**Use of Family-Friendly Work Arrangements and Work-Family Conflict: Crossover
Effects in Dual-Earner Couples**

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Our work is supported by the Flemish Fund for Scientific Research, Belgium (FWO, Grant nos. G.0630.14N).

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Published in *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* (2016); Volume 21, Issue 1.

Abstract

This paper uses a dyadic approach to examine how an employee's work-family conflict is affected when his or her partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements. We focused on two types of family-friendly practices, i.e. reduced work hours and schedule or workplace flexibility. Hypotheses were tested with multilevel structural equation modeling using information of 186 dual-earner couples. In line with our hypotheses, we found support for both a positive and a negative crossover effect, though the results showed differences between the two types of family-friendly work arrangements. First, a positive crossover effect was found for both reduced work hours and schedule or workplace flexibility; however, the specific mechanisms explaining this effect differed per type of arrangements. In particular, employees whose partner made use of reduced work hours were found to experience less home demands which was in turn associated with lower family-to-work conflict, whereas employees whose partner made use of schedule or workplace flexibility experienced a similar positive crossover effect but through an increase in the social support they perceived. Second, a negative crossover effect was found only for reduced work hours and not for schedule or workplace flexibility. Specifically, employees whose partner made use of reduced work hours were found to work on average more hours a week, which was in turn related with more work-to-family conflict, whereas employees whose partner made use of schedule or workplace flexibility worked on average less hours a week and consequently, experienced lower work-to-family conflict. Implications for literature and practice are discussed.

Keywords: family-friendly work arrangements; work-family conflict; dual-earner couples; crossover effects

Use of Family-Friendly Work Arrangements and Work-Family Conflict: Crossover Effects in Dual-Earner Couples

In this study, we investigate how the use of family-friendly work arrangements by one partner is related to the work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict of the other partner in a dual-earner couple. Stimulated by the strong feminization of the labour market and changing gender norms, the number of dual-earner families has risen substantially in the last few decades (Van Gils & Kraaykamp, 2008). In dual-earner couples, where both partners have to combine work and home responsibilities, individuals have a high risk of experiencing work-family conflict (Elloy & Smith, 2003). Work-family conflict is a form of interrole conflict in which individuals' work and family roles are to some extent mutually incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Work-family conflict may occur in two directions. People can either experience *work-to-family conflict* when their work roles prevent them from completing their home roles successfully or *family-to-work conflict* when they struggle to fulfill their work roles due to their home responsibilities (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Both work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict can have serious consequences for individuals as well as for organizations. Work-to-family conflict has been associated with job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, turnover intentions and lower productivity levels (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000). Family-to-work conflict is related to physical health problems (e.g., hypertension), mental health problems (e.g., stress and burnout) and family dissatisfaction (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). Because of these negative side effects, an increasing number of organizations have started to offer family-friendly work arrangements (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). These are human resource practices such as part-time work and telework which aim to provide users with additional resources (e.g., time or flexibility) that could help them to better balance their work and home roles and thus

to reduce their work-family conflict (Ryan & Kossek, 2008). Although there is some mixed support for this proposition (Allen, Johnson, Kiburz, & Shockley, 2013; Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Hill, Erickson, Holmes, & Ferris, 2010), several studies have indeed found that users of family-friendly work arrangements experience less work-family conflict (e.g., Byron, 2005; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Masuda et al., 2012).

In this paper, we posit that in dual-earner families, not only one's own, but also one's partner's use of family-friendly work arrangements can affect an employee's work-family conflict. This is because the use of family-friendly work arrangements is a work decision with a high family-relatedness, i.e., a decision which is often influenced by family factors (e.g., the birth of a child) and which may in turn affect the home domain (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012). In general, it is expected that the use of these practices by one partner will *benefit* the other family members (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012; Hammer, Neal, Newsom, Brockwood, & Colton, 2005). That is, the partner who makes use of family-friendly work arrangements is able – and likely – to invest the additional resources (i.e., time or flexibility) in the home domain by, for instance, taking care of more home responsibilities or by giving more social support (Allen et al., 2013; Noonan, Estes, & Glass, 2007; Poelmans, 2005). In that way, the use of family-friendly work arrangements by one partner may reduce the other partner's work-family conflict. However, this may only be part of the story. In particular, we expect that employees whose partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements are likely to respond to their partner's increased input at home by contributing more at work, i.e., by working more hours, since this would both restore the changed input-ratio between them and their partner (DeMaris, 2007) and could compensate for the risk of lowered career prospects their partner runs by making use of these practices (Verbakel, 2010). This would, however, increase their work-family conflict.

In this study, we examine whether these two competing processes indeed occur and how they together affect an employee's work-to-family and family-to-work conflict. Thereby, we address the increasing calls to examine the crossover effects of family-friendly work arrangements (Barnett, Gareis, & Brennan, 2009; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Maume & Sebastian, 2012). To date, research on this topic has dominantly applied an individual focus. We found only one study, i.e. by Hammer, Neal and colleagues (2005), that investigated the effects of family-friendly work arrangements at a couple level. These authors hypothesized that couple-level use of family-friendly work arrangements would be related to less work-to-family conflict and less family-to-work conflict, but could not find support for these hypotheses. They argued that their results could be biased due to imprecision in how they had measured the use of family-friendly work arrangements since they had not differentiated between current and past use of these arrangements; nor between systematic (e.g., every week) and sporadic use (e.g., a few times a year). It could, however, also be that their results are due to the existence of the two competing mechanisms which we described above.

In this study, we aim to overcome these issues by (1) focusing explicitly on current and systematic use of these arrangements and (2) examining both the potential beneficial and adverse intermediary processes which could occur at a couple level. We focus on two types of family-friendly work arrangements, i.e. reduced work hours (which allow users to work fewer hours; e.g., part-time work) and schedule or workplace flexibility (which give users more autonomy concerning when or where to work, e.g., telework). We test our model through multilevel structural equation modeling using data of 186 dual-earner couples.

