

Family life under pressure?

*Parents' paid work
and the quantity and quality of parent-child and family time*

Anne Roeters

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Staat het gezinsleven onder druk?

*Het werk van ouders en de kwantiteit en kwaliteit van ouder-kind- en familietijd
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)*

Proefschrift

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Voor mijn ouders

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In an interview on the high incidence of behavioral problems among adolescents in the Netherlands in April 2008, André Rouvoet, the Dutch minister of Youth and Family at that time, called for more research on this issue (“We zijn drukker en vragen te veel van onze kinderen [We are busier and ask too much of our children],” 2008). According to Rouvoet, parental time pressure was one of the main causes of adolescent problem behavior and needed further exploration. He argued that modern parents are too preoccupied with work to spend enough time with their children and give them the attention they need. Thus, Rouvoet implicitly claimed that paid work and a healthy family life are incompatible and that children suffer as a result. Rouvoet’s “crusade” reflects a general concern in both the Netherlands and other Western societies as the time-related conflicts that are associated with combining paid work and a family are often stressed and problematized (Bianchi, 2000; “Female power,” 2010; Hochschild, 1997; “Nooit de kinderen van school gehaald [Never picked up the children from school],” 2010; Nuffield Foundation, 2009; Robinson & Godbey, 1997; “The real pressure on parents,” 2007; Van Gils, 2007).

Concerns with the consequences of combining paid work and care have given rise to a large number of studies on the influence of parental paid work on parent-child time (e.g. Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006; Crouter, Bumpus, Head, & McHale, 2001; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Zick & Bryant, 1996). Nevertheless, the results of these studies hardly provide evidence for Rouvoet’s presumption that parents’ paid work restricts them from spending time with their children. Despite the rise in female labor participation, the time parents spend with their children has remained stable in recent decades and even showed a slight increase (Bianchi et al., 2006; Gauthier, Smeeding, & Furstenberg, 2004; Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau [SCP], 2006). Furthermore, research on the impact of employment and work hours on parent-child time found that the effects are small and sometimes even absent (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2006; Crouter et al., 2001; Nock & Kingston, 1988). What these studies suggest is that parents find ways to protect the time they spend with their children (Bianchi, 2000). Prior research also showed that family life even benefit from the resources and positive experiences paid work can provide (e.g., Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Moen and Wethington (1992) contended that families employ “family adaptive strategies” in response to the restrictions and opportunities within society. Protecting family life from work encroachments could be considered as such a strategy. Still, it remains unclear how parents cope with work-related restrictions and how they use work-related resources for the benefit of family life. This dissertation aims to provide more insight in the influence of parents’ paid work on family life by systematically examining families’ time use and the ways in which family time is affected by fathers’ and mothers’ paid work characteristics.

Most studies depict parents as actors who passively react to the demands their paid work imposes upon them. It is argued that because parents’ time is scarce, their participation in the family is restricted when their work is more demanding and absorbs a larger proportion of their time (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; Coverman, 1985; Crouter et al., 2001). However, if parents indeed protect family life and use work-related resources in the benefit of the family, it is more

appropriate to consider parents as active and inventive, rather than passive actors. It then becomes interesting *how* these active parents deal with the pressures from the work domain. Is the way in which parents organize family time affected by work characteristics other than those related to the time that is spent at work? Which family activities do parents prioritize? Do parents respond to the work demands of their partner? How is the quality of parent-child time affected by paid work and what are the consequences for the parent-child relationship? And is the protection of family life facilitated or restricted by country characteristics, such as support for working families? The implicit “time scarcity” arguments that underlie previous research do not provide sufficient grounding to answer detailed questions on the ways in which parents balance work and family life. We therefore propose a more complex approach with a more detailed account of both the work and the family domain.

First, we argue that the time parents spend with their family does not only depend upon the time they spend at work, but that it depends upon other work characteristics as well. Studies explaining the impact of paid work on parent-child time tended to restrict themselves to the parent’s employment status and work hours, but work is more than time spent away from home (MacEwen & Barling, 1991). Previous research has shown that work characteristics such as job flexibility, the work-family culture, and job insecurity affect employees’ well-being and feelings of work-family balance (e.g., Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005; Jacobs & Gerson, 2005; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999; Valcour & Batt, 2003) and this may also have implications for the time, energy, and attention parents can allocate to their families. For example, an organizational culture that considers the time that is spent at the workplace as an important indicator of organizational commitment may induce parents to focus more on work, restricting their involvement in the family domain.

Second, we contend that parents are likely to prioritize certain family activities over others when they allocate their scarce time to the family. As a result, some types of child-related activities may be affected more strongly by paid work than others. Family activities vary both in terms of their content (e.g., care versus more discretionary play activities) and with regard to who participates (one parent or both) and these differences may make activities more or less responsive to parents’ work characteristics. For example parents may protect activities in which the whole family participates more than one-on-one activities, because the utility of family activities is high.

Third, we argue that when studying the impact of paid work on family time, the quality of family time and its consequences need to be considered as well. Whereas parents may go through great lengths to protect the quantity of family time, paid work may unintentionally reduce for the quality of this time. The term “quality time” has become part of everyday language (e.g., Casper & Bianchi, 2001; Hochschild, 1997), but it is not yet clear what it depicts and how it relates to paid work and family outcomes. Moreover, it is likely that parents who spend more and higher quality time with their children develop higher quality relationships with them (Crouter, Head, McHale, & Jenkins Tucker, 2004). Time spent together is a relationship-specific investment that

increases mutual understanding and enhances bonding. Nevertheless, the link between paid work, joint time, and relationship quality has mostly been studied for the marital relationship (e.g., Hill, 1988; Poortman, 2005) and not for parents and children (with the exception of Huston & Rosenkrantz Aronson, 2005).

Fourth, instead of focusing on individual parents, as is common in the literature, we take the dyad as the starting point in order to capture family processes more realistically. In two-parent households, parents coordinate work and family life together. Because of this interdependency, the mother's work characteristics need to be taken into account when studying how the father's work affects his involvement in the family, and vice versa. For example, when the father works late on a regular basis, the mother is likely to compensate for his absence. Most studies remain on the individual level, however (e.g. Bryant & Zick, 1996; Crouter et al., 2001), and when the influence of one partner on the other is studied, the focus generally lies on the influence of maternal employment on the father's participation in the household (e.g., Brayfield, 1995; Casper & O'Connell, 1998; Coverman, 1985; Pleck, 1979). We extend upon these studies by studying how mothers respond to the work characteristics of the father and by studying gender differences in the effects of paid work.

Fifth, we take the national context into account, investigating Moen and Wethington's (1992) claim that parents' success in protecting family life depends upon the institutional and normative context in a country. According to Moen and Wethington families maximize family well-being within the societal constraints. The demands from the work domain form one such constraint and we contend that families have more resources and flexibility to deal with these constraints when government support for working families is high. For example, when the government provides leave arrangements and child care support, paid work can more easily be combined with family responsibilities. Moreover, strong parenthood ideologies may stimulate parents to more strongly protect family life. It is therefore likely that paid work characteristics and parent-child time are less strongly associated in some countries than in others. Studying cross-national differences also sheds light on the generalizability of earlier studies that have been performed in different countries.

These theoretical and methodological considerations lead to the following **core research question**:

How do work characteristics of fathers and mothers explain the quantity and quality of parent-child and family time and, consequentially, the quality of the parent-child relationship?

We define parent-child time and family time as the time that parents and children spend jointly rather than separately (see Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001) and we distinguish between different types of time use. We differentiate on the basis of the type of joint activity, namely between routine and interactive child-related activities, and make a distinction on the basis of who participates (one parent and the children, both parents and the children, or both parents without the children). Both the amount and the quality of parent-child time are studied. "Quality" is approached as the

extent to which interaction time is fragmented and contaminated by work demands, assuming that activities are more enjoyable and focused when there are no distractions or interruptions (e.g., Bittman & Wacjman, 2000; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003). We will not only study the antecedents of parent-child time, but also examine the consequences of parent-child time for the quality of the parent-child relationship. Moreover, we will study how the association between parental work hours and parent-child time is conditioned by country characteristics. In addition to studying the impact of work hours, we consider other work demands and resources, such as job insecurity, flexibility, and the organizational culture. It is important to note that by focusing on the ways in which parents organize family time, we neglect that children themselves also affect how much time they spent with their parents. This is an oversimplifying assumption, especially when adolescents are concerned (Crosnoe & Trinitapoli, 2008). Nevertheless, this dissertation studies work-family effects and the parents form the natural linking pin between these two domains. Moreover, we will take the age of the children into account in the various empirical models and examine whether work characteristics affect parents with young and adolescent children differently.

1.2. Sociological relevance

It is commonly argued that social cohesion, inequality, and rationalization are the three main problems of sociology (e.g., Ultee, Arts, & Flap, 2003). This dissertation relates to social cohesion and inequality at the micro as well as at the macro level. First, social ties within the nuclear family constitute a core feature of society's *social cohesion* (Dykstra, Kalmijn, Knijn, Komter, Liefbroer, & Mulder, 2006). Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001) argued that individualization can be studied through the extent to which couples' lifestyles are separate rather than joint and the same could be argued for families. At the micro level, both parents and children benefit from family time and mutual involvement. Children of parents who are more involved do better in school, have a higher self-esteem, and have higher levels of socio-emotional functioning (e.g., Amato & Booth, 1997; Amato & Rivera, 1999; Barber & Buehler, 1996; Crouter, Head, McHale, & Tucker, 2004; Crosnoe & Trinitapoli, 2008; Moorehouse, 1991; Putnam, 2000: 303-306; Yabiku, Axinn, & Thornton, 1999) and parents who are more involved report higher levels well-being and more stable marriages (e.g., Crouter et al., 2004; Kalmijn, 1999). Coleman (1988; 1994) classified parental time investments in children as a form of social capital that enhances the child's human capital and illustrated this with an example of a Korean mother who helps her child with homework by going through the school material herself. Because such a substantial time investment would not be possible if this hypothetical mother would have had a demanding full-time job, Coleman suggested that outside employment of the mother harms the child's well-being. In his discussion of social capital Coleman considers maternal employment as a threat for social capital on the societal level as well. Maternal time investments in children have unintended consequences for others: When the child does better in school, the general performance level and atmosphere in the child's class benefits. Conversely, neighborhood social capital decreases

when paid employment removes mothers from home during the day. Coleman does not corroborate his arguments with empirical evidence however and empirical research has failed to show that children and society indeed suffer from maternal employment (Bianchi, 2000). Still, it is clear that the time family members spend together both reflects and affects the strength of social ties in society.

Second, this dissertation addresses issues related to *social inequality*. Households vary in the extent to which they share the coordination, care, and supervision of their children equally. The gendered division of labor has been widely studied by sociologists, economists, and psychologists alike. These studies compellingly showed that the main responsibility for children and the organization of family activities still lies primarily with the mothers in modern-day post-industrial societies (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2006; Casper & Bianchi, 2002; Kluwer, Heesink, & Van de Vliert, 1997; SCP, 2008, 2009; Treas & Widmer, 2000). Although, New Home Economics (Becker, 1991) argues that all members in the household profit from intra-household specialization in paid and unpaid work, other scholars have contested this notion, pointing at the long-term disadvantages for women: Because investments in the family are relationship-specific they weaken women's power position in the couple (e.g., Brines & Joyner, 1999; England & Farkas, 1986; Oppenheimer, 1997). Moreover, a more equal division of labor reduces the risks of specialization and equity resulting from a more equal division of labor benefits the relationship quality (Blair, 1993; Kalmijn, 1999; Kalmijn, Manting, & Loeve, 2007; Oppenheimer, 1997). By studying whether men's and women's family time respond differently to work characteristics, we gain more insight in gender differences within the households.

This research also relates to inequalities at the macro level, as it compares parents who hold different types of jobs. When parents with more "family-friendly" jobs are able to spend more time with their children than parents with less "family-friendly" jobs, this is likely to be reflected in differences in their children's well-being, functioning, and achievement. Because higher educated jobs usually provide more resources, such as autonomy (Eurofound, 2007a; Hochschild, 1997; Schieman, Milkie, & Glavin, 2009), this may reinforce socioeconomic differences. Moreover, the trade-off between paid work and family time is likely to have a different meaning for families in different socioeconomic strata. For example, a study by Price (2008) suggested that children in low income families benefit more from the income that is earned by working an additional hour than from the additional hour of parent-child time. In high-income families, the relatively small marginal benefits of the additional income are outbalanced by the benefits of the additional time.

1.3. Theoretical Approaches

1.3.1. *Time use research*

Parent-child time and family time are central dimensions of social time and have been studied extensively by time use researchers. Two notable examples of studies on family time are those of Bianchi et al. (2006) and Robinson and Godbey (1999) that are both based on longitudinal time diary data. In general, time use studies start from the simple notion that time is a fixed resource that has to be divided over different activities, such as paid work and care (Gershuny, 2000). When two types of time use do not come at the cost of one another (e.g., both work hours and parent-child time increased in the last decades), logic holds that the time spent in other activities, such as personal care, decreases or that multitasking increases (Bianchi et al., 2006). Our theoretical framework will start from this basic notion and build from there.

Time use research often explains how much time people spend in a certain activity the basis of implicit arguments on the costs and benefits of a certain activity. More explicitly, temporal organization theory (e.g., Southerton, 2006; Van Gils, 2007) proposes that people participate less in activities that take more effort to organize and social motivation theory (Hills & Argyle, 1998; Van Gils, 2007) contends that people participate more in activities that yield a higher social utility. The time use literature also provides a starting point in studying the quality of family time. Bittman and Wacjman (2000), followed by Mattingly and Bianchi (2003), argued that leisure activities can be labeled as “high quality” when they are not contaminated or interrupted by non-leisure secondary activities, such as work-related activities and the care for children. The underlying rationale is that leisure activities are more focused and enjoyable when they are not disturbed by non-leisure activities. This approach provides objective standards to assess the quality of family activities, as it is likely that activities are more ‘efficient’ relationship investments when the level of disturbance is low.

1.3.2. *Work-family research*

With the term “work-family research” we refer to those sociological and psychological studies that focus on the ways in which family life suffers or benefits from parents’ involvement in paid work. This field studies a wide array of outcomes, such as feelings of conflict, stress, and parenting (e.g., Bumpus, Crouter, & McHale, 1999; Menaghan & Parcel, 1990; Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, & Crouter, 2000; Repetti, 1989). Whereas the work-family literature studies work-to-family effects as well as family-to-work effects, our discussion will focus on the former.

Conflict and enrichment. Our theoretical arguments on the influence of parental work characteristics on family time are grounded in the two dominant theoretical approaches in the work-family literature: the conflict and the enrichment approach. The conflict, or depletion, approach is the most common approach in the literature (Eby et al., 2004). In their meanwhile classic article Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) distinguished three sources of conflict between

work and family roles: time-, strain-, and behavioral-based conflict. The first source closely corresponds with the zero-sum approach in the time use literature: Because a day only has 24 hours, one hour at work is argued to cut directly into family time. The mechanism behind strain-based conflict is similar, but applies to the scarcity of energy: Work stressors absorb energy that can no longer be allocated to the family. Finally, behavioral-based conflict relates to behavior that is required in one role but incompatible with the other role. For example, a manager needs to be professional at work, but this is not necessarily a useful attitude when interacting with his children.

The conflict approach has been criticized for only focusing on the problematic aspects of multiple role combination. “Positive psychology” started to focus on the ways employees can benefit from involvement in paid work (e.g., Grywacz & Marks, 2000; Van Steenbergen, Ellemers, & Mooijaart, 2007). The related enrichment approach (e.g., Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) proposes that skills, abilities, and values that are acquired in the work domain can be applied in the family domain and that positive experiences at work improve interactions at home. For example, when a father comes home from work after a satisfactory day at work, his positive experiences during the day are likely to make him more energetic, open, and agreeable when interacting with his children.

The interdependency between partners. Most studies on work-family issues acknowledge that partners within the same household affect each others’ behavior and well-being in both the work and the family domain. The crossover perspective contends that job experiences of one partner directly affect the other partner (e.g., Bass, Butler, Grzywacz, & Linney, 2009; Gareis, Barnett, & Brennan, 2003). For example, when a wife experiences a high level of stress at work, it is expected that her husband’s stress levels increase as well because the wife shows less positive affect and behavior at home (e.g., Danner-Vlaardingerbroek, Kluwer, Van Steenbergen, & Van der Lippe, 2010; Mauno & Kinunnen, 1999). The interdependency between partners is also addressed by theories on the division of paid and unpaid labor. For example, New Home Economics (e.g., Becker, 1991) argues that partners divide paid and unpaid labor according to their comparative advantages. The “resource” or “exchange bargaining” theory (Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, & Matheson, 2003; Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Casper & Bianchi, 2002) also starts from an economic perspectives and contend that the partner with the least resources is burdened with household chores, including child care. The demand/ resource capacity approach (e.g., Brayfield, 1995; Coverman, 1985) takes a slightly different approach by focusing on the combination of demands and availability. This theory argues that men participate more in the household when family demands are higher because their wives are employment. Moreover, this approach argues that men’s own work hours restrict him in responding to these family demands. As such, the demand/response capacity approach offers a useful starting point for hypotheses on the ways in which parents’ are affected by their own work demands and those of their partner.

1.3.3. Organizational research

The organizational literature addresses the ways in which employees respond to work arrangements and organizational structures. It therefore provides useful insights on the influence of paid work on parents' time, energy, and attention. This field partly overlaps with the work-family literature because feelings of work-family conflict are an often-examined outcome, but it clearly distinguishes itself from the work-family literature by its theoretical approach and the stronger focus on individual-level outcomes that are not directly family-related, such as health, burnout, and flow. The demand/control model, developed by Karasek and Theorell (1990), is an often-used model to explain employee well-being. Karasek and Theorell argued that in order to understand how paid work affects employees physical and mental health, there are two relevant dimensions to consider: The demand that is imposed upon the employee and the control the employee has in performing his or her work. Karasek and Theorell claimed the combination of high demands with low control is the least favorable combination that creates most strain. Other scholars extended the model by considering other work demands and resources (e.g., Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Demerouti et al., 2001).

Organizational sociology focuses mostly on the effects of organizational characteristics, such as organizational structures, human resource practices, and employer-employee relationships (e.g., Kalleberg, Knoke, Marsden, & Spaeth, 1996). Although many studies in this field explain outcomes on the organizational level, such as organization survival, outcomes on the employee-level have been studied as well, addressing how structures and arrangements in the organization impact employees' performance and organizational commitment, as well as employees' feelings of work-family conflict and well-being (Haveman, 2000). Organizations affect employees' work-family balance through the human resource facilities and policies they offer, as well as through the organizational norms they set (e.g., Crompton, Lewis, & Lyonette, 2007). For example, Thompson, Beauvais, and Lyness (1999) argued and showed that managerial support, time expectations, and career consequences determine the "family-friendliness" of an organizational culture and that employees' work-family balance and organizational commitment improves when the organizational culture is more family-friendly. As such, these studies teach us that it is not merely the number of work hours that has implications for employees' personal and family lives, but that work characteristics related to the content of one's job or the organization of the workplace can both facilitate and inhibit the combination of work and family responsibilities.

1.3.4. Parenthood and gender ideologies

To answer the core question of this dissertation, it is important to consider the social and normative climate in which work-family decisions are taken. From the 1960s, the second demographic transition set in and fertility rates decreased dramatically (Casper & Bianchi, 2002; Lestaeghe, 2007). The average number of children per woman in the Netherlands has almost halved from 3.1 in 1960 to 1.8 in 2008 (Central Bureau of Statistics Netherlands, 2010). Scholars have argued that the emotional value that is attached to children increased as fertility rates

declined (Bianchi, et al., 2006; Hays, 1996) and a strong parenthood ideology emerged parallel to the second demographic transition (Craig, 2007; Gauthier et al., 2004). Norms regarding motherhood have become more stringent and prescribe highly intensive parenting that encompasses close supervision and education (Arendell, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2006; Hays, 1996; Hochschild, 1997). Qualitative research suggests that the norm of intensive mothering is difficult to reconcile with paid work and that mothers often feel stressed, pressured and inadequate as a result (Hays, 1996; Hochschild, 1997).

Although the nature of fatherhood has changed as well, and fathers are expected to be more actively involved with their children than before (e.g., Casper & Bianchi, 2002; Dykstra & Hagestad, 2007; Kay, 2006), the main responsibility for the care of children still lies with the mother (e.g., Casper & Bianchi, 2002; Cha, 2010; Daly, 1996; Hays, 1996; Treas & Widmer, 2000). This implies that employed women carry a “double burden”, combining high work and family demands (Hochschild, 1989). Bielby (1992) argued that differences in role prescriptions lead men to prioritize the work domain whereas women prioritize the family. Subsequently, women let work come at the cost of the family and protect family life from the intrusion of work (e.g., declining a promotion for the sake of the children), and men let family come at the cost of work (e.g., accepting the promotion although this decreases the time he can spend with his children). These gender ideologies provide a useful framework to understand differences between fathers and mothers. Gender ideologies and attitudes are also commonly considered determinants of the division of paid and unpaid work within the family: Role theory holds that more progressive family and gender norms stimulate fathers to participate more in the household and care for children (e.g., Bonney, Kelley, & Levant, 1999; Casper & Bianchi, 2002; Parsons, 1949; Van der Lippe, 1993).

1.4. Research questions

This dissertation studies selected aspects of our core research question on how parental paid work affects the quantity and quality of family time by means of five research questions. Each research question focuses on a different facet of the core research question and is addressed in a separate empirical chapter. Figure 1.1. summarizes the research questions of this dissertation. We start our analysis by studying the association between paid work and parent-child interaction time.

Parental work characteristics and time with children

Although previous research explaining parent-child time focused on time-related aspects of work, such as employment status, work hours, and nonstandard work schedules (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2006; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Presser, 2003), we argue that aspects related to the content of work, the work environment, and arrangements, such as job flexibility, job insecurity, and the

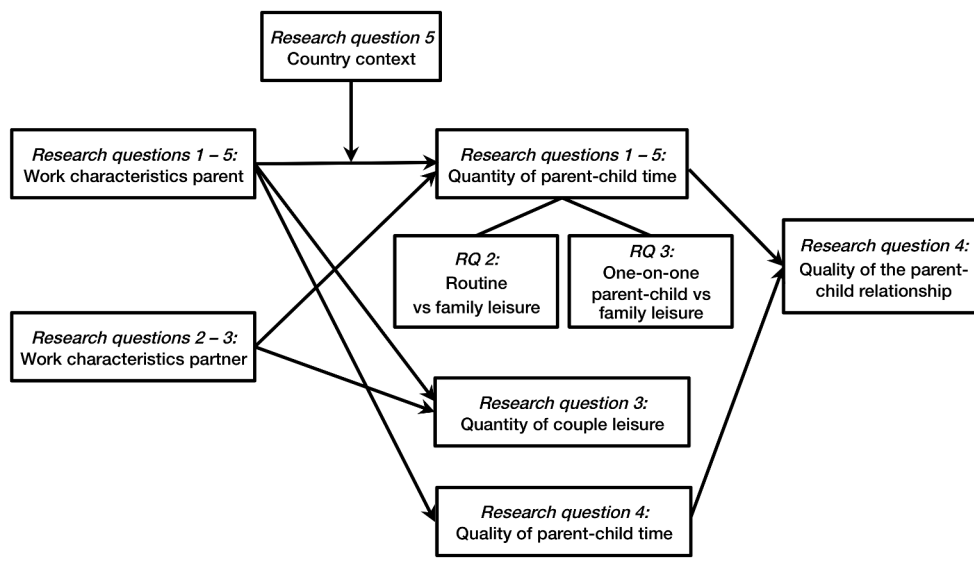


Figure 1.1. Schematic overview of the research questions.

organizational culture, also influence the time and energy parents have available at home. For example, it is likely that the family-friendliness of the organizational culture is relevant for the ways in which parents combine work and family life and consequentially for the time they spend with their children. We thus apply insights from the organizational and work-family literature to the time use literature on parent-child time and study the possibility that parent-child time depends on parents' job insecurity, organizational culture, flexibility, nonstandard hours, autonomy, availability, and social support as well.

Because mothers and fathers and parents of young and adolescent children differ in their commitments and needs, we study whether the effects of work characteristics on parent-child time are conditioned by the gender of the parents and the age of the children. Previous research on the effects of work hours on parent-child time considered parents as a homogeneous group and did not systematically investigate the differences between fathers and mothers and between parents of young and adolescent children. It is, however, likely that these groups respond differently to variations in work characteristics. Normative expectations hold that mothers are less allowed to let paid work intrude on their family involvement than fathers. Mothers' main priority is expected to lay with the family, whereas being a provider is part of the fatherhood role (Bielby, 1992; Kay, 2006). Because mothers are likely to protect family life more strongly than fathers, work characteristics may have a different impact for mothers than for fathers. The age of the child is likely to be relevant as well. As Bianchi (2000) noted, children are not always available

to interact with their parents. Children go to school and extra-curricular activities and their unavailability is likely to increase as they grow older. Moreover, overall parent-child time decreases when they enter adolescence, so there may simply be fewer activities to be affected (Crosnoe & Trinitapoli, 2008; Crouter et al., 2001). Thus, by comparing mothers and fathers and parents of young and adolescent children, we aim to gain more insight in gender differences and possible changes in the association between work characteristics and parent-child time. The above results in **Research question 1**:

Do work characteristics influence the quantity of parent-child time? And do the effects differ for fathers and mothers and for parents of young and parents of adolescent children?

Interdependencies between partners and the difference between routine and interactive activities

Parents have “linked lives” (Moen, 2003): They function within the same household and have to coordinate the care, supervision, and education of their children together. As a result, the work characteristics of one parent may impact on the family involvement of the other parent. This research question addresses both actor effects (the effects of a parent’s own work characteristics on parent-child time) and partner effects (the effects of one parent’s work characteristics on the other parent’s parent-child time, see Kenny & Cook, 1999).

In addition to taking both partners into account, we differentiate between two types of child-related activities: routine and interactive activities. Studies on trends in time use suggest that these activities are of a different nature and that men mostly increased the time spent in interactive activities (Gauthier et al., 2004; Robinson & Godbey, 1999). Nevertheless, previous research seldom distinguished between the two types of activities. In comparison to routine activities, interactive activities are generally considered more enjoyable and intensive. Yet, because routine activities are more obligatory in nature they may be affected less by parental work demands than interactive activities. For example, reading a book to a child might be more enjoyable than bathing the child, but can more easily be postponed when things are hectic at work. Because of these differences, work demands may affect routine and interactive activities differently and we will therefore contrast the effects on the two types of activities. **Research question 2** reads as follows:

Do parents’ own work demands and those of their partners influence the quantity of child-related routine and interactive activities?

Work demands and one-on-one parent-child, couple, and family leisure

With the third research question we again examine whether work demands have a different impact on different types of family activities, but instead of distinguishing between activities with a different content, we now differentiate on the basis of *who* participates. Parent-child time and couple time are often studied separately and when joint time is measured it often remains

unclear whether or not the partner or children are present as well. Exactly who is present strongly determines the nature of the activity, however. In the literature on leisure, non-adult leisure is considered to be less relaxing (Bittman & Wacjman, 2000; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003) and a study by Schneider, Ainbinder, and Csikszentmihalyi (2004) suggested that mothers de-stress more from spending time with their children when the father is present as well. Despite these likely differences, the literature does not differentiate between activities in which one parent and the children, the whole family and only the parents participate (a notable exception is Lesnard's (2008) study on the effects of nonstandard work hours).

On the basis of theoretical arguments on the utility of family activities, time restrictions, and economies of scale we presume that work demands have a greater impact on activities that are not prioritized and that are more difficult to coordinate. We again take a household perspective and study how the different activities are affected by the fathers' and the mothers' work demands. In this specific research question we restrict ourselves to family *leisure*, and do not study routine activities, because leisure activities can be undertaken with each family member, whereas this is not the case for care activities. **Research question 3** reads as follows:

Do the effects of parents' work demands on the quantity of family leisure time differ depending on who participates (i.e., one parent and the children, both parents and the children, or both parents without the children)?

Work characteristics, parent-child time, and the consequences for parent-child relationship quality

The literature on the impact of paid work on parent-child interaction can roughly be divided in two fields: One field studying the impact on the time parents spend with their children and another field studying the effects on the parent-child relationship quality. Time use and relationship outcomes are likely to be related however, as more time spent together is likely to benefit the relationship (Crouter et al., 2004). With the fourth research question we study the role of parent-child time in the association between work characteristics and the parent-child relationship quality. In addition to examining the amount of time that is spent together, we examine the quality of this time as we expect that paid work affects the extent to which parent-child time is disturbed by paid work. We distinguish between different types of work characteristics. First, we consider the "pure" work demands: work hours, job insecurity, a family-unfriendly organizational culture, and job stress. Based on the conflict approach we expect work demands to decrease the quantity and quality of parent-child time and, in turn, the relationship quality because these demands limit the parents' time, energy, and availability at home. Second, we consider work characteristics that are likely to have a "double edge" in the sense that they can be expected to have both a detrimental and a beneficial effect on the quantity and quality of parent-child time. Job flexibility, a nonstandard schedule, and flow increase parents' flexibility and energy levels, but erode the boundaries between work and family life at the same time. Summarizing, **Research question 4** incorporates the quality of parent-child time and the consequences for the parent-child relationship quality and reads as follows:

Is the association between parental work characteristics and the parent-child relationship quality mediated by the amount and disturbance of parent-child activities?

Cross-national differences in the impact of work hours on parent-child time

Whereas the first four research questions remain on the household level, Research question 5 addresses the role of the country level. Because countries differ in the extent to which they facilitate working parents, country characteristics may affect how paid work and family outcomes are associated. Moen and Wethington (1992) argued that the national context determines the extent to which working parents are able to protect family life from the intrusion of paid work. If this would indeed be the case, the strength of the association between paid work hours and parent-child time would differ across countries. **Research question 5** examines whether this is the case and if so, how these differences can be explained.

Are there any cross-national differences in the association between parental work hours and parent-child time? And if so, can these differences be explained by country-level characteristics?

In explaining cross-national differences in the association between work hours and parent-child time we look at the countries' reconciliation policies, cultural norms, and income levels. Government support for working families and strong parenting ideologies may enable or stimulate parents to reconcile high work demands with the care for children and this may buffer the detrimental effect of work hours on parent-child time. At the same time, wide access to part-time jobs and high income levels such as in the Netherlands, enable parents who want to be highly involved in their children's lives to work part-time. Without the possibility to reduce one's hours, family-oriented parents are likely to compensate for their absence, for example by cutting down on community work. The difference in parent-child time between parents with a full-time and a part-time job may therefore be smaller in these more restrictive countries.

1.5. Data

1.5.1. Self-collected data

The first four empirical papers are based on self-collected data. The 'Work and Family Life in Dutch Households' data set was collected in the spring of 2007. The sample consists of Dutch families that were selected from the Taylor Nelson Sofres-Netherlands Institute for Public Opinion (TNS-NIPO) Household Panel that comprises 200,000 households (www.tns-nipo.com). Data were collected by means of a computer-based survey and the households in the panel without access to a computer were provided with one by TNS-NIPO. A total of 4,912 parents,

nested in 2,620 households, were approached and 2,816 parents, nested in 1,874 households, responded. This implies that the response rate was 57%.

We chose to approach respondents through an existing sample for three reasons. First, this enabled us to directly approach the households with children that were relevant for the dissertation. Second, we could draw a stratified sample to ensure that we had a balanced sample of earner types. Third, because we had information on the background characteristics of all participants in the panel we were able to compare the respondents and nonrespondents and check whether our final sample was biased. Comparisons of the respondents with the nonrespondents showed that there were no differences in gender, age, life stage, household size, educational level, ethnicity or employment status.

1.5.2. *The European Working Conditions Survey*

The fifth, cross-national, study was based on an existing data set: the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) data. The EWCS is funded by the European Union and coordinated by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). The aim of the survey is to provide insight in the working conditions in Europe and serve as input for the creation of social policy (Eurofound, 2007a, 2007b). The survey was carried out for the first time in 1990/91 and has been repeated three times (in 1995/6, 2000/1, and in 2005). In the first two waves, the sample of countries was restricted to the EU15 countries, but it has been extended since. We answer the fifth research question on the basis of the 2005 wave that covered 31 countries: the EU27 countries, plus the two candidate countries (Turkey and Croatia), Norway, and Switzerland. On the individual level, 29,680 interviews were administered and the overall response rate was 48%. There was a wide variation in the response rates however, and the country-level response rates varied between 28% in the Netherlands and 67% in Turkey (Eurofound, 2007b: 28). Due to data restrictions we limit the number of countries to 23: the EU25 countries minus Cyprus and Malta. The EWCS sample is representative of all European persons in paid employment, aged 15 or older. In order to answer research question 5 we select the 5,183 respondents who had at least one minor child living in the same household and without missing values on the measure of parent-child time.

1.6. The Dutch context

Whereas research question 5 draws a cross-national comparison, the main part of this dissertation concentrates on the Netherlands. Because of the specific characteristics of the Netherlands when work-family issues are concerned, this paragraph sketches the Dutch context as a general background for the first four empirical chapters of this dissertation.

Female labor force participation in the Netherlands is relatively high: The most recent cross-national comparative data are from 2005 and show that 66% of Dutch women had a paid job for

at least one hour per week, a percentage that is similar to the US and 10% above the European average (SCP, 2006: 141). The Netherlands especially stands out because of the extremely high prevalence of part-time work among women. In 2005, 61% of the women in paid employment held a part-time job of 30 hours per week or less (SCP, 2006: 145). This is the highest percentage in Europe, followed by Germany and the UK with part-time rates of 39%. In the US, 18% of the women in salaried employment held a part-time job in 2005. Moreover, when women work part-time in the Netherlands they usually have small part-time jobs: In 2000, 31% of the Dutch women had a job of less than 20 hours per week, whereas this percentage lies below 15% in other European countries (with the exception of the UK, Eurofound, 2003). Although it is mainly women with children who work part-time in the Netherlands, part-time work becomes increasingly popular among childless women and men as well (SCP, 2008). In 1994, 11% of Dutch men had a part-time job and this increased to 15% in 2005. This percentage is the highest in Europe, although Denmark comes close (12% in 2005). In the US, 8% of the men in salaried employment worked part-time in 2005 (SCP, 2006: 145).

