WORKING PAPER

Intra-Individual and Crossover Effects of Work Contact in Leisure Time on Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance

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ABSTRACT

Using data from the 2015/2016 German Family Panel (pairfam), this article examines the intra-individual and crossover effects of work contact in leisure time on satisfaction with work-life balance. Results of mediation analyses show that individuals who have work contact in leisure time are less satisfied with their work-life balance because of the (perceived) obligation to be available after work hours. Partners, by contrast, are less satisfied with work-life balance only when the other partner actually has work contact in leisure time. The negative association between work contact/availability and satisfaction with work-life balance is mediated in both partners by work-home conflict.

Content

Preface

The prevalence of mobile electronic communication devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops enables work contact outside regular work hours for an increasing number of workers with smart working agreements, as well as for office workers in traditional sectors (Ghislieri et al. 2017). Schieman and Young (2013, S. 244) use the term work contact as "shorthand for the frequency with which workers send and receive work-related communications (e.g. emails, phone calls, text messages) outside of regular working hours". The authors note that expanded access to email and smartphones enables remote work, but also contributes to "24/7 availability". This presents workers with new challenges to manage and maintain the boundaries between work and home life (Derks et al. 2015; Ghislieri et al. 2017). According to boundary theory, mobile electronic communication devices increase the permeability of the temporal, physical, and psychological boundaries between the work and home domains (Clark 2000). As a consequence, work can more easily spill over into, and conflict with, home life (Greenhaus/Beutell 1985). Previous research has shown that work contact outside regular work hours is related to higher levels of work-home conflict and that individuals with work contact in leisure time are more likely to be distressed, feel guilty, and have sleep problems (Schieman/Glavin 2008; Schieman/Young 2013) – factors that impair physical and mental health (Burchell et al. 2002; Robinson/Godbey 1997; Roxburgh 2004; Shields 1999) and negatively affect home life (Green 2004; Kattenbach et al. 2010; Macky/Boxall 2008; Roxburgh 2004).

Due to its negative effect on home life, work contact in leisure time might lower satisfaction with work-life balance on the part of both affected workers and their partners. The balance between work and spheres outside work such as family life is a "career value" for employees who want to feel satisfied and successful in fulfilling their commitments in the work and family domains (Valcour 2007). Previous research has shown that crossover effects exist within couples for work-home conflict, stress, depression, emotional exhaustion, work hours, schedule flexibility, work salience, and family involvement (Bolger et al. 1989; Chan/Margolin 1994; Galambos/Walters 1992; Hammer et al. 1997; Liang 2015; Sanz-Vergel et al. 2015; Westman et al. 2001; Westman/Vinoku 1998; Yoon/Kang 2016). However, the extent to which work contact in leisure time affects satisfaction with work-life balance in both partners has received less attention. The use of communication technologies outside work hours has been found to impair the quality of interactions with friends (Rotondi et al. 2017) and can thus also be expected to impair satisfaction with work-life balance on the part of both partners.

