SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM IMPACT OF PARENTAL JOB CHARACTERISTICS ON CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT

Using the National Survey of Families and Households, this paper examines short-term and long-term impact of parental job characteristics on children's well-being. The results show that school-aged children had more adjustment problems if either parent experienced job disruptions and dissatisfaction. When a mother worked longer, nonstandard schedules, but fewer weeks, children also had more adjustment problems. These effects were partially mediated by parental marital quality and parenting behaviors. Mother's nonstandard work schedules and father's job disruptions decreased marital happiness and increased marital conflict. Mothers with fewer work hours and more job disruptions, as well as fathers with nonstandard schedules and more satisfying jobs, were more involved and supportive. Parents with less satisfying jobs were more likely to use harsh punishments. Analysis of long-term impact shows that children had higher levels of mental well-being in adulthood if, in their childhood, their father worked long hours, had more standard schedules, and worked long weeks.

In the last several decades, significant changes have taken place in the U.S. economy. Employers have increasingly emphasized flexibility in the use of all kinds of resources at their disposal (Presser, 2003; Rubin, 1996). Their strategies in response to greater competition and uncertainty in product market have centered on cutting the cost involved in production. The expansion of service sector, the increasing use of information technology, and the rising number of part-time, temporary, and contingent workers are among such strategies (Appelbaum, 1992; Appelbaum et al., 1997; Rubin, 1996). Two-fifths of employees in the U.S. work most of their hours either on weekends, during evenings and nights, or on rotating shifts (Presser, 2003). The expansion of service sector facilitated the increase of women's employment by increasing the types of jobs for which employers have traditionally hired women. While the most substantial change occurred among mothers with infants and preschoolers (Hayghe, 1997; Hoffman, 1989), there is also a significant increase in employment of mothers with school-aged children--the labor force participation rate for mothers with school-aged children rose 23 percentage points to 78% from 1975 to 1999 (Hayghe, 1997; U. S. Department of Labor, 2000). Furthermore, with technological change and the growth of 24-hour economy, opportunities have grown for staggering couples' employment shifts. Thus, not only are the majority of married couples dual-earner couples, but also there is a considerable lack of overlap in the time each partner is doing paid work (O'Connell, 1993; Presser, 2003).

How will the growing diversity and flexibility in the temporal structure of the workplace affect family life? This has been one of the major concerns among workers, employers, and researchers in recent years. These effects will not be simple given the nature of these changes. Increases in the labor force participation rates of married women have highlighted the

connections between paid work and family life, and many scholars have challenged the fallacy that work and family are distinct non-overlapping domains (Ferree, 1990; Kanter, 1977; Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, & Crouter, 2000; Spitze, 1988; Thompson & Walker, 1989; Voydanoff, 2005). The quality of family life depends not only on the social-psychological and other properties of members and their relationships, but also on external social structures such as the economy, the state, and education. When these external structures change, they challenge the abilities of families to adapt. Jobs structure time and limit workers' availability to participate in family roles and routines. Experiences at the workplace can also influence workers' psychological states which, in turn, affect the frequency and quality of family interactions. In the face of increasing time demands, families are confronted with a series of decisions about how to allocate and share the time available to them. This process involves establishing priorities for goals and balancing needs and available time resources. Men and women stand in a different relationship to time and as a result, they have different entitlements to, and power over, the time available to them.

Empirical research has examined extensively the determinants and consequences of women's labor force participation and found mixed results on the effects of mother's employment on children's well-being (see Spitze 1988; Hofferman 1989 for a review; also see (Baum, 2004)), but these studies have focused on employment status or the number of hours worked, not the scheduling of employment time and other job characteristics. Research examining employment scheduling has also tended to focus on its effects on the worker's well-being, such as perceived conflict between work and family roles, not on family relations (e.g., (Barnett & Gareis, 2006; Bohen & Viveros-Long, 1981; Keith & Schafer, 1980; Martens, Nijhuis, Van Boxtel, & Knottnerus, 1999; Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980; Staines & Pleck, 1983; Voydanoff, 1988). Even when studying family life, most research has often looked only at

selected dimensions of family life, for example, time in housework (Presser, 1994), marital quality and stability (Gareis & Brennan, 2003; Kingston & Nock, 1987; Presser, 2000), and child care (Brayfield, 1995; Han, 2004; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Presser, 1989; Thomson, 1993). The effects of parental job characteristics on children's well-being have not received adequate attention (Dunifon, Kalil, & Bajracharya, 2005; Han, 2005; Han, Waldfogel, & Brooks-Gunn, 2001; Strazdins, Korda, Lim, Broom, & D'Souza, 2004). Even less known are the potential long-term consequences of parental employment on children's well-being.

