in nature. The data we collected is small in scale but allows a complex and detailed understanding of probation practice. We used a purposive sampling technique which stated only that probation practitioners had to work for the National Probation Service (NPS). The sample was self-selecting and only qualified probation officers agreed to be interviewed. We interviewed 18 probation officers with the sample consisting of 12 women and 6 men. The participants were aged between 30 and 64. The probation officers had been qualified for between 6 months and 29 years. Their qualifications ranged from the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work which was the required qualification for probation officer up until the mid-1990s, and the PQF Graduate Diploma, the most recent form of qualification for working at probation officer level. Ethical approval was granted by our institution and access granted by NOMS. Participants gave verbal and written informed consent before any data was collected.

The study is geographically bounded as probation officers were recruited from one division of the NPS. We gained access to 6 Local Delivery Units employing around 240 probation officers (Ministry of Justice, 2015). Therefore we interviewed around 8% of probation officers. Most of the participants we interviewed designated themselves as 'generic'

probation officers. However, we also interviewed three court liaison officers in addition to a number of participants working in specialist roles with particular clients such as women, or sex offenders. We therefore understand that it is not possible to generalise our findings due to the small sample size and geographically bounded nature of our sample (Creswell, 2012; Denscombe, 2014; Stake, 1995). However, the complex nature of our data allows us highlight the nuances that are implicit to much of the work that probation officers do.

Although we initially collected the data for a project focussing on emotional labour we noticed during the fieldwork and preliminary analysis process that participants often commented upon the spillover from work to home life. Therefore we decided to explore this further through a structured analysis of the data. The data were analysed by one of the primary researchers using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Interestingly, much of the research on spillover and, in particular, WFC referred to above, uses quantitative methods. The qualitative nature of our methods means that it can shed light on the nuances of work-family conflict.

Findings

Staines' (1980) notion of spillover highlights the porosity of the temporal and physical boundaries between work and home life. Similarly, participants in our study refer to exactly this. Thus the following sections will discuss the porous nature of these boundaries as well as exploring the way work transcends these boundaries. We also explore the way in which participants manage this dynamic.

Desensitisation

As we saw above, in her ethnography on prison officers, Crawley (2002) found that prison officers' families highlighted the way that prison officers acted at home mirrored their behaviour at work. In later work, Crawley argues that this stemmed from the "cultural expectations to be 'hard'" that constitute 'prison culture' (2004: 184),which is linked to how prison officers behave at home or parent their children, for example. Similarly, three of our participants also reflected on how their work had affected them outside of their work in this way:

> …you become desensitised don't you to things and almost, like I know my
> wife sometimes she says, sometimes you seem like a hard person now and it's
> because…you listen to this stuff all day long. (PO20)

> I think you do need to develop a thick skin with a lot of things and erm and like I say, that desensitisation to things you know that […] you know […] I've often talked about it with my colleagues about you know if, people we just talk about, "oh yeah and he chopped her arms off and he shoved her in you know!" you know and you think, "God if other people could hear the type of conversations we have to have and the kind of things we have to deal with they'd be absolutely mortified […] but because we're doing it day-in day-out we're just kind of used to it really. (PO12)

However, the quote from PO20 suggests that the hardness commented upon by his wife does not come from cultural expectations but is a result of having to deal on a daily basis with information about serious sexual and physical offences. Therefore, as PO12 comments, probation officers become desensitised or less shocked by this type of information. In her study of emotional literacy in probation practice Knight (2014) discusses the process of desensitisation as a form of protection and highlights some drawbacks such as making it more difficult to harness the motivation of an offender. We would concur with that analysis. However, our data also suggest that an additional drawback of this process, which appears to happen in other criminal justice professions as well, impacts upon people outside of their work lives as well. In this sense we can observe a behaviour-based conflict whereby behaviour which is seen as appropriate at work (i.e. a certain degree of emotional detachment, or desensitisation) results in practitioners behaving in this way at home.