The high part-time rate in the Netherlands is related to both institutional factors and parents' preferences. Part-time work is widely accessible in the Netherlands. Unless employers can show that the company suffers substantially, Dutch employees have the right to reduce their work hours (SCP, 2006). Moreover, Dutch parents strongly feel that a child is harmed when both parents work full-time (SCP, 2009). Only 6% of Dutch parents with a child aged 6 or younger agree that a full-time/full-time earner model is "ideal", whereas this model is preferred by a majority of the parents in most European countries (SCP, 2006: 154). Dutch men and women are relatively satisfied with the number of hours they work (SCP, 2006: 153), but at the same time, it is often argued that working part-time hinders women's careers and independence (e.g., Becker & Moen, 1999; SCP, 2008). Gender differences in earnings are relatively high in the Netherlands and only 50% of Dutch married women with minor children was economically independent in 2006 (SCP, 2009: 175). Moreover, female representation in higher management positions, politics, and public administration is relatively low in the Netherlands (Keuzenkamp, 2001; SCP, 2009: 214).

With regard to leave policies and child care provision, the arrangements in the Netherlands are limited as compared with the Scandinavian countries (Plantenga & Remery, 2005; SCP, 2006). Parental leave is often unpaid and fathers are entitled to only two days of paternal leave (Swedish fathers have 60 days of paid leave). Leave arrangements are scarce in comparison with some of the other Continental, Anglo-Saxon, Mediterranean, and Eastern European countries as well. As compared to other countries, child care coverage is moderate in the Netherlands. For example, in 2003, 35% of the children under three years old was in formal child care in the Netherlands, as compared to 56% in Sweden, 81% in Flanders (Belgium), and 3% in Western Germany (Plantenga & Remery, 2005).

From the above we can conclude that the Netherlands is a specific country when the combination of work and family life is concerned. Because the variety in work hours is relatively large and parenthood ideologies are strong, this also makes it an appealing context to study how

paid work affects family life. Moreover, with our final research question, we specifically investigate how the association between paid work and parent-child time is affected by the national context, and what the role of accessibility to part-time work is.

1.7. Outline of the dissertation

Chapter 2 answers the first research question and starts our investigation of the impact of family life by examining the association between parental work characteristics and the amount of parent-child time. In this chapter we also study whether the gender of the parent and age group of the children condition this association. Chapter 3 (Research question 2) extends the theoretical framework by considering the interdependency between partners and by differentiating between care and interactive activities. In chapter 4 (Research question 3) we make the distinction between one-on-one parent-child, one-on-one couple and family leisure and examine whether the impact of work demands differ depending on who participates. The implications for the quality of the parent-child relationship are examined in Chapter 5 (Research question 4). In this chapter we analyze a path model that predicts that the association between parental work characteristics and the parent-child relationship quality is mediated by the amount and quality of joint time. Chapter 6 (Research question 5) extends the scope to the international level, studying cross-national differences in the association between parental work hours and time with children. Finally, Chapter 7 presents the general conclusion and discussion of the results.

Chapter 2

**Parental work characteristics and time with children.
The moderating effects of parent's gender and children's
age**

This chapter is co-authored by Tanja van der Lippe, Esther Kluwer, and Werner Raub and is currently under review.

2.1. Introduction

It is a general concern in society that families spend increasingly less time together because female labor force participation and work demands increased (e.g., Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006; Gauthier, Smeeding, & Furstenberg, 2004; Moen, 2003). However, notwithstanding the fact that time is a fixed resource, research found surprisingly little empirical evidence for the expectation that parents who work more hours spend substantially less time with their children (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2006; Brayfield, 1995; Crouter, Bumpus, Head, & McHale, 2001; Nock & Kingston, 1988). The presumption that work demands cut into parent-child time is grounded in the conflict approach (e.g., Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), arguing that work demands restrict parents' involvement at home because they reduce parents' available time, energy, and availability. In this study we re-examine the association between parental work characteristics and parent-child time by investigating whether this association does occur when we consider a wider range of work characteristics and specify relevant conditions that have been neglected by previous studies.

The aim of this study is two-fold. First, although most studies focus on work hours, work is more than spending time away from the family. Work demands absorb energy and attention as well as time. Previous research showed that work demands reduce parental and child well-being (e.g., Baxter, Gray, Alexander, Strazdins, & Bittman, 2007; Karasek & Theorell, 1990; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). Moreover, certain work characteristics, such as job autonomy, *enhance* parental well-being (Van Steenbergen, Ellemers, & Mooijart, 2007). Although this is likely to affect parents' time use, work characteristics other than work hours received relatively little attention, however, and the studies that did address other work characteristics tended to retain a focus on time-related dimensions, such as nonstandard work schedules (Baxter, 2009; Estes, 2004; Noonan, Estes, and Glass, 2007). We contribute to the literature by studying a wider range of alternative work demands and resources, including the organizational culture and flexibility, as antecedents of parent-child time.

Second, previous research considered parents as a homogenous group, both theoretically and in the analysis of the data. Nevertheless, there are reasons to expect that fathers and mothers as well as parents of young and adolescent children respond differently to work characteristics. Bielby (1992) argued that men allow, and are allowed, to let work demands reduce their participation in family life, whereas this does not apply likewise to women. Moreover, the impact of work characteristics on parent-child time is likely to be limited when children are unavailable to interact with (Bianchi, 2000) and children who enter adolescence become less available because they spend more time in school and with their peers (Crouter et al., 2001). Work characteristics may therefore be more salient for parents of younger children than for parents of older children.

Direct comparisons of the work-to-family effects for fathers and mothers are scarce, although there are some notable exceptions (Bianchi et al., 2006; Galambos, Sears, Almeida, & Kolaric, 1995; Nock & Kingston, 1988). Nevertheless, none of these studies actually tested whether

gender differences were significant. With regard to age, most studies consider children of all ages (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2006; Nock & Kingston, 1986; Zick & Bryant, 1996), although some focused either on young children (Greenberger, O'Neil, & Nagel, 1994) or adolescents (Crouter et al., 2001). Differences in the findings of these studies may therefore have resulted from differences between the samples. Studying whether the strength of the association between work characteristics and parent-child time is conditioned by the gender of the parent and the age group of the children is the second contribution of this study.

Because the family functions as a major source of social, emotional, and instrumental support (Coleman, 1994), children benefit from spending time with their children in a variety of ways, including a reduction in the child's behavioral problems (e.g., Amato & Rivera, 1999). It is therefore important to gain a more profound insight in the possible detrimental and beneficial effects of parental paid work and in differences between groups of parents.

2.2. Theoretical framework

We begin the theoretical framework with setting out the expectations regarding the main effects of the work characteristics on parent-child time. Subsequently, we argue why the impact of work characteristics on parent-child time may be stronger for some groups of parents than for others and develop hypotheses on interaction effects.

2.2.1. *Work characteristics and parent-child time*

Work demands. The most widely used approach in studying the impact of parental paid work on family life is the conflict approach (Eby et al., 2005). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) set out three sources of conflict between work and family roles: time-, strain-, and behavioral-based conflict. Participation in the work role requires time, produces strain, and can require behavior that is not compatible with parenting behavior. As a result, higher work demands decrease the amount of parent-child time because parents have less time, energy, and attention available for their children.

Parents' available time, energy, and attention are likely to be limited not only by work hours, but by other work demands as well (Glass & Estes, 1997). Plausible candidates are job insecurity and an organizational culture that is unsupportive towards employees' family demands (e.g., Thomson et al., 1999; Van der Lippe, 2007). Because job insecurity reduces individual well-being, parents with insecure jobs may have less energy to actively take up and participate in activities with their children. Moreover, parents may be inclined to increase their work involvement in order to safeguard their job or career. The norms in the organization, as reflected in the organizational culture, may also affect the amount of time, energy, and attention that is detracted from the family (Glass & Estes, 1997). Employees are likely to be reluctant to make use of family-friendly policies when they fear that their career will suffer when they do. Moreover,

when the amount of face-time at work is considered to be an indicator of organizational commitment and employees receive little family support from their managers, parents are discouraged to prioritize family over work responsibilities (Thompson et al., 1999). These consequences are likely to hinder a parent's involvement at home. For example, a parent may be less inclined to take a day off when a child is sick. Moreover, a "greedy" organizational culture induces parents to devote more time and energy to work (Van Echtelt, 2007), which will limit their availability at home.

The empirical literature indeed suggests that paid work hours, job insecurity, and a family-unfriendly organizational culture restrict parents' involvement in the family. Employed mothers spend less time with their children than their nonemployed counterparts (Bianchi, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2006; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Sandberg & Hofferth, 2001) and longer work hours decrease the time parents spend with their children (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2006; Brayfield, 1995; Zick & Bryant, 1996). These effects have not always been found however, and the effects that were found were small (Bianchi, 2000; Crouter et al., 2001; Hawkins & Olson, 1993; Nock & Kingston, 1988). Previous research on job insecurity showed that insecurity increases stress and decreases individual well-being, family satisfaction, and family functioning (Larson, Wilson, & Beley, 1994; Mauno & Kinunnen, 1994; Menaghan, 1991). Similarly, parents who working in an organization with a "family-unfriendly" organizational culture feel less entitled to make use of work-family benefits and report more feelings of work-family conflict (e.g., Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Grandey, Cordeiro, & Michael, 2007; O'Neill, Harrison, Cleveland, Almeida, Stawski, & Crouter, 2009; Thompson et al., 1999). Summarizing, our first hypothesis reads as follows: More work demands (as indicated by the number of work hours, job insecurity, and a less family-friendly culture) are associated with less parent-child time (*Hypothesis 1: Work Demands Hypothesis*).

Job resources. The enrichment approach (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Van Steenbergen et al., 2007) proposes that performance in one role can benefit from involvement in another role. Skills, abilities, and values that are acquired in the work domain can be applied in the family domain and positive experiences at work may increase a parent's general well-being, improving interactions at home (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Furthermore, the Job demands-resources model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) argues that work performance and well-being are enhanced when a job entails more resources, such as supervisor support for the employee's family demands.

Flexibility in scheduling accommodates parental involvement as it helps parents to fine tune work and family demands. When parents are able to plan and organize their work tasks flexibly they can plan their work efficiently and around child-related activities. For example, it would be possible to leave work early to pick up one's children from school. Moreover, job autonomy enables employees to finish their work more efficiently (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), freeing time for one's children. One particular component of job flexibility that we will explore, and that previous research has not yet looked into, is parents' availability at work. When children are able to reach their parents at work, parents can more easily respond to family emergencies or general

needs, such as a bad experience at school. Thomas and Ganster (1995) identified supervisor support as an additional relevant component of the family supportive work environment. Supportive supervisors are likely to accommodate employees' family needs and be more lenient when family responsibilities interfere with work responsibilities. Moreover, supportive colleagues can assist in meeting the direct work demands and compensate for parents' absence. Finally, on the basis of the enrichment approach it can be expected that the beneficial effects of job resources on individual well-being create energy stimulating parents to actively take up and participate in child-related activities (Glass & Estes, 1997; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Previous studies showed that employees benefit from job resources in several ways (e.g., Van Steenbergen et al. 2007; Warren & Johnson, 1995). Parents with flexible schedules experience less work-family conflict, are healthier, and are more satisfied with family life (e.g., Butler, Grzywacz, Ettner, & Liu, 2009; Parasuraman, Purohit, & Godshalk, 1996; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Autonomy increases productivity (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) and organizational commitment and decreases burn-out (e.g., Bakker, Demerouti, de Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Demerouti et al., 2001). Moreover, autonomy buffers the detrimental effects of work demands on individual well-being (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). With regard to social contacts at work, empirical studies showed that when these are of a higher quality, employees' mental and physical health is better, the quality of parenting is higher, and work-family conflict is reduced (e.g., Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Greenberger, Goldberg, Hamill, O'Neil, & Payne, 1989; Karasek & Theorell, 1990; Repetti, 1994; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Warren & Johnson, 1995). This results in the second hypothesis: More job resources (as indicated by the level of flexibility and social support from supervisors and colleagues) are associated with more parent-child time (*Hypothesis 2: Job Resources Hypothesis*).

Nonstandard work hours. Nonstandard scheduling is likely to be relevant for the organization of family life, but is difficult to interpret as either a work demand or resource. Nonstandard work hours provide specific challenges for family life, while providing flexibility at the same time (Presser, 2003). On the one hand, work hours outside of regular office hours make it more difficult to separate work and family life and are likely to cut into family life severely, as most family events take place during evenings and weekends (Lesnard, 2008; Peters & Van der Lippe, 2007; Presser, 1999). On the other hand, nonstandard hours decrease the need for alternative child care arrangements (Presser, 1999) and they can come with more flexibility. For example, morning shifts enable parents to pick up their children from school. Working outside office hours may also reflect a strategy of freeing time from work when children are available (e.g., after school) and catching up with work when children are asleep or away. Barnett and Gareis (2007) found no differences in the mother-child time of mothers who worked during days versus evenings, but Lesnard (2008) demonstrated that although off-scheduling in the evening reduced family time (in which both parents participate), it increased one-on-one father-child time when the father finished work directly after school hours.

Because previous research is inconclusive we formulated two competing hypotheses: Working nonstandard hours is associated with more parent-child time (*Hypothesis 3: Nonstandard Hours*

Hypothesis I) and working nonstandard hours is associated with less parent-child time (*Hypothesis 4: Nonstandard Hours Hypothesis II*). A drawback of formulating competing hypotheses is that a lack of findings either reflects a lack of effects or that the two effects outweigh each other. One way of disentangling this is to formulate expectations on the conditions under which one of the two effects dominates, as we will do in the following section.

2.2.2. The moderating effects of gender and age group

Gender. In a literature review, Bielby (1992) argues that societal norms on work and family commitment are gender specific. Whereas men's main responsibility is to provide for the family, women are expected to prioritize the family domain over the work domain. As a result, men more easily let work interfere with the family than women (e.g., working late and skipping a family meal) and women more easily let family interfere with work (e.g., leaving work to pick up a sick child and skipping a meeting).

Previous empirical results are mixed. Some studies found that work characteristics had a similar impact on men and women (Barnett, Marshall, Raudenbush, & Brennan, 1993; Galambos et al., 1995; Hughes, Galinsky, & Morris, 1992), but others indeed found that the effects of work characteristics on family life were stronger for men than for women (e.g., Bumpus, Crouter, & McHale, 1999; Menaghan & Parcel, 1990; Nock & Kingston, 1988). For example, Bianchi and colleagues (2006) found that mothers more strongly protect their child-related activities than men and that this has implications for other activities in which they are involved, such as their leisure time. Similarly, England and Farkas (1986) as well as Becker and Moen (1999) showed that mothers scale back and adjust their work to accommodate family demands when children are young, whereas fathers do this to a much lesser extent. We therefore hypothesize that the negative effects of work demands are weaker for mothers than for fathers (*Hypothesis 5: Gender/Work Demands Hypothesis*).

Bielby's (1992) discussion of gender differences relates to the effects of work demands. This discussion could be extended to job resources, predicting that women protect family life from the influences of paid work altogether. However, Bielby's arguments also make it likely that women value spending time with their family so highly that they will be more motivated than men to use job resources if they can benefit the family. Thompson et al. (1999) as well as others (e.g., Grandey et al., 2007; Greenberger et al., 1989; Hochschild, 1997) showed that although family-friendly policies are gender neutral, organizational norms are more accepting towards utilization among female employees. Informal sanctions, such as career consequences, restrict men in using such policies. We therefore hypothesize that the positive effects of job resources on parent-child time are stronger for mothers than for fathers (*Hypothesis 6: Gender/Job Resources Hypothesis*). Finally, we expect that women plan their work hours more strategically to fit family demands (Becker and Moen, 1999). Because they usually work less hours than men, they also have more flexibility in doing so. We thus expect that nonstandard hours are less detrimental for

parent-child time for mothers than for fathers (*Hypothesis 7: Gender/Nonstandard hours Hypothesis*).

Young versus adolescent children. When explaining why employed and nonemployed mothers differed so little in the time they spent with their children, Bianchi (2000) argued that most studies neglected the fact that children are not always available. When children are at school, in extra-curricular activities or spend time with friends, it is irrelevant whether their mother works during this time. In the current study we assume that the availability of children decreases as they grow older. Once they enter high school (in the Netherlands they do so around the age of twelve), their school hours increase, they are required to do (more) homework, and the peer group increases in significance (Bianchi, 2000; Crouter et al., 2001: 414; Giordano, 2003). We therefore expect differences in work characteristics to be less salient during adolescence than during the early childhood stages. A second reason why paid work may become less salient is that parent-child time becomes scarcer during the child's adolescence. Crouter et al. (2001) found that father-adolescent time was unaffected by paternal work overload and argued that an additional work hour of the father made no difference because father-child activities are rare. We extend prior research by directly comparing parents with young children and parents with adolescents. Summarizing, we hypothesize that the effects of work demands, resources, and nonstandard hours on parent-child time are weaker in households with adolescent children than in households with young children (*Hypothesis 8: The Adolescent/Work Characteristics Hypothesis*).

2.3. Method

2.3.1. Data, sample, and response

The analyses are based on self-collected household data in the Netherlands. The sample was drawn from the Taylor Nelson Sofres - Netherlands Institute for Public Opinion (TNS-NIPO) Household Panel, a large-scale household panel in the Netherlands that comprises 200,000 households. The information available on the panel members allowed us to approach those households relevant to our study. The sample was representative for the Dutch population in terms of earner types, educational level, and region. Ethnic minorities were underrepresented, which is a common problem in Dutch survey research (Stoop, 2005), and it is likely that households with extremely high work and family demands did not take part in the panel. Because the combination of paid work and family time is most pressing in the households that have a higher chance of being excluded, this may imply that we underestimated the effects of paid work. We miss those households that do not have the flexibility to buffer the intrusion of work and that may have the greatest need for job resources.

A total of 2,620 households (equaling 4,912 parents) were approached and 1,874 households (2,816 parents, 57%) returned at least one questionnaire. We selected those parents who were in paid employment and had at least one child aged 17 or younger. This resulted in an effective sample size of 2,593 parents. Because 862 of the two-parent households returned both of the questionnaires (and both parents are in the data set), the data are partly nested. Collecting the data through a larger household sample made it possible to check whether the respondents differed from the nonrespondents. This was not the case for gender, age, life stage, household size, educational level, or employment status.

2.3.2. Measures

The time parents spent with their children was measured by asking parents to rate how often they participated in a list of child-related activities, such as having meals and watching television together, in the week preceding the survey. This scale was based on Bianchi et al.'s (2006) "estimated daily activities with children" measure (p. 79). This list of activities contained 18 one-on-one parent-child activities (without the partner) and ten family activities (in which the partner participated as well). The response categories ranged from 0 = *never* to 6 = *more than three times per day*. We took the mean (α : .88 for fathers and .89 for mothers), resulting in a scale ranging from 0 (*low frequency*) to 6 (*high frequency*). Because analyses showed that this variable was skewed to the right and that this affected the results, we minimized the skewness of the dependent variable by performing a zero-skewness log transformation in Stata.

The number of work hours was measured by asking parents how many hours they worked in the week preceding the survey (including overtime). Job insecurity was measured with a five-point Likert scale, consisting of five items (α : .82, e.g., "I am worried that I will lose my job", 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*). This scale was based on Crompton, Lewis, and Lyonette (2007). We took the average score over the five items and on the final measure higher values indicated more insecurity. A shortened version of the scale developed by Thompson and colleagues (1999) was used to measure the family friendliness of the organizational culture. We selected 12 items (α : .89, e.g., "To get ahead at this organization, employees are expected to work overtime on a regular basis"). The items had five answer categories (1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*). We recoded the items so that higher values corresponded with a less family-friendly, less family-friendly organizational culture and took the mean score over the items.

Schedule flexibility was measured by taking the mean score of the respondent's answers on two questions: "To what extent do you determine when you start and end work?" (1 = *others fully determine this* to 5 = *I fully determine this*) and "When something unexpected happens, is it possible for you to take time off or work from home?" (1 = *this is impossible* to 5 = *this is very well possible*). Job autonomy was based on the task authority dimension of Karasek and Theorell's (1990) control scale, and consisted of three items (e.g., "Can you decide how to perform your work?", 1 = *never* to 5 = *always*, α : .83). We measured availability *at work* on the basis of a single self-designed item. The respondents were asked to what extent they agreed

with the statement “When necessary, my children can reach me at any moment of the day” (1 = *fully disagree* to 5 = *fully agree*). The measure for informal supervisor support was based on Greenberger et al. (1989) and Estes (2004). Items related to general socio-emotional support (seven items, e.g. “My supervisor is willing to listen to personal problems”) and flexibility with regard to family demands (two items, e.g., “My supervisor is understanding when I receive phone calls from home at work”, 1 = *fully disagree* to 5 = *fully agree*). We took the mean over the nine items (α : .90). *Social support from colleagues* is based on a scale used in the Time Competition survey (Van der Lippe & Glebbeek, 2003) and concerned emotional (five items such as “I feel at home among my colleagues at work”, “I discuss personal matters with my colleagues”, 1 = *fully disagree* to 5 = *fully agree*) and instrumental support (three items, e.g. “Can you ask your colleagues for help?”, 1 = *never* to 5 = *always*). All items loaded on a single factor (α : .87). We took the mean over the eight items, which resulted in a final measure with higher values indicating more support.

In order to separate working during evenings and weekends that is the result of the parent’s own flexible planning from fixed work hours (determined by the parent’s supervisor) outside of standard office hours, we constructed two measures for nonstandard work hours. First, those parents who reported working during evenings or weekends on a regular basis, but who did not work in permanent or rotating shifts, were assigned a 1 on the dummy variable *non-fixed standard hours*. Second, parents who reported working during evenings or weekend on a regular basis and worked in fixed or rotating shifts, scored a 1 on the dummy variable *fixed nonstandard hours*.

To test for moderating effects, two dummies were included, measuring whether the parent was *female* (0 = *male*, 1 = *female*) and whether the youngest child was an adolescent (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*). We controlled for the number of children and the parent’s years of education. The parents were asked about the highest level of education they attained and the original categories were recoded into an interval scale, following a standard recoding procedure (De Graaf, De Graaf, & Kraaykamp, 2000). We also included a dummy indicating whether the respondent was self-employed (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*). We controlled for self-employment because this type of employment differs from wage jobs in multiple aspects. Self-employment provides less security and results in more work-family conflict, but also enhances autonomy and flexibility (Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001). Those in self-employment were not presented with the questions relating to schedule flexibility, the organizational culture, and contact with supervisors and colleagues. Because we wanted to preserve the full sample, self-employed respondents were assigned the mean score of the respondents in paid employment on these specific variables. Because the respondents in self-employment have a constant score on these characteristics (i.e., the mean), whereas the employed respondents have varying scores, the effects apply to the respondents in wage employment only and the whole sample is preserved. This is a common procedure, used, for example, by Poortman and Kalmijn (2002, p. 184).

2.3.3. Method of analysis

The hypotheses were tested using OLS regression with a cluster correction, as implemented in Stata. The cluster correction was applied because the individual parents were nested in households. We estimated multiple models. First, we ran a model that included only the control variables (Model 1). In the second and third step we added the work hours (Model 2) and the other work characteristics (Model 3). Fourth, we ran the models with the interaction effects. In order to avoid entering too many variables in the model, we included one interaction term at a time, while keeping the control variables and work characteristics in the model.

2.4. Results

2.4.1. Descriptive analyses

Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2.1. The average score on the untransformed parent-child time measure was 1.98 which a score of “on one to three days in the previous week” on the frequency-scale. Parents scored relatively high on items related to having meals and watching television together, but low on outdoor activities such as going to the playground and playing sports together. On average, parents had 1.83 children and the youngest child was 7.58 years old. Around 30% of the parents had at least one adolescent child. Nine percent of the respondents was self-employed. The bivariate correlations between (the log-transformed) parent-child time and the work characteristics show that although the coefficients of all the work demands were in the expected direction, only work hours yielded a significant association. With regard to the job resources, only the positive associations with availability and support from colleagues were significant. The work demands and job resources correlated positively among themselves, but multicollinearity was not a problem.

2.4.2. Main effects

Table 2.2 presents the results of the models with the main effects. In order to examine how work characteristics contribute to the explanation of parent-child time, we first estimated a model that only included the control variables (Model 1). As expected, mothers participated more in child-related activities than fathers and parent-child time was higher when children were younger and the number of children was higher. Two variables had a marginally significant effect: Parents spent less time with their children when they had an adolescent child and, unexpectedly, when they were higher educated.

In Model 2, we included the number of work hours. Parents who worked longer hours, participated significantly less in parent-child time, but the coefficient was small (-.004) and the variable added little to the explained variance. Adding the other work demands to the model

Table 2.1. Descriptive Results

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	<i>N</i> (individuals)	Correlation with parent-child time (transformed)
Parent-child time (untransformed)	1.98	.55	1 – 5.36	2,593	1.00
<i>Work demands</i>					
Work hours	31.02	14.76	1 – 100	2,593	-.27***
Job insecurity	2.34	.77	1 – 5	2,593	-.04
Restrictive organizational culture	2.61	.64	1 – 5	2,350	-.04
<i>Job resources</i>					
Flexibility	2.89	1.01	1 – 5	2,350	-.01
Autonomy	3.26	.98	1 – 5	2,593	.01
Availability	4.28	.90	1 – 5	2,593	.12***
Support from supervisor	3.58	.73	1 – 5	2,350	.01
Support from colleagues	3.53	.65	1.38 – 5	2,350	.04*
<i>Nonstandard hours</i>					
Non-fixed (1=yes)	.20	.40	0 – 1	2,593	.02
Fixed (1=yes)	1.18	.38	0 – 1	2,593	.01
<i>Control variables</i>					
Female (1=yes)	.48	.50	0 – 1	2,593	.25***
Number of children	1.83	.80	0 – 5	2,593	.12***
Age youngest child	7.58	5.44	0 – 17	2,593	-.39***
Adolescent child (1=yes)	.31	.46	0 – 1	2,593	-.36***
Years of education	12.59	2.49	5 – 20	2,593	.04 [†]
Self-employment (1=yes)	.09	.29	0 – 1	2,593	-.01

[†] = $p < .10$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$.

(Model 3) also resulted in only a small increase in R^2 . Nevertheless, six out of the ten work characteristics reached significance or marginal significance. Hypothesis 1 (the Work Demands Hypothesis) that predicted positive effects of job resources received partial support. Parents spent less time with their children when they worked longer hours, but parent-child time did not depend on the level of job insecurity or the family-friendliness of the organizational culture. With regard to Hypothesis 2 (the Job Resources Hypothesis) parent-child time indeed increased when parents had more job autonomy, when they were more available for their children while they were at work, and when they received more support from colleagues (marginally significant). The association with flexibility was nonsignificant however, and supervisor support reduced rather than increased parent-child time. The results further suggest that parent-child time was higher

Table 2.2. The Main Effects of the Work Characteristics on Parent-Child Time ($N_{individuals} = 2,593$, $N_{households} = 1,784$)

	Hyp.	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
		B	SD	B	SD	B	SD
<i>Work demands</i>							
Work hours	-			-.004***	.001	-.005***	.001
Job insecurity	-					-.004	.011
Restrictive organizational culture	-					-.008	.015
<i>Job resources</i>							
Flexibility	+					-.008	.008
Autonomy	+					.023**	.008
Availability	+					.061***	.009
Support from supervisor	+					-.033*	.014
Support from colleagues	+					.022 [†]	.013
Nonstandard hours							
Non-fixed (1= yes)	-/+					.050**	.019
Fixed (1= yes)	-/+					.036 [†]	.020
<i>Control variables</i>							
Female (1=yes)		.218***	.012	.146***	.017	.134***	.017
Adolescent child (1=yes)		-.057 [†]	.030	-.061*	.029	-.058*	.029
Age youngest child		-.026***	.003	-.025***	.003	-.027***	.003
Number of children		.056***	.012	.053***	.012	.052***	.012
Years of education		-.005 [†]	.003	-.003	.003	-.002	.003
Self-employed (1=yes)						-.014	.026
R^2		.243		.260		.285	

[†] = $p < .10$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$.

among parents who worked during nonstandard hours, both when these hours were voluntary (i.e., non-shift and non-fixed) and enforced (marginally significant). This supports the Hypothesis 3, the first Nonstandard Hours Hypothesis, but contradicts Hypothesis 4. Additional analyses (results not shown) indicated that the effects of nonstandard hours were mostly attributable to the effects of working during the weekend and that the negative effect of supervisor support only applied to the higher educated respondents.

2.4.3. Moderating effects

In the subsequent analyses, two additional models were estimated for each of the ten work characteristics: one model including an interaction term with the dummy “female” and one model

Table 2.3. The Moderating Effects of Parent's Gender and Children's Age on the Association Between Work Characteristics and Parent-Child Time

	Gender parent			Age group children		
	Female (1=yes)	Work characteristic	Interaction effect	Adolescent (1=yes)	Work characteristic	Interaction effect
<i>Work demands hypothesis</i>						
	+	-	+	-	-	+
Work hours	.064	-.006***	.002 [†]	-.201***	-.006***	.005***
Job insecurity	.177***	.005	-.019	-.086	-.008	.152
Restrictive organizational culture	.029	-.027	.040 [†]	-.037	-.006	-.008
<i>Job resources hypothesis</i>						
	+	+	+	-	+	-
Flexibility	.139**	-.008	-.002	-.110*	-.014	.019
Autonomy	.061	.016	.023	-.256***	.010	.064**
Availability	.073	.055***	.014	.034	.065	-.021
Supervisor support	.203*	-.024	-.019	-.019	-.030 [†]	-.011
Support from colleagues	.132	.022	.000	-.051	.023	-.002
<i>Nonstandard hours hypothesis</i>						
	+	+/-	+	-	+/-	-/+
Non-fixed (1=yes)	.118***	.007	.092**	-.070*	.031	.069 [†]
Fixed (1=yes)	.137***	.043	-.015	-.048	-.053*	-.051

Note: The cells in the table present the coefficients in the different models that tested the interaction effects. For example, in the model that tested the interaction effect between gender and work hours the coefficient of the main effects of gender and work hours were respectively .064 and -.006. The coefficient of the interaction effect between gender and work hours was .002. The coefficients are unstandardized.

[†] $p < .10$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$.

including an interaction term with the dummy "adolescent child". The other work characteristics and the control variables were included in each model. Table 2.3 provides the coefficients of the main and interaction effects for each model.

Gender. The gender of the parent moderated few of the associations between the work demands and parent-child time. In line with Hypothesis 5 (the Gender/Work Demands Hypothesis) the interaction term with work hours was marginally significant, suggesting that the negative impact of work hours is somewhat weaker for mothers than for fathers. The interaction

between gender and the family-friendliness of the culture was marginally significant as well. However, when combined, the results suggested that when the organizational culture was less family-friendly, father-child time was lower, but mother-child time was higher. This last finding directly contradicts our expectation that work demands decrease parent-child time (see Hypothesis 1). It is important to note that models with interaction effects cannot be conclusive with regard to the direction of the effects. It is therefore also possible that the positive effect of being female was stronger in organizations with less family-friendly organizational cultures. None of the resources interacted with the gender of the parent, so Hypothesis 6 (the Gender/Job Resources Hypothesis) received no support. The signs of the effects for autonomy, availability, and support from colleagues were in the predicted direction however. Finally, the gender of the parent interacted with the dummy variable indicating regular, non-fixed non-shift work during nonstandard hours. The coefficients suggest that the positive association between working nonstandard hours and parent-child time was stronger for mothers than for fathers and supports Hypothesis 7 (the Gender/Nonstandard Hours Hypothesis). None of the effects of the other work characteristics was moderated by the parent's gender. Thus, the expectation that work characteristics had a different effect on parent-child time for fathers than for mothers received some, but little support.

Adolescent children. The last three columns of Table 2.3 show the results of the interactions with the age group of the children. In line with Hypothesis 8 (the Adolescent/Work Characteristics Hypothesis) the negative association between parental work hours and parent-child time was weaker for parents with adolescent children than for parents with younger children. Moreover, the beneficial effect of job autonomy was stronger, rather than weaker, for parents with adolescent children as compared to parents with younger children. Similarly, the effect of nonstandard hours that are non-fixed/non-shift interacted (marginally significant) with the age group of the children, but the effect was stronger, rather than weaker for parents with adolescent children. In other words: Parent-child time benefited more from these nonstandard hours when parents had adolescent children as compared to when they had young children. The age group of the children did not moderate the effects of the other work characteristics, although the effects for job insecurity and supervisor support had the predicted signs. Thus, Hypothesis 8 received partial support.

Although we expected that the effects of the control variables would differ for fathers and mothers, we did not include any interaction variables for the control variables because this was outside of the scope of the study. Nevertheless, we estimated additional models in which the fathers and mothers were analyzed separately because prior research showed that women are more responsive to family demands than fathers (e.g., Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003; Sanchez & Thomson, 1997), women more often use self-employment as a strategy to reconcile work and family responsibilities (Budig, 2006), educational level has a stronger effect for women than for men (Sayer et al., 2004; Zick and Bryant, 1996), and gender differences in the division of labor decrease when children enter adolescence (Craig & Sawrikar, 2009). The results of the separate models for fathers and mothers (results not reported) suggested that all control variables had a

stronger impact for the mothers than for the fathers, corroborating findings from previous research that suggested that women are more responsive to family demands. Moreover, although the effect size of work hours was larger for fathers than for mothers, the work characteristics had a larger impact on mothers than on fathers. The finding with regard to work hours is in line with the finding from the model with the interaction effect, but apparently the gender differences in the effects of the other work characteristics that emerged from the separate models were not significant. Finally, it should be noted that the effect of organizational culture did not yield a significant effect for the mothers, which warrants further caution when interpreting the unexpected interaction effect between gender and organizational culture.

2.5. Conclusion and discussion

The aim of this study was two-fold. First, we analyzed whether the time parents spent with their children depended on their work demands and resources. In addition to the commonly examined work hours, we considered job insecurity, the family-friendliness of the organizational culture, flexibility, autonomy, availability, social support, and the prevalence of nonstandard hours. Second, we examined whether the association between these work characteristics and parent-child time was different for fathers and mothers and for parents of adolescent children and parents of younger children.

In line with the conflict approach and previous research, we found that parents who worked longer hours participated less in parent-child activities. None of the other work demands appeared to be relevant however and differentiating between fathers and mothers and adolescent and younger children did not change this. With regard to the job resources, parent-child time increased when parents had more autonomy at work and when their children could reach them while they were at work. We also found that parents who regularly worked nonstandard hours, but did not work fixed nonstandard hours or in shifts, spent more time with their children. This could indicate that parents plan their time strategically, leaving work when children are available, and catching up on work in the evenings or weekends when children are sleeping or away. The results concerning social support were remarkable: Although support from colleagues increased parent-child time as expected, support from supervisors reduced parent-child time. These findings mainly applied to the higher educated parents and tentatively suggest that supervisor support increases work commitment and that energy and attention are detracted from the family as a consequence. Prior research showed that supervisor support indeed increases work commitment (e.g., Thompson et al., 1999; Valcour & Batt, 2003) and the risks of eroding boundaries between the work and family domain may be higher for higher educated parents.