This study contributes to the literature by (1) examining family-friendly work arrangements using a dyadic approach (Barnett et al., 2009; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Maume & Sebastian, 2012), (2) not only looking at negative but also at positive crossover effects (Litano, Myers, & Major, 2014; Westman, 2001) and (3) reflecting on both crossover

and interactive effects. The latter means that we not only examine how an employee's work-family conflict is affected when his or her partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements, but also whether this relationship differs when this employee him- or herself also makes use of such arrangements. Although this interactive effect has been recognized as an important and informative component of a dyadic model (e.g., Kenny & Ledermann, 2010), the nature of this effect has often been neglected by previous crossover research.

A Dual-Earner Couples Perspective

The need to study work-family issues using the couple as the unit of analysis has been widely recognized in the field (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012; Westman & Etzion, 2005). Because both partners within a couple are part of the same family environment, they are affecting each other in a continuous and reciprocal manner (Cox & Paley, 1997; Hayden et al., 1998). Specifically, one partner's strain, attitudes, behaviors and choices may affect the other partner's strain, attitudes, behaviors and choices. These effects are referred to as crossover effects (Barnett, Gareis, & Brennan, 2009; Gareis, Barnett, & Brennan, 2003). Research has, among others, found that employees' work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict significantly depend on their partner's job stress, family stress and work-family conflict (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, Granrose, Rabinowitz, & Beutell, 1989; Hammer, Allen, & Grigsby, 1997; Hammer, Cullen, Neal, Sinclair, & Shafiro, 2005; Westman & Etzion, 2005).

In this paper, we expect that there may also be crossover effects of the use of family-friendly work arrangements. When an employee's partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements, this partner gets additional resources (i.e., time in the case of reduced work hours and flexibility in the case of schedule or workplace flexibility), which could and, as we explain below, are likely to be invested in the home domain. In this study, we expect that this may affect both the home and the work situation of the employee and that the former change is likely to be associated with a decrease in work-family conflict (a positive crossover process),

and the latter with an increase of work-family conflict (a negative crossover process). In what follows, we develop our hypotheses in more detail.

Positive crossover process

First, we hypothesize that employees whose partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements are likely to experience less home demands and more social support, which may, in turn, lower their work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. This builds on the belief that the partner who makes use of family-friendly work arrangements is likely to invest the additional resources he/she gets (i.e., time or flexibility) in the home domain (Allen et al., 2013; Noonan, Estes, & Glass, 2007). The decision process theory of work and family (Poelmans, 2005) helps to explain why this may occur. This theory states that when individuals within a couple make or act on their (home or work) decisions, they do not only consider their own needs and satisfaction, but also take into account those of their partner. This is because partners have a strong tendency to be attentive to each other and to reciprocate (Poelmans, 2005). Therefore, when one partner gets more resources, he/she is likely to invest these resources at least partially in the family so that their partner (and the other family members) could benefit as well. The use of family-friendly practices by one partner is therefore likely to affect the home situation of the other partner. In this study, we focus on two such processes of dyadic adjustment: an impact on home demands and on perceived social support. First, we expect that employees whose partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements will experience less home demands. More specifically, we believe that their partner, thanks to the additional resources he/she has, is likely to take up more home tasks. As home tasks are generally the shared responsibility of both partners within a dual-earner couple, more tasks done by one partner can leave less tasks for the other partner (Noonan et al., 2007) and could therefore reduce the latter's home demands (Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2005). Second, employees whose partner uses family-friendly work arrangements may also perceive

more support from their partner (Granrose, Parasuraman, & Greenhaus, 1992). Research has for instance found that employees perceive more social support when their partner works fewer hours (e.g., Humbert & Lewis, 2008). Not only does the partner then have more time and energy available to give support (Granrose, Parasuraman, & Greenhaus, 1992), research has also shown that employees may perceive more social support from increased housework done by the partner (Van Willigen & Drentea, 2001). Employees whose partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements may even perceive more support from family and friends. The partner's use of family-friendly work arrangements typically makes family and friends (more) aware that support is needed, which can trigger them to also provide more support (Granrose, Parasuraman, & Greenhaus, 1992; Shumaker & Brownell, 1984; Tausig & Michello, 1988).

Hypothesis 1a. Employees whose partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements experience less home demands.

Hypothesis 2a. Employees whose partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements perceive more social support.

Research has further shown that less home demands are associated with less family-to-work conflict (Byron, 2005; Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes, 2011) and more social support with less work-to-family conflict and less family-to-work conflict (Byron, 2005; Michel et al., 2011).

Hypothesis 1b. Home demands are related positively to family-to-work conflict.

Hypothesis 2b. Perceived social support is related negatively to family-to-work conflict.

Hypothesis 2c. Perceived social support is related negatively to work-to-family conflict.

Negative crossover process

In addition to this positive crossover path, we expect a negative crossover process. In particular, we hypothesize that employees whose partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements are likely to work more hours and may therefore experience more work-to-family

conflict and family-to-work conflict. There are a number of reasons why these employees may feel stimulated to work longer hours. First, by working more hours, they could restore the changed input-ratio within the couple. According to the process theory of work and family (Poelmans, 2005), partners within a couple tend to compare the total inputs they and their partner contribute to different life domains. Employees whose partner starts investing more at home may therefore feel an urge to reciprocate to keep the input-ratio between the partners just (DeMaris & Longmore, 1996). People typically do so by increasing their input in another important life domain, such as paid work (DeMaris & Longmore, 1996). Indeed, research has shown that employees tend to compensate for their partner's higher input in household labor by contributing more at work (DeMaris, 2007; DeMaris & Longmore, 1996). Second, employees whose partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements may also work more hours because this is likely to increase their wage and career prospects (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005). In that way, they could compensate for the risk of lowered career prospects their partner runs by making use of family-friendly work arrangements (Hendrickx, Bernasco, & de Graaf, 2001; Verbakel, 2010). Indeed, the use of family-friendly work arrangements is often associated with lower career prospects since it reduces one's visibility in the organisation (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Cooper & Kurland, 2002; Vittersø et al., 2003), risks to be associated with lower organizational commitment (Eaton, 2003; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999) and complicates building good relationships with one's supervisor (Cooper & Kurland, 2002; Houston & Waumsley, 2003). Third, because of the lower career prospects associated with family-friendly work arrangements, employees whose partner makes use of these practices may feel like their career is being prioritized. To live up to that expectation, they may feel stimulated (or obliged) to work more hours (Hammer et al., 1997). In line with this reasoning, previous research has shown that employees whose partner has a

less successful career have a stronger incentive to work long hours (Hendrickx, and de Graaf, 2001; Verbakel, 2010).