In the community

Our data also show that probation work differs from prison work in relation to the physical boundaries between work and family life. Generally speaking, prison officers are able to leave prisoners and therefore their work behind physically. While this may not fully mitigate behaviour-based conflict it does give prison officers the chance to create physical boundaries between work and family life[1]. However, the majority of probation officers, in common with most social workers, work within the community. This means that their work has the potential to spill over into their home life in various ways.

Elsewhere we have discussed the impact of an increasing volume of high-risk caseloads in probation (XXXX, 2016). There are implications for this in terms of WFC. Four participants

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[1] Notwithstanding the fact that a prison officer may bump into a former prisoner or, perhaps, someone on Release on Temporary Licence, outside of work.

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talked about how they avoided 'taking work home' with them. However, at times there are cases which worry probation officers to the extent that they think about it at home:

> I don't generally take things home with me though really I don't, I don't yeah, I don't wake up in the middle of the night thinking- well maybe I do a little bit [laughs]. (PO12)

> I go home at the weekend, they're not going to stop offending just because it's Friday night at four o'clock, you know they're still active they'll still do some nasty and dangerous and offensive thing when I'm not here… and I'm responsible for them and I'm still responsible six months after they're not even on probation so there's, yeah, I suppose there is quite a lot of anxiety around the job. (PO10)

Here we see examples of strain based conflict related to the type of work these practitioners do. It is clear that POs try not to take work home with them as they understand the importance of creating a boundary between work and family life. Nevertheless, as we can see from the examples above, the temporal boundary between work and family life is not always so easy to maintain, particularly given the emphasis placed on risk management and increasing volume of high-risk cases.

Another way in which spillover occurs, which arises from the community-based nature of probation work, is the fact that practitioners might meet clients in the street in a similar way to that of social workers (Pugh 2007). One of our participants was able to avoid this by living in a different place to where they worked:

> …it's quite nice sometimes to leave it behind. Sometimes it's quite nice to have the separation between xxxxx and xxxxx. (PO13)

However, should a probation officer live in the community where they work there is the potential for the physical work boundary between work and home to become more porous. This results in work spilling over into home life more frequently:

> You go out on a weekend or after work on a night out or whatever and due to [the colour of my] hair I'm invariably spotted and […] especially because, I think, I did the duty role for so long I met a lot of people and that sort of thing so I'm quite recognisable and so you'll often have sort of people shout you in the street. (PO3)

The above participant also describes how he attempts to prepare for these situations during supervisions:

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> I always say to people "if we see each other in town, I'll never say hello to you, unless you say hello to me." (PO3)

There are links here to counselling and similar techniques are employed by other 'caring' professions[2]. What marks probation is the dual role of 'care and control' that is implicit to this profession (Harris 1980; Robinson 2013; Canton; 2013). Indeed, it is the 'control' side of this dichotomy which can be problematic. In the following example, the participant described how he bumped into a client in the street shortly after initiating breach proceedings:

> We came across one of my customers and he wanted to knock me head off and, you know, he was drunk and I'd breached him […] and then he saw me and the wife out in town and I just went at him…"who the hell do you think you are to bring this up in front of my wife? This is my wife bah-ra-ra-ra-ra-ra [angry sound]" and she said, "God, you were like a Pitbull." (PO21)

This type of altercation can result in time-based conflict, albeit in a way perhaps not considered by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), whereby work impinges on time dedicated to family life. In turn, and referring back to the bi-directional nature of the model, this results in behaviour-based conflict in that the practitioner has to adopt behaviour which is appropriate to either work or home. The two, in this particular and arguably highly unique situation are, arguably mutually exclusive although this is not to suggest that there are behaviours which are appropriate for both work and family settings. .