This study acknowledges the macro-structural changes over the past several decades, and it investigates the short-term and long-term consequences of parental job characteristics for children's well-being. Based on previous research, I develop a theoretical model specifying the relationship between parental job characteristics and children's well-being. More specifically, I address three questions: (1) Do parental job characteristics have short-term effects on children's well-being? (2) Are the effects of parental job characteristics on children's well-being mediated by marital quality and parenting behavior? And (3) Do parental job characteristics have long-term effects on children's well-being?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Figure 1 presents the basic theoretical model of the relationship between parental job characteristics and children's well-being to be tested in this study. This model allows a direct effect of parental job characteristics on children's well-being. It also allows indirect effects of parental job characteristics on children's well being through parents' marital quality and parenting practices. In addition, parents' marital quality can have a direct effect on parenting practices.

"Figure 1 about here"

Parental job characteristics may affect children through parenting practices. A large body of literature suggests that children appear to do best when parents are warm and supportive, spend generous amounts of time with children, monitor children's behavior, expect children to follow rules, encourage open communication, and react to misbehavior with discussion rather than harsh punishment (Amato & Fowler, 2002; Amato & Rivera, 1999; Baumrind, 1968, 1978; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). When parents have demanding and less rewarding jobs, these optimal parenting practices may be compromised. A demanding job schedule which has the potential to claim much of the worker's time, such as long job hours, a schedule extended to weekends, and multiple jobs, may cause health problems for workers and leave little time for them to fulfill family responsibilities and to be with their spouse and children (Bumpus, Crouter, & McHale, 1999). Because the timing of social events in the society as a whole is based on the most general pattern of working time, those whose jobs are not in these hours (e.g., evening or night shift and weekend job) may find it difficult to synchronize their schedules with the schedules of other family members and to participate in social events. When the employment time is irregular and unpredictable, which often characterizes the rotating schedule, varied starting and stopping time, and business travel, it also places constraints on family organization. Research has consistently found that nonstandard job schedules have diminished parental involvement and responsiveness to children (Akerstedt, Fredlund, Gillberg, & Jansson, 2002; Bildt & Michelsen, 2002; Bumpus et al., 1999; Costa, 1996; Fagan, 2001; Fenwick & Tausig, 2001; Heymann & Earle, 2001; Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998; La Valle, Arthur, Millward, Scott, & Clayden, 2002; Poissonnet & Veron, 2000; Simon, 1990).

Psychosocial aspects of the job are also important in determining how employment affects family relations (Hughes & Galinsky, 1994). While the structural aspects of employment

are likely to influence workers' availability to participate in family roles and routine, psychosocial job characteristics predict increased psychological distress, which may lead to negative family interactions (Downey & Coyne, 1990; Gecas & Seff, 1990; Jacob & Johnson, 1997; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1992; Menaghan & Merves, 1984; Miller, Schooler, Kohn, & Miller, 1979; Papp, Mark Cummings, & Schermerhorn, 2004; Voydanoff, 1988; Whisman, 2001). Workers with satisfying jobs often find them rewarding and fulfilling, and thus less stressful. Often experiencing job disruptions could be stressful because of the feelings of insecurity and uncertainty caused by these disruptions.

Job characteristics may also affect children's well-being through the marital relationship of the parents. Previous research has linked parental marital conflict to more hostile parent-child relationship, less warmth and more conflict among siblings, and problematic peer relationship (Nomura, Wickramaratne, Warner, Mufson, & Weissman, 2002; Papp et al., 2004; Stocker & Youngblade, 1999). With less time to fulfill family responsibilities and to share activities together, the parents with demanding jobs often experience marital conflict and divorce, which lead to children' maladjustment (Booth, Johnson, & White, 1984; Hill, 1988; Kingston & Nock, 1987; Presser, 2000; White, 1983; White & Keith, 1990). Studies on shift schedules found generally negative effects, both with respect to the individual's health and the worker's family life (Simon, 1990). While afternoon shifts cause problems with parent-child interaction, night shifts are likely to cause problems with husband-wife relationships and increase the likelihood of divorce (Presser, 2000; Staines, 1986; White & Keith, 1990).

Recent studies also suggest some positive relationship between nonstandard work schedules and childcare, especially when the joint effects of both parents' employment schedules are considered (Brayfield, 1995; Han, 2004; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Presser, 1994). While

mother's time with children was not affected by father's work hours, father's childrearing time was increased by mother's evening employment and with the increase of the nonoverlapping hours of parents' work time (Han, 2004; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Presser, 1988). These effects, however, were limited only to fathers with very young children (Brayfield, 1995). Also, most of these effects were on household work associated with childrearing, rather than on time in socioemotional or teaching activities. Because of the rare availability of formal care for children (such as day-care or programs for older children) outside standard business hours and weekdays, most families use a variety of childcare arrangements and often depend on informal care provided by relatives (Barnett & Gareis, 2006; Brandon & Hofferth, 2003; La Valle et al., 2002; Presser, 1988; Strazdins et al., 2004). Juggling care-giver availability with their own and their partner' schedules could intensify the stress experienced by parents.