Hypothesis 3a. Employees whose partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements work more hours.

Since working more hours has been associated with both more work-to-family conflict (Byron, 2005; Michel et al., 2011) and more family-to-work conflict (DiRenzo, Greenhaus, & Weer, 2011; Ruppanner & Pixley, 2012), we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3b. Working hours are related positively to family-to-work conflict.

Hypothesis 3c. Working hours are related positively to work-to-family conflict.

Moderating role of the partner's own use of family-friendly work arrangements

The above hypotheses build on the idea that a process of dyadic adjustment is initiated when one partner uses family-friendly work arrangements and gains resources. We thereby assumed that only one partner within the dual-earner couple makes use of family-friendly work arrangements. In couples where both partners use family-friendly work arrangements, they both gain resources, leaving less reason for the processes of dyadic adjustment to occur. We therefore expect that both the positive and the negative crossover effect will be buffered when the employee him/herself also makes use of family-friendly work arrangements. Compared to the situation where only one's partner makes use of these practices, the relative benefit for the employee in terms of reduced home tasks is then likely to be lower and there would be less reason to provide social support. This would thus buffer the positive crossover path. Also the negative crossover path is less likely to occur since the input-ratio between the partners would have changed less (or not at all), leaving less stimulus for the employee to restore the ratio by working more hours.

Hypothesis 4a. The negative association between the partner's use of family-friendly work arrangements and the employee's home demands is moderated by the employee's

own use of family-friendly work arrangements such that the relationship will be less negative when the employee makes use of those family-friendly work arrangements him/herself.

Hypothesis 4b. The positive association between the partner's use of family-friendly work arrangements and the employee's perceived social support is moderated by the employee's own use of those family-friendly work arrangements such that the relationship will be less positive when the employee makes use of those family-friendly work arrangements him/herself.

Hypothesis 4c. The positive association between the partner's use of family-friendly work arrangements and the employee's working hours is moderated by the employee's own use of those family-friendly work arrangements such that the relationship will be less positive when the employee makes use of those family-friendly work arrangements him/herself.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Methodology

Procedure and sample

A standardized questionnaire was collected among Flemish (Dutch speaking Belgian) heterosexual dual-earner couples in 2013. We selected couples in which both partners were employed in an organization that offers both types of family-friendly work arrangements. Note that under the Belgian career break system, employees have the right to take up reduced work hours unless there are justifiable organizational constraints (Moss & O'Brien, 2006).¹ The Belgian government also encourages the use of schedule or workplace flexibility arrangements (Meulders & O'Dorchai, 2009) which organizations can make available at their own discretion. Through snowball sampling procedures, we contacted 784 employees (392 couples), of which

615 employees completed the questionnaire (response rate 78%). We excluded four couples in which one partner was taking a full-time career break¹ (and was thus not working at the moment of the survey) because of our focus on across-domain conflict. After removing respondents with missing partners, the sample for our study was 222 couples. The sample with complete data amounts to 186 couples.

Fifty percent of the respondents were male and 50% were female. The respondents were aged between 23 and 58 years ($M = 38$ years, $SD = 9$ years). Most of our respondents had children (73%), with 31% having children younger than 5 years old. Twenty percent of our respondents worked in the manufacturing industry, 33 % in the service sector and 47% in the public sector. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents had a supervisory responsibility and the average supervisor had eight subordinates. Twenty percent of the respondents used reduced work hours and 58% made systematic use of schedule or workplace flexibility in the past six months.

Measures

Unless mentioned otherwise, response options were set on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from one (1: totally disagree) to five (5: totally agree). Items which were negatively formulated were reverse scored.

Use of family-friendly work arrangements. Respondents were given a list of seven family-friendly work arrangements, i.e., contractual part-time work, part-time career break, working from home, working in a satellite office, arrangements which allow hours to be spread unequally over the week, month or year (e.g., compressed work weeks or annualized working hours), leave compensation for overtime hours and leave per hour². Following recommendations by previous research (Blair-Loy and Wharton, 2002; Glass and Finley, 2002), the seven arrangements were grouped into two bundles: reduced work hours (first two) and schedule or workplace flexibility (last five). For each schedule or workplace flexibility

practice, respondents had to indicate which of these practices were available to them and how often they had made use of them during the past six months. Response options ranged from ‘never’ to ‘more than once a week’. For reduced work hours, which is by definition used every week, we simply asked whether they had made use of the practice over the past six months or not. For each family-friendly work arrangement, we created a binary variable which was one if the respondent made systematic use of the practice (i.e. at least once a month) and zero if the respondent did not make systematic use of the practice (i.e. less than once a month) or if it was not available to the respondent. This approach has also been used by other empirical studies on family-friendly work arrangements (e.g., Allen, 2001). For the use of part-time work, we included a follow-up question, which asked why they took up this practice. For people who indicated non-family related reasons (such as an extra job or an education), the dummy for part-time work was recoded to zero. Finally, we computed the use of a specific type of family-friendly work arrangements as the mean use of each of the family-friendly work arrangements in that category. We thereby assume that using more arrangements of the same type increases the specific resource this type provides (i.e. time or flexibility) and therefore facilitates the work-family combination even more.

Home demands. We assessed home demands using the three-item scale of Peeters and colleagues (2005). The items were given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from one (1: never) to five (5: always). An example item for the scale is “How often do you have to do many things in a hurry when you are at home?” ($\alpha=0.83$).