In the quote above, PO21 chose to adopt behaviour that was more appropriate to family life than work life which, in turn, risks being regarded as inappropriate in a probation environment. As with desensitisation, this response can act as a form of protection although in this case we would argue that PO21 is protecting his wife from the 'dirty' side of his work, resulting in WFC. By dirty work (Hughes, 1958) we mean those workers who marshal 'the boundaries between our clean and ordered lives … and the undifferentiated mass of dirt from which such order rises' (Ward and McMurray 2016: 56). This situation resulted in the participant engaging in edgework in order to protect his wife from the difficult work that he does and had to do so in an ad hoc way:

> In its purest expression, edgework represents a form of 'experiential anarchy' where the completely novel circumstances of the situation force one to 'ad hoc a response to the immediate threat'. (Lyng 2014: 7)

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[2] See work on boundary setting social work such as Trevithick (2011); Cooper (2012). For dual or multiple relationships see Pugh (2007).

The porous nature of the physical and temporal boundary between probation work and practitioners' private lives increases the potential for WFC because they work with people who are in the community. Additionally, the controlling element of probation work makes this an area that requires practitioners to respond in ways that meet the needs of both of their 'lives'.

Altruistic imaginings

Commonly stemming from a real-life work-related experience the next type of spillover takes the form of what we call 'altruistic imaginings'. Such imaginings expose the way in which practitioners connect to the caring side of their profession. Altruistic imaginings took the form of participants describing situations in which they felt like they wanted to help their clients in material ways but which were also inappropriate and unprofessional:

> "Am I doing enough?" […] it's simple things innit, do you know, I've got a spare jacket I could give offenders. I've got food. I've got things that I know they could do with but I can't give them it. (PO10)

> [an offender] said to me last week "what am I going to do at Christmas? I'm on my own. I don't want to be on my own" [...] but it is his problem [...] many people are alone at Christmas and it's very sad but when you're driving home from that home visit and then you start thinking, "[sigh] could I have him for Christmas?" [Laughs] [...] and then that's obviously gone in a second (PO7)

That practitioners did not act on these imaginings (or, at least, that they did not tell us about acting on them) is unsurprising. The requirement to maintain professional boundaries are well-defined and accepted[3]. Moreover, such imaginings show how probation workers deal with altruistic ambivalence and similarly to social workers strive for 'objectivity and self-awareness,' (BASW 2014: 15) in the professional relationship where they must 'be clear in their own minds about the limits of the relationship (Trotter 2008 : 77).

However, these imaginings tell us something about work spillover. Returning to Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) conceptualisation of WFC we would argue that these imaginings result in strain-based conflict. As PO10 explains 'So when I can't respond to that, you do feel a bit guilty.' This, we argue, can result in disjuncture; 'a term used to define ethical stress experienced when one's value beliefs and behaviour are in conflict - again, with a focus on

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[3] For example, the Probation Institute's code of ethics stipulates that, 'Appropriate boundaries must be established in relationships with service users and colleagues'. (Probation Practice Code of Ethics 1.2 2016: 8.2)

helping' (Fenton 2012: 941). This is not always a negative development. Indeed, one participant described this ethical disjuncture in positive terms:

> I think it's very healthy to have all these feelings […] not necessarily to act upon them but […] for one moment to think, "What can I do to make sure he's not on his own on Christmas day? Well-" and then "well it's not my responsibility." (PO7)

Here, then, we can see that such thoughts allow practitioners to reinforce professional boundaries and then use those boundaries to rationalise the detachment required when working with people living in difficult circumstances. Shortly after making the above comment PO7 refers to disjuncture more explicitly. She describes how earlier in her probation career she had not been coping with the role well as she was unable to distinguish between what was her responsibility towards offenders and what was their responsibility. We have seen, across criminal justice and social policy, a shift towards responsibilising people for their actions (whether that is offenders, (potential) victims or parents, for example) (Garland 2001). These altruistic imaginings can be used to reaffirm the principles of responsibilisation.