So far, communication technology use in leisure time has been analyzed only from the perspective of individuals and their significant others, and mostly with regard to work-home conflict (Boswell/Olson-Buchanan 2007; Derks/Bakker 2014; Wright et al. 2014). However, work-home conflict is a weak measure for work-life balance (McDowall/Kinman 2017; Valcour 2007), and satisfaction with work-life balance is favored over work-home conflict as an indicator of work-life balance (Szücs et al. 2011). The first aim of the present study is to analyze the intra-individual and crossover effects of work contact in leisure time on satisfaction with work-life balance: Does work contact in leisure time affect satisfaction with work-life balance on the part of individuals and their partners? The second aim is to investigate whether work contact in leisure time is problematic because of workers' (perceived) obligation to be available outside regular work hours. Westman, Etzion, and Danon (2001) found that sense of control not only supports workers, but also invokes a sense of control in their partners who, in turn, are less likely to experience negative outcomes. Is the relation between work contact in leisure time and satisfaction with work-life balance mediated by the (perceived) obligation to be available during after-work hours? The third aim of the present study is to analyze why work contact and availability in leisure time might lower satisfaction with work-life balance. High levels of job pressure and long work hours might drive individuals to work outside regular work hours and might also contribute to workers' perception that they are obliged to respond to work-related communications. Moreover, because work contact and availability are boundary-spanning demands (Voydanoff 2007, S. 11), they might lower satisfaction with work-life balance in both partners due to work-home conflict. For example, the use of electronic communication devices to perform job-related functions outside regular work hours has been found to increase work-home conflict (Boswell/Olson-Buchanan 2007; Derk/Bakker 2014; Wright et al. 2014). These findings prompted the question: Is the relation between work contact and satisfaction with work-life balance mediated by job pressure, work hours and work-home conflict? The present study is based on data from the 2015/2016 wave of the Partnership and Family Panel (pairfam). Mediation analyses were conducted based on 790 heterosexual dual-earner couples.

1   Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance and Work Contact in Leisure Time

Work-life balance, that is, the ability to balance work and private life (Szücs et al. 2011), is a major issue for individuals' quality of life across European countries and is broadly addressed by the EU Social Agenda, the Lisbon Strategy, and the Work-Life Balance Initiative of the European Commission (Szücs et al. 2011). Satisfaction with work-life balance is distinct from work-life balance itself, which is often compared with high levels of work-home conflict. The concept of work-home conflict, however, has several weaknesses. It assumes that conflict always leads to a low satisfaction with work-life balance (Szücs et al., 2011; Valcour 2007), that individuals invariably experience work-home conflict, and that levels of conflict do not change in the short term (McDowall/Kinman, 2017). The focus on overall satisfaction with work-life balance, by contrast, takes account of the fact that the relevance of work and private life differs between individuals, that private life is more than the role at home (Abendroth/Ducki 2011), and that activities in various domains can be mutually enriching (McDowall/Kinman 2017). Satisfaction with the balance between work and non-work domains such as family life is "an overall level of contentment resulting from an assessment of one's degree of success" in fulfilling the respective role demands (Valcour 2007). It includes affective and cognitive components (Valcour 2007). The cognitive component involves the perceived degree of success in meeting the demands in the work and home domains; the affective component encompasses the positive feeling or emotional state that results from this perception. Individuals are satisfied with their work-family balance when they perceive that they have sufficient resources to meet the multiple demands in the work and home domains (Valcour 2007). According to work/family border theory (Clark 2000) and Voydanoff's (2007) conceptual model of work, family, and community, a domain is defined by a basic organization and boundaries, that is, by a structure that – besides organizational and extrinsic characteristics – involves timing and spatial location (Voydanoff 2007, S. 5). *Timing* refers to the amount of time individuals spend in one domain and when they are active in that domain; *spatial location* refers to where individuals are active.

Electronic communication devices such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets can increase the permeability of the boundaries between the work and home domains. They can serve as boundary-spanning demands, where elements from the work domain enter into the home domain, for example, when individuals receive work-related telephone calls at home. Work contact in leisure time is a boundary-spanning demand that is associated with role blurring, where the distinction between the work role and family roles becomes unclear (Schieman/Young 2013; Voydanoff 2007). Recent studies have shown, for example, that smartphone use in the evenings hinders engagement in recovery activities (Derks et al. 2014), is related to emotional exhaustion (Xie et al. 2018), and impairs well-being (Gombert et al. 2018). Work contact in leisure time might therefore impair individuals' satisfaction with work-life balance. Because role blurring can also impair family role performance and quality (Voydanoff 2007), not only individuals' but

also their partners' satisfaction with work-life balance might be affected by work contact in leisure time. In addition, individuals might have difficulties switching off from work when their partners are still connected to work. So far, studies have found crossover effects of work contact in leisure time on marital satisfaction (Liang 2015), stress (Bolger et al. 1989; Galambos/ Walters 1992), mood (Chan/Margolin 1994), depression (Westman/Vinoku 1998; Yoon/Kang 2016), work-family conflict (Ghislieri et al. 2017; Hammer et al. 1997; Sanz-Vergel et al. 2015), and social undermining (Liang 2015). Hence, I expect that crossover effects of work contact in leisure time on satisfaction with work-life balance also exist, and that work contact is negatively associated with satisfaction with work-life balance in both partners:

> Hypothesis 1: Work contact in leisure time is negatively associated with individuals' and their partners' satisfaction with work-life balance.

However, the strain from the use of work-related communication technology outside regular work hours has been found to arise mainly when supervisors expect employees to be available during after-work hours (Derks et al. 2015). The effect of smartphone use on work-home interference, for example, depends on the expectations of availability from co-workers and supervisors (McDowall/Kinman 2017). Sense of control is a crucial workplace resource for dealing with high levels of job demands (Galvin/Schieman 2012; Schieman 2013). Moreover, individuals' sense of control invokes a greater sense of control in their partners (Westman et al. 2001). The negative effect of work contact on satisfaction with work-life balance in both partners might therefore be driven by the actual or the perceived obligation to be available in leisure time.

> Hypothesis 2: Work contact in leisure time is negatively associated with individuals' and their partners' satisfaction with work-life balance due to actual or perceived availability in leisure time.

2 The Role of Job Pressure, Long Work Hours, and Work-to-Home Conflict

High levels of job pressure and long work hours are job demands that can lead to negative work outcomes. Individuals experience job pressure when the quantity of work does not match the time scheduled for it (Koltai/ Schieman 2015). When this is the case, they feel overwhelmed by the workload and the lack of time to complete work tasks (Schieman 2013). High levels of time pressure and workload are related to perceived pressure when completing work tasks, and are intensifiers for negative work outcomes such as job exhaustion (Guinchi et al. 2016). Working long and intensive hours is associated with exhaustion, distress, and mental and physical health problems (Bakker/Geurts 2004; Kattenbach et al. 2010; Krause et al. 2005). Exhaustion and stress can reduce the quality of life at home (Green 2004; Kattenbach et al. 2010; Macky/Boxall 2008; Roxburgh 2004) because individuals who are stressed or exhausted have fewer resources for activities in the home domain and need more time for recovery (Crouter 1984; Kopelman et al. 1983). Job pressure and long work hours

are therefore a threat to employees' work-life balance (Bakker/Geurts 2004; Krause et al. 2005).

High levels of job pressure and long work hours might drive individuals to respond to work-related messages in leisure time. High levels of time pressure, and especially a high workload, might also contribute to individuals' perception that they are obliged to be available in leisure time. Job pressure and work hours might therefore be mediators of the relationship between work contact/(perceived) availability and satisfaction with work-life balance. I therefore predict that it is because of high levels of job pressure and long work hours that individuals and their partners are less satisfied with their work-life balance when they have work contact or (feel that they) are obliged to be available in leisure time:

> *Hypothesis 3*: Job pressure and work hours mediate the relationship between work contact/(perceived) availability in leisure time and satisfaction with work-life balance.

As work contact and availability in leisure time are boundary-spanning demands, they might lower satisfaction with work-life balance because of work-home conflict. Work-home conflict is the conflict between the individual's roles at work and at home (Greenhaus/Beutell 1985); it can be time-based, strain-based, or behavior-based. Behavior-based conflict exists when behavior that is appropriate for the work role is inappropriate for home life; time-based conflict occurs when work-related time demands hinder the fulfillment of the role at home; and strain-based work-to-home conflict involves emotional interference of work at home (Greenhaus/Parasuraman 1987). Work contact – that is, responding to work-related communications – or being available in leisure time can increase work-life conflict (Boswell/Olson-Buchanan 2007; Derks/Bakker 2014; Wright et al. 2014) and might therefore lower satisfaction in both partners. Hence, I predict that work-home conflict drives the negative effects of work contact and availability in leisure time on satisfaction with work-life balance:

> *Hypothesis 4*: Work-home conflict mediates the relationship between work contact/availability in leisure time and satisfaction with work-life balance.