Our expectation that women would protect family life more than men held true for some of the work characteristics. Work hours reduced parent-child time less for mothers than for fathers and the beneficial effects of autonomy and working nonstandard hours applied more to mothers than to fathers. Because previous research on gender differences in work-to-family effects focused on

work demands (e.g., Bumpus et al., 1999; Galambos et al., 1995; Nock & Kingston, 1988), it is interesting to note that nonstandard hours appear to have a stronger effect for women than for men. This suggests that women plan their work more strategically around the availability of the children and use work-related resources in doing so. We also found that the family-friendliness of the organizational culture interacted with the gender of the parent (the effect was marginally significant). The direction of the effects can be interpreted in two ways. They could imply that mother's involvement in parent-child activities increases when a culture is less family-friendly, whereas the involvement of fathers is reduced, but our findings could also indicate that the gender differences in parent-child time are larger in organizational cultures that are less family-friendly. Although we cannot distinguish between these explanations statistically, the latter interpretation seems intuitively more plausible. Family-friendly organizations are more likely to be gender egalitarian and in these organizations men may feel more comfortable to prioritize their family. Nevertheless, because the interaction effect was only marginally significant this explanation needs further corroboration by future research.

In response to Bianchi's (2000) claim that research on the association between work and family life should take into account that children are not always available, we compared the impact of work characteristics on parents with young and adolescent children. Work hours appeared to matter less when children had reached adolescence, which could be due to the fact that there is less joint time to be affected by paid work. It should be noted, however, that our theoretical assumption that children are less available when they are older may be problematic. Although adolescents will spend more time with peers and doing homework, their bedtime is also likely to be postponed, providing more opportunity for interaction. For two other work characteristics, autonomy and nonstandard hours, we found that these mattered *more* during adolescence. Craig (2006) already showed that parents of adolescent children attach increasing importance to autonomy and flexibility and apparently autonomy also becomes more relevant for the actual time they spend with their children. Our results indicate that parents use job autonomy and work during evenings and weekends to arrange their work in such a way that they can spend time with their adolescent children when these children need attention and are available. Because parent-child time becomes more incidental and discretionary once children reach adolescence, autonomy and nonstandard hours may become more salient resources to accommodate paid work to the unpredictable family demands.

While interesting findings emerged from the current study, effects of work characteristics remained small and limited. Examining a wider range of work characteristics and specifying conditions under which the effects are more likely to occur did therefore not lead to substantially different results. This may be explained in two ways: the effects may simply be minimal or they may not be detected because the theoretical approach and data did not go into enough detail. Because the combination of paid work and family responsibilities remains a pressing societal and scientific issue (e.g., Moen, 2003), it is worth the effort to further explore the second possibility. Further research needs to exclude the possibility that paid work impacts on family life in ways that have not been covered here. Moreover, further examination of the work-family link

can provide more insight in the exact strategies parents use to minimize the detrimental impact of work and in the consequences of these strategies. There are several possible avenues for future research.

First, the nature of an activity may be of importance. Routine and interactive activities are of a different nature: Routine activities are less discretionary than interactive activities (Bianchi et al., 2006) and previous research found that fathers prefer play over care (Robinson & Godbey, 1999). This is likely to have implications for the extent to which these two types of activities are affected by paid work. Who participates may be relevant as well, because this affects both the organization and utility of an activity. Folbre, Yoon, Finnoff, and Fuligni (2005) argued that it is important to distinguish between one-on-one parent-child, family, and couple time when studying family time and Lesnard (2008) indeed found that nonstandard hours have a different impact on these types of activities. Future research could therefore distinguish between parent-child activities with and without the other partner and examine whether the family activities are protected more from parental work demands because their utility is higher or they or whether they are affected more strongly because they are more difficult to organize.

Second, although parents clearly protect the time with their children (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; Hays, 1996), they may not be able to prevent work from affecting the quality of this time. Previous research showed that paid work affects parenting and the parent-child relationship (e.g., Crouter, Bumpus, Maguire, & McHale, 1999; Galambos et al., 1995), but the role of time in this association has gained little attention. Future research could examine whether work affects the quality of parent-child time more than the quantity.

Finally, whereas the conflict approach assumes that parents are passively reacting to the work demands that are imposed upon them, previous research showed that parents find ways to reconcile work and family demands or select work hours to match the time they want to spend with their children (e.g., Becker & Moen, 1999; England & Farkas, 1986; Moen & Wethington, 1992; Van Gils, 2007). One way of studying the implications of such strategies would be to perform a cross-national comparison of association between work hours and parent-child time. If the notion of strategic action would hold true, the association between parent-child time and work hours would differ between countries, depending on how difficult it is to reconcile work and family life and to select one's own work hours. This would also provide more insight in the extent to which the results of this study are generalizable to other countries.

With regard to the data, future research could also make use of time diary data. Asking parents to estimate the frequency of activities with their children, as we did, is common in the literature (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2006: 79), but results in less detailed information than time diary data and may prompt socially desirable answers. Two other limitations of the study should be mentioned. The cross-sectional nature of the data implies that we had to consider associations, rather than causal relationships. This implies that we cannot exclude the possibility that the causality is reversed and that parents adjust their work characteristics in order to spend more time with their children. Moreover, we may have underestimated the effects of work

characteristics on parent-child time because the parents who experience most time pressure are less likely to participate in the panel from which we derived our sample.

Concluding, this study showed that the time parents spend with their children partly depends on the characteristics of their job, but that these effects are small. Parents spend less time with their children when they work longer hours, and parent-child time also appeared to be related to the content and organization of their work. Moreover, we found that gender and the age group of the children moderated the effects of work hours, autonomy, and nonstandard hours. The finding that the gender of the parent and the age group of the children condition the effects of work hours may partly account for the inconsistent findings of previous research on the association between work hours and time with children.

Chapter 3

Parental work demands and the frequency of child-related routine and interactive activities

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3.1. Introduction

Over the past decades, the number of dual-earner families has increased dramatically in Western societies (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006), and the feeling of being under time pressure has become widespread (Hochschild, 1997; Roxburgh, 2006). There is a general concern in society that this has detrimental consequences for the time that parents spend with their children (Bianchi, 2000). Although child development research has shown that parental involvement does indeed increase children's well-being (e.g., Bogenschneider, 1997; Yabiku, Axinn, & Thornton, 1999), work-family research focusing on the influence of parental work demands on the time spent with children generally found that the effects are small and inconsistent (e.g., Aldous, Mulligan, & Bjarnason, 1998; Bianchi, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2006; Brayfield, 1995; Crouter, Bumpus, Head, & McHale, 2001; McBride & Mills, 1993; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Peterson & Gerson, 1992; Robinson & Godbey, 1999; Roeters, Van der Lippe, Kluwer, & Raub, 2010; Zick & Bryant, 1996). Moreover, cross-national research has shown that the time parents spend with their children has increased in recent decades, even though mothers are entering the work-force in growing numbers and working life has become more demanding (Gauthier, Smeeding, & Furstenberg, 2004).

It is often suggested that paid employment has only a minor impact on the time parents spend with children because parents, and especially mothers, are very protective of this time (Bianchi, 2000; Nock & Kingston, 1988). In this article, we reexamine this assumption and analyze how parental involvement in child-related activities is associated with parents' own work demands as well as with those of their partners. We argue that it may be premature to claim that parental work demands do not affect this aspect of family life, for two reasons.

First, previous research may have underestimated the effects of parental employment on certain types of child-related activities. Most studies have considered the total time parents spend with their children and may have therefore underestimated the impact of work demands on one particular type of activity while overestimating the impact on another. Robinson and Godbey (1999) and Bianchi et al. (2006) distinguish between two fundamentally different child-related activities: routine activities, involving daily care (such as feeding or dressing a child), and interactive activities, involving the active supervision and education of children (such as reading to a child or playing together). Routine activities are less intensive, more obligatory in nature, in the sense that they cannot easily be postponed or curtailed, and have a lower intrinsic value than interactive activities. Although previous research has differentiated between these activities in the analysis of time-use trends (Bianchi et al., 2006; Gauthier et al., 2004; Robinson & Godbey, 1999), there are no studies investigating whether paid work affects the two activities differently. It is likely, however, that parental work demands intrude less on routine activities than on interactive ones, because the latter are more flexible and can be postponed more easily. Diapers have to be changed, but parents can choose whether to place their child in front of the television or actively engage in play with them.

Second, previous research has focused mainly on paid work hours (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; Nock

& Kingston, 1988). Qualitative aspects of a parent's job, such as an unsupportive work environment or a large degree of job insecurity, may function as additional work demands, however, because they too absorb time and energy and make the working role "greedy" (e.g., Coser, 1974; Roeters, Van der Lippe, Kluwer, & Raub, 2010; Thompson et al., 1999; Valcour & Batt, 2003; Van der Lippe, 2007; Van Echtelt, 2007). Employees who work for organizations that are less family-responsive experience more work-family conflict (Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Thompson et al., 1999) and job insecurity has been found to increase stress and decrease general well-being, family satisfaction and functioning (Larson, Wilson, & Beley, 1994; Mauno & Kinunen, 1994; Menaghan, 1991). Because few studies have examined the effects of these qualitative aspects on the actual time spent with children (with the exception of Estes, 2004), the current study takes these psychosocial job characteristics into account.

An additional contribution of this study is that we take both fathers and mothers into account. Previous research on the influence of paid work on parental time with children tended to focus on the harmful effects of maternal employment, largely overlooking how paternal employment affects the family. The studies that did consider the father's involvement focused mainly on how fathers are affected by their partner's paid employment (e.g., Brayfield, 1995; Coverman, 1985; Presser, 1994) and not on the influence of their own work demands or the effects of their work demands on the mother's involvement. Because fathers have increased their involvement in child care in recent decades (Bianchi et al., 2006; SCP, 2009), fathers should be taken into account when examining the relationship between paid work and time with children (Townsend, 2002). Men and women differ in their commitment to work and the family however (Bielby, 1992) and they respond differently to the demands of paid employment as a result (e.g., Bumpus, Crouter, & McHale, 1999; Menaghan & Parcel, 1990; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Roeters et al., 2010). We therefore explore whether fathers and mothers differ with regard to the effects of work demands on parent-child time. The relationship between work and family life is bi-directional; Family life also affects how people behave and feel at work (e.g., Eby et al., 2005; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). In the present study, however, we focus on the impact of paid work on the family. Moreover, although we acknowledge that family life can benefit from paid work as well (e.g., Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), we focus on the effects of work demands because we want to better understand how parents deal with pressures from work and why prior research found such small effects of work demands.

3.2. Theory and hypotheses

3.2.1. The demand/response capacity approach

The negative influence of paid employment on parents' involvement in child-related activities is often explained on the basis of time-based conflict or the scarcity of time (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; Eby et al., 2005; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This conflict, or *time availability approach* argues

that being in paid employment and working longer hours both reduce the time available for one's family. Paid work absorbs energy as well as time (Becker, 1991; Eby et al., 2005; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), yielding an additional effect on parental involvement. Modern "greedy workplaces" intrude most on employees' family lives because they demand a high level of commitment, long hours and "face time" (Becker & Moen, 1999; Bielby, 1992; Coser, 1974; Van Echtelt, 2007). The *demand/response capacity approach* is an extension of the time availability approach (Brayfield, 1995; Coverman, 1985). It takes both partners into account and argues that involvement in household and child care tasks depends on two factors: the demand made on an individual and the extent to which he or she can respond to this demand. It is argued that having an employed partner and young children increases one's family demands, whereas work demands restrict one's own response capacity. This approach implicitly assumes that parents substitute for one another in their time with children.

The demand/response capacity approach is largely confirmed by the literature. Men contribute more to housework and child care when their wives are in paid employment and work longer hours (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Coverman, 1985; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Peterson & Gerson, 1992). Brayfield (1995) even found that the spouse's paid work hours have a greater impact on the father's involvement than his own. As was the case in the time availability studies, however, the effects found were very small (e.g., Coverman, 1985; Hawkins & Olson, 1993; Nock & Kingston, 1988), and some studies found no effects at all (Marsiglio, 1991; Yeung, Sandberg, Davis-Kean, & Hofferth, 2001). Moreover, the few studies that have examined the effects of partner characteristics on mothers yielded mixed results. Nock and Kingston (1988) found that the father's paid work hours had a minor positive effect on mothers' involvement, whereas Peterson and Gerson (1992) found no effect.

The demand/response capacity approach is the starting point of our theoretical framework. Whereas the time availability approach only focuses on the individual, the demand/response capacity approach focuses on the couple. Figure 3.1 presents the conceptual model. In the following two sections we will elaborate upon this model.

3.2.2. *The influence of the actor's own work demands*

In line with both the time availability and demand/response capacity approach, our first hypothesis states that higher work demands are associated with less involvement in both routine and interactive child-related activities (*Hypothesis 1*). Being in paid employment and spending more time at work prevents parents from engaging in activities with their children. This hypothesis is depicted by the arrows labeled *a* through *d* in Figure 3.1 that relate the parents' own work demands to their own participation in parent-child activities. We further anticipate that workplace characteristics have an additional effect on parental involvement.

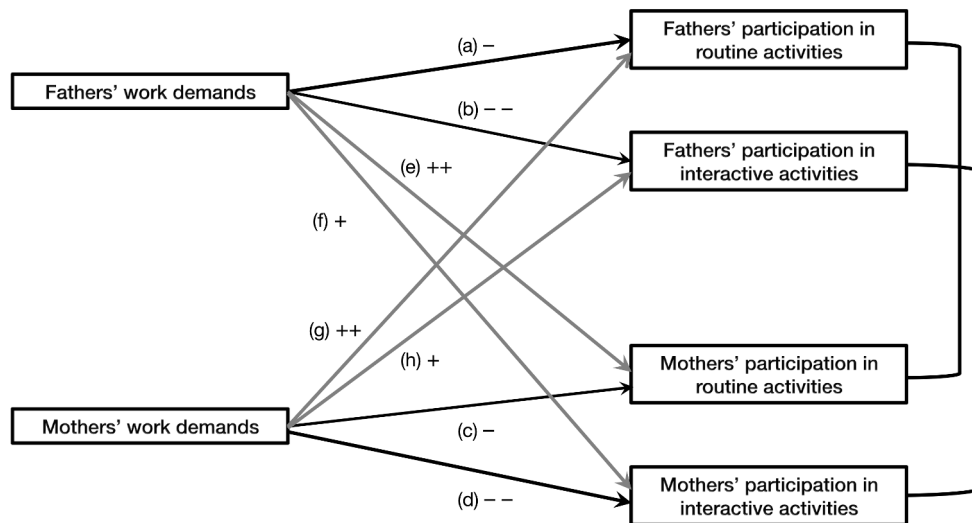


Figure 3.1. Conceptual model

We examine two workplace characteristics that are often considered in the literature on the family-responsiveness of organizations (e.g., Presser, 1986; Thompson et al., 1999; Valcour & Batt, 2001). First, we expect that a “family-unfriendly” organizational culture that does not support the family demands of employees will curtail parental involvement. This could for example be the case in an organization in which regular overtime is considered an indicator of organizational commitment. Parents who work for such organizations will be encouraged to devote more time and energy to work (Thompson et al., 1999), and this is likely to restrict the amount of time and energy they have available for their children. Second, job insecurity may encourage people to invest more time and energy in order to safeguard their job and career, which is likely to detract time and energy from the family (Van der Lippe, 2007). We test the direct effects of these job characteristics but acknowledge that they may also have an indirect effect through parental paid work hours.

In our second hypothesis, we distinguish between routine and interactive activities. Because routine activities are more urgent and obligatory in nature than interactive activities, we expect parental work to affect routine activities to a lesser extent. Interactive activities are easier to reschedule from day to day and we therefore expect that parental work demands are more likely to curtail these activities. We thus predict that the negative effect of work demands on parental involvement in child-related activities is weaker for routine activities than for interactive activities (*Hypothesis 2*). In terms of the conceptual model, this implies that we expect the relationships

represented by arrows *a* and *c* to be weaker than the relationships represented by arrows *b* and *d* in Figure 3.1.

3.2.3. *The influence of the partner's work demands*

So far, we considered parents in isolation and not as a part of a couple. Although this is in line with time availability studies, the demand/response capacity approach predicts that fathers and mothers also respond to the work demands of their partner. We argue that if one partner is unable to engage in activities with the children as a result of high work demands, the other partner will compensate by increasing his or her own involvement. The third hypothesis therefore states that one partner's work demands are positively associated with the other partner's involvement in child-related activities (*Hypothesis 3*). (Arrows *e* through *h* in Figure 3.1.) Although previous research has focused mainly on the effects of the partner's employment status and paid work hours, we again expect that the partner's workplace characteristics have an additional effect. We presume that if a mother is limited in her parental involvement because she works for an organization with a unsupportive organizational culture and experiences a high level of job insecurity, the father will be motivated to increase his own involvement in child-related activities and vice versa.

We extend the demand/response capacity approach by arguing that the effect of the partner's work demands may differ for the two types of child-related activities. We expect that partners are more likely to substitute for each other in routine activities than in interactive ones. Routine activities cannot easily be postponed and parents may therefore be forced to do more when their partner's job imposes more constraints. Interactive activities are less obligatory in nature. For example, when a mother's work demands limit her own child-related activities, her partner will be obliged to spend more time feeding and bathing the children, whereas he may not feel responsible for playing with them more often than he normally does. Another reason to expect the substitution effect to be weaker for interactive activities is that the frequency of such activities may be associated with the family's lifestyle. Although previous research generally classified child-related activities as unpaid labor (Gershuny, 2000; Gronau, 1977), interactive activities have a strong leisure component. Moreover, mothers who are more involved with their children are likely to have an involved partner as well (Harris & Morgan, 1998). Consequently, the fourth and final hypothesis states that the positive association between one partner's work demands and the other partner's parental involvement is stronger for routine activities than for interactive activities (*Hypothesis 4*). In terms of the conceptual model that is depicted in Figure 3.1, the associations represented by arrows *e* and *g* are expected to be stronger than the associations represented by arrows *f* and *h*.

3.2.4. *The role of gender*

Our model distinguishes between fathers and mothers. Bielby (1992) argued that because of men's strong commitment to work, society permits them to let their job interfere with family life,

whereas women in paid employment generally feel stronger commitment to the family domain than to the work domain. Women therefore go at greater lengths - and are expected to go at greater lengths - to prevent their job from interfering with their family responsibilities than men. This is especially apparent in the Netherlands, where a large proportion of Dutch mothers is in part-time employment (SCP, 2006). Although some studies found that the effects of paid work on individual well-being and family interactions are similar for men and women (Barnett, Marshall, & Raudenbush, 1993; Galambos, Sears, Almeida, & Kolaric, 1995; Hughes, Galinsky, & Morris, 1992), others indeed found that fathers' work demands have a greater impact on family life than mothers' (Bumpus et al., 1999, p. 473; Menaghan & Parcel, 1990; Nock & Kingston, 1988). Because previous research is inconclusive on this issue, we decided to explore whether fathers and mothers differ with regard to the association between work demands and parental involvement.

We control for standard family background characteristics: the age of the youngest child, the number of children in the household, and the educational level of the parents. The family demands are higher for parents with more and younger children (Casper & Bianchi, 2002), and higher educated parents have been found to invest more in their children's development (e.g., Gauthier et al., 2004).

3.3. Method

3.3.1. Data, sample, and response

The data used to test our hypotheses were collected by means of a computer-based survey held among a sample of Dutch households in the spring of 2007. The respondents were selected from the Taylor Nelson Sofres - Netherlands Institute for Public Opinion (TNS-NIPO) Household Panel, a large-scale household panel in the Netherlands that comprises 200,000 households. The information available on the panel members allowed us to approach those households relevant to our study. The sample is representative for the Dutch population in terms of earner types, educational level and region. Ethnic minorities were underrepresented, which is common in Dutch survey research (Stoop, 2005). Moreover, it is likely that respondents facing extremely high work and family demands did not take part in the panel precisely because of these demands. Because information is available on all households in the panel, we could compare the respondents and nonrespondents. The respondents did not differ from the nonrespondents in terms of gender, age, life stage, household size, educational level, or employment status.

For this specific study, we selected households with two heterosexual parents and with at least one child of eleven or younger. In general, Dutch children make the transition from primary to secondary education at the age of twelve, a transition that is usually accompanied by greater physical independence for the child and less direct supervision by the parents. We selected both

single-earner and dual-earner families because the percentage of single-earner families in the Netherlands is still fairly large (SCP, 2006) and because we are interested in how nonemployed parents are affected by their partner's work demands. The single-earner families constituted 9.4% of the households in the sample and the dual-earner families were broken down into households with a full-time/full-time arrangement (6.9% of the final sample), a full-time/part-time arrangement (63.7%), and a part-time/part-time arrangement (16.6%). Because a large majority of Dutch women have a part-time job, this distribution is not surprising. Although a large proportion of Dutch women is in paid employment, they work relatively few hours. This is the result of a strong belief that full-time jobs for mothers are harmful for family life that is combined with strong corporate and public family policies (e.g., people have the right to reduce their paid work hours) (SCP, 2006). On average, the age of the youngest child was 4.79 and the couples had 1.95 children. The average number of years of education for the couples in the sample was 12.68 (on a scale ranging from 6 to 20 years of education).

Of the 1,190 two-parent households that were approached, 893 (75%) returned at least one questionnaire. We narrowed this sample down to our final sample by selecting those households in which *both* partners returned the questionnaire. This was the case for 639 households. We performed an additional analysis to check whether excluding households in which only one parent responded resulted in a selective sample. The analysis showed that this was not the case with regard to age, life stage, household size, educational level, ethnicity, and employment status.

3.3.2. Measures

Dependent variables. Similar to Bianchi et al.'s (2006) "estimated daily activities with children" measure, we asked the respondents to rate how often they engaged in eighteen child-related activities, such as having dinner together and watching television together, in the week preceding the survey. This method produces less socially desirable answers than asking respondents to estimate how many hours per week they usually spend on activities with their children.

The activities rated as routine were: having breakfast, lunch or dinner together, caring for babies, toddlers and young children, medical routine, and picking children up or dropping them off. This selection closely resembles the activities that Bianchi et al. (2006) labeled as routine. To this we added 'having meals together'. In the Netherlands, having meals with the nuclear family is common and generally considered to be part of the daily family routine. This is, for example, reflected in the fact that elementary schools give children one hour off during lunch time to enable them to have lunch at home. The remaining activities were labeled as interactive and cover indoor activities (e.g., playing with baby, reading to a child, watching television together), outdoor activities (e.g., walking and biking, going to the playground), educational activities (e.g., talking), and performing household tasks together (e.g., household chores, shopping). Again, the labels correspond with those of Bianchi et al. (2006). The response categories ranged from 0 =

never to 6 = more than three times per day. We constructed the measures for routine and interactive activities by taking the mean score on the different types.

Independent variables. Our model included four indicators for the work demands: (a) employment status (1 = *employed*, 0 = *nonemployed*), (b) paid work hours, (c) the restrictiveness of the organization's work-family culture, and (d) job insecurity. We took employment status into account because employed and nonemployed parents may differ in how they use their time and in their commitment to child-related activities (Nock & Kingston, 1988). *Paid work hours* (including overtime) were measured by asking the respondents how many hours they did paid work in the week preceding the survey. The *restrictiveness of the work-family culture* was measured using a shortened version of the "family friendliness" scale developed by Thompson et al. (1999). The items are related to three dimensions: managerial support, career consequences, and time expectations. We included four items for each aspect, with our final measure consisting of twelve items (e.g., "In the event of a conflict, managers do not understand when employees have to put their family first"), each ranging from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*. The α was .90 for both fathers and mothers. Taking the mean score resulted in a five-point scale ranging from a highly family-friendly culture to a highly restrictive culture. In order to measure *job insecurity*, we took the average score on five items (e.g., "I am worried that I will lose my job"), with answers again ranging from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*. The same scale was used in the European Quality of Life study (Crompton, Lewis, & Lyonette, 2007). The reliability was high, with an α of .83 for fathers and .80 for mothers.

Control variables. We controlled for the parents' educational level (the average number of years of education), the number of children, and the age of the youngest child in the household.

3.3.3. Method of analysis

We estimated both actor effects (the influence of an actor's own work demands) and partner effects (the influence of the partner's work demands) (see Kenny and Cook, 1999, for a discussion of these types of effects). Because we consider multiple dependent variables and wanted to estimate the two types of effects simultaneously, we employed structural equation modeling using AMOS (Arbuckle, 2006). This method also enabled us to test cross-equation differences between the coefficients for routine and interactive activities by imposing equality constraints. By comparing the chi-squares of the models with and without the equality constraints, we were able to test whether the association between work demands and routine activities differed significantly from the association between work demands and interactive activities.

3.4. Results

3.4.1. Descriptive analyses

Table 3.1 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables and includes the correlations between the dependent and independent variables. As was to be expected, mothers engaged more in child-related activities than fathers. With the exception of work hours, mothers and fathers differed little in their work demands.

The structural equation model constructed on the basis of our theoretical expectations had a chi-square of 150.8 with 48 degrees of freedom. The model fit was good with a CFI of .933 and RMSEA of .058. The correlations between the partners' involvement in child-related activities were positive (.273 for the routine activities and .366 for the interactive activities). This implies that if one partner reported the frequency of child-related activities as being high, the other partner did so as well, even when family and work demands were taken into account. The control variables did not affect the results.

Table 3.1. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations Between the Independent and Dependent Variables for Fathers and Mothers ($N = 639$)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i> test ^a	Correlation with own routine activities	Correlation with own interactive activities
<i>Fathers</i>					
Frequency of routine activities	1.19	.65	.000	1	.64***
Frequency of interactive activities	.70	.49	.000	.64***	1
Employment status (1 = <i>employed</i>)	.97	.16	.000	-.05	-.01
Paid work hours	38.94	11.91	.000	-.18***	-.13***
Restrictive organizational culture	3.30	.65	.000	.07 [†]	.07 [†]
Insecurity	2.25	.76	.033	-.10*	-.02
<i>Mothers</i>					
Frequency of routine activities	2.40	1.00		1	.62*
Frequency of interactive activities	1.20	.65		.62*	1
Employment status (1 = <i>employed</i>)	.89	.32		-.06	-.05
Paid work hours	20.42	12.14		-.13***	-.09*
Restrictive organizational culture	3.50	.61		-.02	-.02
Insecurity	2.31	.76		.02	.01

Note: Descriptive statistics of work characteristics only concern employed parents.

^a *p* value of *t* test for equality of means for fathers and mothers (paired comparisons).

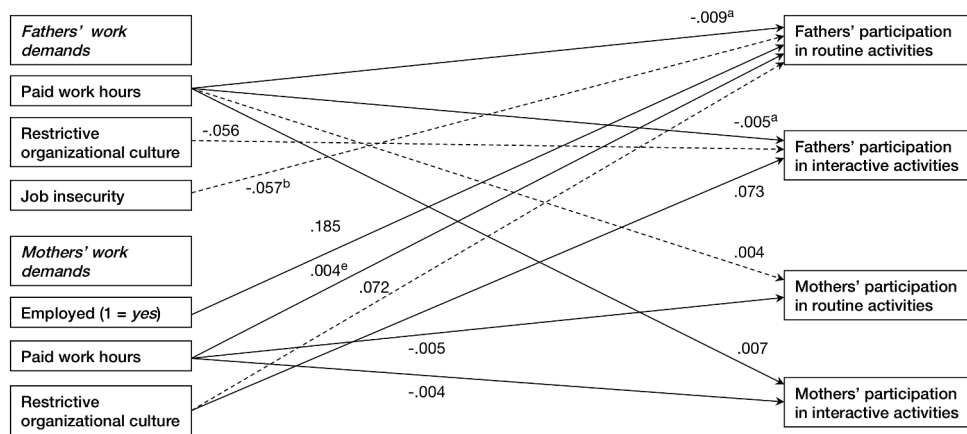
[†] = *p* < .10; * = *p* < .05; ** = *p* < .01; *** = *p* < .001.

3.4.2. *The actor effects*

Hypothesis 1 predicted that parents who experience higher work demands would report lower frequencies of child-related activities. The results, presented in Figure 3.2, showed that this was mainly the case for the paid work hours. Both fathers and mothers indeed participated less in routine and interactive activities when they worked longer hours. The other work demands yielded no effects, with the exception of two marginally significant associations for the fathers. Fathers working in more restrictive, less family-friendly, organizational cultures reported lower frequencies of interactive activities ($p = .063$), and fathers who experienced more job insecurity were less involved in routine activities ($p = .076$).

Hypothesis 2 differentiated between the two types of child-related activities and predicted that work demands were more strongly associated with the frequency of interactive activities than with the frequency of routine activities. The footnotes in Figure 3.2 indicate which relations differ

Figure 3.2. Path model predicting child-related activities, significant actor, and partner effects (N = 639). Unstandardized coefficients. Control variables omitted. Significance at the .05 level or better. Dotted lines represent a relationship that is significant at the .10 level.



^a Imposing equality constraints between the effects of fathers' paid work hours on fathers' routine activities and on father's interactive activities resulted in a significant decline of the model fit at the .01 level. ^b Imposing equality constraints between the effects of fathers' job insecurity on fathers' routine activities and on father's interactive activities resulted in a significant decline of the model fit at the .00 level. ^c Imposing equality constraints between the effects of mothers' paid work hours on fathers' routine activities and on father's interactive activities resulted in a significant decline of the model fit at the .00 level.

for the two types of activities. A p value below .05 indicates a significant deterioration of the model fit when equality constraints were imposed. None of the cross-equation differences was significant for the mothers. The two types of activities did differ for the fathers, but the differences were the opposite of those predicted: Work demands were more strongly associated with the frequency of routine activities than with the frequency of interactive activities. The effect of the fathers' paid work hours on routine activities was stronger than the effect on interactive activities, and the same was true for the impact of job insecurity. Moreover, although fathers' job status was not significantly related to either of the activities, the relationship with routine activities was stronger. Finally, the associations with the fathers' organizational culture did not differ significantly, even though this variable yielded a marginally significant association with the interactive activities and was not associated with routine activities.

3.4.3. The partner effects

Hypothesis 3 predicted that parents would increase their parental involvement when their partner's work demands increased. Fathers with employed partners reported higher frequencies of routine activities than their counterparts with a nonemployed partner. The frequency of fathers' routine activities increased further when their partners worked longer hours and in a less family-friendly organizational culture (marginally significant). Moreover, when the organizational cultures of the mothers were less family-friendly, fathers participated more in interactive activities. The mothers' child-related activities only became more frequent when their partners worked more paid hours.

The final hypothesis, Hypothesis 4, stated that the impact of the partners' work demands would be stronger on routine activities than on interactive activities. This was only partially the case and the difference, again, only applied to the fathers. Mothers' paid work hours were indeed more strongly related to fathers' involvement in routine activities than to fathers' involvement in interactive activities. The same was true for mothers' employment status, although the difference was only marginally significant. The family-friendliness of the mother's organizational culture had precisely the same impact on the father's involvement in routine activities as on his involvement in interactive activities. The results revealed no difference between the father's work demands and the mother's involvement in routine and interactive activities.

We tested additional models in order to investigate whether the results differed when single earners were excluded from the analysis. Most effect sizes increased and the effects became slightly more significant. Two effects changed from marginal significance to significance on the .05 level: Fathers who reported more restrictive organizational norms were more involved in interactive activities, and when the mother reported a less family-friendly organizational culture, the father's involvement in routine activities was higher. We also tested an alternative model that excluded watching television together, which is likely to be the most passive interactive activity, from the analyses, but this did not change the results.

3.5. Conclusion and discussion

The aim of this study was to examine how parental involvement in routine and interactive activities related to parents' own work demands and those of their partner. Based on the demand/response capacity approach, we predicted that parents would be less involved in child-related activities when their work demands – as indicated by employment status, paid work hours, the restrictiveness of the organizational work-family culture and job insecurity – were higher. We also expected parents to increase their involvement in response to their partners' work demands. Finally, we expected routine activities (i.e., customary daily care) to be less sensitive to a parent's own work demands and more sensitive to his or her partner's demands than the more discretionary and intensive interactive activities (i.e., active supervision and play).

As predicted, parents who worked longer hours and parents whose partner worked shorter hours were less involved in activities with their children. The qualitative aspects of their jobs – the organizational culture and job insecurity – were not or only marginally related to parental involvement, however, a finding that is in line with other studies that included multiple work characteristics (e.g., Estes, 2004; Roeters et al., 2010). Our results further suggest that fathers and mothers responded differently to their own work demands and those of their partner. The time mothers spent with their children was barely affected by their own and their partners' work demands, whereas the temporal involvement of fathers was more sensitive to both their own work demands and those of their partner. Moreover, fathers differentiated more than mothers between routine and interactive activities with children, with participation in routine activities being more reactive to work demands. This suggests that paternal participation in routine activities is flexible and discretionary, whereas interactive activities are relatively fixed for men.

The findings are partly consistent with our conceptual model. Although the theoretical idea behind the demand/response capacity approach is quite simple – time and energy are scarce resources that are divided between the work and family domains – reality is not. Higher work demands do not automatically imply spending less time with one's children. Work characteristics other than paid work hours had little explanatory value and the effects that did occur were small. Nevertheless, these findings are consistent with previous empirical research (e.g., Bianchi, 2000). Apparently, parents find ways to minimize the extent to which work encroaches on family life (Becker & Moen, 1999). Our study shows that mothers in particular experience low flexibility with regard to parent-child time. As a result, work demands may be met at the expense of other activities, such as individual or couple leisure time without children (Bianchi et al., 2006; Bittman & Wacjman, 2000). Future research could look into the wider implications of this. We also expected parents to prioritize child-related routine activities over interactive activities. We indeed found a difference between routine and interactive activities, but only for the fathers, and in the opposite direction: Fathers' routine activities appear to be more, rather than less, flexible. This difference is in line with earlier studies that showed that fathers prefer play-related activities over care-related activities and that, as a result, they use their child care time mainly for "fun" activities such as play, and less for the basic care tasks (Bianchi et al., 2006; Robinson & Godbey, 1999).

Combining work and family life poses challenges for parents and forces them to make decisions, men and women alike. Yet, the gender of the parent and the nature of the activities affect these decisions. The general pattern that emerges from our study suggests that fathers have more discretion than mothers with regard to child-related activities. The small effects for the mothers further confirm the general notion that they protect the time with their children because they feel a great sense of responsibility toward them (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2006; Hays, 1996; Nock & Kinston, 1988). This gender difference is in line with some previous studies (Bumpus et al., 1999) but not with others (e.g., Galambos et al., 1995). According to Bielby (1992, p. 289), men “allow (and are permitted to allow) work to intrude on family time” whereas this is less the case for women. In interpreting the work-family choices of men, it is important to note that for many fathers, having a job and providing financial security is part of being a good father (Bianchi et al., 2006, p. 176; Townsend, 2002). The finding that fathers respond more strongly to their own work demands and those of their partners has interesting policy implications. It suggests that policies aimed at increasing the participation of fathers in the family could focus on several aspects of fathers’ own work, as well as on the labor market participation of mothers.