Social support. Social support was measured using a scale developed by Caplan, Cobb, French and Pinneau (1975). The scale contains four items on perceived non-work social support such as “My spouse, friends and relatives are willing to listen to my personal problems” ($\alpha=0.88$). This scale thus includes spousal support as well as support from family and friends. Further analyses showed that it dominantly reflected the spousal support. In particular, we

collected additional data with a subsample of this study (i.e., 134 employees) measuring both this scale and a similar social support scale focusing exclusively on spousal support. Both scales were found to correlate highly ($\rho = .63$; $p < .001$), which indicates that the partner is generally perceived as the most important provider of social support.

Working hours. Working hours were measured as a continuous variable. Respondents were asked to indicate the total number of hours which they work in an average week, including overtime.

Work-family conflict. Work-to-family and family-to-work conflict were measured using scales developed by Carlson, Kacmar and Williams (2000). For both directions of work-family conflict, we included two types of work-family conflict: time-based and strain-based conflict. This is in line with previous studies which investigated the effects of family-friendly work arrangements on work-family conflict (e.g., Lapierre & Allen, 2006). All subscales consisted of three items. Sample items for work-to-family conflict are “My work keeps me from my home activities more than I would like” for time-based work-to-family conflict and “I am often so emotionally drained when I get home from work that it prevents me from contributing to my private life” for strain-based work-to-family conflict. Sample items for family-to-work conflict are “The time I spend on home responsibilities often interferes with my work responsibilities” and “Due to stress at home, I am often preoccupied with private life matters at work”. The Cronbach’s alpha’s amount to 0.88, 0.85, 0.80 and 0.89 respectively.

Person-level control variables. We controlled for the employee’s gender and age since these variables have been related to work-family conflict and to the amount of household and paid labor (Cohen, 2004; Darcy, McCarthy, Hill, & Grady, 2012; DeMaris & Longmore, 1996, Frone et al., 1992). For gender, we coded men as 1 and women as 0. Age was measured as a continuous variable expressed in years representing how old the respondent is. In addition, we controlled for three work-related factors which have been shown to influence work-family

conflict: the economic sector (Buelens & Van den Broeck, 2007), supervisor status (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002) and the family-supportive organizational culture (Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999). These factors are also likely to covary with levels of household and paid labor because they reflect the employee's demanding job structure and institutional norms (Bell & Hart, 1999; Buelens & Van den Broeck, 2007; Townsend, 2001). Economic sector was measured with a binary variable which was 1 if the employee worked in the public sector and 0 otherwise. Supervisory status was measured with a continuous variable representing the number of employees which the respondent supervised. Family-supportive organizational culture was measured using the five-item subscale of Thompson and colleagues (1999) on the extent to which people link the use of family-friendly work arrangements to career penalties in their organizations. A sample item includes "In this organization, employees who participate in available work-family programs are viewed as less serious about their careers than those who do not participate in these programs" ($\alpha=0.86$).

Couple-level control variables. We controlled for having young children by including a dummy which was 1 when the couple has a child younger than five and as 0 otherwise. A plethora of studies have demonstrated the importance of having young children for levels of household labor, paid labor and work-family conflict (e.g., Bellavia & Frone, 2005; Madsen, 2003).

Analyses

Analyses were performed on 186 dual-earner couples with the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM). The APIM model is a multilevel approach which was introduced by Kenny (1996) to analyze dyadic data. Observations in dyadic data are dependent in the sense that scores of the members of a dyad are closer to each other than scores from people who are not part of the same dyad. The APIM model takes this interdependence of partner data into account (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). This methodological framework has

been recommended in the study of families (Rayens & Svavardottir, 2003) and small groups (Bonito, 2002) and is increasingly being used in the social sciences (Kenny et al., 2006). Following APIM procedures, we created a pairwise dataset by linking each employee's observations with his/her partner's observations and centered all predictor variables at the grand mean (Kenny et al., 2006). In order to associate the partner's predictors with the employee's outcomes, each person's predictor and outcome scores need to appear twice in the pairwise dataset (Kenny et al., 2006). This results in a dataset with one line per individual, containing data of both this individual and his/her partner. In our study, the input dataset thus includes 372 cases (Kenny et al., 2006). We illustrate this design of the APIM model in Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2 about here

We first checked whether multilevel modeling was an appropriate analysis procedure by calculating the ICC(1) values of the work-family conflict variables (LeBreton & Senter, 2008). The ICC(1) value can be interpreted as the proportion of observed variance in the dependent variable that is due to systematic between-level (here: couple) differences compared to the total variance (LeBreton & Senter, 2008, p. 822). We found ICC(1) values of 0.09 for time-based work-to-family conflict, 0.07 for strain-based work-to-family conflict, 0.19 for time-based family-to-work conflict and 0.29 for strain-based family-to-work conflict. Since 7% to 29% of the variance in the outcome variables can be attributed to the couple level, we can affirm that multilevel modeling is appropriate (LeBreton & Senter, 2008).

As our model contains multiple dependent variables, we tested it with multilevel structural equation modeling (MSEM). MSEM, like structural equation modeling (SEM), estimates the different relationships in the model simultaneously, while taking into account that

the data is dependent (i.e. that employees are nested within couples) . The analyses were performed with M-plus version 5.2 (Muthén and Muthén, 2011).

Insert Table 1 about here

Results

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptives of and correlations among our studied variables. Note that we found negative correlations between an employee's use and a partner's use of each type of family-friendly work arrangements. This suggests that most often, just one partner within the couple makes use of a certain type of family-friendly work arrangements.