3 Empirical Strategy

3.1 Data and Sample

The data used are from the 2016 German Partnership and Family Panel (pairfam). Pairfam is an annual survey with a focus on family and partnership issues; it was launched in 2008 with around 12,400 randomly selected respondents. The panel study includes three birth cohorts, 1991–1993, 1981–1983, and 1971–1973 (Huinink et al. 2011). The panel was extended to include an additional sample of eastern German respondents, who receive the same questionnaires as the respondents in the initial sample. Pairfam has a multi-actor design, where the so-called "anchor persons" are asked to consent to their partners being interviewed. The anchors complete the anchor questionnaire; their partners receive a modified, shorter partner questionnaire. Partners do not necessarily live together in one household. The anchor population comprises persons who live in private households in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Satisfaction with work-life balance, work contact in leisure time, and availability in leisure time were observed in 2016. The sample included 790 heterosexual couples; all couples were dual earners. Information was available on both partners' work hours, levels of work-home conflict, incomes, educational levels, age levels, migration backgrounds, and, where applicable, (eastern German) origin. Household characteristics were taken from the anchor questionnaire. Unfortunately, job pressure, work contact in leisure time, availability in leisure time, as well as occupational status, sector, and the relation between the couple's respective working times were measured only for the anchor population. The information on partners' work hours, educational level, age, migration background, and eastern German origin was provided by the anchor. Table 1 shows all variables in the analysis.

3.2 Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance

Information on satisfaction with work-life balance was available for both partners, who answered the following research question separately: How satisfied are you with the relation between the time that you devote to your job or to your vocational education and training or your degree and the time that you devote to your private life? Satisfaction with work-life balance was used as a continuous dependent variable and measured on a scale from 0 to 10 (0 = *very unsatisfied* and 10 = *very satisfied*).

3.3 Work Contact in Leisure Time

Work contact in leisure time was observed for the anchor population and was measured with the item: "I respond to work-related communications (e.g., emails or phone calls) during my leisure time." Respondents could choose between five categories, ranging from 1 = *fully disagree* to 5 = *fully*

agree. Due to the small number of observations, especially for the fifth category ($N < 100$), a dummy variable was constructed. To this end, the first, second, and third categories were assigned the value 0 = no work contact and the fourth and fifth categories were assigned the value 1 = work contact.

3.4 Availability in Leisure Time

Availability in leisure time is one mediator of the relationship between work contact and satisfaction with work-life balance. Anchors indicated their agreement or disagreement with the following statement on a five-point scale (from 1= *fully disagree* to 5 = *fully agree*): "When I spend time with my family, my partner, or my friends, I have to be available for work-related matters." This measure captures (a) the obligation to be available for work as part of a formal work arrangement such as on-call work and (b) workers' perception that they have to be available for work matters although no formal arrangement exists. Similar to work contact, the mediator variable was coded with 0 = no availability (first to third categories) and 1 = availability (fourth and fifth categories).

3.5 Job Pressure and Work Hours

Time pressure and workload are indicators for job pressure. Time pressure was measured in anchor population with the item "I often have to work under great time pressure"; workload was measured in the anchor population with the item "I often have to handle an excessive workload." Respondents indicated their agreement or disagreement with each statement on a five-point scale. Dummy variables were constructed for each variable, where the first, second and third categories were assigned the value 0 = low time pressure/workload and the fourth and fifth categories were assigned the value 1 = high time pressure/workload. The anchors' work hours were measured with the item "How many hours do you work on average per week, including overtime hours? Please consider all gainful activities." The information on partners' work hours was collected from the anchor with the question: "How many hours does your partner work on average per week including overtime hours?" Both variables were used as continuous variables.