The difference between routine and interactive activities sheds new light on the findings of earlier studies on paternal involvement with children. Our study suggests that the demand/response capacity approach provides a better explanation for fathers’ involvement in routine activities than for their involvement in interactive ones. This may explain why previous research has yielded inconsistent results (e.g., Brayfield, 1995; Marsiglio, 1991; Yeung et al., 2001). Most studies considered the total amount of time fathers spend caring for their children, but the definition of what activities constitute child care generally remained vague. Differences in the operationalization of paternal involvement may therefore explain the inconsistent findings. Future research could benefit from a clear conceptualization of parental time that takes differences in the nature of activities into account.

Another interesting avenue for future research would be to investigate the relationship between parental behavior, attitudes and commitment toward work and the family. Although previous research suggests that parental behavior is guided by feelings of commitment (Bielby, 1992), we believe that the literature would benefit from future studies measuring parental commitment and attitudes toward family activities, as this could help clarify the underlying mechanisms.

We should note that the effects that were found might partly be the result of selection effects. Parents may select a certain workplace and work schedule in order to maximize time with their children. Previous research has shown that mothers in particular are likely to adjust their work schedules to accommodate family demands (England & Farkas, 1986; Presser, 1999; Van Gils, 2007). Longitudinal data would help to disentangle the selection effects from the pure effects of work demands. In a similar fashion, many women scale back and take a part-time job in order to prevent paid work from impinging on family life (Becker & Moen, 1999), which may mute the employment effect (Bianchi et al., 2006, p. 86) and explain why the organizational culture and job insecurity were not, or only weakly, associated with parent-child time. Although employment

status has a similar impact on child care time in the Netherlands and the U.S. (Van den Broek, 2006), the prevalence and frequent use of work-family policies in the Netherlands limits the generalization of our results. Cross-national comparisons could provide more insight into the ways in which institutional structures influence work-to-family effects. Such studies could also explore the classification of joint activities in greater depth. For example, although having meals together is typically a routine activity in the Netherlands, this may be different in the U.S., where daily family meals are much less common. Finally, we should note that we had no information on secondary activities and other people who may have been present during child-related activities (Folbre, Yoon, Finnoff, & Fuligni, 2005; Zick & Bryant, 1996). Time-diary data could solve this problem and analyses based on more detailed information may reveal more subtle effects of work demands.

In conclusion, our study showed that fathers and mothers respond differently to the demands of paid work and family life. Fathers experience a certain degree of flexibility with regard to their involvement in child-related activities, whereas the involvement of mothers seems relatively fixed. The nature of family activities appears to be relevant in this respect, as the fathers' work demands intrude most on their involvement in basic care tasks, suggesting that fathers give the priority to interactive activities such as play with their children.

Chapter 4

Parental work demands and parent-child, family, and couple leisure in Dutch families: What gives?

This chapter is co-authored by Judth Treas. A slightly different version is forthcoming in Journal of Family Issues.

4.1. Introduction

In the majority of Western families, parents combine the organization of family life with one or two paid jobs (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006). This combination creates challenges because time and energy have to be allocated over the two domains (Hochschild, 1997; Roxburgh, 2006). Remarkably, research on the relation between work and time spent with children has found few effects of work demands on the time parents spend with their children (Bianchi, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2006; Brayfield, 1995; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Roeters, Van der Lippe, & Kluwer, 2009). Moreover, although labor market participation among women has increased in the last decades, parents are now spending more time with their children than before (Bianchi et al., 2006; SCP, 2006). These findings suggest that parents, and especially mothers, protect activities with their children (Bianchi et al., 2006). Exactly how work demands affect the way in which leisure is organized in the family remains an unanswered question.

Most leisure has come to be privatized within the home and family (Harrington, 2006). In general, studies on family time do not systematically address who is involved in the family activities being studied. The time a parent spends alone with children is seldom distinguished from the family time spent jointly with the partner and children although these times clearly differ in nature. Only recently, the distinction between these types of activities has been recognized in the literature (Lesnard, 2008). In studying how working parents manage their time with children, we distinguish both kinds of parental leisure with children. To address the potential trade-offs in leisure within the family, we also consider the adult time that partners share together but apart from their children. With survey data for Dutch families, we examine how couples allocate time to these three different sorts of leisure activities. The Netherlands is a particularly interesting case with regard to the work-family interface. It is socially accepted, especially for women, to work part-time, and employees have the legal right to reduce their work hours with no consequences for their healthcare benefits (SCP, 2008). Because of the flexibility of employment, The Netherlands is a strategic context to study how different work arrangements affect the organization of family leisure. Drawing on theories of social motivation, temporal organization, and scale economies, we test hypotheses regarding the relative impact of work demands on each of the three leisure options. Do working parents protect child-related activities by taking turns--each spending time alone with the children? Or, do dual-earner couples organize their time in such a way that leisure is spent together with the whole family? And, does the working couple's time alone together suffer because of their child-oriented leisure?

The sociology of leisure has addressed the meaning and nature of family leisure extensively (e.g., Shaw & Dawson, 2001; Such, 2006) and showed that leisure is a central component of modern day parenting that is purposely used to educate and socialize children (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). Although family leisure can also go together with stress, time pressure, and even conflicts (Kay, 2006), few activities are as positively associated with parent's mood as playing and socializing with children (Zuzanek, 2006). Moreover, children whose parents are more involved in do better in school, have higher self-esteem, and experience many other positive outcomes (e.g., Demo & Cox, 2000). When both parents are present during leisure activities,

children receive additional attention, they have the opportunity to watch their parents interact, and the parental caregiver experiences less stress (Folbre, Yoon, Finnoff, & Fuligni, 2005; Schneider, Ainbinder, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2004). In addition, shared leisure time between spouses is an important predictor of marital stability and quality, as sharing activities constitute a relationship-maintaining strategy as well as an investment in the union (Claxton & Perry-Jenkins, 2008; Hill, 1988; Poortman, 2005). Although leisure may also include other persons, we are specifically interested in processes *within* the nuclear family.

4.2. Previous research

Research on the allocation of family leisure time has seldom distinguished the different leisure patterns (Folbre et al., 2005). In one notable exception to this, Lesnard (2008) examines “conjugal”, “father- and mother-child time”, and “parents-child time” separately in a study on the effects of off-scheduling. In general, studies focused on the total time parent-child time, without taking into account whether or not the other parent is present. The studies that have made this distinction are either descriptive (Bianchi et al., 2006; Folbre et al., 2005; Fuligni & Brooks-Gunz, 2004) or focused on the different *consequences* of the two forms of parent-child time on parental well-being (Schneider et al., 2004). Still, we know little about the articulation of these two types of parent-child interactions with their likely precursors, such as work demands.

Similarly, partners’ one-on-one leisure has been neglected. As Claxton and Perry-Jenkins (2008) stated, “Little research has distinguished between couple leisure and family leisure, either empirically or conceptually” (p. 30). In studies on the impact of work on either parent-child interaction or couple interaction, the consequences for the other types of family interaction are usually acknowledged only peripherally (e.g., Amato, Booth, Johnson, & Rogers, 2007; Bianchi, 2000; Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001). To address this void, the aim of this study is to examine whether the effects of work demands on family activities differ depending on who participates (i.e., one parent and the children, both parents and the children, or both parents without the children).

4.2.1. Differences between parent-child, family and couple leisure

Studies that compared the time parents spend with their children to the time they spend without them, either focused on parents’ beliefs and priorities or on the different nature of these activities. According to the first approach, couple interaction and child-related activities compete with one another (Amato et al., 2007; Hill, 1988; Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001). Parents have limited time and energy, especially when they are employed. Because contemporary parenting ideology calls on parents to invest heavily in their children’s development (Arendell, 2000; Craig, 2007; DeVault, 2000; Hays, 1996; Hochschild, 1997; Kay, 2006), parents are encouraged to prioritize

their children in the allocation of their free time at the expense of their one-on-one couple leisure (Daly, 2001; Lareau, 2000; Simon, 1995).

Second, although some studies found that couples spend less time together when (young) children are present (e.g., Hill, 1988: 444; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003), Huston and Vangelisti (1995) found that the amount of joint leisure time with the partner does not differ much between new parents and childless couples, but that its nature changes because leisure time is spent in the presence of the baby. Mattingly and Bianchi (2003) labeled non-adult leisure, as opposed to adult-only leisure, as “contaminated” time. Such contaminated leisure is said to be less relaxing for parents, because they have responsibility for the children. The term “non-adult time” refers both to one-on-one activities with a child and to family activities. To our knowledge, no studies of couple or adult leisure draw comparisons with parent-child (e.g., reading a story together) or family leisure (e.g., going for a walk with the whole family). Some argued that it is important to make this distinction, however. Family leisure is said to be a more “leisurely” because parents can share the responsibility for the child (Folbre et al., 2005; Fuligni & Brook-Gunn, 2004). Schneider et al. (2004) found that mother-child and family leisure activities have different effects on maternal well-being. When mothers participate in activities with children and partner, their stress levels decreased; when they participate in child-related activities without the partner, stress levels increased.

4.2.2. The impact of work on parent-child, family, and couple leisure

The previous overview showed that the nature of family leisure depends on who participates. But do the effects of work differ for these different activities? Earlier studies only examined parts of this question. Studies on the effects of parental employment showed that work hours have a negative, but small or sometimes non-significant, effect on the time parents spend with their children (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2006; Crouter, Bumpus, Head, & McHale, 2001; Marsiglio, 1991; Nock & Kinston, 1988; Roeters, Van der Lippe, & Kluwer, 2009).

Because the studies on the influence of work on parental time with children did not differentiate between family and one-on-one activities with children, it is not clear whether the small effects of work hours found for time with children apply to both forms of parent-child leisure. For example, a full-time working couple may spend more time in one-on-one activities with children and less time in family activities than a single-earner couple. An ethnographic study on low-income U.S. families indeed suggested that serial family meals are a common strategy to deal with high work demands (Tubbs, Roy, & Burton, 2005).

As with the parent-child interaction studies, most studies on the influence of work on couple interaction did not consider whether or not children were present during the couple activities. Couples participate less in joint activities when the wife is employed (Hill, 1988) and when the partners work more hours (Amato et al., 2007; Crouter et al., 2001; Kingston & Nock, 1987). Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001) found that when employed, wives participated more in joint activities with their husband, as compared to individual leisure, but Poortman (2005) found no

effect on the proportion of leisure that the couple spent together. The few studies that have distinguished between activities with and without children present have shown that parents experience less adult leisure (either with the partner or other adults) when they are employed full-time (Bittman & Wacjman, 2000) and work longer hours (Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003).

Finally, a note on Lesnard's (2008) study on the effects of off-scheduling on different types of family activities. Although he described longitudinal trends for all three forms of family time, he compared the effects of off-scheduling for couple *and* family time with the effects on one-on-one parent-child time. Lesnard found that joint couple and family time only reduced when parents worked in the evenings, whereas the effects on parent-child time were wider and more differentiated. For example, fathers spent more time with their children when they finished work in the afternoon.

4.3. Hypotheses

The negative association reported between work demands and time spent with family members is consistent with the conflict, or time availability approach (Eby et al., 2005). This approach argues that time is a scarce resource that has to be divided between the family and work domains. Our general hypothesis therefore states that higher work demands, such as longer work hours or more demanding work arrangements, are associated with less parent-child, family and couple leisure. We focus on the time that is spent at work, as indicated by the parental work hours and the type of work arrangements for the couple (e.g., full-time/full-time work arrangement). Rather than considering work schedules, we restrict ourselves to work hours and arrangements because these are the most commonly examined work demands.

We expect that the extent to which work demands impinge upon leisure activities will differ depending on who participates in the activity. Because parents place different priorities on different types of family-oriented leisure, and some activities are more difficult to coordinate and organize than others, we might expect work demands to cut into time spent on low priority, hard-to-organize activities in particular. Our hypotheses are derived from three theoretical perspectives: social motivation, temporal organization, and scale economies.

Social motivation theory, parenting ideology, and monitoring. As a first step in constructing our theoretical framework, we differentiate between activities that do and do not involve children. We expect that parental work will have a smaller impact on leisure activities with children than on 'adult' leisure for two reasons. First, social motivation theory (Hills & Argyle, 1998; Van Gils, 2007) argues that activities differ in their payoffs and that people will pursue those activities that provide the highest utility. The pay-offs are determined by the social utility of activities as well as by normative expectations of the social context. This approach is a useful framework to study the consequences of modern parenthood ideologies. The parenting ideology in Western societies holds that parents are obliged to invest in their children because (time) investments are essential for children's development (Amato et al., 2007; Arendell, 2000; Bianchi, 2000, Daly,

2001; DeVault, 2000; Hays, 1996). Nowadays fathers are expected to actively take part in leisure activities with their children and mothers are expected to invest heavily in the education and socialization of their children (Hays, 1996). Family leisure is often 'purposive' as parents see this as the appropriate context to exert parenting and as a natural way of stimulating communication and strengthening family bonds (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). These arguments combined with the scarcity of time lead parents to prioritize activities with their children over activities with their partner (Daly, 2001; Dyck & Daly, 2006; Simon, 1995).

The second reason why children's leisure activities may be prioritized over adult leisure is that children, especially young ones, cannot be unsupervised. Even older children need to be monitored and transported to activities outside the household. This implies that parents must accommodate their couple activities to the children's shadow time (e.g., when they nap, are engaged in organized activities, or have a babysitter) as well as to their own availability. Because couple time involves effort and money, parents may economize by including their children in their own leisure activities, for example, taking their children to the cinema. Alternatively, parents may tailor their own leisure to their children's activities, say, by attending their soccer games.

Given social expectations that maximize the time with their children and because couple leisure requires the organization of alternative child care arrangements, we expect that work demands, such as high work hours and work arrangements in which both parents work full-time, will impinge more strongly on adult-only activities than on activities with children. This results in the following hypothesis: The impact of work demands on parent-child leisure and family leisure is weaker than the impact of work demands on couple leisure (*Hypothesis 1*).

Temporal organization theory. In distinguishing between parent-child and family leisure, temporal organization theory (e.g., Southerton, 2006; Van Gils, 2007) forms a useful framework as it considers the number of people that are involved in an activity. This perspective proposes that how often an activity occurs depends on how easy it is to organize. Activities that involve more people are more difficult to fit into empty timeslots, because the schedules of multiple people have to be considered (Van Gils, 2007). Thus, we expect that one-on-one parent-child leisure is easier to initiate than family leisure. Family activities are the most difficult to coordinate, because all parties have to be available at the same time. Thus, we expect that the implications for family leisure of parental work demands will be greater than for one-on-one parent-child activities. The social motivation logic may also argue for work impinging less upon parent-child activities than upon family activities: If parents find it very important to spend time with their children, they may decide to take turns supervising them, thereby maximizing the total parental coverage of the children (Bianchi et al., 2006: 111). We thus hypothesize that the impact of work demands on one-on-one parent-child leisure is weaker than the impact of work demands on family leisure (*Hypothesis 2a*).

Economies of scale. Following the principles of economies of scale, it is more efficient to organize activities that include as many family members as possible rather than organize a host of individualized activities. According to Treas and Cohen (2006), in countries where co-residence between parents and grown children is high, children who do not co-reside visit their

parents more often, suggesting that children are more inclined to visit parents when they can also meet siblings in the parental home. Another reason why parents may prefer family activities over one-on-one activities is that parents experience these activities as more relaxing (Schneider et al., 2004) while still providing quality time for their children (Folbre et al., 2005). If parents organize their leisure to maximize “family time”, work demands should have a relatively smaller impact relative to parent-child activities. These arguments lead to a prediction directly contradicting Hypothesis 2a: The impact of work demands on one-on-one parent-child leisure is stronger than the impact of work demands on family leisure (*Hypothesis 2b*).

The gendered nature of leisure. Our analytical model differentiates between fathers and mothers because previous research revealed relevant gender differences in the experiences of leisure and the influence of paid work. Active involvement in leisure activities, or leisure-based parenting, is part of the dual character of the fatherhood ideal, alongside with the provider role (e.g., Daly, 1996; Dykstra & Hagestad, 2007; Kay, 2006; Such, 2006). In contrast, maternal employment, and full-time employment in particular, is generally considered to conflict with the motherhood role and mother-child interaction generally has a less leisurely character than father-child interaction (Such, 2006). Moreover, because women bear the main responsibility for housework and child care, their unpaid labor spills over into their leisure, resulting in leisure experiences that are more fragmented and contaminated by secondary (non-leisure) activities (Bittman & Wacjman, 2000; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003; Such, 2006). In line with this, Larson, Gillman, and Richards (1997) showed that family leisure activities are less enjoyable for mothers than for fathers. Finally, research shows that mothers facilitate father-child leisure (Seery & Crowley, 2000) through a process of “gatekeeping” or emotion work (DeVault, 2000), for example by offering suggestions for particular father-child activities. This stimulates father-child activities but demands additional time and energy of the mother (Seery & Crowley, 2000).

4.4. Method

4.4.1. Data, sample, and response

The hypotheses are tested with Dutch household data that were collected in the spring of 2007 through a computer-based e-mail survey. The households were recruited through the Taylor Nelson Sofres-Netherlands Institute for Public Opinion (TNS-NIPO) Household Panel, which involves 200,000 households. Households that do not have access to the Internet are provided with a computer that enables them to participate in the panel. The sample is representative of the Dutch population in terms of work arrangements, gender, and educational level.

Of the 2,292 two-parent households with minor children that were contacted, 1,712 (74.7%) filled out at least one questionnaire. In 953 (55.6%) of these households, *both* partners returned the questionnaire. Because we need the information on both parents, we excluded the

households with only one respondent. Moreover, we excluded 27 households with a youngest child who had turned 18. We also excluded 18 homosexual couples; our analytical model differentiates the effects for fathers and mothers and the sample size was too small to perform separate analyses for the homosexual couples. This resulted in an effective sample of 898 two-parent households with at least one minor child. We found no systematic differences with regard to age and education between the households that did and did not return the questionnaire. With regard to gender, age, working arrangements, or the age and number of children, there were no significant differences between the households that returned only one questionnaire and those that returned both questionnaires.

4.4.2. *Measurement*

Dependent variables. The respondents were asked how often they participated in a set of leisure activities. For parent-child and family leisure separately, parents were presented with nine activities (i.e., having dinner together, watching television together, going shopping, playing games, pursuing outdoor activities, having tea or lemonade together, having a special conversation, going to the playground, and visiting the children's sports game). The selection of these activities was based on the child-related activities that Bianchi et al. (2006) considered in their elaborate analyses of trends in American family life. We added shared meals because they are an important part of Dutch family life. Parents were asked how often they were involved in each of these activities in the week preceding the survey. The response categories ranged from 1 = *never* to 7 = *more than three times per day*. Presenting the respondents with concrete activities helped them recall the frequency with which the activity took place. Moreover, this method produces less socially desirable answers than asking them to estimate how many hours per week they usually spent on activities with their children. We constructed an overall score by taking the mean. This resulted in two scores (for one-on-one and family activities) for both the fathers and mothers.

Because couple activities are less frequent, the parents indicated how often they participated in activities together without children in the *three months preceding the survey*. The nine activities with the partner included having dinner, going out for dinner, going to the movies or theatre, visiting friends or family, pursuing sport activities, shopping, watching television, having a special talk, and enjoying outdoor activities. The response categories ranged from 1 = *never* to 7 = *multiple times per day*. We converted the mean for all three dependent variables to standardized z-scores to compare the effects on the three leisure types. Having the reports of both parents, it is possible to use both sources of information to construct the measures for couple and family leisure. The overall family activity reports of the fathers and mothers correlated .59 and partner activity reports correlated .73. Following a common practice with multi-actor data (Gagné & Lydon, 2004), we took the mean to create family and couple leisure scores based on the reports of the fathers *and* mothers.

Independent variables. Two types of key independent variables are considered: work arrangements (at the couple level) and work hours (at the individual level). We evaluated four types of work arrangements: (a) single earner couples, (b) dual earner couples in which both parents work full-time, (c) dual earner couples in which one parent works full-time and the other parent works part-time, and (d) the remaining work arrangements (e.g., part-time/part-time and both unemployed). A part-time job was defined as a work week between 12 and 34 hours and a full-time job as a work week of 35 hours or more (SCP, 2006). Dutch employees have the legal right to adjust their work hours without jeopardizing their job. Many parents, especially mothers, make use of this right (SCP, 2008), so there is a wide variety of work schedules. The most popular work arrangement among parents with children is full-time/part-time: In 2005, 47% of such couples had this arrangement (SCP, 2006: 76). In contrast, the full-time/full-time combination is relatively rare (6% of couples with children), as full-time maternal employment is generally considered to be harmful to the family and children (SCP, 2006).

On the individual level, parental *work hours* (including overtime) were measured by asking the respondents how many hours they worked in the week preceding the survey (the same period for which respondents rated their participation in child-related activities). Unemployed parents are assigned a 0 on this variable. The variables were converted into z-scores in order to compare the effects for men and women.

Control variables. We controlled for the age of the youngest child in the household, the square of this age, the number of children in the household, the average educational level of the parents (indicated on a 11-point scale), and the total annual household income (summing the parents' individual incomes as indicated on a 27-point scale). Family socio-economic status variables reflect American research, which has shown middle-class as opposed to working class parents to spend more time interacting with youngsters (Lareau, 2000).

4.4.3. Method of analysis

The method of analysis is seemingly unrelated regression. Seemingly unrelated regression simultaneously estimates multiple equations taking into account correlated measurement errors. This method also enables us to test cross-equation hypotheses. For example, *t* tests can address the null-hypothesis that the effect of work hours on family activities is not significantly different from the effect of work hours on couple activities.

4.5. Results

4.5.1. Descriptive analyses

Table 4.1 presents the descriptive statistics. For one-on-one child activities, the mothers' average score is 2.29, which falls between the response categories for activities on 1-3 and 4-6 days in the previous week. Fathers, not unexpectedly, have a lower average of 1.75, which lies between never and 1-3 days. The comparable mean on family activities is 2.17. The average score of 2.96 on couple leisure indicates that the parents participated in one-on-one couple activities slightly less than 2-3 times in the three months preceding the survey. As is customary in the Netherlands, the dominant work arrangement is the full-time/part-time model (47.55%). The percentage of full-time/full-time working couples is slightly higher than the country average: 9.1% as opposed to 6%. Almost one fourth of the households in the sample are single earner families and less than 20% fall in the "other" category (75% being a part-time/part-time arrangement). The average work hours are 39.03 for the employed fathers and 21.47 for the employed mothers.

Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics ($N = 898$)

	<i>M / %</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Range</i>
Father-child activities (1-7)	1.75	.56	1 – 4.67
Mother-child activities (1-7)	2.29	.74	1 – 6
Family activities (1-7)	2.17	.58	1 – 5.11
Couple activities (1-7)	2.96	.77	1 – 5.33
Single earner couple	23.05		0 – 1
Dual-earner, full-time/part-time	47.55		0 – 1
Dual-earner, full-time/full-time	9.91		0 – 1
Other work arrangement	19.50		0 – 1
Work hours – fathers	39.03 ^a	11.67	0 – 103
Work hours – mothers	21.47 ^a	12.05	0 – 102
Age youngest child	7.49	5.30	0 – 17
Number of children	1.87	.76	1 – 6
Educational level parents	6.49	1.80	2 – 11
Income	23.00	5.62	8 – 54

^a Descriptives of work hours are calculated over the employed fathers and mothers.

Bivariate correlations (not shown) reveal that when parents participate more in one-on-one activities with their children, they also participate more in family activities ($r = .40$ and $.58$ for fathers and mothers, respectively; both are significant on the $.001$ level), these activities seem to complement rather than substitute for one another. Mother-child and father-child activities are positively and significantly associated with one another as well ($r = .40, p < .001$), which is likely to reflect common causes (e.g., the age of the children). The correlation of couple activities and family activities is positive and significant ($r = .11, p < .05$) and, although not significantly associated with father-child leisure, couple activities are negatively correlated ($r = -.09, p < .05$) with mother-child activities, indicating a maternal leisure trade-off.

4.5.2. *Main effects*

We first consider the general hypothesis that parental work demands are negatively associated with the three types of leisure within the family. The results of the seemingly unrelated regression models appear in Table 4.2. Beginning with father-child activities, Model 1 shows no significant differences between the single-earner couples (the reference category) and the couples with other work arrangements. Men in full-time working couples participated no more or less in one-on-one activities with their children than did men in single earner couples. The work hours of the fathers were related to their involvement: Fathers who worked more hours participated less in one-on-one father-child activities. The work hours of the mother yielded a positive association, which suggests that men responded to their partner's absence by increasing their time with the children. For the control variables, the model showed a concave, nonlinear relationship with the age of the youngest child. At younger ages, the association was positive (fathers participate more in one-on-one father-child activities with an older child), but the strength of this relation weakened and became increasingly negative after the age of seven. Surprisingly, the educational level showed a negative association, suggesting that highly educated fathers participated less in child activities, net of their work hours. The household income yielded a positive association with the involvement of the father.

Model 2 considered the one-on-one mother-child activities. As compared to single earner couples, women in all other work arrangements participated less in one-on-one activities with their children (the difference for "other arrangements" is only marginally significant). This suggests that more demanding couple work arrangements were associated with a lower involvement in mother-child activities. The maternal work hours did not have an additional effect, but paternal work hours yielded a positive association. This is consistent with a compensation effect (mothers making up for the absence of fathers) or with the selection into high paternal work hours of couples who particularly value maternal time with children. Again we found a nonlinear relationship with the age of the youngest child: The relationship was consistently negative and became stronger with the age of the child. Moreover, we again found a counter-intuitive negative association with SES, but income did have a positive effect. As the R^2 's show, mother-child time was better explained by the models than was father-child time.

Turning to the relationships with the family activities, Model 3 showed no significant associations for the work demands on the household level. Although the signs of the associations were in the expected directions, couples with more demanding work arrangements did not differ significantly from single earner couples. The work hours of the father did show the expected negative association with the frequency of family activities. With regard to the control variables, the relation with the age of the youngest child showed a pattern similar to father-child leisure: The relationship was concave with a tipping point at the age of 7.75. The frequency of family leisure activities was lower in families with a lower educational level but higher in families with a higher income.

Table 4.2. Results of the Seemingly Unrelated Regression Model. Unstandardized Coefficients and Standard Errors (N= 898)

	Model 1:		Model 2:		Model 3:		Model 4:	
	Father-child activities		Mother-child activities		Family leisure activities		Couple leisure activities	
	(z score)		(z score)		(z score)		(z score)	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Ref: Single earners								
FT/PT ^a	-.027	.097	-.208	.091*	.075	.096	.092	.089
FT/FT	-.110	.162	-.424	.152**	.050	.161	.421	.115*
Other	.037	.119	.187	.111 [†]	-.076	.096	-.037	.109
Work hours father	-.007	.003**	.008	.003**	-.010	.003**	-.008	.003**
Work hours mother	.007	.003*	-.003	.003	-.003	.003	.001	.003
Age youngest child	.035	.024	-.004	.022	.043	.024	.033	.022
Age youngest child squared	-.005	.001***	-.004	.001**	-.005	.001**	.003	.001*
Number of children	.033	.046	.038	.043	.031	.045	-.013	.042
Educational level parents	-.059	.019**	-.084	.018***	-.062	.019**	.030	.018 [†]
Family income	.008	.002***	.006	.002**	.006	.002*	.001	.002
Intercept	.392	.210 [†]	.586	.196**	.681	.200	-.492	.192
R^2	.0839		.1934		.0961		.2286	
p value	.0000		.0000		.0000		.0000	

^a FT = fulltime, PT = part-time

[†] = p < .10; * = p < .05; ** = p < .01; *** = p < .001.

Couple leisure is addressed in the fourth and final model. Compared to single earner families, the full-time/full-time parents participated more in couple activities despite the considerable time demands of their jobs. Although this directly contradicts our expectation, the negative association between the paternal work hours and couple leisure was in line with the conflict or time availability argument. Of the control variables, only the age of the youngest child seemed to be important, but again the relationship was nonlinear. Couples with older children participated more in couple leisure, and this effect became stronger with the age of the child. These effects indicate a trade-off between time with and without children, not only at a given time, but also over the life course. That is, parents focus on their offspring when the children are young, perhaps knowing that they can make up for foregone couple leisure when the children are older. In any case, couple time was better accounted for by the models than was family time, as indicated by the R^2 's.

In additional analyses (results not shown), we tested whether the effects of the work demands interacted with the age of the children in the household. These analyses yielded very few significant effects. The association between the fulltime/fulltime arrangement and family leisure was only significant (and negative) when there was a young child (youngest aged 7 or younger) present in the household. Moreover, the positive association between the paternal work hours and mother-child leisure (the compensation effect) was stronger in families with a young child as well.

4.5.3. The cross-equation hypotheses

Next, we statistically compared the relevant associations between the respondent's work demands and the respondent's reports of parent-child, family, and couple activities. T tests evaluated the null-hypothesis that the relation between, for example, paternal work hours and the frequency of father-child activities was equal to the relation between paternal work hours and the frequency of family activities. Unfortunately, when the standard error of one of the coefficients is very high, it is difficult to reject the null-hypotheses, even when one of the coefficients is significant whereas the other is not.

Although Hypothesis 1, based on social motivation theory, predicted that parents are more protective of activities that involve children, Table 4.2 shows that only the paternal work hours were negatively associated with couple leisure. The p value of the t test comparing the negative effect of the father's work hours on couple leisure with the negative effect of these hours on father-child leisure was .92, and the p value for the comparison between the effects on couple family leisure was .57. Hypothesis 1 that predicted that parents protect time with children more than time with partner is therefore rejected.

Table 4.3 presents the results of the t tests contrasting the impact of work on family leisure with that on one-on-one parent-child leisure. Hypothesis 2a stated that work has a greater impact on family leisure because it is more difficult to organize, whereas Hypothesis 2b expected work to have a greater impact on one-on-one leisure because family activities involve scale

Table 4.3. Seemingly Unrelated Regression Estimates of Frequencies of Family and Parent-Child Leisure: Unstandardized Regression Coefficients and Tests of Cross-Equation Differences with Family Leisure

	Family leisure	Comparison with father-child leisure		Comparison with mother-child leisure	
	$B_{\text{Family leisure}}$	$B_{\text{Father-child leisure}}$	p value t test	$B_{\text{Mother-child leisure}}$	p value t test
Ref: Single earners					
Full-time/part-time	.075	-.027	.294	-.208*	.002
Full-time/full-time	.050	-.110	.247	-.424**	.002
Other	-.076	.037	.343	.187 [†]	.333
Work hours father	-.010	-.007*	.422		
Work hours mother	-.003			-.003	.900

[†] = $p < .10$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$.

economies and are more strongly protected. Table 4.3 shows that the latter hypothesis receives more support.

The t tests showed no significant differences between the work arrangement effects on father-child and family leisure. This is not surprising because none of the work arrangements yielded a significant association with the father-child and family activities. For the mothers, we did see significant differences. The non-significant effects of the part-time/full-time and full-time/full-time arrangements on family leisure differed significantly from the negative and significant effects on mother-child leisure. Because more demanding work arrangements had a greater negative impact on mother-child leisure than on family leisure, these findings provide support for Hypothesis 2b emphasizing the efficiency of including all family members in one activity.

Finally, although the negative association between paternal work hours and one-on-one time with children was slightly larger than the negative association with family time, the difference was not statistically significant. The mother's work hours also yielded a significantly similar association with one-on-one and family leisure.

4.6. Conclusion and discussion

In this study we examined how work impinges upon leisure activities within the family. In line with the time conflict approach, we hypothesized that greater work demands, both on the individual and couple level, leave parents with less time to spend with their partner and children. In the second part of the study, we tested whether the relationship between work demands and leisure

activities differed for three different types of leisure: one-on-one parent-child, family, and couple leisure.

Work demands generally, but not always, decreased the frequency of leisure activities with family members. Parents who faced more demanding work participated less in one-on-one parent-child activities. For men, the number of work hours was important, whereas for women the couple's employment arrangement seemed to overrule the effect of their work hours. Of course, the differences between single-earner households and other work arrangements were mostly attributed to variations in the employment status of the mother. In contrast to the one-on-one mother-child activities, activities with the whole family were unaffected by the mother's work demands. Maternal work therefore seemed to have a larger impact on the former than on the latter type of leisure. This suggests that when the work demands increase, mothers cut down on one-on-one activities with children rather than on the family activities. This finding contradicts our hypothesis that was based on temporal organization theory and that stated that it is easier to organize leisure activities that involve fewer persons, but is in line with our economies of scale hypothesis. Strongly protecting activities with the whole family may be an efficient strategy to maximize family interaction. Moreover, the pay-offs of these activities may be higher, because the mother can share the responsibility of the children with the father and enjoy the company of her partner as well. These arguments seem to outweigh the more practical 'temporal organization' arguments. For fathers, work demands have a similar impact on their one-on-one activities with children as on family leisure. Apparently, men do not differentiate between parent-child and family activities and the positive externalities of family leisure appear to be less salient for them. Previous literature suggested that mothers more actively and consciously organize family activities (DeVault, 2000) and the economies of scale hypothesis may therefore apply more to mothers than to fathers.

Although the frequency of couple leisure is lower when the father works more hours, full-time/full-time working couples were found to participate more in couple leisure than their single-earner counterparts. Not only is this inconsistent with the time conflict approach, it also implies that work does not impinge disproportionately on couple leisure as social motivation theory predicted on the basis of modern parenthood ideologies that prescribe parents to prioritize child-related leisure. Explaining the absence of a relation between fathers' work overload and temporal involvement with their adolescent children, Crouter et al. (2001) argued that the frequency of joint activities is already so low that paternal absence does not make a difference. Extending this argument to our findings, work demands may not make a difference because the level of couple leisure is low. Moreover, this finding is in line with previous research in the Netherlands that found that full-time/full-time working couples held relatively modern attitudes and had active lifestyles (Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001; Van Gils, 2007). Also, full-time working couples may consciously participate more in leisure independent of children, in order make their relationship more resilient.

The finding that work demands have a different impact on family activities, depending on who participates, sheds new light on previous findings in the literature. The inconsistent and limited

effects of maternal work hours on the time may partly be explained by the ways in which mother-child time is measured. If mother-child time includes the time spent with the whole family, the effect of maternal work demands is likely to be tempered, as we showed that mothers strongly protect time with the whole family. Our results suggest that this distinction is not relevant for fathers. Moreover, because joint couple leisure is so often spent in the presence of children, the conclusions of previous research on couple leisure may actually apply to time with the whole family and not to one-on-one couple time.