The darker side of probation practice

As mentioned earlier in this article one can understand probation practice as being 'dirty work' (Hughes 1958). This concept forms the basis of this section. In Worrall and Mawby's (2013) research on probation occupational culture, they found that practitioners felt tainted by society as a result of marshalling the boundary between non-offending and offending communities. In response to that taint Worrall and Mawby's participants constructed positive professional identities. Traditionally dirty work is seen to result in workers feeling physically, morally or socially tainted by society, and our own observations confirm this. However, we also suggest that probation work can result in practitioners having a skewed view of society which, in turn, affects the way they lead their private lives.

Darker imaginings

The dirty element of probation work seems to have changed our participants in similar ways to Crawley's participants described being 'changed by the job' (2004:180). Our participants described the way in which the work they did had resulted in them having a 'skewed' view of the world:

I'm looking at people differently […] really I just question people's motives all the time and it's often for the worst not the best […] I think it's probably just a by-product of just doing this work. (PO10)

I remember one day my wife phoned me and she said "oh, you know, oh [our daughter's] going to her friend's house for tea after school. I'm stuck at work 'cos of snow or whatever, I won't get there in time, [our daughter's friend's] dad is picking [our daughter] up for school." And straight away I said "Well what do we know about him?" [Laughs]… you know and [my wife] knows him because she goes to school and she drops them off and she sees the parents more than I do you know and things like that but that were my response straightaway "Well what do we know? What do we know about him?" you know. And there were nothing really in my head that thought he would do anything it wasn't, you know, "she cannot go" but straightaway I just thought I don't know this guy…and I would never think like that if I didn't work in this job. (PO11)

PO10 describes darker imagining that might happen as a result of the information that he is exposed to as part of his work. In turn, these sinister thoughts inform how he views society. PO10 discusses these thoughts in a relatively abstract manner whilst PO11 provides a more concrete and personal example in which work and family life collide. Where this occurs, there is the potential for strain-based conflict to arise because, we would argue, once a probation practitioner has been exposed to such information, it is natural to want to act and protect one's family although this is not always perceived as appropriate or possible.

Managing the self

Neither the altruistic imaginings nor the darker imaginings in the previous section were acted upon. However, we were offered examples of these darker imaginings spilling over quite tangibly into participants' family lives. One way in which these darker imaginings are acted upon is where practitioners have to manage the way in which they present the darker side of probation to others. This results in probation workers providing caveats when giving advice and engaging in self-regulation.

I've had a few personal experiences where something might be happening for somebody else and my, I've immediately gone to the worst possible scenario, you know but then you know like I say having to sort of remind myself and like with my family as well saying "well this might be happening but you've gotta remember the job that I do and the fact that I see all this stuff all the time…So it might not actually be that at all but that's, just you know, my skewed view on society now". (PO12)

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PO12 is behaving in a way regarded as appropriate within probation because probation practitioners are, on a daily basis, required to assess risk and will have professional experience of serious offences. However, her awareness of potential risks are inappropriate for her personal life and, PO12 understands that her response may not be appropriate in a family life setting. Indeed, she gives her 'professional' opinion, but caveats it with a reminder about her occupation. In some respects, PO12 is demonstrating that she has a magnified perception of potentially harmful behaviour and comments that this might just be an effect of her 'skewed view on society'.

PO10 offers a different example of self-regulation:

> I used to […] help coach [the kids] football team and I was just really, do you know, I'd see some of the parents like touch the kids and you know not inappropriately even but I wouldn't even, do you know I'd stay clear of doing that. So it clearly has impacted on me because I wouldn't have questioned doing that, I know it's innocent, I know I haven't done anything wrong and I know my motive isn't wrong. (PO10)

Arguably, as a result of this skewed view of society PO10 self-regulates his life outside of work in that he stops touching the children he is coaching. Whilst the touching by other parents and himself was not inappropriate, he was unable to reconcile this with the knowledge he had gained as a probation officer and chose to change his involvement in community activities as a result of his profession:

> […] but I still don't do it because I worry that other people might perceive it differently. So it's changed me in that respect, I'm a lot more aware I suppose, a lot more kind of tuned into it. (PO10)

The connection to dirty work can be seen here, in that PO12 and PO10 are both attempting to manage the boundary between their work and home life. PO12 makes direct reference to her 'skewed' view of the world when providing advice to mitigate her magnified view of the sinister side of society. While PO10 acknowledges that his skewed view of society has resulted in him changing the way he acts in his home life. Moreover, we see a further connection with 'dirty work'. In this case, PO10 seems to be feeling morally tainted as a result of his knowledge of, and proximity to, offending behaviour. In this case this type of spillover manifests itself as self-conscious self-regulation.