3.6 Work-Home Conflict

The index variable work-home conflict was measured with the following four items: (a) "Because of the time-related workload in my job or in my vocational training or my studies, my private life takes a backseat." (b) "Even when I'm doing something with friends, my partner, or my family, I often have to think about work." (c) "After the pressure at work, I find it hard to relax at home and/or to enjoy my leisure time with others."(d) "My work keeps me from activities with friends, my partner, or my family more than I

would like." Cronbach's alpha was .78. The response categories for each statement ranged between 1 = *does not apply at all* to 5 = *fully applies*. The anchors and their partners responded to these statements separately. The four variables were summed to create a sum index. The sum index was subsequently transformed to a range between 0 and 1 in the following way: The sum was subtracted from the minimum value and this result was divided by the maximum value.

Table 1 Variables in the Analysis (N = 790)

	Percent/Mean*	*SD*	Min.	Max.
Anchor's satisfaction with work-life balance	6.14*	2.11	0	10
Partner's satisfaction with work-life balance	5.93*	2.45	0	10
Anchor's work contact in leisure time	28.22		0	1
Anchor's availability in leisure time	8.73		0	1
High time pressure (anchor)	4.79		0	1
High workload (anchor)	41.39		0	1
Anchor's work hours	36.38*	11.94	1	80
Partner's work hours	37.36*	11.94	4	80
Anchor's work-home conflict	0.19*	0.12	0	0.70
Partner's work-home conflict	0.29*	0.18	0	0.80
Occupational groups (anchors)				
Managers	5.44		0	1
Professionals	22.02		0	1
Technicians and associate professionals	35.56		0	1
Clerical support workers	7.97		0	1
Service workers	10.63		0	1
Craft and related trades workers	10.12		0	1
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	3.67		0	1
Elementary occupations	4.55		0	1
Public sector	9.11		0	1
Fixed-term contract	16.32		0	1
Anchor's monthly net individual income (in euros)	1,903.13*	1,084.39	150	6500
Partner's monthly net individual income (in euros)	2,026.60*	1,286.66	100	12,000
Anchor's years of education	(13.97)	2.94	8	20
Partner's years of education	(14.07)	2.91	8	20
Anchor's age	(38.42)	5.97	22	45
Partner's age	(39.21)	7.12	19	63
Anchor's age squared	(1,512.33)	432.21	484	2025
Partner's age squared	(1,588.76)	558.27	361	3,969
Anchor's migration background	16.58		0	1

	Percent/Mean*	SD	Min.	Max.
Partners' migration background	6.58		0	1
Anchor's eastern German origin	35.56		0	1
Partner's eastern German origin	35.31		0	1
Relation between respective working times				
Both partners full-time	36.08		0	1
Anchor full-time, partner other arrangement	27.72		0	1
Partner full-time, anchor other arrangement	30.37		0	1
Both partners other arrangement	5.82		0	1
Relationship status				
Living apart together	2.53		0	1
Cohabiting	15.56		0	1
Married	81.89		0	1
Monthly net household income (in euros)	(2,116.57)	1,515.28	200	35,714.29
Age of youngest child in months	(75.03)	65.11	0	304
Number of children				
No children	23.16		0	1
One child	23.54		0	1
Two children	41.01		0	1
Three and more children	12.27		0	1
Female anchor	52.15		0	1

Data source: 2015/2016 German Family Panel (pairfam).