Mother's and father's job characteristics may have different consequences for their family life and for children's well-being. Paid work has different meanings for mothers and fathers, because of the sex-segregated nature of the labor market, and the continuing gender division of care and household work in families (Fagan, 2001). Bielby & Bielby (1989) suggest that gendered division of labor and gender-role norms shape men's and women's work and family identities--women's balancing act is characterized by trade-off between employment and family, while men can sustain dual work and family identities without trading one off against the other. If traditional gender division of labor still dominates the norms and practices in the U.S. society, we would expect a stronger effect of mother's job characteristics on their family life and on children's well-being than father's job characteristics. On the other hand, if our society is indeed moving toward a more egalitarian division of labor, we would expect similar effects of mother's and father's job characteristics on their family life and on children's well-being.

Nonstandard work schedules may have stronger influence on school-aged children and adolescents (Dunifon et al., 2005). Whereas parents who work evening or night shifts may spend the day with very young children, their time with older children who are in school during the daytime would be very limited. Also, adolescents may be particularly vulnerable to living environment and family stress (Gerard & Buehler, 1999; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Recent studies have reported negative effects of parental evening work schedules on the quality of the home environment parents provide for children (Heymann & Earle, 2001), which could lead to children's behavioral problems.

Recent literature has begun to examine the effects of nonstandard work schedules on children's well-being. This research varies in study population, sample selection and measures of parental work schedules and children's outcomes, and it produced mixed results. For example, Han (2005) found a negative association between mother's nonstandard schedules and children's cognitive performances, particularly if these schedules began in the first year of the child's life, and for measures of cognitive development at 24 months and expressive language at 36 months. Strazdins et al. (2004) found higher behavioral difficulties among Canadian children ages 2 to 11 years when their parents worked nonstandard schedules. Dunifon (2005) found no significant association between the work schedule of low-income single mothers leaving welfare for employment and the behavioral problems of their children ages 5 to 15 years over a five year period. Only Han (2005) has explicitly tested the pathways between parental job characteristics and children's well-being, which suggests that the negative effects of mother's nonstandard work schedules may be due to the type of child care used.

No studies have examined the consequences of parental job characteristics for the well-being of children after they reach adulthood. Some studies linked maternal employment with

children's educational attainment and found mixed results. Some studies show that a child's ultimate education level is not significantly affected by the number of hours or the number of weeks a mother works when her child is an adolescent , while others show the effects may vary by mother's education, child's gender, and race/ethnicity (Baum, 2004) .

METHOD

Data

Data come from the National Survey of Families and Households, a longitudinal survey of the U.S. adults. A national probability sample of 13,007 respondents aged 19 and older were interviewed in 1987-1988. They were reinterviewed in 1993-1994 and in 2001-2002. Stepfamilies, minorities, and single-parent families were oversampled. The survey used both face-to-face interviews and self-administered questionnaires. Information on both primary respondents and their spouses/partners was collected. Also one child under 19 was selected as the focal child and information on this child was provided by adult respondents. Focal children aged 5-18 in wave 1 were also interviewed in wave 2 and wave 3. There were 1,368 dual-earner couples with children aged 5-18 and with information on both spouses. Among them, 974 completed self-administered questionnaires and also answered questions about the focal child and were not missing on key variables. In wave 3, 569 focal children of these respondents who were 18-34 years of age in 2001-2002 were also interviewed.

Measures

Parental job characteristics. Five aspects of both mother's and father's job characteristics were assessed. *Number of employment hours* was the total number of hours each parent worked on all jobs last week or the number of hours each parent usually works if s/he did not work last week. *Demanding job schedule* was an index of five nonstandard work time

arrangements, including nonday shift, multiple jobs, varied schedule, day and night alternating schedule, and weekend work. The index ranged from 0 to 5. *Number of weeks worked* was the total number of weeks each parent worked last year. *Number of job disruptions* was the number of times each parent reported out of paid work for a period of at least six months. *Unsatisfying job* was based on the question of how much each parent agreed or disagreed that the job s/he does is one of the most satisfying parts of his/her life. Those who answered "'strongly disagree' / 'disagree' / 'neither agree nor disagree'" were compared with those who answered "'strongly agree' / 'agree'." Missing cases on job satisfaction were indicated with a dummy variable.

Children's well-being in childhood was measured with children's adjustment scale at wave 1. As part of the NSFH wave 1 interview, parents rated the focal child on 10 items drawn from a larger inventory of child behavior (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1981). Sample items included "loses temper easily," "bullies or is cruel or mean to others," "does what you ask," and "gets along well with other kids." The 3-point response categories ranged from 1 (not true) to 3 (often true). Items assessing negative behaviors were reverse coded and the 10 items were averaged so that high scores on the scale indicated better well-being.

Children's well-being in adulthood was measured with a modified version of the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), administered to the children at wave 3. Each of the 13 items on the scale asked the number of days the respondent felt certain ways in the past week. Sample items included "depressed," "trouble concentrating," "everything was an effort," "slept restlessly," and "poor appetite." Items assessing negative behaviors were reverse coded and the 13 items were averaged so that high scores on the scale indicated better well-being.