Parenting: managing others

In addition to self-regulation, participants managed others as a response to their exposure to the darker side of probation. This occurred primarily in relation to parenting:

> …I hate going to XXXX fair, I will always say to my husband: "you go stand round there and then if the ride stops around there you get him off and I'll-" so, I'd like to think it doesn't stop them doing what they should be doing, they play out, they go places, but it affects my anxiety levels […] I do sometimes feel, think people have ulterior motives that probably don't, probably just really nice people and I immediately am on red alert if people start talking [...] I worked once with a sex offender who had used a mirror under a changing room in a swimming baths and seen girls getting changed, so I have a thing about that now so when they go to swimming I say "just be careful and just watch, have a little look around the floor area-" well that's not normal, is it, when your kids- I don't know if it's normal or not but- my husband would say "what is wrong with you? That's not normal. Why you telling them that? They're just going to swimming baths." But actually I think once it's in your head I can't get rid of the fact that I know that that happened. So that's the way it affects me. (PO14)

PO14 offers two anecdotes which highlight the difficulty in knowing where the boundary between appropriate and inappropriate use of knowledge gained as a result of being a probation officer lies. It might be argued that by engaging in dirty work PO14 uses the knowledge she has of the darker side of society to parent her children. However, in the first anecdote PO14's husband is complicit in the action taken in protecting their children at the fair. In contrast, in the swimming pool example, her husband sees the advice being offered as inappropriate. PO14's husband demonstrates where he thinks the boundary between work and family life lies in terms of divulging information about serious sex offending to their children. Even so, PO14 argues that where the protection of her children is concerned, she has to act upon the knowledge she has gained.

It is important to note that participants were unsure of how to use the knowledge gained in work in their family life, with PO14 saying, 'I don't know if it's normal or not'. PO11 elaborates on this, saying:

> I think I may be over protective as a parent sometimes. …you know, is it a good thing or is it a bad thing? I don't know? (PO11)

These quotes demonstrate the difficulty that practitioners have in managing the boundary between work and family life in terms of parenting. This is because the boundaries are porous and susceptible to multiple interpretations which are contingent on a parent's occupation.

The impact of the collision between work and family is seen here with participants finding it difficult to know whether the action they took was appropriate.

Discussion and Conclusion

Our findings show that 'work and family lives are interdependent' (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985: 86) and that considerable spillover occurs between work and family lives. Our focus here has been spillover from work to family, although we acknowledge that spillover can occur in other directions. Indeed, such analysis may shed light on how spillover might have a positive effect on people's lives. While we are unable to generalise our findings, we have brought to light some of the antecedents and manifestations of spillover from work to home life in probation practice, a previously unexplored area of research. It is worth noting that our data and analysis is focused on heterosexual relationships, and nuclear families. This is merely a product of the people with whom we spoke and those who chose to talk about their families. It may well be that people of other sexualities and family groupings experience spillover in different ways, potentially an avenue for future research. Such research would shed light on whether the WFC model we have used here is flexible and durable enough to account for people who are not partners and parents, therefore contributing to the literature on the sociology of the family.

In the same way that Crawley (2004) drew parallels between prison officers and probation officers and the potential for spillover and feelings of being tainted by one's work, we would argue that similarities exist between many occupations in and beyond criminal justice. Thus, the findings presented here have implications beyond probation work. This suggests that codes of ethics, such as those published by the Probation Institute (2014) and BASW (2014) should acknowledge the strain that such work places on practitioners and provide a mechanism with which practitioners can ameliorate the pressures of this kind of work.