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3.7 Controls

Because work contact and availability in leisure time were most prevalent for employees in upper-level positions and in elementary occupations (Table 2), anchors' status positions were controlled for using the ISCO-08 classification with the following categories: (1) Managers, (2) Professionals, (3) Technicians and associate professionals (4) Clerical support workers, (5) Service and sales workers, (6) Craft and related trades workers, (7) Plant and machine operators, and assemblers and (8) Elementary occupations. The first category was the reference category. The status positions of both the anchors and their partners were further taken into account by introducing the monthly net income and the years of education for each individual. Because job pressure can differ between sectors and forms of employment (White et al. 2003), I also controlled for whether the anchor worked in the public sector and whether he or she had a fixed-term contract. Information on age, migration background and eastern German origin was available for both partners and was also used as control variables. Age and age squared were introduced as continuous variables, and migration background and eastern German origin as dummy variables. Several household characteristics were also considered. I controlled for the relation between the couple's respective working times (1 = both partners work full-time, 2 = only anchor works full-time, 3 = only partner works full-time, and 4

= neither anchor nor partner works full-time); the relationship status (1 = living apart together, 2 = cohabiting, and 3 = married); the net equivalence scaled household income according to a modified OECD scale; the age of the youngest child in months; and the number of children (0 = no children, 1 = one child, 2 = two children, and 3 = three or more children). Finally, a control for the anchor's sex and a control for the additional sample of eastern German individuals were used in the analysis.

Table 2 Percentages of Anchors with Work Contact and Availability in Leisure Time by Occupational Group

In %	Work contact in leisure time	Availability in leisure time	Discrepancy
Managers	35.54	18.25	17.29
Professionals	39.97	5.72	34.25
Technicians and associate professionals	22.20	7.35	14.85
Clerical support workers	12.01	0.15	11.86
Service workers	29.76	11.22	18.54
Craft and related trades workers	18.61	7.26	11.35
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	16.00	4.41	11.59
Elementary occupations	37.53	17.89	19.64
Chi-squared test	**	*	

Data source: 2015/2016 German Family Panel (pairfam). Note. Weighted percentages.

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3.8 Method

Mediation analyses were conducted in several steps. A linear regression model was estimated only with work contact in leisure time and controls (Model 1). Availability in leisure time was introduced as a mediator in Model 2. In Model 3, time pressure and workload were used as mediator variables for work contact and availability. In Model 4 both partners' work hours were introduced, and in Model 5 both partners' work-home conflict was introduced. Model 6 contained all mediator variables. Table 3 shows the results for anchors' satisfaction with work-life balance; Table 4 shows the results for partners' satisfaction in this regard. The complete models can be found in in the appendix (Tables A1 and A2). The indirect effects were estimated with the delta method based on the full models. That is, two regression coefficients were multiplied, for example the effect of work contact on work-home conflict and the effect of work-home conflict on the satisfaction with work-life balance. The proportion of the explanatory variables via the mediator variables is calculated by dividing the indirect effect the estimated total effect.

4 Results

4.1 Descriptive Results

Respondents' satisfaction with work-life balance had a mean value of 6.32 without work contact in leisure time and 5.98 with work contact. According to the *t* test, the mean difference was statistically significantly greater than zero (Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0192). The difference in satisfaction was even greater with regard to availability in leisure time. The mean value was 6.29 without availability and only 5.45 with availability. The mean difference was statistically significantly greater than zero (Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0004). The mean values for partners' satisfaction with work-life balance were not statistically different for work contact and availability.

Work contact in leisure time was most prevalent in upper-level positions and at the lowest level of the workplace hierarchy (Table 2). Around 36% of managers and even around 38% of workers in elementary occupations reported that they responded to work-related communications in leisure time. These were also the biggest groups of workers who reported that they had to be available in leisure time (18 % and 18% respectively). The discrepancy between responding to work-related communications and the obligation to be available in leisure time existed for all occupational groups. However, it was most extreme for professionals (around 34%) and for workers in elementary occupations (almost 20%), and it was also high for service workers (around 19%). Due to the small number of observations, the association between work contact/availability in leisure time and satisfaction with work-life balance could not be analyzed separately for the occupational groups. The multivariate analyses only controlled for occupational groups.