Three limitations of this study should be mentioned. First, we studied associations, and not effects. Given the cross-sectional nature of our data, we cannot rule out the possibility of a selection effect. Parents may decrease their work demands because they want to maximize the time they spend with their children. Previous research has shown that mothers, in particular, adjust their work schedules to accommodate family demands (Presser, 1999). A second limitation is our lack of time diary data. More accurate reports might lead to lower standard errors, better *t* tests, and less discrepancy between parents' reports. "With whom" data, such as in the American Time Use Survey data used by Bianchi et al. (2006) and the new version of the Dutch time use survey promise a new and improved measurement approach to address family interaction patterns. Third, although employment status has a similar impact on child care time in the Netherlands and the U.S. (Bianchi et al., 2006) the prevalence and uptake of work-family benefits in the Netherlands may limit the generalizability of this study. Dutch parents can more easily adjust their work hours to match their family demands than, for example, American parents, increasing the risk of selection effects. Cross-national data could provide more insight into the ways in which institutional structures affect the impact of paid work.

Although this study has a strong time use focus, future research could further integrate its approach with the concepts and theories in the literature on parenting and sociology of leisure literature (Harrington, 2006). Greater attention to how family time is perceived is important in light of the observation that there is an element of work in leisure and vice versa (Moorhouse, 1989). Future research needs to explore the different meanings of family time, the role of gender, and how work demands affect not only the quantity but also the quality of family leisure activities and parenting.

Summarizing, this study contributed to the literature in three ways. First, we reaffirmed that parental work demands relate negatively to leisure and interaction within the family. Second, we showed that it is relevant to distinguish between the three types of family leisure: one-on-one parent-child leisure, family leisure, and couple leisure. Couple leisure seems to stand apart from parental activities with children in two ways: Not only is its absolute level lower, but the impact of work demands on couple leisure is much smaller than the impact on the activities with children. Third, although previous research has already shown that parent-child activities with and without the partner present differ in nature (Folbre et al., 2005) and consequences (Schneider et al., 2004), this study points to different determinants. The associations between work hours and time with children might be stronger if research were to focus on the parent's one-on-one activities with children rather than activities that also engage the partner.

Chapter 5

Work characteristics and parent-child relationship quality:

The mediating role of temporal involvement

This chapter is co-authored by Tanja van der Lippe and Esther Kluwer. A slightly different version is forthcoming in *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

5.1. Introduction

In Western societies, parental employment, and maternal full-time employment particularly, are often considered detrimental for the parent-child relationship, especially when children are young (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006). It has been argued that paid work harms the parent-child relationship because it restricts parents' available time and attention for children. Even though research has shown that this claim is largely unjust (Bianchi, 2000), the exact mechanisms that link parental paid work to the parent-child relationship need further examination. So far, studies on the impact of work demands on family life have focused either on the time spent with the family (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2006) or on aspects of the quality of family relationships, such as marital satisfaction and parent-adolescent conflict (e.g., Crouter, Bumpus, Head, & McHale, 2001; Schoen, Rogers, & Amato, 2006). Although the association between the two outcomes has seldom been considered, we argue that parents who face high work demands may have lower quality family relationships *because* their work restricts them from spending quality time with their family. This mechanism has been studied for the marital relationship (e.g., Poortman, 2005) but not for the parent-child relationship.

Expanding the current literature, we address the following research question: Do the amount and nature of parent-child activities mediate the association between parental work characteristics and parent-child relationship quality? In addition to studying the amount of time that parent and child spend together, we argue that the nature of joint time is relevant and that the parent-child relationship is more likely to benefit from activities that are more focused on the child and less interrupted by other activities.

We further contribute to the literature through our conceptualization of paid work. Previous research has focused mostly on paid work hours, but work is more than spending time away from home (MacEwen & Barling, 1991). For example, job insecurity and stress take time, energy, and attention away from the family as well. We therefore consider a wider range of work characteristics that are commonly examined in the literature on the family friendliness of organizations, namely the organizational culture, job insecurity, stress, flexibility, nonstandard work hours, and work engagement (e.g., Mauno & Kinunnen, 1999; Presser, 1994; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). We found this specific selection to be relevant for families in previous research and to encompass work experiences, as well as the psychological, normative, and temporal features of a job.

A final asset of this study is the inclusion of both fathers and mothers. Previous research on work and parent-child time has focused on mothers and has largely overlooked paternal employment. Yet fathers have increased their share of child care in recent decades (Bianchi, 2000; SCP, 2006), and their involvement benefits children's well-being (Amato & Rivera, 1999). The inclusion of fathers also enables us to examine gender differences.

5.2. Previous research

Many studies have found that work characteristics and parenting behavior are interrelated. Most studies have taken the work-stress perspective (Menaghan & Parcel, 1990), focusing on the detrimental effects of parental work, and have found that work stressors are associated with more parental role overload, withdrawal, and parent-adolescent conflict and with less parental nurturing behavior and parental acceptance (e.g., Crouter, Bumpus, Maguire & McHale, 1999; Crouter, Bumpus, Head et al., 2001; Larson, Wilson, & Beley, 1994; Repetti, 1994). Studies based on the work-socialization perspective have found that the family can also benefit from paid work (Menaghan & Parcel, 1990). Parents with more complex and challenging jobs show sounder parenting behavior and provide a more intellectual and physically suitable home environment for their children (e.g., Menaghan & Parcel, 1990; Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, & Crouter, 2000). A limited number of studies on paid work and the parent-child relationship specifically examined couples (Perry-Jenkins et al., 2000). For example, Bumpus, Crouter, and McHale (1999) found that work stressors decreased parents' knowledge of their children only when marital quality was low. With regard to the effects of work on the quality of the parent-child relationship, research is scarce. An exception is the study of Rogers and White (1998), who found that parents' employment status and schedule did not affect parent-child relationship quality.

The effects of parental work on parenting behavior have been found to be mediated by parental well-being (e.g., Galambos, Sears, Almeida, & Kolaric, 1995; MacEwen & Barling, 1991; for a review, see Perry-Jenkins et al., 2000). For example, Bumpus, Maguire et al. (1999) found that parental work pressure increased parental role overload, which, in turn, increased parent-adolescent conflict. Parental work does not only affect the parent's well-being, however; it also affects how much time parents spend with their children (Bianchi, 2000). Because the time parents spend with their children is a likely antecedent of the quality of the parent-child relationship (Huston & Rosenkrantz Aronson, 2005), we expect that joint parent-child time is a relevant mediator in the association between parental work and the parent-child relationship. We did not come across studies that examined parent-child time as a possible mediator, although two studies have addressed this possibility indirectly. First, Crouter, Bumpus, Head et al. (2001) studied the impact of parental work overload on both father-adolescent time and conflict. They found an effect of work overload only on conflict, and from that, they concluded that joint time did not mediate the association between work overload and father-adolescent conflict. Second, Huston and Rosenkrantz Aronson (2005) found that employed mothers spent less time with their infants than did nonemployed mothers, which decreased the mother-child relationship quality. We thus propose that the effects of parental work characteristics on parent-child relationship quality are indirect and run via the amount and nature of parent-child activities.

5.3. Theoretical framework

5.3.1. *The mediating effect of the amount of parent-child time*

Hypotheses on the effects of parental work characteristics on parent-child time can be derived from the two central theoretical approaches in the literature: the conflict approach and the enrichment approach. The conflict approach (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) states that time, attention, and energy are scarce resources that have to be divided between work and family. More demanding work characteristics therefore reduce the amount of parent-child time. Most empirical studies have focused on the impact of paid work hours, to find that these reduce the time spent with children (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2006; Brayfield, 1995; Coverman, 1985). Nevertheless, the effects were small and sometimes even absent (e.g., Crouter, Bumpus, Maguire et al. 2001; Nock & Kingston, 1988). In addition to paid work hours, we argue that a “family-unfriendly” organizational culture, job insecurity, and stress are work stressors as well, as they too absorb time, energy, and attention. Previous research has suggested that these work characteristics decrease individual well-being (e.g., Thompson et al., 1999; Van der Lippe, 2007), which is likely to restrict parents’ attention and energy at home and cause them to be less tuned in to their children’s needs. We therefore expect that longer work hours, a less family-friendly organizational culture, job insecurity, and stress are associated with a lower frequency of parent-child activities (*Hypothesis 1a*). Figure 5.1 depicts this hypothesis.

Not all work characteristics can be labeled “work stressors”. The enrichment approach (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) proposes an alternative model that focuses on positive effects across roles. Skills, abilities, and values that are acquired in the work domain and positive experiences at work that increase a parent’s general well-being can improve interactions at home (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). When parents come home from work energetic instead of tired, they are more likely to feel like playing with their children rather than, for example, let the children watch television while reading the newspaper. As such, positive work experiences enhance the frequency of parent-child activities. A job can also offer resources that facilitate the combination of work and care. On the basis of this approach, it could be argued that facilitating work characteristics enhance parents’ time and energy availability, and are therefore likely to increase the frequency of parent-child activities. Parents who work nonstandard hours and with more flexible jobs can arrange their work in such a way that they match their hours to their children’s needs and availability. Moreover, work engagement or flow is likely to increase parental well-being and create energy that enhances parent-child activities (Bakker & Geurts, 2004).

Despite the likely beneficial aspects of job flexibility, nonstandard hours, and work engagements, arguments from the conflict approach may pertain to the above-mentioned work characteristics as well. Nonstandard schedules create challenges because parents who work such schedules regularly work during family hours on evenings and weekends (Presser, 1994). Similarly, job flexibility erodes the boundaries between work and family (Peters & Van der Lippe,

2007). And although work engagement is likely to create energy, it also increases work commitment, which could come at the expense of commitment to the family (Bielby, 1992). Because arguments from both the enrichment and the conflict approach apply, we formulate two competing hypotheses for these “double-edged” work characteristics: More job flexibility, working nonstandard hours, and more work engagement are associated with a *higher* frequency of parent-child activities, according to the enrichment approach (*Hypothesis 1b*) or with a *lower* frequency of parent-child activities, according to the conflict approach (*Hypothesis 1c*).

It is generally assumed that parents who spend more time with their children develop a better relationship with them (e.g., Hays, 1996; Hochschild, 1997). Both attachment theory (Hill, 1988) and self-expansion theory (Ickes & Duck, 2000) argue that spending time together raises mutual understanding. Moreover, joint activities can be considered relationship-specific investments that strengthen mutual commitment (Hill, 1988). Although the association between joint time and relationship quality has been investigated for the marital relationship (e.g., Claxton & Perry-Jenkins, 2008), this is much less the case for the parent-child relationship. Nevertheless, Huston and Rosenkrantz Aronson (2005) found that mothers who spent more time with their children showed more nurturing maternal behavior, although there was no effect on the child’s engagement. Moreover, contact and affection between parents and adult children are both dimensions of intergenerational solidarity (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). We thus expect that a lower frequency of parent-child activities is associated with a lower parent-child relationship quality (*Hypothesis 2*).

5.3.2. The mediating effect of the nature of parent-child time

Time-use research showed that people – women in particular – often multitask and that secondary activities affect the nature of primary activities (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2006; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003). A child-related activity that is combined with a work-related activity has a different nature from that of an activity solely focused on the child. *Contamination* refers to the occurrence of secondary activities. For example, a parent-child activity is contaminated when a parent is ruminating about a work-related problem while playing with his or her children. A second aspect of the nature of time is *fragmentation* (Bittman & Wacjman, 2000, Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003). A child-related activity is more fragmented when the episodes are short because of interruptions by other activities, such as a phone call from work. Although studies on the impact of mothers’ employment status on the contamination and fragmentation of leisure yielded mixed results (Bittman & Wacjman, 2000), Mattingly and Bianchi (2003) found that more work hours reduce the quality of leisure activities because they are more contaminated and fragmented.

On the basis of the conflict and enrichment approaches, we expect that work experiences are more likely to spill over to the family domain and disturb parent-child time when a job absorbs more time, energy, and attention. The term disturbance refers to both contamination and fragmentation. With regard to work stressors, we expect that jobs that are “greedier” put a larger

claim on family life, forcing parents to be strongly involved in their work and constantly stay updated. This may cause parents to invest more mental energy in their work, even when they are interacting with their children. It may also be more difficult for such parents to buffer work encroachments. For example, when a mother comes back from work late, she has less time to regain her energy, which may make it hard to focus on her children without thinking about work. Similarly, when a manager shows little family support and expects employees to work during the weekend, his or her employees are more likely to work or be preoccupied with work during the weekend. We therefore expect longer hours, a less family-friendly organizational culture, job insecurity, and stress to be associated with more disturbance of parent-child time (*Hypothesis 3a*).

We further presume that double-edged work characteristics increase the disturbance of parent-child time. Work may interfere more with family activities when nonstandard hours and flexibility make it more difficult to separate paid work and family life. Moreover, parents who are more engaged in their work may be more inclined to take their work home. We thus hypothesize that more flexibility, nonstandard hours, and more work engagement are associated with more disturbance of joint parent-child activities (*Hypothesis 3b*).

Previous research studied contamination and fragmentation not as antecedents, but as outcomes, and simply assumed that more disturbance results in less quality time with detrimental outcomes for those involved (e.g., Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003). We expect parents to establish higher quality relationships with their children when joint activities are less disturbed by work. A stronger focus on the child improves communication and enables parents to tune in to their children's needs. Moorehouse (1991) indeed found that children did better in school when mother-child activities were more child focused. The final hypothesis therefore states that more disturbance of parent-child time is associated with a lower parent-child relationship quality (*Hypothesis 4*).

The theoretical expectations, discussed above, can be combined, which results in a conceptual model as presented in Figure 5.1. Because previous research has consistently showed that men and women respond differently to the demands from work and the family (e.g., Bielby, 1992; Galambos et al., 1995; Hochschild, 1997), we distinguished between fathers and mothers in our analyses. As this study is the first to disentangle the association among work characteristics, joint time, and parent-child time, we focus on how parents' own work characteristics affect the relationship with their children. Because we acknowledge that parents are likely to affect each other's involvement in the family (e.g., Brayfield, 1995), we explored how the interdependency between the partners affected the results in an additional model. We controlled for standard family characteristics: age of the youngest child, number of children in the household, whether the youngest child is an adolescent, the parent's relationship status, and educational level. Children demand close supervision and attention when they are young, and joint time and relationship quality decrease when children reach adolescence (Buist, Dekovic, Meeus, & Van Aken, 2002; Crouter, Bumpus, Head et al., 2001). More children and being single increase family demands and overall parent-child time. We also controlled for the parent's

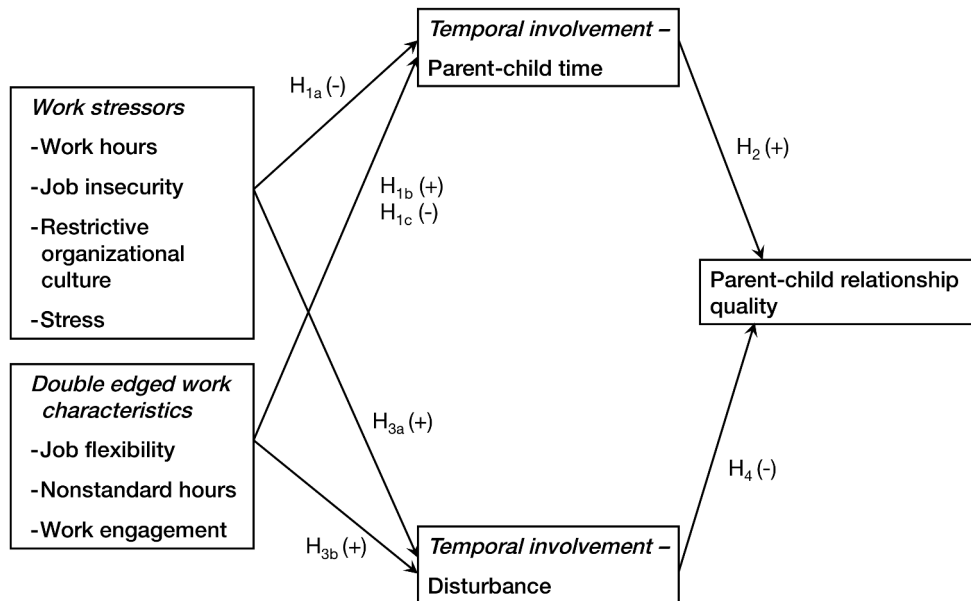


Figure 5.1. Conceptual model.

educational level, as more educated parents have been found to invest more in their children’s upbringing (Bianchi et al., 2006).

5.4. Method

5.4.1. Data, sample, and response

We tested the hypotheses with Dutch household data collected in the spring of 2007 through a computer-based e-mail survey. Recruited through the Taylor Nelson Sofres–Netherlands Institute for Public Opinion (TNS-NIPO) Household Panel, more than 200,000 households were involved. Households without access to the Internet were provided with a computer. Because of the large panel size, we could approach a sample that was representative in terms of work arrangements, gender, and educational level. Nevertheless, the data underrepresent ethnic minorities, and it is likely that respondents facing very high work and family demands did not take part in the panel because of those demands.

Of the 4,912 parents with minor children who were contacted, 2,816 (57.3%) filled out the questionnaire. Although this response rate is low in comparison with the United States, it complies with what is common in the Netherlands (Stoop, 2005). We selected the final sample in

two steps. First, we selected parents with school-aged children (i.e., 4 – 18 years old) because we expected little meaningful variation in parent-child relationship quality for babies and toddlers. This excluded 763 parents (27.1%) of the initial sample. Second, we selected parents in paid employment, excluding another 116 parents (8.1%) from the sample. The final sample consisted of 1,008 fathers and 929 mothers. In 583 cases, both partners of the same household were in the data set. We dealt with the nested structure of the data by running separate models for the fathers and mothers.

5.4.2. Measures

Independent variables. Our model included seven work characteristics. Paid work hours (including overtime) were measured by asking respondents how many hours they worked in the week preceding the survey. We assessed the work-family culture using a shortened version of the Family Friendliness scale (Thompson et al., 1999). We took the mean score over 12 items (e.g., “In the event of a conflict, managers are not understanding when employees have to put their family first”), each ranging from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*. Higher values indicated less family-friendly and more restrictive norms. The α was .89 for fathers and .88 for mothers. Job insecurity was measured with five items, such as “I am worried that I will lose my job” (Crompton, Lewis, & Lyonette, 2007), with answer categories ranging from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree* (α = .80 for fathers and .81 for mothers). Higher scores indicated more job insecurity. Stress was based on the scale developed by Pearlin and Schooler (1978) and included seven items. Respondents were asked to think about their job and indicate how often they felt annoyed, concerned, tensed, unhappy, frustrated, satisfied (reversed), and relaxed (reversed) (1 = *never* to 5 = *always*) (α = .86 for fathers and .85 for mothers). Taking the mean score resulted in a final scale with higher values indicating more stress. The scale for job flexibility was based on two questions: “To what extent do you determine when you start and end work?” (1 = *others fully determine this* to 5 = *I fully determine this*) and “When something unexpected happens, is it possible for you to take time off or work from home?” (1 = *this is impossible* to 5 = *this is very well possible*). The correlation between the answers was .25 for fathers and .32 for mothers. Respondents were assigned a 1 on the dummy variable nonstandard hours when they worked rotating shifts or when they reported working during evenings, nights and weekends on a regular basis and a 0 when they did not. Work engagement, finally, was measured with six items related to the enjoyment of their job, such as “I feel full of energy at work” and “My work inspires me” (Crompton et al., 2007). The α was .93 for both fathers and mothers. Higher values corresponded with more engagement.

Mediating variables. To measure the frequency of joint activities, respondents were asked to rate how often they participated in a range of child-related activities, such as having dinner and watching television together, in the week preceding the survey. This type of question is similar to the “estimated daily activities with children” measure (Bianchi et al., 2006, p. 79) and was assessed for 18 one-on-one parent-child activities (without the partner) and 10 family activities (in which the partner participated as well). Response categories ranged from 0 = *never* to 6 =

more than three times per day. We constructed the final measure by taking the mean score ($\alpha = .88$ for fathers and $.89$ for mothers), which resulted in a score ranging from 0 (low frequency) to 6 (high frequency). We replicated the time-diary measures of contamination and fragmentation through a self-developed scale, which asked parents how often their attention was directed to work while spending time with their children and how often work-related activities interrupted their activities with their children. This scale on disturbance of parent-child activities consisted of seven items, such as “While I am interacting with my children I often think about work” and “Activities with my family are often interrupted because my work contacts me.” The α was $.78$ for fathers and $.74$ for mothers. A higher score indicated more disturbance by paid work.

Dependent variable. We measured parent-child relationship quality with six questions, based on a scale developed by Rogers and White (1998). Examples are “How well is the overall relationship with your children?” and “How close do you feel to your children?” The questions had five answer categories (e.g., ranging from *not well* to *very well* for the first example). The reliability of the scale was good, with α of $.78$ for fathers and $.79$ for mothers. The scores on the parent-child relationship items were negatively skewed. We performed a log transformation to reduce the skew, but this did not alter the results. We therefore decided to include the original, nontransformed variables in the model.

Control variables. We included as controls number of children, age of the youngest child, a dummy variable indicating whether the youngest child is an adolescent (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*), and educational level of the parent (ranging from 1 = *primary school unfinished* to 11 = *Ph.D. degree*). We also controlled for type of household and structure of the data by including dummies indicating whether the respondent was a single parent (0 = *married or cohabiting*, 1 = *single*) and (if applicable) whether the respondent’s partner participated in the survey as well (0 = *yes*, 1 = *no*).

5.4.3. Method of analysis

Structural equation modeling provided us with the opportunity to test the entire path model and to include a measurement model for our main latent variables, relationship quality and disturbance of joint time. To keep the model parsimonious, the frequency of joint activities and the independent variables were included as item parcels. We used AMOS to estimate the models (Arbuckle, 2006); AMOS automatically deals with missing values, excluding the respondents with missing data on a particular variable in the estimation of the equations in which this variable is included.

We based our analytical strategy on the suggestions of Shrout and Bolger (2002). They argued that, when there are theoretical reasons to expect that the mediation process is distal rather than proximal, one can immediately examine the indirect effects in a mediation model, without testing the direct effects first as other analytical strategies do. This argument applies, because it is unlikely that changes in work characteristics have an immediate effect on the relationship quality. The relationship quality is grounded in past experiences and depends on many factors in the

family domain; therefore, a change in work characteristics may have no direct consequences for relationship quality. Because it is unlikely to detect an overall effect, it is unnecessary to test this. Immediate testing of indirect effects in a path model also makes it possible to detect suppressor effects. For example, the beneficial effect of work engagement on relationship quality, as Hypotheses 1b and 2 predicted, may cancel out the detrimental effect predicted by Hypotheses 3a and 4 – this would become apparent when a path model is estimated.

5.5. Results

5.5.1. Descriptive and bivariate analyses

Table 5.1 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables in the model as well as the p values of the t tests of gender differences. The parents in the sample had an average of slightly less than two children and the average age of the youngest child was around 11 ($M = 11.18$ for fathers and $M = 10.63$ for mothers). The youngest child was an adolescent in about half the families, and the average educational level was about 13 years of education. Mothers reported significantly higher levels of parent-child relationship quality than did fathers and participated more in activities with their children. They also reported fewer disturbances of parent-child activities, but the difference with fathers was small. Finally, mothers worked significantly fewer paid hours; reported more family-friendly work-family norms, stress, and flexibility than fathers; and experienced slightly more job insecurity.

Table 5.2 shows the correlations for the fathers and mothers separately. The results for fathers (located under the diagonal) show that the father-child relationship quality was positively associated with the frequency of father-child activities and negatively associated with the level of disturbance. The correlations were highly similar for mothers (located above the diagonal). Nevertheless, the mother-child relationship did not yield an association with the disturbance of parent-child activities.

5.5.2. Explanatory analyses

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 present the results of the structural equation model for fathers and mothers, respectively. The model for fathers had a good fit, with a chi-square of 611.293 (230 degrees of freedom [df]), a comparative fit index (CFI) of .954, and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .041. The fit of the model for the mothers was reasonable to good, with a chi-square of 639.354 ($df = 230$), a CFI of .941, and a RMSEA of .044. The models explained 26% and 27% of the variance for fathers and mothers, respectively.

Table 5.1. Family Variables, Work Variables, and Control variables: Descriptive Statistics
(N_{fathers} = 1,008; N_{mothers} = 929)

	Fathers			Mothers			<i>t</i> test ^a
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Parent-child relationship quality	1,008	3.83	.48	929	3.96	.49	.000
Frequency of joint activities	1,008	1.77	.43	929	1.91	.52	.000
Disturbance	1,008	2.57	.45	929	2.49	.43	.000
Work hours	1,008	39.53	11.92	929	22.61	12.73	.000
Restrictive organizational culture	913	1.65	.63	815	1.53	.60	.000
Job insecurity	1,008	2.35	.77	929	2.39	.76	.000
Stress	1,008	2.11	.57	929	2.01	.55	.000
Flexibility	913	2.97	1.01	815	2.76	.99	.000
Nonstandard hours ^b	1,008	.40	.49	929	.42	.49	.379
Work engagement	1,008	3.42	.85	929	3.45	.85	.438
Age youngest child	1,008	11.18	4.45	929	10.63	4.28	
Number of children	1,008	1.91	.79	929	1.86	.78	
Adolescent ^c	1,008	.50	.50	929	.47	.50	
Educational level	1,008	6.43	1.97	929	6.29	1.82	
Single parent ^d	1,008	.07	.25	929	.07	.26	
Nonresponding partner ^e	942	.29	.46	864	.28	.45	

^a *p* value of *t* test for equality in means of the fathers and mothers. ^b 0 = Respondent works standard hours, 1 = respondent works nonstandard work hours. ^c 0 = Youngest child is 11 years old or younger, 1 = youngest child is 12 years or older. ^d 0 = Respondent has a partner, 1 = respondent is a single parent. ^e 0 = Respondent's partner also participated, 1 = respondent's partner did not respond (if applicable).

For both fathers and mothers, work hours and work engagement were associated with frequency of parent-child activities (Hypotheses 1a–1c). Parents participated less in these activities when they worked longer hours and experienced fewer work engagements. The frequency of mother-child activities was also lower when mothers worked nonstandard hours. The positive effects of work engagement and nonstandard hours supported Hypothesis 1b and rejected Hypothesis 1c. The second part of the model shows that parents who reported higher frequencies of parent-child activities reported better parent-child relationship quality. This confirmed Hypothesis 2. Thus, paid work hours and work engagement had an indirect effect on the relationship quality, through the amount of joint time. Working nonstandard hours also yielded an indirect effect for mothers.

Table 5.2. Correlations Between the Independent and Dependent Variables for Fathers and Mothers
(Fathers Under the Diagonal, Mothers Above the Diagonal) ($N_{\text{fathers}} = 1,008$; $N_{\text{mothers}} = 929$)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Relationship quality	–	.33***	.05	.07*	-.04	-.09**	-.12***	.04	.05	.16***
2. Frequency of parent-child activities	.33***	–	-.06†	-.12***	-.00	-.06†	-.05	.03	-.06*	.07*
3. Disturbance	-.07*	-.07*	–	.27***	.14***	.07*	.12***	-.00	.18***	.13***
4. Work hours	-.01	-.14***	.29***	–	.02	-.09**	-.16***	.03	.10**	.18***
5. Restrictive organizational culture	-.08*	-.02	.15***	.12***	–	-.36***	-.37***	-.05	-.02	.32***
6. Job insecurity	-.15***	-.03	.03	-.06*	.17***	–	.27***	.14***	-.05	-.24***
7. Stress	-.14***	-.04	.11***	.01	.36***	.40***	–	-.13***	.01	-.46***
8. Flexibility	.05	.01	.12***	-.02	-.24***	-.29***	-.12***	–	-.28***	.05
9. Nonstandard hours	.00	.03	.05	.21***	.07*	.01	.02	-.22***	–	.06
10. Work engagement	.19***	.05	.17***	.14***	.30***	-.36***	-.53***	.19***	.06	–

† = $p < .10$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$.

In line with Hypothesis 3a, parent-child activities were more disturbed when parents worked longer hours, the organizational culture was less family-friendly, and stress was higher. Job insecurity was not associated with the nature of joint time, for neither fathers nor mothers. With regard to double-edged work characteristics, the results showed that the level of disturbance was higher when parents experienced more flexibility and reported more work engagement. Nonstandard hours yielded an additional, positive, effect for mothers. Hypothesis 3b therefore is largely confirmed. Hypothesis 4 predicted that the disturbance of parent-child activities was negatively associated with the parent-child relationship. Paid work hours, the family-friendliness of the organizational culture, stress, level of flexibility, nonstandard hours (for mothers only), and work engagement thus yielded an indirect effect on the parent-child relationship quality, through the disturbance of parent-child activities. A few work characteristics affected the relationship quality directly. Controlling for the amount and disturbance of parent-child time, parent-child relationship quality was better when parents worked longer hours and reported more work engagement.

Additional analyses. To test whether the interdependency between the coupled fathers and mothers affected the results, we ran an additional model in which we estimated the models for fathers and mothers simultaneously, and we added covariances between the father's and the

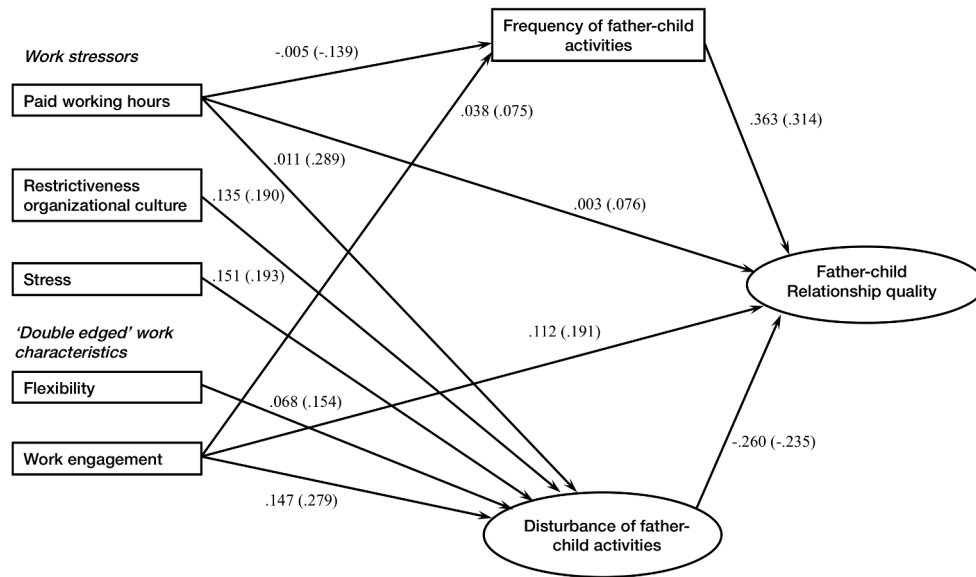


Figure 5.2. Results of the structural equation model for fathers. Significant paths (on the .05 level) and unstandardized coefficients (N = 1,008). Results for the control variables omitted. χ^2 : 611.293, df = 230, CFI = .954, RMSEA = .041.

mother's parent-child time, disturbance, and parent-child quality (results not reported). The estimates in that model did not show any substantial differences from the separate models, which implies that interdependency between partners did not affect the associations between the constructs in our conceptual model. Moreover, we combined the models for fathers and mothers in a multigroup analysis and tested whether setting equality constraints on the paths for the fathers and mothers altered the results. The model deterioration was significant, which implies that the models for fathers and mothers were significantly different. This had only a minimal impact on the effects, however. The significance levels of the effects decreased and the effects of nonstandard hours that were significant only for mothers were significant for the full model. Finally, we tested whether the effects of paid work hours were nonlinear, but including the work hours squared did not result in a significant improvement of the model, which suggests that the effects are similar for part-time and full-time employed mothers.

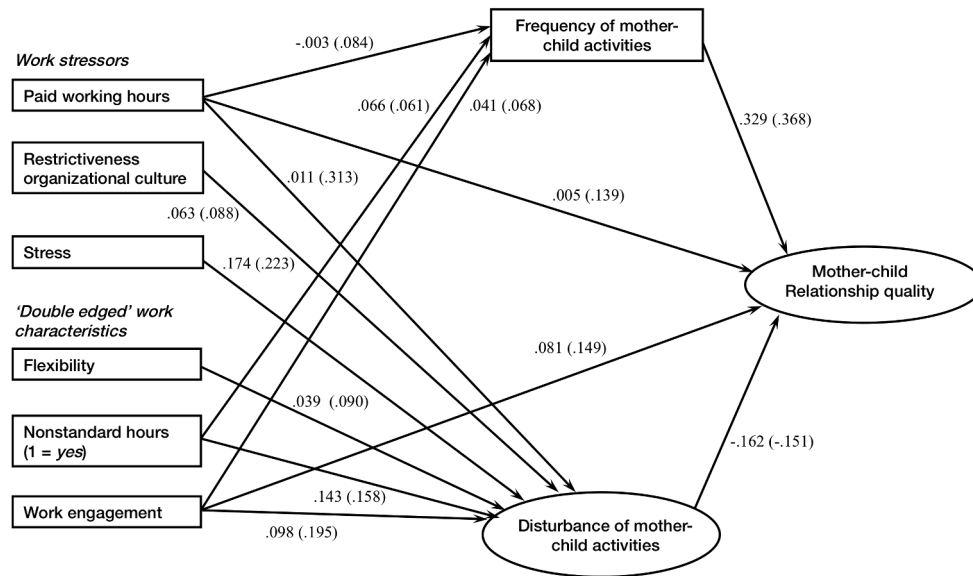


Figure 5.3. Results of the structural equation model for mothers. Significant paths (on the .05 level) and unstandardized coefficients (N = 929). Results for the control variables omitted. χ^2 : 639.354, $df = 230$, CFI = .941, RMSEA = .044.

5.6. Conclusions and discussion

The results of this study indicate that the time parents spend with their children plays a central role in the mechanisms that link parental paid work and the parent-child relationship quality. The effects of paid work on the parent-child relationship quality ran largely through parents' temporal involvement. Parents who worked longer hours and experienced less work engagement spent less time with their children, and that decrease in joint time, in turn, resulted in a lower relationship quality. The results also implied that it was not merely the amount of time that mattered but also *how* that time was spent. When parent-child activities were less focused on the child, because parents were preoccupied with or interrupted by their work, the quality of the parent-child relationship was lower. Work characteristics that make a parent's job greedier and that increased the disturbance of parent-child time were paid work hours, family-friendliness of the organizational culture, flexibility, stress, and work engagement. Although previous research on the work-family interface has provided ample evidence for the existence of gender differences (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2006), we found that fathers and mothers responded to these work characteristics in surprisingly similar ways. Apparently, fathers and mothers are more

similar than different when it comes to the effects of paid work on the relationship with their children.