Parental marital quality at wave 1 was assessed with two measures. *Marital happiness* was indicated by a single item that asked the respondents, "Taking things all together, how would you describe your marriage?" The responses ranged from 1 (very unhappy) to 7 (very happy). *Marital agreement* was a summary scale of 7 items. Respondents were asked how often in the last year, they had disagreements with their spouse/partner on housework, money, spending time together, sex, having a child, in-laws, and children. The responses ranged from 1 (never) to 6 (almost everyday). The 7 items were reverse coded and averaged with higher scores indicating more agreements.

Parenting behavior. I used items from the wave 1 interviews to create measures of parental support, punishment and monitoring. *Parental support* was indexed by six items. The first four questions asked parents how often they spent time with their child in leisure activities away from home (picnics, movies, sports, etc.), at home working on a project or playing together, having private talks, and helping with reading or homework. The answers ranged from 1 (never or rarely) to 6 (almost every day). The fifth and sixth questions asked parents how often they praised or hugged their children, and the answers ranged from 1 (never) to 4 (very often). These items were standardized and averaged with higher scores indicating more involvement and support. *Mild punishment* was indexed by two items. The parents were asked how often they (a) yelled at their children and (b) spanked or slapped their children, and the answers ranged from 1 (never) to 4 (very often). The two items were reverse coded, standardized and averaged with higher scores indicating less harsh punishment. *Parental monitoring* was an index of 8 items. First, parents reported on five times in the day when they allowed the child to be at home alone (before school, in the afternoon after school, all day when there is no school, at night, and overnight). Responses to each time slot were 1 (yes), 2 (sometimes, it depends) and 3 (not

allowed). The next item dealt with how often children were expected to tell parents where they are when away from home with the answers ranging from 1 (hardly ever) to 4 (all the time). The last two items reported on whether the parents restricted the amount of television (1 yes, 0 no) or the types of television programs the child watched (1 yes, 0 no). Parental monitoring scale is the mean of the standardized scores of the eight items.

Control variables included characteristics of the parents and the child that may affect the relationship between job characteristics and children's well-being, all measured at wave 1. Parental characteristics included whether the parents were married or cohabiting, the number of children aged 0-4 in the household, the number of children aged 5-18 in the household, parents' education in years (average of mother's and father's education) and family income (log transformed). Cases with missing family income were substituted with mean and a dummy variable was created to indicate missing income. Characteristics of the focal child included age, gender, race/ethnicity and whether the child was a stepchild.

Statistical Procedures

I tested the direct and indirect relationship between parental job characteristics and children's well-being through hierarchical ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis. All regression equations controlled for the following parents' and children's characteristics: whether the parents were married or cohabiting, the number of children aged 0-4 in the household, the number of children aged 5-18 in the household, parents' education and family income, the age, gender, race/ethnicity of the focal child and whether the focal child was a stepchild. The first set of three regression models assessed the effects of parental job characteristics on children's well-being at wave 1. The baseline model included parental job characteristics and control variables to examine the association between parental job characteristics and children's well-being net of

control variables. The second model added parental marital quality to examine how much of the effects of parental job characteristics on children's well-being is through parental marital quality, and the third model added parenting practices to examine how much of the effects of parental job characteristics on children's well-being is through parental practices.

The second set of regression models regressed each of the parental marital quality and parenting practices measures on parental job characteristics to further explore the relationship between parental job characteristics and marital quality and parenting practices. The final set of two regression models assessed the long term effects of parental job characteristics through regressions of children's well-being at wave 3 when they became young adults on their parents' job characteristics at wave 1 when they were at school age. The baseline model included parental job characteristics, the child's behavioral problem at wave 1 and control variables, and the second model added parental relationship quality and parenting practices at wave 1.

Because children at different developmental stages may be differently affected by their parental job characteristics, marital quality and parenting practices, I also ran interactions between these characteristics and children's age at wave 1 (5-11 vs. 12-18). Significant differences will be noted in the results.

RESULTS

Parental Job Characteristics

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for the variables included in the analysis. It is not surprising that fathers worked longer hours (47 vs. 36), had more demanding job schedules (.88 vs. .76), worked more weeks (51 vs. 44), had fewer job disruptions (.24 vs. .72), and had more satisfying jobs than mothers (50 vs. 45). Combining all jobs, 55% of fathers and 24% of mothers worked more than 40 hours per week, whereas 30% of mothers and 5% of

fathers worked 30 hours or less. Eighty-nine percent of fathers versus 66% of mothers worked the maximum 52 weeks in the past year. Similar proportions of mother and fathers had a nonday shift schedule (12% vs. 11%), had a work schedule that changes from week to week (21%), and had a schedule that alternates between day, evening and night shifts (6%). Fathers were more likely than mothers to have multiple jobs (16% vs. 11%) and to work on weekends (32% vs. 28%). While 50% of mothers experienced at least one period of six months without a job, only 17% of fathers had this experience.