Model evaluation

To test our proposed model, we assessed four nested models: the null model, model 1, model 2 and model 3. The null model includes only the intercept. In model 1, the control variables are added. In model 2, we include the core predictor variables, i.e. the partner's use of family-friendly work arrangements and the employee's home demands, social support and working hours. Finally, model 3 includes the interaction between the partner's use of family-friendly work arrangements and the employee's own use of such practices. We first compared the fit of these nested models by subtracting the -2 log-likelihood value of the new model from the value of the old model. This difference follows a chi-square distribution. The results of these models can be found in the Appendix. Model 1 (including the control variables) has a significantly better model fit than the null model ($D - 2 * \log = 391.9$, $Ddf = 48$, $p < .01$). Also, model 2 (including the core predictor variables) shows a significant improvement over model 1 (including the control variables) ($D - 2 * \log = 94.9$, $D df = 16$, $p < .01$). Finally, model 3 (with the interaction effects) resulted in a significant improvement over model 2 ($D - 2 * \log = 26.2$, $D df = 12$, $p < .05$).

Next, we examined the path coefficients to evaluate our hypotheses. If the interaction term is significant, we evaluate the hypotheses based on model 3; if not, we look at the results in model 2. This is in line with the general recommendations for interpreting moderation hypotheses (Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken, 2002). The results are summarized in Figure 3.

Insert Figure 3 about here

Hypothesis 1a stated that employees whose partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements would experience less home demands. Table 3 shows that this is the case when the partner makes use of reduced work hours ($B = -0.12, p < .05$), but not when he or she uses schedule or workplace flexibility. Hypothesis 1a is thus only partially supported. We found no significant interaction effects, so these relationships do not depend on the employee's own use of family-friendly work arrangements (hypothesis 4a). In line with hypothesis 1b, home demands were found to increase family-to-work conflict, but only when the conflict was time-based ($B = 0.15, p < .05$). We further tested whether the total indirect path from partner's use of reduced work hours to time-based family-to-work conflict through lower home demands was significant using the delta method for indirect effects (MacKinnon, 2008). However, this turned out not to be the case ($B = -0.02, p = .12$).

Hypotheses 2a and 4b concerned the relationship between the partner's use of family-friendly work arrangements and the employee's perceived social support. We found a significant interaction effect with the employee's own use of schedule or workplace flexibility for both types of family-friendly work arrangements and therefore look at the interaction plots to evaluate the relationships (see Figures 4 and 5). Figure 4 concerns the impact of the partner's use of reduced work hours. The figure shows that employees whose partner makes use of reduced work hours perceive less, rather than more, social support, but only when they themselves use schedule or workplace flexibility. If they don't use this arrangement, no

significant impact on social support was found. This is thus unlike expected in hypotheses 2a and 4b. For schedule or workplace flexibility, we found – in line with hypotheses 2a and 4b – that employees whose partner makes use of schedule or workplace flexibility perceive more social support but that this positive relationship becomes weaker when the employee him or herself makes use of schedule or workplace flexibility as well (see Figure 5). Social support is in turn negatively related with time-based (hypothesis 2b: $B = -0.23, p < .001$) and strain-based (hypothesis 2b: $B = -0.30, p < .001$) family-to-work conflict but appears not to be related to work-to-family conflict (hypothesis 2c). We again performed indirect effect analyses. The indirect paths from partner's use of *reduced work hours* to employee's time-based ($B=0.01, p=0.75$) and strain-based family-to-work conflict ($B=0.01, p=0.75$) through more social support were not statistically significant, whereas the indirect effects from partner's use of *schedule or workplace flexibility* to the employee's time-based ($B = -0.04, p < .05$) and strain-based family-to-work conflict ($B = -0.05, p < .05$) via more social support were.

Insert Figure 4 about here

Insert Figure 5 about here

Hypothesis 3a predicted that employees whose partner makes use of family-friendly work arrangements would work more hours. For reduced work hours, we found the expected positive relationship ($B = 0.09, p < .05$). For schedule or workplace flexibility, however, we found a negative relationship with work hours ($B = -0.09, p < .05$). In addition, these relations did not depend on the employee's own use of family-friendly work arrangements, which is in contrast to hypothesis 4c. Note also that one's own use of schedule or workplace flexibility is positively related with one's own working hours ($B = 0.09, p < .05$), indicating that employees who use schedule or workplace flexibility themselves tend to work more hours. In line with

hypothesis 3c, working hours were found to increase time-based ($B = 0.42, p < .001$) and strain-based ($B = 0.28, p < .001$) work-to-family conflict. Finally, indirect effect analyses showed that the paths from partner's use of *reduced work hours* to employee's time-based ($B = 0.04, p < .10$) and strain-based work-to-family conflict ($B = 0.03, p < .10$) through more work hours as well as the paths from partner's use of *schedule or workplace flexibility* to employee's time-based ($B = -0.04, p < .05$) and strain-based conflict ($B = -0.03, p < .05$) via less work hours were all significant.

Testing gender differences

In the above analyses, we examined symmetrical crossover relationships between partners, thus assuming similar effects for men and women. We conducted post-hoc analyses to verify this. Four nested models were tested through multilevel procedures: the null model, model 1 (including the control variables), model 2' (including the core predictor variables) and model 3' (including the gender interaction effects). As model 3', including the interaction between the partner's use of family-friendly work arrangements and the employee's gender, was not significantly better than model 2' ($D - 2 * \log = 5.7, D \text{ df} = 6, p = \text{ns}$), gender is unlikely to moderate the crossover effects of the partner's use of family-friendly work arrangements, providing support for our initial approach.

Discussion

The primary goal of this study was to examine possible crossover effects of the use of family-friendly work arrangements within dual-earner couples. Our results showed that one partner's use of these practices may indeed crossover to the other partner's home demands, perceived social support and working hours, which was, in turn, associated to the latter's work-to-family and family-to-work conflict. However, these effects were found to differ across the two types of family-friendly work arrangements.

Crossover effects of reduced work hours

For reduced work hours, we first of all found indications of a positive crossover effect on family-to-work conflict through lower home demands. In line with our expectations, employees whose partner made use of reduced work hours were found to report less home demands, which was in turn related to less family-to-work conflict. Though indirect effect analyses showed that the total path through home demands was just not significant, this could be due to our relatively small sample size (Mallinckrodt, Abraham, Wei, & Russell, 2006).