Our theoretical framework incorporated insights from the conflict and the enrichment approaches, and the results provided evidence for both. The detrimental effects of paid work hours, a “family-unfriendly” organizational culture, stress, and flexibility suggest that these work characteristics deplete family life. Although job flexibility is generally considered a resource rather than a work demand, it can also harm family life by eroding the boundary between the work and the family domains (Peters & Van der Lippe, 2007). The results for the other work stressors were less clear-cut. First, mothers who worked during nonstandard hours spent more time with their children, but their mother-child activities were more disturbed by work. Work engagement, second, was a particularly interesting case. Engagement harmed the parent-child relationship quality because it increased the level of disturbance while benefitting the relationship quality, both directly and indirectly through the amount of parent-child time. Finally, paid work hours harmed parent-child relationship quality by decreasing the amount and increasing the disturbance of parent-child time, but parents who worked more hours also reported higher quality parent-child relationships. This may reflect a beneficial effect of multiple role combination (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Huston & Rosenkrantz Aronson, 2005), and this finding again stresses the importance of including both the enrichment and the conflict approaches in the study’s theoretical framework.

Because the data were self-reported and cross-sectional, we cannot exclude certain alternative explanations for the results. The parent-child relationship is a sensitive issue and a survey on this topic may elicit socially desirable answers. Because we did not have any child data, we could not validate the reports of the parents, nor could we check for common method variance. Moreover, it is possible that the parent-child relationship quality affects the amount and nature of joint time, as parents are likely to spend more quality time with their children when affection is higher (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). Also, the association between disturbance and relationship quality may be confounded if a third unmeasured variable, such as negative affectivity, affects both. Similarly, work involvement and involvement in the family may be determined simultaneously and have common causes, such as certain personality traits or socioeconomic characteristics. Furthermore, selection effects could (partly) account for the findings in this study: Parents can purposively select a job that accommodates their strong involvement with their children. Previous research showed that especially mothers are likely to do so (e.g., Becker & Moen, 1999), and it has been argued that this is likely to buffer the effects of work (Bianchi et al., 2006). The risk of selection effects is particularly high in the Netherlands, where part-time jobs are widely accessible and maternal full-time employment is generally considered harmful for children (SCP, 2006). A cross-national study that would consider differences in social policies and cultural norms could provide more insight in the implications for the impact of paid work on family life.

To conclude, our study has provided new insights into the mechanisms that link paid work to family outcomes. Whereas previous research considered parent-child time and the quality of the

parent-child relationship as separate outcomes, our results suggest that parental work influences the parent-child relationship *via* the amount and, especially, the nature of joint parent-child time. Moreover, we showed that certain work characteristics both benefit and harm relationship quality. For example, work engagement led to more parent-child time, improving the parent-child relationship, but at the same time it resulted in more disturbed parent-child time, which lowered the parent-child relationship. Applying a sociological time-use perspective appeared useful in revealing new pathways that link paid work to the quality of family relations, and this approach promises to be fruitful in explaining other family phenomena, such as child well-being. Another interesting avenue for future research would be to explore within-couple processes and examine whether relationships in the family depend on the combination of the work characteristics of the father and mother.

Chapter 6

Cross-national differences in the impact of parental work hours
and time with children in Europe

This chapter is currently under review.

6.1. Introduction

In 2007, UNICEF presented a comparative study on child well-being in Western industrialized countries and concluded that children are best off in Northern European countries, in part because parents in these countries spend a relatively large amount of time with their children (UNICEF, 2007). The Northern European countries are also the countries where parents spend a great deal of their time on the labor market (Esping-Andersen, 1999) and these findings therefore challenge the widespread belief that paid work restricts parents in spending time with their children (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; “Female Power,” 2010; Nuffield Foundation, 2009), although it is not yet clear how parents deal with work-related restrictions. Nevertheless, results from prior research suggest that parents strongly protect family time from work encroachments (e.g., Becker & Moen, 1999; Nock & Kingston, 1988). The current study examines parents’ opportunities to protect family life by studying whether the impact of paid work hours on parent-child time is conditioned by the country context. Do European countries differ with regard to the association between parental work hours and the time parents spend with children? And if so, do cross-national differences in family policies and norms, that affect parents’ opportunities to protect family life, account for these differences?

Although parent’s time is generally depicted as a fixed resource that has to be divided between paid work and the family (e.g., Becker, 1965; Coverman, 1985; Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), prior research found that paid work only has a minimal effect on the time parents spend with their children (e.g., Bianchi 2000; Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie 2006; Crouter, Bumpus, Head, & McHale, 2001; Gauthier, Smeeding, & Furstenberg, 2004; Nock & Kingston, 1988). Some authors criticized the “fixed pie” perspective by arguing that parents do not react passively to the demands that are imposed on them, but that they act strategically instead and find different ways to limit detrimental influences from other domains such as the work domain (Bianchi, 2000; Becker & Moen, 1999; England & Farkas, 1986; Moen & Wethington, 1992). For example, parents can leave work early to pick children up from school and finish work in the evenings or reduce their work hours altogether. Such “family adaptive” (Moen & Wethington, 1992) or “work-family strategies” (Becker & Moen, 1999) minimize the extent to which paid work hours cut into parent-child time as they enable parents to combine their family responsibilities with their role as an employee (Bianchi et al., 2006).

According to Moen and Wethington (1992) it is essential to consider the country context when studying how families deal with external pressures, because countries can either restrict or facilitate strategies that minimize work encroachments. Countries vary in the extent to which they support and stimulate the combination of work and family demands and allow parents to reduce their work hours. Prior research suggests that three types of country characteristics may be relevant. First, work and family demands may more easily be combined in countries and welfare states where parents receive more government support through “reconciliation policies”, such as leave arrangements and child care (Den Dulk & Van Doorne-Huiskens, 2007; Esping-Andersen, 1999; Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Plantenga & Remery, 2005; Sayer, Gauthier, &

Furstenberg, 2004). Second, cultural norms may have implications for the extent to which parents (are allowed to) let work intrude upon parent-child time. Third, parents can more easily reduce their work hours when institutional and financial restrictions are lower and part-time work is more widely accessible (Sayer et al., 2004). The current study extends prior research on the impact of work on parent-child time by investigating whether country-level policies, earnings, and social norms are relevant for employed parents in the sense that they increase or reduce the impact of parental work hours on parent-child time. I use data from the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) 2005 on 23 European countries to do this.

Family life can benefit, as well as suffer, from parental employment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Roeters, Van der Lippe, & Kluwer, in press), but I focus on work demands, and work hours in particular, because work hours are the most commonly considered work-related antecedent of parent-child time. Moreover, although it is likely that work-family strategies are determined on the couple level as well as on the individual level (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; Coverman, 1985; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Presser, 1995; Roeters & Treas, in press; Roeters, Van der Lippe, & Kluwer, 2009), I will look at the individual parents. Studying cross-national differences in the association between work hours and parent-child time among individual parents is a first step in exploring work-family strategies. Also, despite some exceptions, such as the French time use data (Lesnard, 2008), couple data are rare, which makes it difficult to draw a cross-national comparison.

6.2. Previous research

Several studies compared the time parents spend with their children across countries. Notable examples are the studies of Sayer et al. (2004), who compared Canada, Germany, Italy, and Norway in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and Gauthier et al. (2004), who covered sixteen industrialized countries between the 1970s and 2000. Because both studies focused on trends in time use, the authors mentioned the cross-country variation in parent-child time but did not analyze the underlying pattern. Cross-national differences in the *association* between work hours and parent-child time have been addressed by a only limited number of studies thus far. Stone (1972) compared twelve Western countries and found that the effects of maternal employment on mother-child time were particularly strong in France and the U.S. Furthermore, Bianchi et al. (2006) found that the effect of women's employment status was slightly weaker in the Netherlands and France than in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. Neither of these studies provided an explanation for the cross-national differences that were found.

Cross-national variations in the effects of determinants of parent-child time other than work hours and cross-national differences in the determinants of unpaid labor in general have been studied more extensively. For example, Sayer et al. (2004)'s compared educational differences in parent-child time across four countries and found that the impact of education for fathers was weaker in Germany and Norway than in Canada and Italy. The authors argued that economic

support for families, which is higher in Germany and Norway, decreases the educational gap because it enables lower educated fathers to free more time for their children. Hook (2006) specifically tested whether country characteristics conditioned the effects of family demands on men's unpaid work (including, but not limited to, child care) and demonstrated that men's unpaid work was more responsive to family demands in countries where mothers worked longer hours and fathers had better access to parental leave arrangements. She attributed these effects to women's stronger bargaining power in these countries. Finally, Fuwa (2004) hypothesized that inequalities on the macro-level would counteract the effects of micro-level power benefits of women and indeed found that women's time availability had a weaker impact on the division of household labor in countries that were less gender-egalitarian.

6.3. Hypotheses

6.3.1. Individual level base hypothesis

The starting point of the theoretical framework is formed by a base hypothesis on the effect on the individual level: the longer a parent's paid work hours, the less time this parent spends with his or her children (*Base Hypothesis*). Although prior research found that being in paid employment and working longer hours reduced parent-child time only to a limited extent (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2006; Coverman, 1985; Crouter et al., 2001; Gauthier et al., 2004; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Zick & Bryant, 1996), the "fixed pie" approach remains the dominant framework in the literature and offers a suitable starting base for the hypotheses on the country characteristics.

If parents indeed protect family life from work encroachments, as is suggested by Moen and Wethington (1992) and Becker and Moen (1999), the extent to which the base hypothesis hold is likely to depend on the parents' opportunities to employ work-family strategies. I examine two types of work-family strategies emerge from the literature: Parents can either take an effort to *reconcile* high work and high family demands or they can *reduce* their work demands (Becker & Moen, 1999; Bianchi et al., 2006: 86; Casper & Bianchi, 2002; Gauthier et al., 2004; Moen & Wethington, 1992). Below, I will formulate hypotheses on the specific country characteristics that can facilitate or restrict the use of these strategies.

6.3.2. Opportunities to reconcile work and family demands

The "fixed pie" assumption that work hours cut directly into parent-child time does not take into account how work and family demands are organized and planned. When parents can fine-tune their work and family responsibilities, work encroachments can be limited (Becker & Moen, 1999; Bittman, 2009). Job flexibility permits parents to arrange work and family life in a way that is most efficient and favorable considering their specific circumstances. For example, flexible work

arrangements allow parents to work when children are not available (because they are in school, involved in extra-curricular activities, or sleeping) and be at home when the children are available. This decision latitude allows parents to protect and attend to family responsibilities, even when they work long hours. The extent to which parents have the opportunity to reconcile work and family responsibilities is likely to depend on two country-level factors: the availability of reconciliation policies and cultural norms regarding work and children.

First, policies directed at the reconciliation of work and family life are likely to create a buffer for negative work-to-home interference because they provide working parents with flexibility. Or, as Sayer et al. (2004) stated: “Family policies and programs (...) may provide more *degrees of freedom* to all parents in making decisions about time allocation” (p.1153, emphasis by the authors). Prior cross-national research indicated that Northern European, Social Democratic countries offer a wider range of reconciliation policies than Continental, Anglo-Saxon and Southern European countries (e.g., Esping-Andersen, 1999; Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Hook, 2006; OECD, 2007; Plantenga & Remery, 2005; Poelmans & Caligiuri, 2008; Sayer et al., 2004) and it is therefore likely that parents in Northern European countries have more opportunities to reconcile high work and family demands. Social policies also set a moral example, influencing the extent to which it is socially accepted to prioritize one’s family at work and, for example, go home when a child is sick. The first hypothesis therefore reads as follows: the effect of parental work hours on parent-child time is smaller in countries with more reconciliation policies (*Hypothesis 1*). Child care coverage is a special case within the range of reconciliation policies. Making use of formal child care will not increase parent-child time as it is a substitute for parental care. It can therefore not be used to protect family life and maximize parent-child time as the other policies do. Nevertheless, because paid work hours are less likely to cut into parent-child time when children are less available when they are in child care, I will specifically examine the role of child care coverage (Bianchi, 2000).

Second, the association between work hours and parent-child time may be conditioned by cultural norms. Protecting family life from the demands of work requires effort and making difficult choices (Bianchi et al., 2006). Whether or not parents do so and (potentially) sacrifice either work success or individual well-being, may depend on the presence of cultural norms advocating the protection of the family. If the parenthood ideology in a country calls on parents to heavily invest in their children’s development, parents will be more reluctant to let their work hours affect the time they spend with their children and instead cut down on activities that are not child-related such as couple activities, “adult-only” leisure, personal care and community time (Bianchi et al., 2006; Hays, 1996; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003). Such norms will therefore increase the inelasticity of the association between work hours and parent-child time. In other words, strong parenthood norms may ‘force’ parents into family protective strategies and limit their opportunities to let work intrude upon family life. Norms regarding parenthood can either be internalized (e.g., a mother feeling guilty when she has to work late) or have an external influence (e.g., friends or family criticizing a mother for working full-time).

The ways in which children and gender roles are regarded are a central part of a country's cultural profile (Wall, 2007). Countries differ in their norms towards parenthood and paid work and whereas maternal employment is considered harmful in, for example, the Netherlands, children are considered deprived when they do *not* go to day care in, for example, Sweden (e.g., Jones & Brayfield, 1997; Treas & Widmer, 2000; Wall, 2007). Moreover, children are viewed as more essential to an individual's life in Southern European countries than in Northern European countries (Jones & Brayfield, 1997). I consider the parenthood ideology of a country to be stronger when attitudes towards maternal employment are more conservative and children are viewed as more central and hypothesize that the effect of parental work hours on parent-child time is smaller in countries with stronger parenthood ideologies (*Hypothesis 2*).

6.3.3. Opportunities to reduce work hours

Instead of finding ways to reconcile high work and family demands, parents may decide to work fewer hours in order to free time for their children (Moen & Becker, 1999). The extent to which parents have the opportunity to reduce their hours depends, among other things, upon the country in which they live. In countries that allow parents to select their own work hours, parents who want to be strongly involved in the upbringing of their children can choose to work part-time and thereby free time for their children. Under these same conditions, parents who have a stronger focus on their work and are less family-oriented (Hakim, 2002) will more likely choose to work full-time. By implication, these two groups of parents will differ substantially with regard to the time they spend with their children.

When a country does not offer parents the opportunity to choose their work hours, the family- and work-oriented parents will be distributed over part-time and full-time jobs relatively at random. In these countries external factors such as economic circumstances and the specific education of a parent will be more decisive for their work hours than their own preferences (e.g., Reynolds, 2003). As a result, child-oriented parents who work full-time are likely to compensate for their absence and find other ways to minimize the impact of work, for example by economizing on the time they spend in leisure activities or personal care. Similarly, parents who are less child-oriented and work part-time will be more likely to allocate the additional time they have available to activities that are not child-related, such as community work. As a consequence, the difference in parent-child time between parents who work a low and a high number of hours will be relatively small in these countries as compared to countries with a higher decision latitude. The basic argument that the context affects between-group differences was based on an idea by Gauthier et al. (2004). In their longitudinal study they found that differences between employed and nonemployed mothers increased between 1960 and 2000 and explained this increased difference on the basis of mothers' increased decision latitude regarding their employment status.

I expect that the extent to which parents who want to spend a high amount of time with their children have the opportunity to work part-time depends upon two country characteristics. First,

policies regarding work hours should allow parents to scale back in their hours (e.g., Plantenga & Remery, 2005). Second, working part-time has to be financially possible and the parents' earnings should be sufficient to provide for the family needs. I therefore assume that when the policy context and financial conditions are favorable, strongly child-oriented parents will choose to work less hours jobs, whereas the less strongly child-oriented parents will choose to work full-time. Because this results in two heterogeneous groups of parents the difference in parent-child time between these two groups will be large as compared to countries where parents are restricted in reducing their hours. It is difficult to assess access to part-time work directly, so I assume that this is reflected in the prevalence of part-time work. This also implies that I assume that people work part-time because they choose to, and not because they are forced into such an arrangement. Summarizing, I expect that the effect of parental work hours and parent-child time is larger in countries with a higher prevalence of part-time work (*Hypothesis 3*) and in countries with higher earnings (*Hypothesis 4*).

6.4. Method

6.4.1. Data, sample, and response

The European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) is an European Union funded project that is coordinated by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). The aim of the survey is to provide insight into the working conditions of European countries and to provide input for the creation of social policy (Eurofound, 2007b). I used the 2005 wave that covered 31 countries: the EU27 countries, plus the two candidate countries, Turkey and Croatia, and Norway and Switzerland. The fieldwork was carried out in the autumn of 2005 (Eurofound, 2007b). The large number of countries that is covered by the EWCS is an advantage over other data sets, such as the Multinational Time Use Survey (MTUS) (e.g., Hook, 2006). Although the MTUS data include 20 countries, data after 1995 are available for only five of these countries. Because the objective of this study is to gain further insight in the work-family balance of modern-day families, I decided to use the EWCS data instead.

The EWCS data set is representative of all European persons aged 15 or older in paid employment (Eurofound, 2007b). A person was considered to be employed if "*he or she did any work for pay or profit during the reference week for at least one hour*" (Eurofound, 2007b: 7). The sample was collected using a multiple stage design and was representative with regard to the regions and urbanization level. In most countries the households were selected through the "random walk" procedure, with the exception of Belgium, Sweden, Netherlands, and Switzerland where respondents were selected through phone screening. The samples in these countries are nonetheless stratified according to the region and urbanization level (Eurofound, 2007b). The data were collected through face-to-face interviews, held at the respondents' homes. A total of 72,300 households were visited and 29,680 interviews were administered. The overall response

rate (defined as the proportion of completed interviews to the total number of eligible cases) was 48%. The country-level response rates varied between 28% in the Netherlands and 67% in Turkey (Eurofound, 2007b: 28).

For this specific study a sub-sample was selected: Those respondents who had at least one minor child living in the same household, did not have a missing value on the work hours variable, and spent time with their children everyday for at least one hour. The rationale for this last criterion will be addressed below. Unfortunately, data on one or more country-level variables were not available for eight of the 31 countries. These countries were excluded, so the final number of countries was 23 countries: The EU25 countries minus Cyprus and Malta¹. The final sample size on the individual level was 5,183.

6.4.2. Measures

Dependent variable: Daily parent-child time. The 2005 wave of the EWCS included two questions on parental involvement with their children. First, the respondents were asked how often they were involved in caring for and educating their children. The answer categories were 1 = *everyday for 1 hour or more*, 2 = *everyday or every second day for less than 1 hour*, 3 = *once or twice a week*, 4 = *once or twice a month*, 5 = *once or twice a year*, and 6 = *never*. Second, the respondents who answered “everyday for 1 hour or more” were presented with an additional open question asking them for how many hours per day they were involved. This number was taken as the final measure for the amount of parent-child time because this measure contained most variation. This did imply that the respondents that indicated spending less than an hour with their children (30% of the full sample) were excluded and that the proportion of women in the final sample is relatively high (64%). Additional analyses were performed to check whether basing the dependent variable on the interval variable with the restricted sample, instead of on the categorical variable with the broader sample had consequences for the results, but the differences were small. Extreme values of 17 hours and more were rounded off to 16 hours (it is unlikely that children are awake during all these hours), which resulted in a final measure for the parent’s *daily involvement* with answers ranging from 1 to 16 hours.

Individual-level predictors. The respondents were asked how many hours they usually worked per week in their main paid job and (when applicable and structural) second job. From these values a single value for the respondent’s *weekly paid work hours* was constructed. The models controlled for a number of family characteristics that are commonly considered in the literature. The family demands, that are likely to increase parent-child time (e.g., Coverman, 1985), were taken into account by including the age of the youngest child and the number of minor children in the household in the model. Moreover, we controlled for the respondent’s gender (1 = *female*, 0 = *male*), as women participate more in child care than men, and for the respondent’s educational level because previous research consistently showed that parental involvement is higher among higher educated parents (e.g., Craig, 2007; Sayer et al., 2004). The educational

level was coded according to the ISCED classification and varied from 0 to 16. Mean imputation was used for the twelve respondents who had a missing value on the education variable.

Country-level variables. Hypotheses 1 and 2 on the reconciliation of work hours and parent-child time were tested using three indicators: government support for working families, child care coverage and child-related norms. The indicator used to measure *government support for working families* was the public spending on families as a percentage of GDP in 2005 (OECD Family Database, 2008). This included public spending on family benefits in cash, services, and tax measures. In order to separate the effects of the provision of formal child care, an additional measure for *child care coverage* was included. This measure was based on EU data on the percentages of pre-school-age children that were in formal child care for 30 hours or more per usual week in 2006 (Commission of the European Communities, 2008: 4). This is a strict measure as it concerns substantial coverage. The data distinguished between child care coverage for children up to three years and aged three through the mandatory school age and the average score over these two values was taken. The variable measuring the *strength of a country's parenthood ideology* was based on data from the World Values Survey (World Values Survey Association, 2000) that was accessed through the online database. The data from the 1999 wave were used because this wave preceded the collection of the EWCS data in 2005 and because the data were complete for this year. The final measure was constructed in two steps. First two separate scales were constructed for the centrality of children and disapproval of maternal employment. The former scale was based on four items (Cronbach's α : .63, e.g., "Parents duty is to do their best for their children even at the expense of their own well-being") and the latter scale was based on two items (α : .75, e.g., "A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works"). For each item, answer categories ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* through 5 = *strongly agree*. I took the percentage in each country that (strongly) agreed or disagreed in such a way that higher scores indicated a stronger parenthood ideology. The final measure consisted of the average over the two scales in order to let the measure reflect general attitudes towards children and attitudes towards employment and children equally (the α over all items is .70).

Hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested on the basis of two country-level variables: The prevalence of part-time work and hourly earnings. The *percentage of the workforce working in part-time employment* in 2005 was based on data from Eurofound (2007a: 4). In order to measure to what extent parents need a double fulltime income to fulfill family needs the *average hourly earnings in Power Purchasing Standards (PPS)* of the lowest income decile in 2002 was included. PPS is an artificial currency unit that takes differences in national price levels into account. The final measure was constructed by dividing the average gross annual earnings in PPS (Eurostat, 2006: 3) by the county's average number of work hours (as calculated on the basis of the EWCS data). The earnings of the lowest income decile were selected as opposed to the earnings of the general population, because it reflects the minimum income level and is not distorted by any possible large income inequalities in a country. All variables, with the exception of the hourly earners, were recoded into proportions in order to make interpretation easier. Moreover, the

individual-level variables (with the exception of gender) were grand-mean centered and the country-level variables were centered around the average across the countries.

6.4.3. Analytical strategy

Because the respondents were nested in countries, multi-level analysis was employed using the statistical software package MLwiN 2.10. The hypotheses were tested using cross-level interactions. Although the theoretical framework focused on the moderating effects of country characteristics, the direct effects were also examined. Unfortunately the scope of this study did not allow taking the direct effects of country-level characteristics on the individual work hours into account as well. A total of ten models were estimated. In the first two steps (results not reported in a table) the intercept-only model was tested and the individual-level predictors were entered. In the third step the coefficient of work hours was allowed to vary between the countries (Model 1). Because the sample-size did not allow to enter all five country-level variables in the same model, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested separately from Hypotheses 3 and 4. The first two hypotheses relate to individual-level differences work-family reconciliation whereas the last two hypotheses relate to differences between groups of parents. In both cases I first entered the country-level characteristics, testing the direct effects (Models 2 and 4) and then estimated separate models for each interaction effect (Models 3a through 3c for the first set of hypotheses and Models 5a and 5b for the second set).

6.5. Results

6.5.1. Descriptive analyses

Table 6.1 presents the descriptive statistics of the individual-level variables and shows no remarkable results, except for the high proportion of women in the sample (which can be attributed to the construction of the sample). The country-level variables are shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.1. Descriptive Statistics of the Individual-Level Variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	Range
Parent-child time	3.93	3.07	5,183	1 - 16
Female (0 = yes)	0.64	0.48	5,183	0 - 1
Age youngest child	7.48	4.78	5,183	0 - 17
Number of children	1.72	0.80	5,183	1 - 8
Educational level	3.48	1.24	5,171	0 - 6
Paid work hours	38.19	12.37	5,183	1 - 120

Table 6.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Country-Level Variables

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i> parent-child time (<i>SD</i>)	Public spending on families (% of GDP)	Child care coverage ^a	% with strong parenthood ideology ^b	% of workforce part-time employed	Earnings ^c
Austria	171	4.95 (3.77)	2.88	4.00	62.96	19.70	8.13
Belgium	303	2.79 (1.32)	3.12	42.50	44.48	21.50	9.05
Czech Republic	169	3.98 (3.65)	2.19	20.00	43.30	4.80	3.33
Denmark	273	4.77 (3.38)	3.20	73.00	25.81	22.10	10.67
Estonia	155	3.34 (2.15)	1.50	45.00	58.15	7.70	1.46
Finland	240	3.27 (2.87)	2.97	38.50	29.94	14.40	8.40
France	265	3.85 (2.75)	3.78	29.50	50.20	16.90	8.17
Germany	116	3.97 (2.29)	3.04	17.00	48.47	22.30	7.68
Greece	268	3.08 (2.13)	1.09	14.00	61.73	4.60	4.57
Hungary	303	3.68 (2.34)	3.11	32.00	55.85	4.70	2.13
Ireland	235	4.07 (3.16)	2.58	41.00	34.32	16.70	6.70
Italy	170	4.76 (2.94)	1.31	29.50	68.26	12.80	8.23
Latvia	251	3.05 (1.96)	1.30	29.50	71.95	11.10	1.17
Lithuania	172	5.82 (4.89)	1.13	25.50	56.03	8.00	1.46
Luxembourg	142	5.82 (4.89)	3.60	16.50	53.39	17.80	9.35
Netherlands	303	5.71 (4.40)	2.26	5.50	37.28	45.80	9.71
Poland	272	3.95 (2.82)	1.17	11.50	72.41	11.10	2.09
Portugal	274	3.43 (1.76)	1.66	49.00	62.53	11.50	3.63
Slovenia	165	3.81 (3.27)	1.97	46.00	41.18	8.80	3.80
Slovakia	262	3.35 (2.68)	2.12	33.50	49.94	2.60	2.81
Spain	122	4.63 (2.56)	1.24	31.50	43.15	8.70	5.74
Sweden	256	3.15 (2.39)	3.17	42.50	26.90	24.00	6.93
United Kingdom	239	4.86 (4.14)	3.55	14.50	43.11	25.30	7.56
Average ^d	225	3.96	2.35	29.17	49.62	14.91	5.77
<i>SD</i>		0.91	0.91	16.82	13.66	9.58	3.06

^a Percentage of pre-school-age children that is in formal child care for 30 hours or more per week.; ^b Self-constructed scale. Scores range from 0 through 100; ^c Hourly earnings of lowest income decile; ^d Average over the 23 countries.

Countries did not only differ in the average parent-child time (which varied between an average of 5.82 hours per day in Luxembourg and 2.79 hours in Belgium), but their standard deviations varied as well. The standard deviations were highest in Luxembourg and the Netherlands and lowest in Belgium and Portugal.

The countries also varied greatly in their reconciliation policies, norms, the prevalence of part-time work, and earnings. Public spending on families was relatively high in the Continental countries and the UK and lowest in the Southern and Eastern European countries. Child care coverage varied between 49% in Portugal and 4% in Austria, with Denmark as an extreme outlier (75%). The data showed that parenthood ideologies were strongest in Southern European countries and weaker in the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands. In most countries the percentage of the workforce in part-time work was between 10 and 20% with relatively low percentages in Eastern European countries, and the highest percentage in the Netherlands (43.50%). The Eastern European countries also ranked low with regard to the hourly earnings of the lowest income decile in PPS, the Southern and Continental countries took a middle position, and the Scandinavian countries ranked highest.

6.5.2. *Multi-level models*

The hypotheses were tested using multi-level modeling. In the first step the intercept-only model was estimated. The Intra Class Coefficient (ICC) was 0.072 implying that 7.2% of the variance of parent-child time lay on the country-level. In the second step the individual level variables were added to the model (results not reported). The intercept of parent-child time was allowed to vary randomly in this model, as well as in the subsequent models. Women appeared to spend more time with their children than men, and parent-child time decreased with the age of the youngest child. The number of children and the parent's educational level did not have an effect. The number of paid work hours, the main independent variable, was negatively associated with parent-child time (β : -.023, p = .000). This confirmed the 'Base Hypothesis'. In the third step, I tested whether the coefficient of work hours varied across countries by estimating a model with a random coefficient for work hours. This model (Model 1) is presented in Table 6.3. The improvement in the model fit as compared to the model with a fixed coefficient was significant (difference in $-2LL$ = 45.291, df = 1, p = .000), suggesting that there were indeed cross-national differences in the effect of work hours.

Exactly why the coefficient of work hours varied between countries was analyzed in the subsequent models. In the fourth step of the analysis the country-level variables were included in the model. The models testing the effects of public spending, child care coverage, and norms are presented in Model 2a (Table 6.3) and the results of the effects of part-time work and earnings are shown in Model 3a (Table 6.4). Model 2a showed that parents spent more time with their children in countries with higher public spending on families (p = .024). The countries' child care coverage and parenthood ideology were not associated with parent-child time (with p values of respectively .480 and .182). Model 3a showed that parent-child time was higher in

Table 6.3. Direct and Cross-Level Interaction Effects of Individual-Level Variables, Public Spending on Families, Child Care Coverage, and Cultural Norms on Parent-Child Time (Unstandardized Coefficients, Standard Errors between Brackets)

	Model 1	Model 2a	Model 2b	Model 2c	Model 2d
Intercept (γ_{00})	2.879 (.166***)	2.789 (.154***)	2.789 (.154***)	2.788 (.153***)	2.790 (.154***)
<i>Individual level effects</i>					
Female (1 = yes) (γ_{10})	1.598 (.087***)	1.604 (.087***)	1.604 (.087***)	1.605 (.087***)	1.602 (.087***)
Age youngest child (γ_{20})	-.136 (.008***)	-.136 (.008***)	-.136 (.008***)	-.136 (.008***)	-.136 (.008***)
Number of children (γ_{30})	-.041 (.050)	-.042 (.050)	-.042 (.050)	-.042 (.050)	-.042 (.050)
Educational level (γ_{40})	-.014 (.034)	-.015 (.034)	-.015 (.034)	-.015 (.034)	-.015 (.034)
Paid work hours (γ_{50})	-.022 (.006***)	-.022 (.006***)	-.022 (.006***)	-.021 (.006***)	-.022 (.006***)
<i>Country level effects</i>					
Public spending on families (γ_{01})		34.694 (17.575*)	33.845 (18.977*)	33.974 (17.345*)	34.908 (17.617*)
Child care coverage (γ_{02})		-.413 (.813)	-.415 (.813)	-1.024 (.896)	-.408 (.815)
Strength of parenthood ideology (γ_{03})		1.089 (1.193)	1.092 (1.193)	1.118 (1.176)	.709 (1.295)
<i>Cross-level interactions</i>					
Work hours * public spending (γ_{51})			.081 (.687)		
Work hours * child care (γ_{52})				.059 (.034*)	
Work hours * ideology (γ_{53})					.035 (.044)
<i>Individual-level variance</i>					
Country-level variance	7.488 (.148)	7.488 (.148)	7.488 (.148)	7.490 (.148)	7.488 (.148)
	.527 (.167)	.440 (.141)	.439 (.141)	.428 (.137)	.439 (.141)
-2LL ($N_{countries} = 23; N_{individuals} = 5,183$)	25229.225	25225.115	25225.101	25222.480	25224.510

Note: All individual level variables are mean centered, the country-level variables are centered around the mean of the 23 countries.

* = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$.

Table 6.4. Direct and Cross-Level Interaction Effects of Individual-Level Variables, Prevalence of Part-Time Work, and Earnings on Parent-Child Time (Unstandardized Coefficients, Standard Errors between Brackets)

	Model 1 (repeated)	Model 3a	Model 3b	Model 3c
Intercept (ν_{00})	2.879 (.166***)	2.790 (.180***)	2.736 (.179***)	2.802 (.179***)
<i>Individual level effects</i>				
Female (1 = yes) (ν_{10})	1.598 (.087***)	1.607 (.087***)	1.594 (.087***)	1.599 (.087***)
Age youngest child (ν_{20})	-.136 (.008***)	-.135 (.008***)	-.135 (.008***)	-.135 (.008***)
Number of children (ν_{30})	-.041 (.050)	-.042 (.050)	-.046 (.050)	-.044 (.050)
Educational level (ν_{40})	-.014 (.034)	-.017 (.034)	-.013 (.034)	-.016 (.034)
Paid work hours (ν_{50})	-.022 (.006***)	-.021 (.006***)	-.010 (.005*)	-.021 (.006***)
<i>Country level effects</i>				
Percentage of workforce in part-time employment (ν_{04})		-.075 (1.999)	.865 (1.992)	-.427 (1.970)
Hourly earnings lowest income decile (ν_{05})		.112 (.063*)	.110 (.062)	.141 (.063)
<i>Cross-level interactions</i>				
Work hours * part-time (ν_{54})			-.192 (.044***)	
Work hours * earnings (ν_{55})				-.005 (.002**)
<i>Individual-level variance</i>				
Country-level variance	7.488 (.148)	7.485 (.148)	7.490 (.148)	7.487 (.148)
	.527 (.167)	.367 (.119)	.359 (.117)	.366 (.119)
-2LL ($N_{countries} = 23; N_{individuals} = 5,183$)	25229.225	25224.517	25212.836	25219.369

Note: All individual level variables are mean centered, the country-level variables are centered around the mean of the 23 countries.

* = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$.

countries where the average hourly earnings of the lowest income decile were higher ($p = .037$). Parent-child time did not depend on the prevalence of part-time work however ($p = .485$).

Cross-level interactions. In the next step the cross-level interactions were included in the models (Model 2b through 2d for the first set of hypotheses and Model 3b and 3c for the second set). The results with regard to Hypothesis 1 showed that the interaction between public spending on families and work hours was nonsignificant (Model 2b). The level of child care coverage (Model 2c) did seem to condition the association between work hours and parent-child time however ($\gamma_{52} = .059, p = .04$). The positive coefficient implies that the negative effect of work hours on parent-child time became weaker when child care coverage increased. For example, in Denmark, with a child care coverage of 75%, the difference in parent-child time between a parent who worked 20 and 50 hours per week was 1.10 hours a day, while the same difference in work hours results in a difference of 1.48 hours a day of parent-child time in Austria (with a child care coverage rate of 4%). Thus, the interaction effect between work hours and child care coverage was small but existent. Model 2d showed that the child-related norms did not condition the effect of work hours. Summarizing, the hypotheses regarding the reconciliation of work and family demands received partial support. The association between working and parent-child time was indeed weaker in countries where former child care was more widely available, but financial government support and cultural norms did not reduce the effects of work hours.