"Table 1 about here"

Short-Term Effects of Parental Job Characteristics on Children's Well-Being

Results from hierarchical OLS regressions of children's well-being at T1 on parental job characteristics, marital quality, parenting practices and other parents' and child's characteristics at T1 are presented in Table 2. In the baseline model (Model I) when only parental job characteristics and control variables are included, most significant coefficients are in the expected direction with the exception of the number of weeks the mother worked. Children's adjustment scores declined if either the mother or father experienced more job disruptions (mother for aged 12-18) and dissatisfaction. When *mothers* worked longer hours (aged 5-11), had more demanding schedule (aged 12-18), but worked *fewer* weeks, children also had lower adjustment scores. Most of these effects change only slightly when parental marital quality measures are added (Model II), suggesting a weak mediating effects of marital quality on the relationship between parental job characteristics and children's adjustment. Notable changes are the effects of mother's demanding job schedules and father's job disruptions which are no longer significant when marital quality is taken into account. As expected, parents' marital quality is

strongly associated with children's well-being; the happier the parents were with their marriage and the fewer disagreements the parents had, the fewer behavioral problems children had.

"Table 2 about here"

The effects of parental job characteristics are further attenuated when parenting practices are added (Model III). Mother's work hours becomes marginal significant and mother's job dissatisfaction becomes insignificant. The size of the effect of father's job dissatisfaction is reduced by 30%. Most of the effects of parental job characteristics, however, remain statistically significant or marginally significant. The coefficients of parental marital quality are substantially attenuated when parenting practices are added, which suggests that a large portion of the effect of marital quality on children's well-being is through parenting practices. Nonetheless, the direct effects of parental marital quality variables remain significant. Among parenting practices, mother's involvement and support (aged 12-18) and both parents' mild punishment are positively associated with children's behavioral adjustment, but parental monitoring is negatively associated with children's behavioral adjustment (aged 12-18).

Effects of Parental Job Characteristics on Parental Marital Quality and Parenting Practices

To better understand how parental marital quality and parenting practices are influenced by parental job characteristics and thus serve as mediating factors between parental job characteristics and children's well-being, I ran regressions of the variables measuring parental marital quality and parenting practices on parental job characteristics and the results are presented in Table 3. Regressions of parental marital quality on parental job characteristics for children aged 5-18 at wave 1 (first two columns) show that parental marital happiness declined and disagreements increased if the mother had a demanding work schedule, and if father experienced job disruptions, which explains the large attenuation of the effects of mother's

demanding job schedule and father's job disruptions on children's well-being when marital quality measures are taken into account (Table 2, Model II). Parental disagreements also increased if the father worked longer hours, but *fewer* weeks.

"Table 3 about here"

Regressions of parenting practices on parental job characteristics and marital quality (Table 3, columns 3 to 7) show that if mothers worked longer hours, they were less involved in activities with their children and fathers were more likely to use harsh punishment. Mothers with unsatisfying jobs were also more likely to use harsh punishment. Mothers' job disruptions, however, increased their activities with their children. Among father's job characteristics, the most consistent result is the negative impact of father's job dissatisfaction--fathers with unsatisfying jobs were less often involved in activities with children and more often used harsh punishment, and their wives also more often used harsh punishment. Other significant effects indicate that mothers used harsh punishment more often if their husbands worked more weeks and fathers were *more* involved in children's activities if they had more demanding, nonstandard work schedule. Moreover, it is not surprising that happily married parents were more involved in activities with their children, while parents with frequent disagreements more often resorted to harsh punishment.

Long-Term Effects of Parental Job Characteristics on Children's Well-Being

Table 4 presents results from regressions of mental well-being of focal children aged 18-34 at wave 3 on parental job characteristics, marital quality and parenting practices when they were aged 5-18 at wave 1, controlling for children's behavioral adjustment at wave 1 and other parents' and children's characteristics. In the baseline model when only parental job characteristics and control variables are included, young adults seem to have higher levels of

mental well-being if, in their childhood, their father worked long hours, had a less demanding schedule, and worked longer weeks. These effects are slightly attenuated but remain significant even when parental marital quality and parenting practices are taken into account. Surprisingly, parental marital quality and parenting practices in early years do not have strong effects on young adults' mental well-being.

"Table 4 about here"

DISCUSSION

The increase of labor force participation of women with children in the last several decades and the growing diversity and flexibility of the temporal structure of the work place have raised concerns about their impact on families. This paper investigated the impact of parental job characteristics on children's well-being among dual-earner families, one issue that has only begun to receive some attention (Dunifon et al., 2005; Han, 2005; Strazdins et al., 2004). Three questions were examined: (1) whether parental job characteristics have short-term effects on children's well-being; (2) whether the effects of parental job characteristics are mediated through parental marital quality and parenting practices; and (3) whether parental job characteristics have long-term effects on children's well-being.

The results show that parental job characteristics do have important short-term impact on children's well-being, although the results vary by parent's gender and across different job characteristics. Job disruptions and dissatisfaction are negatively associated with children's well-being no matter it is the mother or the father who experiences them. However, temporal dimensions of the mother's job seem to be more salient for children's well-being than those of the father's job. When the mother works longer hours and a demanding schedule that is characterized by nonday shifts, alternating shifts, varying schedule, weekend work, and multiple

jobs, children tend to have more adjustment problems. Although previous research has found negative consequences of mother's nonstandard work schedules for the development of younger children (Han, 2005; Strazdins et al., 2004), this study suggests that similar effects apply for school-aged children and adolescents.