4.2 Multivariate results

Work contact in leisure time was negatively associated with satisfaction with work-life balance in both partners. The effects were statistically significant at the 95% level (Tables 3 and 4, Model 1). Anchors' satisfaction was 0.356 lower with work contact in leisure time than without; partners' satisfaction was almost 0.396 lower in this case. Hypothesis 1 was confirmed: Not only the anchors but also their partners were less satisfied with their work-life balance when they responded to work-related communications in leisure time.

When availability in leisure time was included in Model 2, work contact in leisure time was still significantly associated with partners' satisfaction with work-life balance (Table 4). At −0.418, the effect of work contact in leisure time was even slightly higher in Model 2 than in Model 1. Availability was not significantly related to partners' satisfaction. For anchors, by contrast, the effect of availability was statistically significant at the 99% level, and, at −0.682, it was larger than the effect of work contact, which was not statistically significant in Model 2 (Table 3). The indirect effect of work contact via

availability was −0.115 and significant at the 95% level. Around 33% of the effect of work contact on satisfaction is indirect via availability. Hypothesis 2 was confirmed only for anchors. In their case, the obligation to be available in leisure time mediated the effect of work contact on satisfaction with work-life balance. Their partners were less satisfied only when the anchors actually responded to work-related communications.

Job pressure and work hours were weak mediators of the relationship between availability and anchors' satisfaction with work-life balance (Table 3, Model 3). The indirect effects of availability via time pressure and work load were not statistically significant, but the direct effect of availability was still statistically significant at the 95% level, and the effect size (−0.542) was still considerable compared to Model 2 (−0.682). In Model 4, the indirect effect of availability in leisure time via work hours was statistically significant at the 99.9% level, but the effect size (−0.170) was rather small, the direct effect was still significant at the 95% level, and the effect size (−0.513) was also still considerable. Job pressure and work hours were also weak mediators of partners' satisfaction with work-life balance (Table 4, Models 3 and 4). With time pressure and workload as mediators in Model 3, the effect size (−0.416) and the significance level of the direct effect of work contact were similar to Model 2 (−0.418). When work hours were introduced into Model 4, work contact was still significant at the 90% level, and the effect size (−0.391) was still similar compared to Model 2. The indirect effects of work contact via work hours, time pressure, and workload were not statistically significant. Hypothesis 3 is confirmed only for work hours, and only for anchors. Their lower satisfaction with work-life balance when they had to be available in leisure time was due to longer work hours, but only to some extent.

The effect of availability on anchors' satisfaction with work-life balance was mediated mainly by their work-home conflict (Table 3, Model 5). The indirect effect of availability via work-home conflict was −0.524, and was significant at the 99.9% level. The direct effect of availability was not statistically significant, and the effect size (−0.194) was much smaller compared to Model 2 (−0.682). Almost 73% of the effect of availability on satisfaction is indirect via anchors' work-home conflict. The indirect effect of availability via partners' work-home conflict was not statistically significant. The effect of work contact on partners' satisfaction with work-life balance was also mediated by work-home conflict (Table 4, Model 5). The direct effect of work contact was not statistically significant, and the effect size (−0.288) was smaller compared to Model 2 (−0.418). However, the indirect effect (−0.024) of work contact via work-home conflict was not statistically significant. Hypothesis 4 is confirmed: Individuals who were available in leisure time were less satisfied with work-life balance due to their work-home conflict. There is also empirical evidence that work contact also impairs partners' satisfaction with work-life balance mainly because of their work-home conflict.