Next, the relationship between partner's use of reduced work hours and employee's perceived social support was found to depend on the employee's own use of schedule or workplace flexibility. In particular, we found that employees whose partner made use of reduced work hours perceived less, rather than more, social support, but only when they themselves made use of schedule or workplace flexibility. Perhaps, employees using schedule or workplace flexibility disagree more with their partner on the relative contributions of each partner to work and home, probably due to their tendency to also use the flexibility to contribute more to the work domain (see below). Such disagreement may generate feelings of unfairness and has been shown to result into lower perceived support (Granrose, Parasuraman, & Greenhaus, 1992).

Finally, we found a negative crossover effect of the partner's use of reduced work hours on work-to-family conflict. In particular, employees whose partner made use of reduced work hours were found to work, on average, more hours and therefore experienced more work-to-family conflict. Employees in this situation probably try to compensate for the changed input-ratio between them and their partner or for the lower wage or career prospects associated with reduced work hours (DeMaris & Longmore, 1996; Poelmans, 2005; Verbakel, 2010). Note that it could also be that it was the partner who worked less to start with, who decided to make use of reduced work hours. We are not able to distinguish between these explanations with our cross-sectional data. Yet, even if the using partner was the one initially working less, this does

not necessarily counter the employees' motivation to compensate for the changed input-ratio within the couple and for the possible lower wages associated to reduced work hours.

Crossover effects of schedule or workplace flexibility

For schedule or workplace flexibility, we first of all found indications of positive crossover effects on employee's family-to-work conflict through perceived social support. In line with our hypotheses, employees whose partner made use of schedule or workplace flexibility were found to perceive more social support, but only if they did not make use of schedule or workplace flexibility themselves. This, in turn, was related with less family-to-work conflict.

Unlike hypothesized, we found no positive crossover path through home demands. As the use of this type of family-friendly work arrangements gives an employee more flexibility, we expected that he/she would take up a larger share of the home responsibilities. Possibly, the additional resources are invested in the work domain rather than in the home domain. We indeed observed that in our sample, users of schedule or workplace flexibility tended to work more hours. This adverse effect is likely to occur for this specific type of arrangements because employees tend to overcompensate the hours which they work flexibly (Leslie, Manchester, Park, & Mehng, 2012). This may occur both because the flexibility blurs the boundaries between their family and working life (Vittersø et al., 2003) or because they want to (re)assure their direct supervisor (and colleagues) that the flexibility helps them to be more productive at work (Glass & Finley, 2002).

Also contrary to our expectations, we found that employees whose partner made use of schedule or workplace flexibility worked on average less rather than – as hypothesized – more working hours, which was in turn related with less work-to-family conflict. This may again be related with the observation that users of schedule or workplace flexibility tend to work more

hours. This could trigger his/her partner (here: the employee) to decrease his/her contribution at work (Hendrickx et al., 2001; Verbakel, 2010).

Contributions to the literature and practice

With this paper, we contribute to the literature on family-friendly work arrangements in a number of ways. First, our results illustrate the relevance of examining these practices using a couple level perspective (Barnett et al., 2009; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Maume & Sebastian, 2012). Our results demonstrate the importance of examining the crossover effects of family-friendly work arrangements. Moreover, our finding that the process of dyadic adjustment may depend on whether one or both partners within the couple make use of family-friendly work arrangements underlines the need to treat couples as a unit and take into account total instead of individual use of practices within dual-earner couples. Research on family-friendly work arrangements to date has dominantly applied an individual focus (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007) and in that way largely ignored the ‘family-relatedness’ of this decision (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012). This study showed, however, that there are crossover effects of one partner’s use of these arrangements, which indeed supports the family-relatedness of this decision (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012). At the same time, our results showed that these crossover effects are not always beneficial, but could also have adverse effects. Though this may feel counterintuitive (e.g. Greenhaus & Powell, 2012; Hammer, Neal et al., 2005), it mainly shows that the combination of work and family within dual-earner couples is a complex matter which seems to always require choices with benefits and drawbacks. Future research should further explore how dual-earner couples make such choices and which factors play a role in the decision-making process (e.g., gender roles, career stages and prospects). In addition, it seems interesting to further explore the family-relatedness of other work decisions and how these affect the partner and/or other family members, both in the positive and (perhaps unexpected) negative way.

Second, we did not only show the relevance of using a couple perspective, we also built on two theoretical perspectives, i.e. the decision process theory of work and family and the dyadic adjustment literature, to predict and understand the crossover effects. In that way, we surpass the typical work-family policy studies, which tend to be mainly descriptive (i.e. largely focused on *what* rather than *why*) and sometimes untheoretical (Bardoel, De Cieri, & Santos, 2008). In particular, we expected that when a partner in a dual-earner couple gains resources (i.e., time, flexibility), he or she is likely to invest these resources in the home domain, thereby changing the input-ratio between the partners and stimulating the other partner to make adjustments at work (DeMaris & Longmore, 1996; DeMaris, 2007; Poelmans, 2005). Our results provided support for these processes. We encourage future studies to examine specific triggers and dynamics of dyadic adjustment processes since this framework seems promising for further research on changes in couples' home or work domain.

Finally, our study also demonstrated the importance of distinguishing between different types of family-friendly work arrangements (Glass and Finley, 2002; Hill et al., 2010). We showed how the different types of family-friendly work arrangements affected employees' work-family conflict in different ways and through different processes. These differences could perhaps be related to the different resources each type of work arrangement provides (i.e., time versus flexibility) or with the specific signals associated with their use (e.g. reduced work hours may be a stronger choice for one's family whereas schedule or workplace flexibility may rather be interpreted as a sign of commitment; cfr. Leslie et al., 2012). We recommend future empirical studies to distinguish between various types of family-friendly work arrangements in their analyses and to further explore their different implications.