One unexpected finding is the positive association between the number of weeks mothers worked and children's well-being. One possible explanation is that in dual-earner couples with school-aged children, the 52-weeks work year is the norm for both parents, and mothers who work fewer weeks are considered "nonstandard," which is often associated with poor quality, low pay, and temporary jobs. In additional analysis, I included parent's earnings in the regression equations, and the effect of mother's work weeks remained significant. Still, other aspects of the jobs cannot be ruled out. It is also possible that mothers work fewer weeks because of the need of the family. Sickness and problems of family members may require mothers to take extensive time off from work and this stressful environment may be linked to children's maladjustment.

The data provide some support for the proposition that the effects of parental job characteristics on children's well-being are mediated by parental marital quality and parenting practices. However, parental marital quality and parenting practices, as measured in this analysis, do not account for all the effects of parental job characteristics. Although varying by different job characteristics, most of the effects of parental job characteristics are slightly attenuated when parental marital quality and parenting practices are taken into account, but remain statistically significant. Looking more closely at the effects of parental job characteristics on parental marital quality and parenting practices reveal some interesting patterns. First, it is mother's demanding work schedules and father's job disruptions that are most consistently

associated with declining martial happiness and marital agreements, both leading to children's maladjustment. Juggling time constraints seems particularly stressful for mothers because mothers are expected to be more responsible for caring work at home (Bielby & Bielby, 1989; Hochschild, 1989; Spain & Bianchi, 1996). The more harmful effect of fathers' job disruptions reflects the gendered nature of job disruptions--whereas women's job disruptions are mainly in response to family demands (Moen, 1985), men's job disruptions are often seen as a failure to be a family provider because they are often caused by unemployment, being laid off or being sick (Voydanoff, 1990).

Second, it appears contradictory that parental conflict increased when fathers worked longer hours, but fewer weeks. If the societal expectation of fathers as the primary provider explains why parental conflict intensifies when fathers do not work a standard 52-weeks work year, it seems that in dual-earner families with children, fathers cannot completely escaped from negative impact of the time constraints experienced by dual-earner families.

Third, with regard to parenting practices, parental job characteristics have some effects on parental activities with children and punishment style, but have little impact on parental supervision and monitoring. These findings are consistent with previous research using the same survey (Thomson, 1993). Mothers with longer work hours are less involved in activities with children, but mothers with more job disruptions increase their time with children. Fathers' time with children is not so much affected by the number of hours worked, but more by when they work—fathers spent more time with children if their schedules are less standard. This finding is consistent with prior research which suggests that fathers are more involved in childcare if they work different hours than their wives (Brayfield, 1995; Presser, 1988). In addition, psychosocial aspects of the job are important. Fathers with unsatisfying jobs spend less time with their

children, and job dissatisfaction increases both parents' likelihood to use harsh punishment when their children misbehave.

To answer the question whether parental job characteristics have long-term effects on children's well-being, this study links parental job characteristics at wave 1 when the focal child was at school-age to the focal child's mental well-being at wave 3 when the child became a young adult. The results show no effects of mother's job characteristics, but children had higher levels of mental well-being in adulthood if, during their childhood, their father worked longer hours, had more standard work schedule, and worked more weeks. However, cautions must be made in interpreting these results. First, only 569 out of the 974 children who were 5-18 years of age and lived in dual-earner families at wave 1 were interviewed and provided information on CES-D. Additional analysis showed that those who dropped at wave 3 tended to be African American or Hispanic, step-child, with cohabiting parents, fewer siblings, lower parental education, lower family income, mothers working long hours and more weeks, and fathers having more job disruptions. Although I also used Heckman selection procedure to correct for attribution bias and found similar results, other bias could still remain. If children in the remaining sample were likely to come from middle class families, the traditional work and family values may well apply. This may help explain why a traditional father figure—working long hours, full-year and standard schedules--seems to have more positive long-term influence on children's well-being.

It is surprising that parental marital quality and parenting practices during childhood do not have consistent, strong effects on children's well-being in adulthood. It is possible that our analysis which mainly focuses on testing the pathways between parental job characteristics at one time and children's well-being does not capture the dynamics of work and family

interactions over the thirteen or fourteen years of life span between the two waves. Balancing work life and family life is a constant struggle with which families must confront. This study establishes the short-term impact of parental job characteristics on family life and children's well-being. Future research modeling changes in parents' and children's lives across the life span may shed greater light on the long-term impact of parental employment on children's well-being.