The models testing the second set of hypotheses (Table 6.4) showed that although the prevalence of part-time work did not yield a direct effect in Model 3a, the effect of work hours was indeed stronger in countries where a larger percentage of the workforce is in part-time employment (Model 3b, $\gamma_{54} = -.192, p = .000$). For example, in the Netherlands, with a part-time percentage of 45.80, parents who worked 20 hours per week spent 2.39 hours more a day with their children than parents who worked 50 hours per week. This difference was .10 hours in Slovakia, where the part-time rate was 4%. These findings are in line with the Hypothesis 3. Finally, Model 3b showed that the interaction between work hours and hourly earnings had a negative and significant effect ($\gamma_{55} = -.005, p = .006$), which suggests that the negative effect of work hours was stronger in countries where earnings were higher. In other words, parents in Denmark, the country with the highest earnings (10.67 PPS), the difference in parent-child time between parents working 20 and 50 hours was 1.36 hours a day, whereas this difference was .57 hours a day in Latvia where earnings are lowest (1.17 PPS). Summarizing, both Hypothesis 3 and 4 were supported by the data.

Gender differences. Because previous research showed that men and women differ greatly with regard to work-to-family effects and that it is mostly mothers who adjust their work demands to match their family responsibilities (e.g., Becker & Moen 1999; Bielby 1992; England & Farkas 1986; Maume 2008), additional analyses were performed to check whether our results apply to both genders (results not reported). Separate models for the fathers and mothers in the sample were analyzed. The results with regard to the first set of hypotheses were very similar for

men and women. In contrast, Hypotheses 3 and 4 indeed seemed to apply mostly to the women in the sample.

6.6. Conclusion and discussion

Many studies investigated how parental work demands affect the time parents spend with their children, but the national context has seldom been taken into account. Yet, families function within a country's specific institutional structures with specific cultural norms and this context may influence the array of choices employed parents have when combining work and family demands. The current study examined whether the impact of parental work hours on parent-child time varied between European countries and aimed to explain any variability on the basis of country characteristics.

Multi-level analyses on 5,183 employed parents with minor children from 23 European countries (the EU25 minus Cyprus and Malta) led to two main conclusions. First, countries indeed differed with respect to the association between parental work hours and the time parents spent with their children. This suggests that general assumption that work hours cut into time spent with the family does not hold equally in all countries. Secondly, the results suggested that these cross-national differences can mostly be attributed to differences in the opportunities to reduce one's work hours. The differences between parents working shorter and longer hours were larger in countries where part-time work was more prevalent and earnings were higher. This suggests that parents in these countries have more opportunities to choose a work arrangement that fits their family needs and preferences: Parents who want to spend a lot of time with their children are able to take a part-time job, and those who do have a stronger focus on their career are able to work longer hours. As a result, the differences in parent-child time between these groups of parents are larger in these countries than in countries where parents have a lesser say in their work hours. Gauthier et al. (2004) explained the divergence in the parent-child time of employed and nonemployed mothers in the last decades on the basis of a similar mechanism. My finding that access to part-time work is mainly relevant for women is in line with previous research that found that women are more likely to adjust their work in such a way that family life is accommodated (e.g. Bielby, 1992; Bianchi et al., 2006; England & Farkas, 1986; Maume, 2008).

In addition to studying the reduction of work demands as a possible "work-family strategy", I studied whether opportunities to reconcile work and family demands conditioned the impact of paid work. The level of public spending on families and cultural norms did not account for differences in the impact of work hours, but the level of child care coverage reduced the effect of work hours on parent-child time. The moderating effect of child care coverage supports Bianchi's (2000) argument that research on the impact of parental work on parent-child time should take into account that children are not always available. While children are in school it does not matter whether their parents are at work. Similarly, when children are in child care for a

substantial part of the week, lower work hours will not automatically imply that additional time is allocated to the children. This study suggests that parents spent this time in other activities, such as community work or the care for their own parents.

The lack of evidence for effects of public spending and cultural norms on the association between work hours and parent-child time may reflect that high work and family demands are simply irreconcilable, which would imply that parents either need to adjust their work demands or cut down on their participation in other domains. There are at least two alternative explanations however. First, support and cultural norms in the direct context of the family (i.e., the workplace, friends, and family) may be more salient for the reconciliation of work and family than government support that is relatively distant. Teachman and Crowder (2002) argued that criteria other than the geographic area, such as membership of certain social groups, determine what constitutes a relevant context. Second, it is possible that this study did not consider the appropriate indicators. With regard to the institutional context, public spending and child care coverage were included, but naturally there exist alternative indicators such as the type of welfare state, leave arrangements, the starting age in school, and the quality of child care. It could also be necessary to make a specific distinction between policies that are directed at one- and dual-earner families (Abendroth, Van der Lippe, & Maas, 2010). Similarly, this study may not have taken the appropriate cultural norms into account. The importance parents attach to protecting family life from work encroachments was measured only indirectly, based on statements on the centrality of children and attitudes with regard to the harmful effects of maternal employment.

An alternative explanation for the findings in this study is that the policies and norms influence parent-child time *through* work hours. For example, higher hourly wages may both increase or decrease work hours (Gershuny, 2000). The direct effects of the institutional and normative context on work hours were not analyzed however. Moreover, country characteristics are interrelated. For example, Jones and Brayfield (1997) speculated that a country's family policies may influence this country's cultural norms. Future research could examine path models in order to increase insight in the specific mechanisms.

Some limitations of the current study need to be mentioned. A highest-level sample size of 23 countries is relatively low and could result in biased estimates (Maas & Hox, 2005). The results with regard to child care coverage that were only significant at the .05 level should therefore be interpreted with care. Unfortunately eight of the 31 countries in the EWCS data had to be excluded because country-level data were incomplete. Nevertheless, the EU actively monitors developments in the member states, for example with regard to the Barcelona targets on child care provision, and it is likely that more information on the new EU and candidate countries will become available soon. Also, the measure of parent-child time was limited. The respondents in the EWCS were not asked directly how much time they spend with their children on a daily basis and I therefore had to exclude those respondents who indicated that they spent less than an hour per day. Time-diary data could provide more valid and reliable information on parent-child time. Measuring time use on both week and weekend days would also enable us to take into

account that parents who are busy during the week might compensate during weekends. Unfortunately the variation in countries in the MTUS data set was too limited (data after 1995 were only available for five countries), but the continuing work on the MTUS data and the increasing availability of “with whom” data promise improved measurement approaches. Finally, this study may have suffered from problems of equivalence that are common in cross-national research: Questions may have been interpreted differently in different countries (Jones & Brayfield, 1997). For example, “caring for and educating your children” may mean something different for Italian than for Swedish parents. Similarly, country-level data were not always collected in the same way. For example, with regard to the public spending measure some countries did include data on tax measures whereas others did not.

Fathers and mothers coordinate family life together and work-family strategies are often decided upon together (Becker & Moen, 1999). Moreover, a parent can also be influenced by his or her partner’s work hours through the level of specialization and distribution of bargaining power within the couple (Hook, 2006). In this study I could not account for the influence of the partner however, as there were no couple data available. This could have distorted the results, especially if parents compensated for each other more in some countries than in others. There is some tentative evidence that this may be the case. Prior research has found that countries can enhance specialization through social policies such as parental leave (Hook, 2006: 655; Gornick & Meyers, 2003) and Fuwa (2004) demonstrated that time availability reduces women’s share in unpaid labor more in countries that are more egalitarian attitudes. Future research could further explore this.

Another interesting avenue for future research would be to extend the scope and examine the effects on child well-being. Although the UNICEF report (2007) suggests that children do better in countries where parents spend more time with their children, parent-child time was considered as an indicator of child well-being and not as a predictor. Moreover, it is interesting that child well-being is not necessarily higher in countries where children are regarded as more central. Further research on the interconnectedness of country characteristics, parent-child time, and outcomes for children could create relevant knowledge that could serve to improve child well-being.

Concluding, this study demonstrated that it is important to consider the national context when studying work-to-family effects. Parents, and mothers in particular, actively protect family life from work encroachments and the extent to which they succeed in doing this depends on the institutional context. On the one hand this implies that studies on work-to-family effects that are carried out in different countries should be compared with care. On the other hand, this offers interesting new avenues for future research that could help countries to develop policies to facilitate parents in reconciling work and family life.

Note

¹ The countries included in the study are: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and discussion

In March 2010, in the build-up to the national elections in June, Wouter Bos and Camiel Eurlings, two prominent Dutch politicians, announced that they resigned from Dutch politics in order to spend more time with their (future) family. Their decisions prompted a lively discussion. Some questioned whether the wish to spend more time with their family was not merely an excuse to escape a politically tense period, while others proclaimed a new milestone in the emancipation of Dutch society (“Zijn Eurlings en Bos vaandel dragers van een nieuwe emancipatiegolf?, [Are Eurlings and Bos the front runners of a new emancipation wave?],” 2010). In any case, the public debate clearly indicated that the nuclear family remains the highly valued corner stone of Dutch society and that concerns about the pressure and restraints paid work imposes on family life are widespread. However, empirical research up to now demonstrated that the impact of paid work hours on family time is generally small, which suggests that parents strongly protect family life (Bianchi, 2000). In this dissertation we probed into the presumption that parents protect family life and studied the ways in which work characteristics of both the father and mother affect family time. In doing so, we contended that it is not just the scarcity of time that makes paid work intrude on parent-child time, but that other work demands, such as job insecurity, restrict this time as well, and that job resources can even enhance family time. Moreover, we investigated the implications for the quality of parent-child time and the parent-child relationship and examined cross-national differences in the association between work hours and parent-child time. We studied these issues using multiple samples and multiple methods, such as structural equation and multilevel modeling.

In section 7.1, we recapitulate the answers to the research questions that were addressed in chapters 2 through 6 and discuss the overall conclusions of this dissertation. In section 7.2 we summarize the contributions of this dissertation, section 7.3 addresses the limitations and offers suggestions for future research and section 7.4 goes into practical implications. Section 7.5 completes the dissertation with a final conclusion.

7.1. Answers to the research questions

7.1.1. Parental work characteristics and time with children

In Chapter 2 we investigated the impact of paid work on family time by studying how parental work characteristics affect the quantity of parent-child time. Moreover, we examined whether the effects of work characteristics differed for fathers and mothers and for parents of young and adolescent children. On the basis of our findings we can draw four conclusions. First, how much time parents spend with their children does not only depend upon a parent’s work hours, but on other work characteristics as well. Parents spent more time with their children when they had more job autonomy and when their children could more easily reach them at work. None of the work demands (i.e., job insecurity, and the family-friendliness of the organizational culture) appeared to matter however. Moreover, although nonstandard work hours are often depicted as

a work demand (e.g., Barnett et al., 2008; Lesnard, 2008), they seemed to benefit rather than inhibit parent-child activities. This finding is in direct contrast to American research that emphasized the disruptive effects of nonstandard schedules (Presser, 2003). It is possible that, in the Netherlands, jobs with nonstandard hours are higher quality jobs and provide parents with more flexibility than in the U.S. and other liberal welfare states (Mills & Täht, in press; Sayer, Gauthier, & Furstenberg, 2004).

Second, our findings suggest that the mothers protect parent-child time more than the fathers and that they took more advantage of the possibility to work during nonstandard hours to free time for their children: The number of work hours mattered less for mother-child time than for father-child time, and the beneficial effects of nonstandard hours mostly pertained to the mothers. Although we did not find these effects for the other resources, these findings are consistent with Bielby's (1992) claim that cultural norms restrain women, more than men, from letting work come at the cost of family life and are also in line with earlier studies that have shown that although organizational family-friendly policies are usually gender neutral, women feel more entitled to use them than men (Hochschild, 1997; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999).

Third, we concluded that work characteristics affect parent-child time differently depending on the life stage of the children. The number of paid work hours mattered less for parents with adolescent children than for parents with young children, which might be explained by the lower absolute frequency of parent-adolescent activities. Crouter et al. (2001) also explained the absence of an effect of fathers' work overload on father-adolescent time by arguing that there was too little time to be affected. Alternatively, paid work could be more intrusive when children are young because activities with younger children need to take place during the day when work hours are more likely to form a restriction. In contrast, parents of adolescents can spend more time with their offspring during the evening, because adolescents go to bed later. The finding that autonomy and nonstandard hours were more relevant during adolescence might be explained by the changing parenting needs as children grow older. The higher risks of problem behavior during adolescence and may increase the salience of job resources that increase parents' discretion and flexibility in combining work and family demands (Craig, 2006). Moreover, the possibility to interact with adolescent children during the evening increases parents' possibilities in accommodating work and family time.

Fourth, although looking at the work domain in more detail yielded some interesting conclusions, it is important to note that the work characteristics only had small effects. Thus, although work characteristics contribute to the explanation of parent-child time, it still seems that the time parents spend with their children is relatively unaffected by work. This provides further evidence for the notion that parents protect family life from work encroachments (Becker & Moen, 1999).

7.1.2. Interdependencies between partners and routine and interactive activities

Chapter 3 incorporated the work characteristics of the partner and differentiated between child-related routine and interactive activities. First, we found that the mothers' work demands increased the father's participation in child-related activities and vice versa, a finding that reflects the interdependency between parents. Parents compensate each other's absence and the work demands of one partner therefore influence the family demand that is imposed upon the other partner. Although we considered different work demands, it were mainly the work hours that mattered. The influence of the organizational culture and job insecurity on parents' child-related activities was very limited.

Second, fathers differentiated between routine and interactive child-related activities, whereas mothers did not. Contrary to our expectations, fathers' work demands affected their routine activities more than their interactive activities. We expected routine activities to be more fixed because they can less easily be curtailed or postponed than interactive activities. However, interactive activities are more enjoyable than routine activities and our findings suggest that, for men, this is a more relevant attribute than the urgency of care activities. Previous studies already showed that the trend that fathers allocate more time to their children is mainly the result of an increase the time spent in interactive activities and explained this by pointing at the enjoyable nature of these activities (Bianchi et al., 2006; Robinson & Godbey, 1997). Mothers did not differentiate between routine and interactive activities, which suggests that the necessity of routine activities is a more pressing reason for protecting these activities for mothers than for fathers.

Third, we demonstrated that when participation in child-related activities is concerned, fathers are more responsive to both their own and their partner's work demands than mothers. Participation in child-related activities is more fixed for mothers and they thus seem to protect parent-child time more strongly than fathers. This is consistent with previous research (Belsky, Youngblade, Rovine, & Volling, 1991; Nock & Kingston, 1988) and arguments on gender differences in work and family commitment (Bielby, 1992; Cha, 2010). Motherhood ideologies prescribe mothers to be strongly involved in the upbringing of their children (e.g., Hays, 1996) and these norms are less strongly prescribed to fathers for whom providing for the family is a substantial part of being a good father (e.g., Cha, 2010; Daly, 1996; Hochschild, 1997; Kay, 2001). Fathers did compensate more when their partner faced higher work demands. These gender differences suggest that the demand/response capacity approach (e.g., Coverman, 1985) is more applicable to fathers than to mothers. It could also reflect that women are better able to maintain the boundaries between work and family life, as Belsky et al. (1991) have argued.

7.1.3. Work demands and one-on-one parent-child, couple, and family leisure

In Chapter 4, we further differentiated between different types of family activities by investigating whether the effects of parents' work demands on the frequency of family leisure activities differed depending on who participated (i.e., one parent and the children, both parents and the

children, or both parents without the children). It appeared that this indeed made a difference and that work demands had a different impact on couple leisure, than on one-on-one parent-child and on family leisure. When mothers faced higher work demands this impacted mother-child leisure without the father more than it affected mother-child leisure *with* the father. This suggests that the advantages of family leisure (i.e., they are more enjoyable and less stressful) outweigh the practical disadvantages of activities with more family members. As such, social motivation theory (Hills & Argyle, 1998; Van Gils, 2007) that focuses on the utility that is derived from activities, received more support than temporal organization theory (e.g., Southerton, 2006; Van Gils, 2007) that centers on the structural constraints of organizing activities in which multiple family members participate. Furthermore, our finding that family leisure was protected more by mothers than by fathers is consistent with prior research showing that mothers have a gate keeping role, because they not only take the initiative to plan their own child-related activities, but organize and coordinate joint activities of the father and the children as well (e.g., Lareau, 2000). Moreover, in line with Chapter 2, we found that the father's work demands had a greater impact on joint time than the mother's work demands. This provides further support for the notion that work encroachments are less accepted for women than for men (Bielby, 1992; Cha, 2010).

Finally, Chapter 4 demonstrated that although the work hours of the father reduced couple leisure, couple leisure was highest in households where both partners worked full-time. Apparently, arguments on the scarcity of time only apply to a limited extent here. Couple activities may be relatively unaffected by paid work because they are infrequent: If a couple only goes out to dinner together once a month, it is unlikely that work demands cut into this. It is also likely that the fulltime/fulltime employed couples constitute a specific group that highly values leisure activities as part of their lifestyle and have the financial means to pay for this (Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001; SCP, 2006; Van Gils, 2007).

7.1.4. Work characteristics, temporal involvement, and parent-child relationship quality

Chapter 5 extended the framework of the dissertation further by investigating the impact of paid work on the parent-child relationship quality and examining the mediating role of the temporal involvement. A first conclusion that can be drawn is that the time parents spend with their children indeed played a central role in the process that links work characteristics to the parent-child relationship. Parents with more demanding and greedy jobs spent less and lower quality time with their children, and this, in turn, decreased the parent-child relationship quality. Thus, although prior research examined either time use or the quality of family relationships, the two are not distinct consequences of parents' work characteristics, but they are closely linked. Previous research already showed that joint time is a relevant linking pin between paid work and marital relationship quality (e.g., Hill, 1988), but most studies on parent-child time so far only assumed that joint time benefited parent-child relationship quality. In contrast to our expectation, we found that mothers who worked longer hours, also reported higher quality relationships with

their children. Huston and Rosenkrantz Aronson (2005) also found that the parent-child relationship quality benefited from maternal work hours and argued that mothers with greater work commitments have more income and skills to provide intellectual and social stimulation for their children.

Second, we can conclude from Chapter 5 that work characteristics had a stronger impact on the quality of parent-child time, as indicated by the level of disturbance by work-related activities, than on the quantity of joint time. We considered a wide range of work characteristics (i.e., work hours, job insecurity, the organizational culture, stress, job flexibility, nonstandard hours, and work engagement) and whereas almost all work characteristics influenced the *quality* of parent-child time, only the number and timing of work hours and work engagement affected the *quantity* of parent-child time. Apparently, it is more difficult for parents to protect the quality than to protect the quantity of joint time from work encroachments.

Although we studied fathers and mothers separately, we found few gender differences in Chapter 5. Attachment theory holds for both the father and the mother (Delsing, Oud, De Bruyn, & Van Aken, 2003), so our finding that temporal involvement is equally important for the father-child and the mother-child relationship is not surprising. The similarities in the effects of work characteristics on temporal involvement contrast with our findings in Chapter 2 and 3, however. Because we did not expect substantial variations in parent-child relationship quality for parents with very young children, we only included parents with older children in this chapter. It is possible that gender differences are larger when children are younger because parenthood ideologies and role prescriptions are stronger during the early years.

7.1.5. Cross-national differences in the impact of work hours on parent-child time

In Chapter 6 we shifted the scope of the dissertation from the Dutch context to the international level. Comparing the impact of parental work hours on parent-child time revealed that the strength of this association varied across European countries. Whereas in some countries, such as Belgium, work hours were unrelated with the time parents spend with their children, they were related in other countries, such as the Netherlands. Thus, although the scarcity of time implies that one additional working hour reduces the available time for children and other activities by the same amount in every country, actual parent-child time apparently depended more on the parent's work hours in some countries than in others.

Part-time work appeared to be an essential factor in understanding why the impact of work hours on parent-child time varies across countries. The impact of work hours was strongest in countries where part-time work was more accessible and income levels were higher. The differences in parent-child time between parents working a high and a low number of hours might be larger in these countries because parents who want to be strongly involved in the upbringing of their children can more easily decide to take a part-time job. In countries where parents have less discretionary space, parents who are strongly family-oriented will more likely be forced to work full-time. Because these parents will find other ways to maximize the time with

their children (e.g., by cutting down on time alone), this could explain why work hours and parent-child time are less strongly related in these countries. Gauthier et al. (2004) used a similar argument to explain why the differences in mother-child time between employed and nonemployed mothers decreased over recent decades. Thus, whereas Hakim's (2002) argued and showed that parents vary in their work and family orientations, the current study suggests that the institutional context determines whether or not parents are able to act on their preferences.

The association between work hours and parent-child time was conditioned by the level of child care coverage as well. In countries where a larger proportion of children went to formal child care for a substantial part of the week (more than 30 hours), such as in Scandinavian countries, parent-child time depended less on the parents' work hours. When children are in child care they are not available to interact with and parents who work part-time in these countries may therefore direct the additional time they have available to activities other than child care, such as community work. Public spending on families and norms regarding parenthood did not account for the cross-national differences in the impact of work hours. Although "reconciliation policies" are defined as policies that facilitate the combination of work and family life (Plantenga & Remery, 2005), more public spending did not reduce work encroachments. Possibly, support on the micro level, such as support from family and friends, is more salient for parents. The same argument may explain the absence of a conditioning effect of cultural norms. It is also possible that policies reflect a country's cultural norms and that the norms therefore do not have an independent influence on the association between paid work hours and parent-child time. Unfortunately the number of countries in our study is too small to make inferences on this issue.

7.2. General conclusions

This dissertation reconfirmed the notion that parents protect family time from the demands of paid work, but more importantly we showed that it is premature to stop here and conclude that the effects of paid work on family life are limited. Time is a scarce resource, so when parents' paid work limits the time they have available for the family this forces them to carefully consider how to plan, organize, and coordinate family activities. Certain family activities are prioritized over others and as a result, certain types of activities (i.e., routine activities and one-on-one parent-child activities) are affected more strongly by paid work than others (i.e., interactive activities and activities with the whole family). Moreover, we demonstrated that the time, energy, and attention that can be allocated to the family are not only influenced by the time parents spend at work, but by other characteristics such as job autonomy as well. Understanding the influence of paid work on family life and the protection of family life does not only require a more detailed account of the work and family spheres, but it also requires studying the implications. Although parents protect the quantity of family time it appeared that work demands reduced the

quality of this time. Below we will elaborate on the central conclusions from this dissertation and discuss how they are embedded in previous research and theoretical approaches.

Purposive family time. Leisure research showed that joint leisure activities are often purposive, in the sense that parents take up leisure activities with their children because they consider this an important aspect of parenting, use these activities to transmit norms, want to invest in the relationship, and believe that children benefit from this (e.g., Lareau, 2000; Shaw & Dawson, 2001). Both the finding that parents differentiate between different types of family activities and the finding that the impact of paid work is small, support the notion that family time in general is purposive as well and that parents go through great lengths and employ specific “work-family strategies” (Becker & Moen, 1999) to limit work encroachments.

The conclusion that child-related activities are strongly protected is in line with a large body of literature (e.g., Bianchi, 2000; Bianchi et al., 2006; Hawkins & Olsen, 1992; Howie, Wicks, Fitzgerald, Dalenberg, & Connelly, 2006; Nock & Kingston, 1988) and with theories on the strength of modern day parenthood ideologies. Parenthood ideologies exert a strong normative pressure to invest a high amount of time in one’s children, especially on mothers (Arendell, 2000; Bianchi, 2000; Hays, 1996; Hochschild, 1997). Moreover, our findings confirm social motivation theory (Hills & Argyle, 1998; Van Gils, 2007) that contends that the time people allocate to different activities depends on the normative and social benefits of these activities. Because activities differ in the extent to which they are enjoyable, can be postponed, and are easy to organize, paid work affects them differently. So rather than aggregating all types of parent-child time, research can detect more subtle effects of work on family life when it differentiates between activities of a different nature.

Conflict and enrichment. In the work-family literature the conflict and enrichment approaches are generally depicted as competing approaches (Gareis, Barnett, Ertel, & Berkman, 2009; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Rothbard, 2001). However, this dissertation showed that when the influence of paid work on family time is concerned, both approaches apply. Work demands and work characteristics that erode the boundaries between the work and family sphere limit the quantity and quality of the time parents spend with their children and spouse (e.g., family time was lower when parents worked longer hours), whereas job resources benefit parent-child time (e.g., parents spent more time with their children when they had more autonomy). It is important to realize that it is not always clear-cut whether a work characteristic is a work demand or resource. Work characteristics with a positive connotation, such as job flexibility and work engagement, had detrimental effects as they reduced the quality of joint time. Moreover, it is possible that the positive and negative effects outbalanced each other for such “double-edged” work characteristics. For example, this could explain why flexibility, an often-considered aspect of the family friendliness of a job, did not influence the amount of time parents spent with their children. We can only speculate on the conditions under which either the conflict or the enrichment approach provides the better explanation, but this dissertation does suggest that the job resources were slightly more salient for the mothers, whereas the fathers responded more strongly to the work demands. We will elaborate upon this gender difference below.

The conclusion that paid work both depletes and enriches family life is in line with other studies and theoretical approaches that took both work demands and job resources into account (Bakker et al., 2004; Demerouti et al., 2001; Gareis et al., 2009; Karasek & Theorell, 1990; Rothbard, 2001; Van Steenbergen et al., 2007). Whereas the job demands-resources model (Demerouti et al., 2001) considers both types of work characteristics to explain employee well-being, this dissertation demonstrated that the combination of demands and resources matter for the actual time parents spend with their children as well. Moreover, the “double-edgedness” of work engagement, flexibility, and nonstandard hours fits in the framework of border theory that contends that work/home interference increases when border permeability is higher (Schieman, Milkie & Glavin, 2009). This finding is also in line with prior research that showed that flexibility and work engagement prompt employees to take work home (e.g., Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Peters & Van der Lippe, 2007; Schieman et al., 2009: 987).

Quality matters. The finding that paid work affects the quality of joint time more than it affects the quantity suggests that, although parenthood ideologies stimulate parents to protect the time they spend with their children, it is more difficult to limit encroachments on the quality of joint time. Whereas parents seem to be able to limit the consequences of time-based conflicts, it appears to be a greater challenge to limit the consequences of energy-based and attention-based conflict, the other two sources of conflict that were set out in Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) classic article. This unintended consequence of combining paid work and family responsibilities supports the case for taking a more detailed look at the quality of time (Bittman & Wacjman, 2000; Booth, Clarke-Stewart, Vandell, McCartney, & Owen, 2002).

Fathers and mothers. In general, fathers respond more strongly to both their own work demands and those of their partner than mothers. This indicates that the demand/response capacity approach (Brayfield, 1996; Coverman, 1985) is more applicable to men. The demand/response capacity approach explains participation in household labor by arguing that participation increases when the family demands are high (e.g., because there are small children in the family) and a parent's response capacity is high (e.g., because a parent's work hours are low). Gender ideologies can explain why work demands matter more for fathers than for mothers. Role theory argues and previous research on normative expectations showed that the mother remains responsible for the family domain, whereas the father's participation in the household is more voluntary and discretionary (Bonney, Kelley, & Levant, 1999; Coltrane, 2000; Daly, 1996; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003; Parsons, 1949; Treas & Widmer, 2000; Van der Lippe, 1993). We found fewer gender differences for the job resources, although it appeared that mothers increased the time they spent with their children by working nonstandard hours, whereas this was not the case for men. Because work encroachments are more accepted for men than for women (Bielby, 1992), men are more likely to decrease their family involvement when work demands are high, whereas women will go further in protecting their time at home. Note that gender differences were seemingly more pronounced for parents of younger children than for parents of older children. This provides additional, though tentative, evidence for Craig and Sawrikar's (2009) finding that gender inequalities in the division of labor decrease as children

become older. Possibly gender differences are larger when family demands are higher and parents have to coordinate more. Moreover, the advantages of specialization may be higher when children are young and need more supervision.

7.3. Contributions to the literature

Integrating time use, work-family, and organizational research. In this study we explicitly formulated and tested hypotheses on the ways in which parents protect family life. In doing so, we used theoretical approaches from the work-family and organizational literature to predict how work characteristics affect parents' time use. By doing so we extended the time use literature as well as the work-family and organizational literature. First, the work-family and organizational literatures offered well-developed arguments that served as the basis for hypotheses on time use. By studying work characteristics other than work hours, this dissertation demonstrated that work is more than spending time away from home as work characteristics such as autonomy and job insecurity affected parent-child activities as well. Future time use research should therefore consider that family time is influenced by factors related to the content and organization of work as well. Second, our focus on family time contributed to the work-family and organizational literatures that so far mainly explained subjective outcomes, such as well-being (e.g. Eby et al., 2005). We demonstrated that work characteristics influence actual behavior as well. Studying time use as an aspect of parents' actual behavior is useful because parents may not always be aware of the ways in which their work affects their family. Moreover, attitudes or feelings do not necessarily have to be expressed, but actual behavior is visible to family members and colleagues and is therefore likely to affect parents' relationships with them.

A more detailed account of family time. Although studies on parent-child time generally assume that parents and children benefit from joint time, the exact impact of paid work on family processes and relationships very much remained a "black box". This dissertation contrasted different types of family activities and incorporated the consequences for the parent-child relationship quality. It examined how work characteristics affect the parent-child relationship and paid specific attention to the role of parents' temporal involvement, showing that the quality of joint time is a relevant linking pin between parental work and the parent-child relationship quality. The disturbance of parent-child time, a measure for the quality of time that was adapted from the time use literature on leisure, appeared to be a useful indicator of the quality of joint time as it mediated the influence of work characteristics on the quality of the parent-child relationship.

Our conclusions with regard to the quality of the parent-child relationship imply that when explaining this relationship it is not sufficient to examine the amount of parent-child time. Parents' time use with children and the parent-child relationship quality are related constructs that are both affected by the parents' paid work. Moreover, paid work affects the parent-child relationship through the time parents spend with their children. As such, research on family relationships should take joint time into account, whereas the time use literature should become

more aware of the consequences of time use. This again demonstrates the value of combining different research strands.

A dyadic perspective. This dissertation approached the topic of work-family issues from a dyadic perspective, incorporating both fathers and mothers in its framework. Parents share the responsibility for the family and consequentially one partner's work characteristics have implications for the other. We systematically analyzed these "partner effects" (Kenny & Cook, 1999) and in doing so we looked at the effects of the mother's paid work on the father's involvement in the family and vice versa. From this we learned that maternal employment does not only affect fathers' involvement at home, as has been shown before (e.g., Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Brayfield, 1995; Coverman, 1985), but that mothers respond to the fathers' paid work as well. Moreover, we showed that paternal participation is affected by the mother's employment status, work hours, and organizational culture. Thus, when parents organize family life they do not only take their own work demands into account but those of their partner as well. When one parent works for an organization that is not family-friendly, the other partner needs to step in to keep family life running smoothly. It is therefore important to take the interdependency between partners into account when studying the effect of paid work on family time.

The sociological relevance: Implications for social cohesion and inequality. In Chapter 1 we set out how this dissertation is embedded in the sociological themes of social cohesion and social inequality. Although we did not measure family cohesion directly, we did learn that parents' paid work affects the quality of the parent-child relationship through the time they spend with their children. Moreover, we demonstrated that the quantity and quality of joint time are both key aspects of family ties. Whereas Coleman's (1988; 1994) main concern lay with physical removal of the parent from the household, we showed that the parent-child relationship also suffers when parents are physically present, but emotionally unavailable. This calls for a redefinition of the concept of availability, especially in a time in which modern technologies allow parents to stay in touch with work at home (Biringen, 2000; Danner-Vlaardingerbroek et al., 2010). Although we remained on the household level and did not study how parental work characteristics affected macro-level outcomes, such as cohesion in schools or neighborhoods, society is likely to benefit from healthy parent-child relationships that are the result of parents' work-family strategies. Children of strongly involved parents are more likely to have learned how to establish healthy relationships with others and are less likely to become delinquent (e.g., Amato & Booth, 1997; Amato & Rivera, 1999; Barber & Buehler, 1996; Putnam, 2000). At the same time, our results suggest that parents cut down on activities that are not child-related, such as community work, which is likely to harm parents' social ties with individuals outside the own household. Future research could study whether such a trade-off indeed exists.

Inequalities between fathers and mothers gained a great deal of attention in the current dissertation. On the household level, we found that work encroachments were larger for men than for women, which implies that women, more than men, cut down on other activities, such as adult leisure, or that they multitask the time with their children (Bianchi et al., 2006; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003). As such, gender inequalities are reflected in the "double burden" that employed

women still carry. On the macro-level gender inequalities are likely to be reflected in an imbalance between sectors and organizations that are male and female dominated. If women are indeed more likely to adjust their work as our dissertation suggests, this would imply that “female” sectors and organizations, such as health care institutions, provide the resources and family benefits that are used to accommodate working families, whereas “male” organizations would need to spend a lesser amount of money to finance these benefits.

Successfully combining work and family life is an everyday concern for many working families and although we did not specifically investigate class differences in the processes we studied, this dissertation does suggest that some jobs accommodate family life better than others. For example, parent-child time appeared to benefit from more job autonomy. Because higher status jobs provide more job resources (Schieman et al., 2009) socioeconomic differences in family time may exist and be reinforced on the macro-level. Nevertheless, as higher status occupations are more likely to have double edged work characteristics, such as flexibility and work engagement (Van Echtelt, 2007), families with a lower socioeconomic status may face different, rather than more, pressure than higher socioeconomic families.

7.4. Limitations and directions for future research

This dissertation has certain limitations that future research could improve upon. First, because of the cross-sectional nature of the data we cannot be certain about the direction of the effects, nor can we exclude the possibility that selection effects occurred. For example, we assumed that the time parents spend with their children predicts the relationship quality, but it could also be the case that parents who have higher quality relationships with their children are more motivated to undertake “high quality” activities with them. Still, Crouter and colleagues (2004) concluded from longitudinal data that this was not the case for American families. It is also possible that parents who want to spend a lot of time with their children select jobs that allow them to do so. Previous research showed that women are especially likely to adjust their paid work to the demands in the family (e.g., Becker & Moen, 1999; Cha, 2010; England & Farkas, 1986; Van Gils, 2007). Moreover, this dissertation showed that the gap in parent-child time between parents working a high and low number of hours is larger in countries where part-time work is more accessible, which could indicate that strongly involved parents select themselves into part-time jobs in these countries. However, because the data were cross-sectional we were not able to examine whether a parent’s work characteristics changed as a result of the family demands as well. Part of the work-to-family effects that were found may therefore be concealed family-to-work effects. Future research could collect other types of data, such as longitudinal or experimental data to further disentangle the causality of the associations in this dissertation. Part of the effects that were found may also be spurious since certain psychological dispositions, such as an energetic personality, and socio-demographic characteristics, such as human capital,

may affect a parents' involvement in both the work and the family sphere (Huston & Rosenkrantz Aronson, 2005).