Our findings demonstrate that each type of family-friendly work arrangements has its drawbacks both at the individual and the couple level. While reduced work hours may cause the non-using partner to work more hours and thereby increase his/her work-to-family conflict,

schedule or workplace flexibility is likely to result into the using partner contributing more at work and thereby increasing his/her conflict. The paradox is that those family-friendly working arrangements are in the first place aimed to help the family reduce conflict between work and family domains which raises the question as to how this situation may further evolve. In order to effectively implement these practices, organizations could, for instance, inform users about the possible family-related implications of using family-friendly work arrangements and/or to implement strategies to prevent or deal with possible adverse effects. In this respect, it might be useful for organizations to address the potential fear for career penalties which employees may associate to using family-friendly work arrangements (cf. Thompson et al., 1999) as this could induce dyadic adjustment processes at the couple level which could harm the work-family conflict of the employee's partner. Finally, our results underscore the importance of using a holistic approach in career counseling. As many work decisions -like the decision to make use of family-friendly work arrangements- are family-related, it seems imperative to not only apply an individual focus but to also pay attention to the broader family context (Chen, 2001).

Research limitations

This study is not without limitations. First, due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, we cannot make causal inferences about the relationships. In addition, as our data captures different couple situations at one single moment, we could not examine the possible dynamics of the reciprocal interactions resulting from the use of family-friendly work arrangements. We encourage future research to provide more insight into such dynamics by using novel methodological approaches such as diary studies. Second, the measures which were used in our study were obtained through self-reports by the respondents. Although we used data from multiple sources, future research could add to our research through the use of more objective data. Third, we used a broad measure of perceived social support, capturing support from the

partner as well as from family and friends. Future studies may find it interesting to examine the impact of the partner's use of family-friendly work arrangement on source-specific social support in order to discover which source provides the primary support in response to the use of family-friendly work arrangements by the couple. Fourth, as we focused on dual-earner couples, our results cannot be generalized to single parent or breadwinner families. Moreover, we were not able to control for the entire family composition of the couples. In particular, we had no information on people's elder and disabled care responsibilities. Both of these limitations reveal important questions for future studies. As family structures such as the single, divorced parent are becoming more common, it would be interesting to investigate whether they benefit more or less from family-friendly work arrangements than employees in dual-earner couples. Since an increasing amount of people are having additional care tasks (Chapman, Ingersoll-Dayton, & Neal, 1994), it would also be interesting to look into the reciprocal interactions between the employee and for example his/her elder parent that may result from the employee's use of family-friendly work arrangements.

Conclusion

This paper investigated the effects of the use of family-friendly work arrangements at the couple level. Our results suggest that partners are part of an interdependent and reciprocal system (Poelmans, 2005) and that investigating the crossover effects of family-friendly work arrangements may add to the understanding of their effectiveness in terms of reducing work-family conflict. Moreover, this empirical study has demonstrated the importance of distinguishing between specific types of practices. Nevertheless, the functioning of dual-earner couples is complex and more research is still needed to improve our understanding on the interactive relationships between partners.

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Footnotes

¹A career break is a Belgian family-friendly work arrangement which allows an employee who has worked full-time before, to work fewer hours for a certain period of time. More exactly, an employee could take up a career break for up to one year fulltime or part-time and maximum five years for one-fifth reduction. The employee receives a compensation for the income loss by the government (Devisscher & Sanders, 2007). It is available to all employees under two conditions. First, the employees must have worked at least one year for the same employer. Second, no more than 5% of the total employees within the organization may take up leave simultaneously (Moss & O'Brien, 2006).

²Leave per hour is an arrangement which provides the employee with more flexibility on a daily basis by allowing him/her to take up leave per hour instead of taking up leave per day, which is the normal non-flexible procedure.

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Alphas, and Correlations for All Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Gender ^a	.50	.50	—																
2. Age	38.34	8.51	.09	—															
3. Public sector	.47	.50	-	.01	—														
4. Supervisor status	1.99	5.00	.34**	.13*	-.11*	—													
5. FSOC	3.48	0.82	.17**	-.08	.11*	-.09	.86												
6. Child<5y	.31	.46	-.04	-	.003	-.02	.07	—											
7. Employee's use RWH	.13	.27	-.002	.33**	.19**	-.13*	.13**	.14**	—										
8. Employee's use SWF	.17	.17	-	.11*	-.07	.09	.13**	.004	-.03	—									
9. Partner's use RWH	.13	.27	.30**	-.03	-.10	.01	-.06	.13*	-.10*	.02	—								
10. Partner's use SWF	.17	.17	.10	.14**	-.02	.08	-.08	.01	.02	-.13*	-.03	—							
11. Home demands	3.55	0.71	.30**	-.005	.07	-.06	-.07	.28**	.17**	.01	-.12*	.02	.83						
12. Social support	4.29	0.62	-.09	-	-.05	-.05	.09	-.06	-.05	.04	-.08	-	-.05	.88					
13. Working hours	39.70	8.51	-	.14**	-	.25**	-	-.04	-	.14**	.19**	.01	-.02	.02	—				
14. FWct	1.97	0.86	.33**	-	.26**	.02	.19**	.23**	.53**	-.02	.09	-	.34**	-	-.02	.80			
15. FWCs	1.67	0.75	-.04	.19**	.07	.03	-	.12*	.09	-.08	.03	.10	.23**	.23**	-.01	.43**	.89		
16. WFCt	2.66	1.11	.38**	-.09	.05	.18**	.23**	-.01	.03	.05	.10	.02	.12*	-	.39**	.23**	.18**	.88	
17. WFCs	2.49	0.97	-.09	-.08	.01	.15**	-	-.01	-.08	-.001	-.02	.03	.19**	.24**	.25**	.19**	.31**	.60**	.85
			-.06	-.06	.02		.22**		.02			-		-.13*					
			.03	-.05			-					.02		-.09					
			-.09	-.04			.26**					-							
							-					.03							
							.24**												

Note. $N = 186$ couples. Alphas reported in italics on the diagonal. FSOC = family supportive organizational culture, RWH = reduced work hours, SWF = schedule or workplace flexibility, FWct = time-based family-to-work conflict and FWCs = strain-based family-to-work conflict, WFCt = time-based work-to-family conflict, WFCs = strain-based work-to-family conflict. ^a1 = male; 2 = female.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Figure 1. Proposed research model. Pluses and minuses represent the direction of the hypothesized relationships. Broken lines are used for moderating relationships.