That said, there will be differences between practitioners' experiences of spillover which are contingent upon the institution and jurisdiction in which they work. In addition to shedding light on the specific issues that WFC and spillover present for probation practitioners, our analysis has shed light on the value that practitioners place on different aspects of their work (such as providing, or want to provide, help and showing compassion for their clients). Our analysis has also highlighted some elements of what might be considered to be facets of probation 'culture'. In particular, the risk management role of the probation officer comes to fore when we consider the impact of probation work on practitioners' parenting styles whilst

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the increasingly professionalised nature of the job is pertinent when we consider altruistic imaginings. Future research on this topic in other institutions would thus help us understand better the cultures of the different institutions that make up the criminal justice system.

Kinman et al (2014) comment that where spillover occurs from work to family this can have an impact on wellbeing, satisfaction (both in terms of job and family life), and personal relationships. Additionally, with respect to personal relationships, in their meta-analysis of outcomes of work-family conflict, Allen et al (2000) describe a number of negative consequences of work-family conflict. In relation to non-work related outcomes, they highlight a reduction in satisfaction in relation to life, marriage and family. Indeed, some of our participants alluded to the fact that spillover caused tension between themselves and their partners in relation to parenting practice.

From our research it is clear that probation officers are proactive in managing the boundary between work and home life, but the uncertainty presented by some participants, particularly in relation to parenting suggests they are not always fully equipped to do so. This, we would argue, stems from the neglect paid to this both in terms of research and policy, an important gap in our knowledge and understanding of probation work and related professions:

> Organisations must recognise that work and family are interrelated domains, and emotions, strain and behaviours experienced in these domains have a mutual impact on one another. A work climate where social workers do not fear discussing concerns about the conflict they may be experiencing in their work and family lives could help in reducing it. (Kalliath and Kalliath 2015)

Employers should remember about their duty of care to employees. We would argue that probation providers need to consider the ramifications of these findings in terms of training, workforce planning, retention and sickness as well as consider the need for organisational policies that enable probation practitioners to negotiate the boundary between work and home life. There are particular implications of spillover in relation to the move towards 'agile working', which sees probation practitioners being involved in new ways of working such as more flexible caseload management, and meeting clients in the community (McDermott 2016). Those boundaries, be they temporal or spatial, between work and family life are likely to become ever more porous and organisations should be aware of the potentially negative implications of this. One way to ameliorate this would be to incorporate these ideas into the training that criminal justice professionals receive, as PO14 notes:

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> I see it with the trainees that I think it takes time to understand how emotional the job is […] And I think that's undervalued in the training, I think the impact on you as an individual, the impact on your life, the impact on your thinking, your views on society, those things aren't covered enough in the training. (PO14)

There is scope for the inclusion of modules which focus on raising awareness of the impact of probation work. This would prepare trainees for what probation work entails but should not be restricted to trainees. Rather, it should be adapted for existing practitioners as part of CPD. This training would provide them with a better understanding of spillover and the various ways it occurs. A second option would be the provision of more effective supervision, as we have suggested elsewhere (XXXX, 2016). Whilst peer support can be invaluable in terms of providing support to staff doing difficult work, it should not be the only option for practitioners. Rather, we would argue, probation providers should provide a range of forms of supervision in addition to the managerial approach that out participants described. Examples might include greater use of clinical supervision or a reinstatement of the some elements of the Offender Engagement Programme, in particular the reflective supervision model (Copsey. 2011). Studies of spillover and work-family conflict in social work practice can provide further assistance. Some provide reflective tools which practitioners can use to help manage the boundary between work and home life with a focus on self-care (Kinman et al, 2014) could be tested and adapted for use in probation. This, we would argue, needs to be a collaborative effort between academics, policy makers and practitioners. To conclude, this article has shown the ways in which spillover occurs and affects probation practitioners. This would allow for the provision of better support so that practitioners can manage the boundary more effectively thus leading to more effective service provision and enhanced staff wellbeing.

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