A second, data-related, limitation of this dissertation is that our study was based on self-reports of time use and the quality of the parent-child relationship. Family life is a sensitive and normative issue and this may have prompted parents to overestimate family time and the relationship quality. Because parenthood norms are stronger for mothers than for fathers, we would expect that the social desirability bias is highest among mothers. This could partly explain why mothers who worked more hours also reported higher quality relationships and why we found more effects of paid work demands for fathers than for mothers. Multi-source data or data collected through observational research (e.g., observing how parents and children interact while performing a task together, see, for example, Greenberger, O'Neil, and Nagel, 1994) would provide more objective measures that could partly remove the bias of social desirability.

It would also be valuable to replicate some of the analyses using time diary data. We asked the parents to report the frequency of activities, instead of the total time they spent in an activity. Although asking parents to report the frequency is not uncommon (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2006; Coltrane, 2000) and the small effects of work hours are consistent with previous time diary research, we might have failed to measure more subtle variations in time use. For example, parents with flexible jobs could read to their children as often as parents with inflexible jobs, but may read an average of two stories whereas the parents with inflexible jobs may only have time to read one. If there would indeed be more variation in the absolute time that is spent in activities, this would imply that we underestimated the effects of paid work in this dissertation.

Third, four of the five studies in this dissertation were performed in the Netherlands, and the specificity of the Dutch context warrants some caution in generalizing the results. Whereas Bianchi et al. (2006) suggest that part-time work buffers the effects of paid work, our findings suggested that the differences in parent-child time between parents working part-time and full-time are larger in countries where part-time work is more widely accessible. This could imply that the effects of work hours on the frequency of family activities are smaller in other countries. How this applies to the effects of work characteristics other than the work hours is uncertain. Possibly, countries also differ in the extent to which jobs with high flexibility, low insecurity, and friendly work-family cultures are accessible, but future research should look into this.

Fourth, future research could investigate whether the protection of parent-child time has unintended consequences. The finding that the time parents spend with their children is relatively unaffected by paid work implies that parents multitask and economize on other activities, such as solitary or couple time (Craig, 2007; Daly, 2001). These choices might hurt the couple relationship and cause parents to feel stressed and this could harm children indirectly (Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, & Crouter, 2000). A parent-child activity might lose its beneficial effect or even become a stress factor for the child when a parent is stressed. Also, children are likely to suffer from a decline in their parents' relationship quality and the possible break-up that can emerge from this (Amato & Booth, 1997). Thus, it would be interesting to further investigate how

employed parents balance time with their children, partner, and themselves, and how these different scenarios affect those involved. The parents' decision latitude and the national context might play a central role in this. In a report by UNICEF (2007) that compared child well-being in several post-industrial countries, the Netherlands ranked first and the wide accessibility of part-time work may partly account for this. As compared to parents in other countries, Dutch parents might be better able to accommodate their work to their own and their children's needs. When investigating the unintended consequences, future research should further examine what quality time constitutes. The results from this dissertation suggest that it is valuable to determine to what extent parent-child activities are contaminated and fragmented, but "quality time" is a multidimensional construct. Other dimensions, such as the subjective experiences (Krueger, 2007) and the quality of parenting (e.g., Booth et al., 2002; Grossman, Pollack, & Golding, 1988) are likely to be relevant as well.

Fifth, future research could gain more insight in the ways in which parents protect family life by including the role of attitudes and ideologies in the theoretical framework. We made assumptions on parents' attitudes and priorities, but we did not ask them directly about their attitudes and ideologies. Tapping more precisely into the role of parents' attitudes and ideologies could yield interesting insights in the work-family interface, especially in a cross-national perspective. Treas and Widmer (2000) compared the centrality of children in several countries and found that children were least central in the Netherlands and most central in Southern European countries. In the light of the results of the UNICEF (2007) report it is remarkable that the centrality of children is relatively low in the Netherlands (Jones & Brayfield, 1997), but whereas the centrality might be low, attitudes towards female fulltime employment are conservative in the Netherlands (SCP, 2006). It is possible that children in the Netherlands do well because the opportunity to work part-time enables parents to act upon their preference to be either home or work-oriented. Future research could further investigate these seemingly paradoxical findings and study how parenthood ideologies, attitudes, and behavior interact and affect family and individual outcomes. For example, although norms on the country-level did not appear to condition for the influence of work hours, future research on the individual level could investigate whether paid work intrudes less on parent-child time when parents hold stronger parenthood ideologies.

Finally, although we argued that parents are interdependent actors and studied how they impact each other, we did not consider non-parental child care. Outsourcing is a common strategy to accommodate work and family demands (see De Ruijter, 2006). Because outsourcing the care for a child implies not spending this time with the child, we did not feel confident including child care as an exogenous control variable. Nevertheless, outsourcing decisions are important to consider because they may condition work-to-family effects. One could argue that access to high quality formal or informal child care decreases the interdependency between the partners, because the absence of one partner does not increase the burden or demand on the other partner. Our finding that work encroachments are weaker in countries where child care coverage is higher provides indirect evidence for the moderating effect of child care. When children are in child care during a substantial part of the week, they are not available to interact

with and characteristics of the parent's work are thus of less importance. Future research could further explore work-to-family effects in the wider context of the family's child care arrangements.

7.5. Practical implications

The combination of paid work and family life is a topical issue and the facilitation of working families was one of the main policy goals in the 2008 policy plan of the ministry of Youth and Family (Ministerie van Jeugd en Gezin, 2008). Although the organization of family time clearly is an issue that concerns the private sphere, which makes it difficult to derive policy measures that intervene in the organization of family time, this dissertation provides some useful pointers that could help policy makers, human resource managers, and practitioners, such as family therapists, to support working families and design tailored work-family policies.

Our study sustains the finding from prior research that family members benefit from high quality family time (e.g., Amato & Rivera, 1999; Crouter et al., 2004; Schneider et al., 2004). Support in the planning of healthy "family time" would therefore improve family functioning and enhance parents' and children's well-being. For example, family therapists and the future "Centra voor Jeugd en Gezin" (Centres for Youth and Family, i.e., Dutch neighborhood centers that are currently set up and that will offer support and information regarding parenting to parents) could help parents to improve their time management skills through counseling and workshops. Parents can be informed about the beneficial effects of spending high quality time with their children and be given advice on how to balance work and family demands and limit work encroachments.

Workplaces can also facilitate their employees with children by creating a more family-friendly work environment. We demonstrated that parents go far in protecting the time with their children, so when their workplace does not support them in this and both work and family demands are high, this could eventually come at the cost of the employees' well-being and indirectly harm their work performance. Similarly, and on a more positive note, work performance can benefit from family bonds and positive experiences (Ten Brummelhuis, 2009). More than ten years ago, Thompson et al. (1999) raised the question which specific strategies managers and human resource managers can employ to increase family friendliness, but it is still unclear how concrete measures can be shaped. Higher management can aim to create a family-friendly environment by introducing work-family programs and instructing lower management to be supportive towards employees, but when lower management does not share this view the viability of such measures is likely to be limited (Hochschild, 1997). Similarly, government initiatives to stimulate organizations to become more family-friendly might have limited effects when organizations do not see how they can gain from this, especially in economic difficult times.

The Dutch government currently aims to support and facilitate working families by stimulating workplace flexibility (Ministry of Youth & Family, 2008). For example, in March 2009 the Dutch

Ministry of Youth and Family organized a conference on flexible arrangements and work-family balance that aimed to stimulate employers to increase workplace flexibility by emphasizing the benefits of flexible work for both employers and employees. Our results nuance the proclaimed benefits of flexible arrangements however. We found that family time was surprisingly unresponsive to job flexibility, and that other work characteristics such as the organizational culture mattered more for the time parents spent with their children. Moreover, job flexibility appeared to erode the boundaries as we found that parents who have more flexible work, also report lower quality parent-child activities. In the light of these findings, the increasing popularity of smart phones and the widespread access to Internet warrant caution. Human resource managers and policies could gain from these insights by becoming, and making their employees, more aware of the unintended consequences of increased work flexibility.

This dissertation also offers suggestions on how governmental emancipation policies could increase paternal participation in the family and stimulate a more equal division of labor. The 2007 policy note on Emancipation (Ministerie voor Onderwijs, Cultuur en Media, 2007) has been criticized for being directed only at women (e.g., “Man krijgt hoofdrol in debat over emancipatie,” 2007) and this dissertation suggests that fathers indeed play a crucial role in families. Because paternal participation in child care is responsive to both the father’s own and his partner’s work demands, the government as well as workplaces can stimulate paternal participation in the household in at least two ways. In line with the demand/response capacity approach, policies can either increase the demand that is imposed on fathers or increase their response capacity. First, men’s perceived family demands can be increased by stimulating female employment and increasing the normative appeal on men. For example, public campaigns could illustrate the beneficial effects of paternal involvement. Second, government and organizational policies could support fathers in responding to family demands. Family-friendly arrangements could become more gender-neutral when the formal and informal boundaries to make use of these family arrangements would be removed.

7.6. Family life under pressure?

Although paid work and family life are often depicted as irreconcilable, this dissertation showed that the demands from these two spheres can be combined. Parents allocate their scarce time strategically, and by doing so they limit the extent to which work intrudes on the family. Despite the protection of the quantity of family time, paid work does have unintended consequences for the quality of parent-child time as joint time is more disturbed by work when parental work is more demanding and flexible. We showed that paid work impacts some family activities more than others, depending on the nature of the activity and on who participates. Work demands intrude more upon father’s care activities than they do on their play activities with children and mothers exert their gate keeping role by protecting time with the whole family most strongly. Nevertheless, it appeared that the quality of Moreover, we demonstrated that the quantity and

quality of the time parents spend with their children forms a linking pin between paid work and the quality of the parent-child relationship. So, family time matters for parents and children, but paid work is less harmful for family time than generally is presumed in society. The claim of former minister André Rouvoet that parents are to blame for the high incidence of adolescent problem behavior, therefore appeared to be unsupported. Employed parents need not to be criticized, but should be praised for their efforts to protect family life.

Nederlandse samenvatting

(Summary in Dutch)

Betaald werk wordt over het algemeen gezien als iets dat met het gezinsleven conflicteert. Ook al is inkomen essentieel voor het levensonderhoud van het gezin, in zowel de wetenschappelijke literatuur als populaire media wordt vaak aangenomen dat werk ten koste gaat van het gezinsleven omdat het tijd, energie en aandacht van het gezinsleven wegneemt (Bianchi, 2000; Hochschild, 1997; "Nooit de kinderen van school gehaald," 2010; Nuffield Foundation, 2009). De toegenomen arbeidsparticipatie van vrouwen heeft sociologen, demografen, economen en psychologen geïnspireerd tot een groot aantal studies naar de consequenties hiervan voor kinderen. Uit dit onderzoek blijkt dat deze gevolgen zeer beperkt zijn. Kinderen van werkende moeders zijn niet slechter af dan kinderen van moeders die huisvrouw zijn (Bianchi, 2000). Bovendien is gebleken dat hoewel vrouwen meer zijn gaan werken, ouders eerder meer dan minder tijd aan hun kinderen zijn gaan besteden (Gauthier et al., 2004). Bianchi (2000) stelt dat de negatieve effecten van arbeidsparticipatie en werkuren zo gering zijn omdat moeders, maar ook vaders, de tijd die zij met hun kinderen besteden zeer sterk beschermen. Als werk hun tijd inperkt, zullen ouders eerder kiezen om minder te gaan sporten dan om minder tijd met hun kinderen door te brengen (Bianchi et al., 2006). Iets soortgelijks bleek uit een, ondertussen klassieke, studie van Nock en Kingston (1985), die heeft laten zien dat meer werkuren bij moeders wel ten koste gaat van activiteiten waarbij de aandacht voor kinderen "secundair" is, zoals samen boodschappen doen, maar niet van activiteiten waarin kinderen centraal staan, zoals voorlezen. Op deze manier lijken ouders goed in staat de tijd met hun kinderen te beschermen.

Er is echter nog veel onduidelijk over hoe ouders het gezinsleven beschermen tegen de negatieve effecten van werk. Dit proefschrift onderzoekt dit proces door in meer detail naar zowel het werkdomein als het gezinsdomein te kijken. In het werkdomein hebben we een breed scala aan baankenmerken onderzocht en zo bijgedragen aan eerder onderzoek dat zich vooral op tijd gerelateerde baankenmerken heeft gericht. De organisatieliteratuur laat zien dat baankenmerken die niet direct met tijd te maken hebben eveneens het welzijn van ouders beïnvloeden, maar het is onduidelijk of dit ook doorwerkt in de tijdsbesteding thuis. Zo hebben we bijvoorbeeld onderzocht of ouders meer tijd met hun kinderen doorbrengen als ze werken voor een organisatie met een organisatiecultuur die open staat voor de gezinsverantwoordelijkheden van haar werknemers. In het gezinsdomein hebben we onderzocht of verschillen bestaan tussen verschillende typen activiteiten. Eerder onderzoek heeft vooral naar de totale tijdsbesteding met kinderen gekeken, en hierbij geen systematisch onderscheid gemaakt tussen verschillende typen activiteiten. In dit proefschrift hebben we daarom zorg en

interactieve activiteiten enerzijds, en activiteiten met alleen de ouder en het kind en activiteiten met het hele gezin anderzijds met elkaar gecontrasteerd. Verder is de rol van de kwaliteit van de ouder-kind-tijd onderzocht en hebben we bekeken hoe de hoeveelheid en kwaliteit van ouder-kind-tijd doorwerken op de kwaliteit van de ouder-kind-relatie.

Bij het onderzoeken van de invloed van betaald werk op de kwantiteit en kwaliteit van gezinstijd is de wederzijdse afhankelijkheid tussen de ouders als uitgangspunt genomen. Het gezinsleven is een gedeelde verantwoordelijkheid en het is daarom belangrijk om te onderzoeken hoe ouders elkaar beïnvloeden. Bij het beantwoorden van de onderzoeksvraag is eveneens bekeken onder welke condities de effecten van betaald werk sterker of minder sterk zijn. Op gezinsniveau hebben we hierbij naar verschillen tussen mannen en vrouwen en ouders van jonge en oudere kinderen gekeken. Daarnaast is een internationaal vergelijkende studie uitgevoerd waarin bekeken is of de sterkte van de samenhang tussen werkuren en ouder-kind-tijd verschilt tussen verschillende Europese landen en of eventuele verschillen verklaard kunnen worden op basis van landenkenmerken zoals het werk-familie-beleid en de toegankelijkheid van deeltijdwerk.

Dit proefschrift bestaat uit vijf empirische hoofdstukken die ieder op een specifiek deelaspect ingaan. Voor de eerste vier studies is gebruik gemaakt van zelf verzamelde data. In de lente van 2007 zijn via het huishoudenpanel van TNS-NIPO data verzameld onder 2,620 huishoudens met kinderen. De internationaal vergelijkende studie is gedaan aan de hand van de European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) uit 2005. Hieronder volgt een samenvatting van de theorie en resultaten van de vijf studies uit dit proefschrift. Tenslotte zal ik een algemene conclusie trekken en suggesties voor verder onderzoek geven.

Baankenmerken en ouder-kind-tijd

In het eerste empirische hoofdstuk, hoofdstuk 2, hebben we onderzocht of de hoeveelheid tijd die ouders met hun kinderen doorbrengen verklaard kan worden op basis van baankenmerken, zoals de organisatiecultuur en baanonzekerheid. Daarnaast is gekeken of deze effecten verschillen voor moeders en vaders en voor ouders van jongere en oudere kinderen. De meeste studies naar de invloed van werk op ouder-kind-tijd hebben het aantal werkuren onderzocht (Bianchi et al., 2006; Crouter et al., 2001; Nock & Kingston, 1988) en de studies die zich op andere baankenmerken richtten beperkten zich tot tijdsgelateerde kenmerken, zoals onregelmatig werk (Baxter, 2009; Estes, 2004; Noonan, Estes, and Glass, 2007). In hoofdstuk 2 hebben we een breed scala aan baankenmerken onderzocht, zoals autonomie, flexibiliteit, en de organisatiecultuur. Hoewel er in de organisatieliteratuur veel geschreven is over de effecten van deze kenmerken op het welzijn van werknemers, is er zelden gekeken naar de effecten op hun tijdsbesteding thuis. Het is echter zeer denkbaar dat 'negatieve' baankenmerken zoals baanonzekerheid en een organisatiecultuur die weinig ondersteunend is voor het gezinsleven, tijd, energie en aandacht aan het gezinsleven onttrekken terwijl 'positieve' baankenmerken, zoals autonomie en steun, deze tijd, aandacht en energie juist stimuleren. Zo zal een ouder die

uitgeput thuis komt na het werk eerder geneigd zijn de televisie aan te zetten voor de kinderen en zelf de krant te gaan lezen, terwijl een ouder die een goede werkdag heeft gehad extra energie heeft om de kinderen nog even mee te nemen naar het speeltuintje in de straat.

We hebben ook verwachtingen geformuleerd over de verschillen tussen vaders en moeders en ouders van oudere en jongere kinderen. Allereerst verwachtten we dat moeders de tijd met kinderen sterker tegen de negatieve effecten van werk zouden beschermen dan vaders. Er wordt vaak gesteld dat moeders een sterker verantwoordelijkheidsgevoel hebben richting het gezin, terwijl vaders zich meer verantwoordelijk voelen voor hun werk (Bielby, 1992). Dit zou ook kunnen betekenen dat moeders, meer dan vaders, geneigd zullen zijn om meer gebruik te maken van baankenmerken die het gezinsleven faciliteren, zoals flexibiliteit. Omdat oudere kinderen zelf minder beschikbaar zijn omdat ze meer tijd aan school en hun vrienden besteden, verwachtten we dat de effecten van de baankenmerken op tijd met kinderen minder sterk zullen zijn voor ouders van adolescenten dan voor ouders van jonge kinderen.

De resultaten suggereren dat ook bij het bekijken van een breder scala aan baankenmerken de effecten van werk op ouder-kind-tijd klein blijven. Ook het differentiëren tussen vaders en moeders of tussen ouders met jonge en oudere kinderen verandert hier weinig aan. Toch hadden een redelijk aantal baankenmerken een (marginaal) significant effect: ouders besteedden meer tijd aan hun kinderen als ze minder uren werkten, meer autonomie en beschikbaarheid rapporteerden, en als ze buiten traditionele kantooruren werkten. Daarnaast ging er een onverwacht negatief effect van steun van het management uit, al was dit effect marginaal significant. Ook leek het negatieve effect van werkuren op de hoeveelheid gezamenlijke tijd sterker te zijn voor vaders en ouders van jongere kinderen en was er licht bewijs voor de bewering dat moeders en ouders van adolescenten meer gebruik maken van hulpbronnen op het werk.

Eén-op-één ouder-kind activiteiten, gezins- en partneractiviteiten

In de literatuur over de effecten van tijd schaarste op het gezinsleven, wordt niet alleen weinig onderscheid gemaakt tussen verschillende typen activiteiten, zoals routine en interactieve activiteiten, maar wordt er ook zelden gedifferentieerd op basis van wie er aanwezig is. Wie precies in een activiteit participeert is echter zeer bepalend voor de aard en ervaring van deze activiteit. Zo is een restaurantbezoek waarbij kleine kinderen aan tafel zitten anders dan een etentje voor twee en zal een bezoek aan een speeltuin minder stressvol zijn als de vader en moeder samen de kinderen in de gaten kunnen houden. In hoofdstuk 4 hebben we daarom onderscheid gemaakt tussen vrijetijdsactiviteiten met alleen een ouder en de kinderen, alleen de ouders, of beide ouders én de kinderen. Hierbij verwachtten we dat werkende ouders deze activiteiten verschillend zullen waarderen en dat dit invloed heeft op de keuzes die ouders maken op het moment dat ze hun schaarse vrije tijd moeten indelen. Allereerst verwachtten we dat de huidige ouderschapsideologie een sterke sociale druk op ouders legt om de vrije tijd die ze hebben in eerste instantie aan de kinderen te besteden. Daardoor zullen werkeisen eerder ten

coste gaat van koppelactiviteiten dan van ouder-kind activiteiten. Wat betreft het verschil tussen vrijetijdsactiviteiten met kinderen met en zonder de partner hebben we twee tegengestelde hypothesen geformuleerd. Aan de ene kant is het waarschijnlijk dat de sociale waarde van gezinsactiviteiten groter is dan die van één-op-één ouder-kind activiteiten. Omdat de ouders de verantwoordelijkheid voor de kinderen kunnen delen zijn gezinsactiviteiten minder stressvol dan activiteiten zonder de partner. Bovendien is het efficiënt en kunnen alle gezinsleden elkaar spreken en zien. Aan de andere kant zijn activiteiten waar meerdere mensen aan deelnemen ook moeilijker te organiseren omdat er een groter aantal agenda's op elkaar moeten worden afgestemd. Vanuit dit oogpunt zijn ouder-kind activiteiten makkelijker en te plannen en is het waarschijnlijk dat deze activiteiten door deze flexibiliteit minder onder betaald werk te leiden hebben. Omdat vrijetijdsactiviteiten in alle verschillende samenstellingen ondernomen kunnen worden, hebben we ons in deze studie specifiek op vrijetijdsactiviteiten gericht.

Uit de analyses bleek allereerst dat de activiteiten van de partners zonder de kinderen zo zeldzaam waren dat ze amper door het werk van de vader en moeder beïnvloed werden. Hoewel de werkuren van de vaders wel een klein negatief effect hadden op de tijd die partners samen doorbrachten, brachten koppels waarbij beide partners voltijd werkten juist meer tijd samen door dan stellen waarbij tenminste een van de partners in deeltijd werkte. Bij het vergelijken van één-op-één ouder-kind en gezinsactiviteiten bleek dat de werkeisen van moeders sterker ten koste gingen van activiteiten met alleen het kind, dan van activiteiten met kind én partner. Mannen bleken daarentegen geen onderscheid te maken op basis van wie er in de activiteit participeert. Op basis van de resultaten is te concluderen dat het inderdaad uitmaakt welke gezinsleden aan een vrijetijdsactiviteit deelnemen. Dit geldt in sterkere mate voor vrouwen dan voor mannen. Activiteiten waarin het hele gezin participeert, hebben een grotere waarde omdat ze meer ontspannend zijn (Schneider et al., 2004) en het lijkt erop dat moeders deze activiteiten daarom sterker beschermen tegen de negatieve effecten van werk.

De kwaliteit van tijd en van de ouder-kind relatie

Tijdsbesteding en meer kwalitatieve aspecten van het gezinsleven, zoals de kwaliteit van de ouder-kind-relatie zijn in eerder onderzoek vooral los van elkaar bekeken. En waarbij in de literatuur naar de partnerrelatie onderzocht is of de invloed van werk op deze relatie indirect is en via de hoeveelheid gezamenlijke tijd loopt (Hill, 1988; Poortman, 2005) is dit nog niet gedaan voor de relatie tussen ouders en kinderen. Het is echter goed denkbaar dat ouders met een veeleisende baan een minder goede band met hun kinderen op kunnen bouwen omdat hun werk hen ervan weerhoudt voldoende tijd samen door te brengen. Denk bijvoorbeeld aan de implicaties van het klassieke voorbeeld van een schooloptreden dat wordt gemist door een vergadering die uitloopt. In hoofdstuk 5 is daarom onderzocht of het verband tussen baankenmerken en de ouder-kind-relatie gemedieerd wordt door de hoeveelheid tijd die samen doorgebracht wordt. Het tweede doel van dit hoofdstuk was te onderzoeken welke rol de kwaliteit van gezamenlijke tijd hierin speelt. In de eerdere hoofdstukken bleek de kwantiteit van ouder-kind-tijd maar in beperkte mate beïnvloed te worden door betaald werk, maar dit zegt

weinig over de kwaliteit van deze tijd. Hoewel sociale normen sterk voorschrijven dat de tijd met kinderen beschermd moet worden (Hays, 1996) is het mogelijk lastiger om de kwaliteit te beschermen. We hebben de kwaliteit van ouder-kind-tijd gemeten aan de hand van de mate waarin ouder-kind activiteiten gecombineerd worden met of onderbroken worden door werkgerelateerde activiteiten (Bittman & Wajcman, 2000; Mattingly en Bianchi, 2003).

De empirische bevindingen lieten zien dat zowel de kwantiteit als de kwaliteit van gezamenlijke tijd de relatiekwaliteit tussen ouders en kinderen bevorderde, maar de kwaliteit van tijd werd door een groter aantal baankenmerken beïnvloed dan de kwantiteit van tijd. Ook bleek het niet eenduidig welke baankenmerken werkeisen waren en welke hulpbronnen. Zo besteedden ouders die veel plezier aan hun werk beleefden bijvoorbeeld meer tijd aan hun kinderen maar was de kwaliteit van deze tijd tegelijkertijd lager. Ook zorgde flexibiliteit, een baankenmerk dat vaak als positief wordt gezien, ervoor dat ouder-kind-activiteiten meer door werk "besmet" en onderbroken werden. Uit de analyses kwamen weinig verschillen tussen vaders en moeders naar voren. Mogelijk heeft dit te maken met de steekproef: waar we in de eerdere analyses ook naar ouders van hele jonge kinderen hebben gekeken hebben we ons hier op schoolgaande kinderen gericht omdat hier meer over de relatiekwaliteit kan worden gezegd.

Cross-nationale verschillen in de samenhang tussen werkuren en ouder-kind-tijd

Om te begrijpen hoe ouders het gezinsleven beschermen tegen de eisen van werk, is het zinvol om over de grenzen te kijken en te onderzoeken of de werk- en gezinsverantwoordelijkheden beter samengaan in landen waarin werkende gezinnen meer ondersteund worden. Moen en Wethington (1992) stelden dat overheidssteun ouders faciliteert bij het beschermen van het gezinsleven tegen externe factoren zoals de druk vanuit werk. Deze stelling is het uitgangspunt in hoofdstuk 6 waarin onderzocht is of de sterkte van de samenhang tussen werkuren en tijd met kinderen verschilt tussen landen en op basis van welke landskenmerken deze verschillen te verklaren zijn. Naast de rol van gezinsbeleid van de centrale overheid, is ook naar de rol van sociale normen en het inkomensniveau in een land gekeken.

Hoofdstuk 6 is gestoeld op twee theoretische uitgangspunten. Allereerst hebben we de verwachting geformuleerd dat werkuren en ouder-kind-tijd minder sterk samenhangen wanneer betaald werk beter met het gezinsleven te combineren is. In landen waar de overheid een deel van de verantwoordelijkheid voor het combineren van werk en gezin op zich neemt, gezinnen hierin ondersteunt en arbeidsparticipatie van vrouwen stimuleert, zal dit sterker het geval zijn. Daarom is het waarschijnlijk dat de negatieve invloed van werkuren op ouder-kind-tijd minder sterk zal zijn in landen waar de overheid werkende gezinnen ondersteunt, en waar ouders flexibel kunnen werken, verlof op kunnen nemen en hun kinderen naar kinderopvang kunnen brengen. Tevens verwachtten we dat wanneer in een land een sterke ouderschapsideologie bestaat, ouders meer geneigd zullen zijn om de tijd met hun kinderen te beschermen en de impact van werk hier dus ook minder sterk is.

Ten tweede veronderstelden we dat een sterke samenhang tussen werkuren en ouder-kind-tijd ook kan betekenen dat er sprake is van twee verschillende groepen ouders in een land: ouders die sterk betrokken zijn bij hun kinderen en een deeltijdbaan hebben en ouders die minder intensief betrokken zijn bij hun kinderen en een voltijdbaan hebben. De mate waarin sterk betrokken ouders ervoor kunnen kiezen om een kleinere baan te nemen hangt echter sterk van de institutionele context af, namelijk of het mogelijk is om het aantal uren van een baan terug te brengen of een deeltijdbaan te vinden, en tegelijkertijd moet het financieel haalbaar zijn (het gezin moet ook rond kunnen komen van een anderhalf- of deeltijd/deeltijd-inkomen). In landen waar dit niet mogelijk is, zullen zelfs de sterk betrokken ouders gedwongen worden een voltijdbaan te nemen. Omdat zij zo sterk op hun kinderen gericht zijn, zullen ze evenwel andere manieren vinden om veel tijd met hen door te brengen. Zo zullen sterk betrokken ouders bijvoorbeeld minder gaan sporten of meer 's avonds laat werken. Indien deze redenering opgaat, zouden bij deze ouders grotere banen samengaan met veel ouder-kind-tijd en zou de samenhang tussen werkuren en ouder-kind-tijd minder sterk zijn in landen waar deeltijdwerk minder toegankelijk is.

Multilevel analyses op Europese data (5,184 werkende ouders in 23 Europese landen) bevestigden de verwachting dat de samenhang tussen werkuren en ouder-kind-tijd tussen de verschillende landen varieerde. Deze variatie kon deels verklaard worden aan de hand van de landskenmerken. Het negatieve effect van werkuren was minder sterk in landen waar kinderen voor een substantieel gedeelte van de week naar formele kinderopvang gingen. Daarnaast bleken de effecten van werkuren sterker te zijn in landen waar deeltijdwerk gebruikelijker is en ouders ook financieel in staat zijn om minder te gaan werken.

Conclusie en discussie

Ouders beschermen de tijd die ze met hun kinderen doorbrengen in sterke mate. Gezinstijd is veel minder afhankelijk van factoren in het werkdomein dan vaak gedacht wordt. Toch doet werk er wel degelijk toe. Niet alleen de werkuren zijn relevant voor de tijd die met het gezin wordt doorgebracht, factoren zoals de planning van werkuren en de organisatiecultuur zijn ook belangrijk. Uit dit proefschrift bleek eveneens dat het uitmaakt naar welke gezinsactiviteiten gekeken wordt. Bepaalde activiteiten worden sterker beïnvloed door werk dan andere en mannen en vrouwen verschillen hierin. Voor vaders bleken werkeisen bleken veel meer ten koste te gaan van zorgactiviteiten dan van de, aangename, interactieve activiteiten zoals samen naar de speeltuin gaan. Voor moeders daarentegen bleek het uit te maken wie er in een activiteit participeert: gezinsactiviteiten werden minder sterk ingeperkt door een grotere baan, dan activiteiten waarin de moeder alleen met het kind participeert. Naast dat het relevant bleek om in meer detail naar het werk en het gezinsdomein te kijken, vonden we ook verschillen tussen verschillende typen ouders en verschillende landen. Zo bleken werkeisen over het algemeen voor moeders minder bepalend voor hun ouder-kind-tijd dan voor vaders en was het schadelijke effect van werkuren op ouder-kind-tijd minder sterk voor adolescente kinderen en in landen waar kinderen een groter deel van de week in kinderopvang zitten. Ook leken de verschillen tussen

ouders met een deeltijd en voltijd baan groter te zijn in landen waar deeltijdwerk goed toegankelijk is. Al deze bevindingen bieden meer inzicht in de strategieën die werkende ouders gebruiken bij het combineren van arbeid en zorg.

Een beperking van dit onderzoek is dat de bevindingen gebaseerd zijn op cross-sectionele data (met informatie over maar één tijdstip), waardoor we niet uit elkaar kunnen halen in hoeverre werk echt een causaal effect op gezinstijd heeft en in hoeverre ouders hun werk aanpassen zodat het beter op het gezinsleven aansluit. Ook hebben we geen gebruik kunnen maken van tijdsbestedingsdata wat mogelijk de betrouwbaarheid en validiteit van de data heeft beperkt. Mogelijk zijn er ook meer subtiele effecten te ontdekken als dezelfde analyses op tijdsbestedingsdata uitgevoerd worden. Dit onderzoek biedt een aantal interessante aanknopingspunten voor vervolgonderzoek. Zo zou het bijvoorbeeld interessant zijn verder in te gaan op de onbedoelde effecten van de bescherming van ouder-kind-tijd. Uit dit proefschrift kwam duidelijk naar voren dat de hoeveelheid tijd die ouders met hun kinderen doorbrengen slechts in beperkte mate door betaald werk beïnvloed werd. Hier lijkt een sterke ouderschapsideologie aan ten grondslag te liggen. Het bleek echter ook dat de kwaliteit van de tijd moeilijker te beschermen was. In dit proefschrift hebben we de kwaliteit gemeten aan de hand van de verstoring door werk, maar het is mogelijk dat werk nog op andere manieren doorwerkt op de ouder-kind-tijd. Voelt een ouder zich bijvoorbeeld gehaast of gestrest terwijl hij of zij iets met de kinderen aan het doen is? In dit kader is het een interessante vraag of het voor kinderen altijd goed is tijd met hun ouders door te brengen, ook als die ouder onder tijdsdruk staat en andere activiteiten, zoals sport en vrienden, op heeft moeten geven om er voor de kinderen te zijn. Mogelijk zou een kind er indirect van profiteren als de ouders besluiten samen uit eten te gaan zonder de kinderen als dit de partnerrelatie ten goede komt. Verder onderzoek kan uitzoeken hoe gezinnen hun gezinsagenda inrichten en welke strategieën het meest succesvol zijn in termen van uitkomsten voor ouders en kinderen.

Op basis van dit proefschrift kan worden geconcludeerd dat betaald werk wel degelijk invloed heeft op de tijd die gezinsleden samen doorbrengen, maar dat dit effect subtiel is en onderzoekers vraagt om in detail naar zowel het werk- als het gezinsdomein te kijken. Ouders beschermen de hoeveelheid tijd die zij met hun kinderen doorbrengen sterk, waardoor de negatieve effecten van werkuren en andere baaneisen zeer beperkt zijn. Echter, de kwaliteit van ouder-kind-tijd is lager als ouders een veeleisende baan hebben of een baan hebben waarbij de grenzen tussen werk en privé vaag zijn.

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Anne Roeters

Utrecht, juli 2010

Curriculum Vitae

Anne Roeters was born in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, on October 18, 1982. She studied Sociology at Utrecht University and received her master degree (cum laude) in 2005. In September 2005 she started working on the PhD project "Family life under pressure? The quantity and quality of parent-child and family time." The current study was part of the overarching research project "Interdependencies between work and family life: an interdisciplinary approach of the work-family interface". In 2006 she visited the summer school in Ann Arbor and in 2008 she carried out a two-month research traineeship at the University of California, Irvine. She currently works as an assistant professor at the department of Sociology, Utrecht University. In her future research she is planning to study the unintended consequences of protecting family time and further explore what quality time constitutes.

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