Figure 2. Application of the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model to the research model where X=independent variables, M=mediating variables and Y=dependent variables.

Figure 3. Significant standardized estimations from multilevel models. Grey arrows are used for insignificant estimations from multilevel models.

Figure 4. Interaction of the partner's use of reduced work hours and the employee's use of schedule or workplace flexibility on the employee's social support.

Figure 5. Interaction of the partner's use of schedule or workplace flexibility and the employee's use of schedule or workplace flexibility on the employee's social support.

Appendix

Standardized Estimations from Multilevel Models Predicting Employee's Outcomes

Variable	Null model							Model 1						
	Home demands	Social Support	Working hours	FWCt	FWCs	WFCt	WFCs	Home demands	Social Support	Working hours	FWCt	FWCs	WFCt	WFCs
Intercept	-0.002	0.002	0.000	4.53**	4.02**	6.84	7.91	0.000	-0.002	0.001	4.98**	4.14**	6.83**	8.02**
<i>Within level</i>														
Gender ^a								-0.40**	-0.04	0.20**	-0.09	-0.07	0.03	-0.11
Age								-0.05	-0.23**	-0.09	-0.02	-0.05	-0.12*	-0.09
Public sector								-0.03	-0.07	-0.07	0.08	0.05	0.08	0.02
Supervisor status								-0.004	-0.05	0.13**	0.01	0.06	0.19**	0.16**
FSOC								-0.12	0.07	-0.14**	-	-	-	-
											0.26**	0.24**	0.28**	0.27**
Employee's use RWH								0.06	-0.01	-0.44**				
Employee's use SWF								0.08	0.04	0.12*				
Partner's use RWH														
Partner's use SWF														
Home demands														
Social support														
Working hours														
Employee's RWH*partner's SWF														
Employee's SWF*partner's RWH														
<i>Between level</i>														
Child<5y								0.47**	-0.29*	0.02	0.51**	0.21	-0.05	-0.01
Employee's RWH*partner's RWH														
Employee's SWF*partner's SWF														
-2 * log							7613.2							7221.3
D -2 * log														391.9
D df														48
CFI							.25							.81
RMSEA							.12							.08
SRMR at within level							.10							.05
SRMR at between level							.13							.12

Note. $N = 186$ couples. FSOC = family supportive organizational culture, RWH = reduced work hours, SWF = schedule or workplace flexibility, FWCT = time-based family-to-work conflict and FWCs = strain-based family-to-work conflict, WFCt = time-based work-to-family conflict, WFCs = strain-based work-to-family conflict. ^a1 = male; 2 = female.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Variable	Model 2							Model 3						
	Home demands	Social Support	Working hours	FWCt	FWCs	WFCt	WFCs	Home demands	Social Support	Working hours	FWCt	FWCs	WFCt	WFCs
Intercept	-0.001	0.002	0.000	5.05**	4.21**	7.40**	8.59**	-0.001	0.001	-0.001	4.96**	4.19**	7.36**	8.73**
<i>Within level</i>														
Gender ^a	-0.37**	-0.04	0.16**	-0.01	-0.02	-0.11	-	-0.37**	-0.03	0.16**	-0.02	-0.02	-0.11	-
							0.21**							0.21**
Age	-0.02	-0.23**	-0.11*	-0.08	-0.12	-0.05	-0.05	-0.01	-0.22**	-0.12*	-0.08	-0.12	-0.04	-0.05
Public sector	-0.03	-0.07	-0.08	0.07	0.03	0.11*	0.04	-0.03	-0.06	-0.09	0.07	0.03	0.11*	0.04
Supervisor status	-0.01	-0.05	0.14**	0.01	0.04	0.11*	0.10*	-0.01	-0.05	0.14**	0.01	0.05	0.12**	0.11*
FSOC	-0.14*	0.07	-0.13**	-	-	-	-	-0.13*	0.08	-0.14**	-	-	-	-
				0.24**	0.22**	0.19**	0.20**				0.24**	0.22**	0.19**	0.20**
Employee's use RWH	0.03	-0.01	-0.42**					-0.05	0.12	-0.34**				
Employee's use SWF	0.07	0.04	0.09*					0.14	0.13	0.07				
Partner's use RWH	-0.12*	-0.02	0.09*					-0.13	-0.03	0.18**				
Partner's use SWF	-0.02	0.005	-0.09*					0.02	0.18*	-0.12*				
Home demands				0.15*	0.11						0.14	0.11		
Social support				-	-	-0.04	-0.09				-	-	-0.03	-0.10
				0.24**	0.30**						0.23**	0.30**		
Working hours				-0.07	-0.05	0.42**	0.28**				-0.06	-0.04	0.42**	0.28**
Employee's RWH*partner's SWF								0.13	-0.20*	-0.09				
Employee's SWF*partner's RWH								0.03	0.03	-0.10				
<i>Between level</i>														
Child<5y	0.51**	-0.29*	-0.08	0.52**	0.22	0.03	0.05	0.48**	-0.31**	-0.08	0.51**	0.22*	0.02	0.04
Employee's RWH*partner's RWH								-0.04	-0.003	-0.15				
Employee's SWF*partner's SWF								-0.21	-0.34*	0.44				
-2 * log							7126.4							7100.2
D -2 * log							94.9							26.2
D df							16							12
CFI							.93							.95
RMSEA							.06							.06
SRMR at within level							.03							.03
SRMR at between level							.08							.07

Note. $N = 186$ couples. FSOC = family supportive organizational culture, RWH = reduced work hours, SWF = schedule or workplace flexibility, FWCt = time-based family-to-work conflict and FWCs = strain-based family-to-work conflict, WFCt = time-based work-to-family conflict, WFCs = strain-based work-to-family conflict. ^a1 = male; 2 = female.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.