Figure 1. Model of Parental Job Characteristics and Children's Well-being

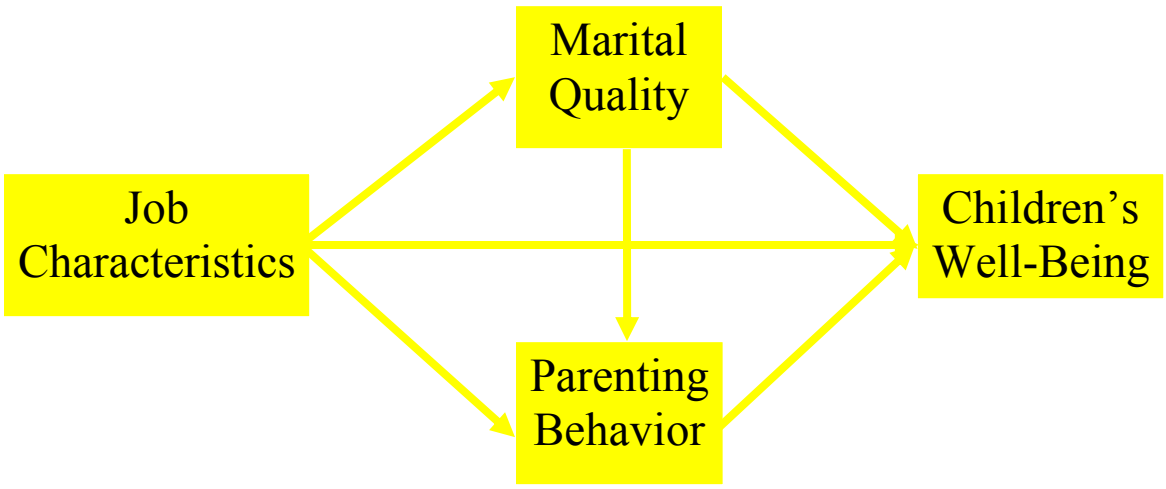

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables (N=974)

	Mean	STD
Mother job characteristics at T1		
Work hours (0-100)	36.00	14.28
Job schedule demanding (0-5)	0.76	1.03
Weeks worked (0-52)	44.45	14.71
Number of job disruptions (0-6)	0.72	0.91
Not satisfying [b]	0.55	
Job satisfaction missing [b]	0.03	
Father job characteristics at T1		
Work hours (0-100)	47.54	13.77
Job schedule demanding (0-5)	0.88	1.04
Weeks worked (0-52)	50.50	6.16
Number of job disruptions (0-7)	0.24	0.67
Not satisfying [b]	0.50	
Job satisfaction missing [b]	0.03	
Child behavioral adjustment at T1 (1-3)	2.55	0.28
Child mental health at T2 (0-7) [a]	5.74	0.99
Parental relationship quality at T1		
Marital happiness (1-7)	5.84	1.34
Marital agreement (1-6)	5.23	0.62
Parental behavior at T1		
Mother support (-2.2-1.0)	-0.09	0.66
Father support (-3.4-1.4)	-0.10	0.70
Mother mild punishment (-2.0-1.7)	0.10	0.75
Father mild punishment (-2.2-1.5)	0.06	0.78
Monitoring(-2.4-.9)	-0.01	0.68
Child characteristics at T1		
Age (5-18)	11.38	3.99
Female [b]	0.49	
Black [b]	0.13	
Hispanic [b]	0.06	
Step child [b]	0.11	
Parental characteristics at T1		
Number of children 0-4 (0-3)	0.16	0.41
Number of children 5-18 (1-7)	1.81	0.86
Parents cohabiting [b]	0.05	
Parental education (0-20)	13.14	2.17
Family income (log, 0-14)	10.57	0.78
Family income missing [b]	0.14	

[a] Number of cases is 569 for mental health at T2. [b] dichotomous variables.

Table 2. OLS Regression of Children's Adjustment on Parental Job Traits, Marital Quality and Parental Behavior for Children Aged 5-18 (N=974)

	Model I	Model II	Model III
Mother job characteristics at T1			
Work hours	-0.067*	-0.065*	-0.057+
Job schedule demanding	-0.053+	-0.038	-0.036
Weeks worked	0.086*	0.080*	0.072*
Number of job disruptions	-0.066*	-0.072*	-0.063*
Not satisfying	-0.062+	-0.056+	-0.041
Job satisfaction missing	0.060+	0.052+	0.062*
Father job characteristics at T1			
Work hours	-0.003	0.009	0.011
Job schedule demanding	0.013	0.017	0.013
Weeks worked	-0.023	-0.028	-0.019
Number of job disruptions	-0.090**	-0.075*	-0.073*
Not satisfying	-0.104**	-0.099**	-0.069*
Job satisfaction missing	-0.025	-0.027	-0.030
Parental relationship quality at T1			
Marital happiness		0.091**	0.067*
Marital agreement		0.143**	0.099**
Parental behavior at T1			
Mother support			0.040
Father support			0.139**
Mother mild punishment			0.162**
Father mild punishment			0.127**
Monitoring			-0.120*
Child characteristics at T1			
Age	-0.053	-0.072*	-0.175**
Female	0.072*	0.069*	0.066*
Black	0.097**	0.113**	0.124**
Hispanic	0.038	0.039	0.007
Step child	-0.093**	-0.099**	-0.094**
Parental characteristics at T1			
Number of children 0-4	-0.051	-0.049	-0.026
Number of children 5-18	-0.009	-0.015	0.019
Parents cohabiting	-0.070*	-0.085**	-0.085**
Parental education	0.084*	0.091*	0.049
Family income (log)	0.018	-0.002	-0.013
Family income missing	0.043	0.050	0.055+
R-squared	0.098	0.133	0.198

Note: Standardized coefficients: + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 3. Regression of Parental Marital Quality and Parental Behavior on Parental Job Traits for Children Aged 5-18 (N=974)

	Parental marital happiness	Parental marital agreement	Mother		Father		Parental monitoring
			Support	Mild punishment	Support	Mild punishment	
Mother job characteristics at T1							
Work hours	-0.029	0.004	-0.093**	-0.032	0.046	-0.054+	-0.014
Job schedule demanding	-0.056+	-0.073*	-0.011	0.018	-0.038	0.015	0.006
Weeks worked	0.041	0.013	0.018	0.031	-0.006	-0.001	-0.024
Number of job disruptions	0.037	0.023	0.054+	0.001	-0.020	-0.044	0.029
Not satisfying	0.001	-0.042	0.014	-0.066*	-0.010	-0.015	0.015
Job satisfaction missing	0.043	0.027	0.041	-0.031	-0.018	-0.019	0.012
Father job characteristics at T1							
Work hours	0.024	-0.100**	-0.001	-0.013	-0.021	0.053	0.033
Job schedule demanding	-0.023	-0.010	-0.020	0.004	0.057+	-0.015	0.014
Weeks worked	-0.053	0.068*	0.029	-0.077*	0.032	-0.019	-0.002
Number of job disruptions	-0.070*	-0.064*	0.008	0.013	-0.008	-0.017	0.010
Not satisfying	-0.043	-0.005	-0.030	-0.061*	-0.070*	-0.094**	-0.020
Job satisfaction missing	-0.005	0.018	0.015	0.013	-0.003	-0.003	-0.006
Parental relationship quality at T1							
Marital happiness			0.089**	0.040	0.076*	0.035	0.014
Marital agreement			-0.015	0.157**	0.020	0.132**	0.006
Child characteristics at T1							
Age	-0.003	0.137**	-0.332**	0.278**	-0.366**	0.203**	-0.797**
Female	0.010	0.015	0.020	0.068*	-0.066*	0.066*	0.062**
Black	-0.005	-0.107**	0.021	-0.029	-0.002	0.048	0.106**
Hispanic	-0.019	0.009	-0.072*	0.071*	0.098**	0.085**	0.011
Step child	0.056+	0.005	-0.049	0.012	-0.083**	0.050+	-0.005
Parental characteristics at T1							
Number of children 0-4	0.062+	-0.055+	0.024	-0.110**	0.074*	-0.159**	-0.030
Number of children 5-18	-0.003	0.041	0.001	-0.076*	0.049	-0.183**	0.039*
Parents cohabiting	0.012	0.095**	-0.002	0.003	-0.067*	0.013	-0.065**
Parental education	-0.038	-0.023	0.111**	0.027	0.210**	0.034	-0.000
Family income (log)	0.058	0.105**	-0.005	0.042	0.011	0.006	-0.016
Family income missing	-0.057+	-0.015	-0.010	0.008	0.017	-0.041	0.028
R-squared	0.031	0.089	0.180	0.195	0.224	0.183	0.678

Note: Standardized coefficients: + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 4. Regression of Mental Well-Being of Young Adults Aged 18-34 on Parental Job Traits When They Were School Age (N=569)

	Model I	Model II
Mother job characteristics at T1		
Work hours	0.011	0.019
Job schedule demanding	-0.035	-0.035
Weeks worked	0.009	0.009
Number of job disruptions	0.049	0.051
Not satisfying	-0.033	-0.037
Job satisfaction missing	-0.033	-0.041
Father job characteristics at T1		
Work hours	0.087+	0.080+
Job schedule demanding	-0.103*	-0.091*
Weeks worked	0.112**	0.108*
Number of job disruptions	0.012	0.018
Not satisfying	0.039	0.040
Job satisfaction missing	0.110**	0.109**
Parental relationship quality at T1		
Marital happiness		-0.032
Marital agreement		0.076+
Parental behavior at T1		
Mother support		0.057
Father support		-0.049
Mother mild punishment		-0.082+
Father mild punishment		0.068
Monitoring		-0.002
Child characteristics at T1		
Age	0.151**	0.149+
Female	-0.095*	-0.097*
Black	-0.162**	-0.157**
Hispanic	-0.011	-0.006
Step child	-0.040	-0.039
Behavioral adjustment	0.239**	0.238**
Parental characteristics at T1		
Number of children 0-4	0.044	0.054
Number of children 5-18	0.049	0.050
Parents cohabiting	0.022	0.020
Parental education	0.014	0.012
Family income (log)	0.036	0.038
Family income missing	-0.027	-0.026
R-squared	0.148	0.161

Note: Standardized coefficients: + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

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