Table 3 Linear Regression for Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Anchor's work contact in leisure time	−0.354*	−0.238	−0.187	−0.150	0.032	0.072
	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.16)
Anchor's availability in leisure time		−0.682**	−0.542*	−0.513*	−0.194	−0.100
		(0.26)	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.25)
High time pressure (anchor)			−0.527**			−0.258+
			(0.16)			(0.15)
High work load (anchor)			−0.721***			−0.345*
			(0.17)			(0.16)
Anchor's work hours				−0.063***		−0.037***
				(0.01)		(0.01)
Partner's work hours				−0.002		0.001
				(0.01)		(0.01)
Anchor's work-home conflict					−6.903***	−5.903***
					(0.57)	(0.58)
Partner's work-home conflict					−0.891*	−0.963*
					(0.40)	(0.41)
Constant	7.300*	7.418*	7.447*	10.113***	7.925**	9.343***
	(2.98)	(2.96)	(2.93)	(3.02)	(2.58)	(2.65)
R^2	0.10	0.11	0.17	0.15	0.27	0.30
N	790	790	790	790	790	790

Data source: 2015/2016 German Family Panel (pairfam).

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Note. OLS regression models; robust standard errors on parenthesis; unweighted; dependent variable: satisfaction with work–life balance.

Controls: status groups; public sector; fixed-term contract; (partner's) individual monthly net labor income, (partner's) age, (partner's) age squared, (partner's) migration background, (partner's) eastern German origin, (partner's) years of education, annual net household income, partners' relative scope of working time, age of youngest child, number of children, anchors' sex, sample.

+$p < .10$ *$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

Table 4 Linear Regression for Partner's Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Anchor's work contact in leisure time	−0.396*	−0.418*	−0.416*	−0.391+	−0.286	−0.288
	(0.20)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Anchor's availability in leisure time		0.130	0.170	0.127	−0.018	0.002
		(0.30)	(0.31)	(0.30)	(0.24)	(0.24)
High time pressure (anchor)			−0.346+			−0.231
			(0.20)			(0.17)
High work load (anchor)			0.036			−0.017
			(0.21)			(0.18)
Anchor's work hours				−0.005		−0.001
				(0.01)		(0.01)
Partner's work hours				−0.068***		−0.015
				(0.01)		(0.01)
Anchor's work-home conflict					−0.675	−0.452
					(0.61)	(0.63)
Partner's work-home conflict					−7.658***	−7.435***
					(0.42)	(0.45)
Constant	7.628*	7.605*	7.668*	9.892**	6.080	6.656
	(3.83)	(3.83)	(3.74)	(3.76)	(3.58)	(3.57)
R^2	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.13	0.36	0.36
N	790	790	790	790	790	790

Data source: 2015/2016 German Panel Study (pairfam).

WSI

Note. OLS regression models; robust standard errors on parenthesis; unweighted; dependent variable:
 partners' satisfaction with work–life balance.

Controls: status groups, public sector, fixed-term contract, (partner's) individual monthly net labor income, (partner's) age,
(partner's) age squared, (partner's) migration background, (partner's) eastern German origin, (partner's) years of

education, annual net household income, partners' relative scope of working time; relationship status, age of youngest child,
number of children, anchor's sex, sample.

 +p <.10 *p < .05 **p <.01 ***p < .001

5 Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of the present study was to analyze whether work contact – that is, responding to work-related communications in leisure time – impairs satisfaction with work-life balance in both partners. Due to the technological developments at many workplaces, work contact in leisure time is prevalent among an increasing number of workers in various sectors and occupations. However, work contact is a boundary-spanning demand and can lead to negative work outcomes. Hence, I asked whether work contact in leisure time affected satisfaction with work-life balance on the part of individuals and their partners. Another aim of this study was to analyze whether the relationship between work contact and satisfaction with work-life balance was mediated by the (perceived) obligation to be available in leisure time. Finally, job pressure, long work hours, and work-home conflict were also taken into account as mediators of the effects of work contact and availability in leisure time on satisfaction with work-life balance.

The results indicate that work contact in leisure time is related to lower satisfaction with work-life balance in both partners, but that different mechanisms are at work. Work contact was not problematic for individuals' satisfaction with work-life balance as long as work contact was – or was perceived to be – optional and voluntary. This was not the case for their partners, for whom work contact lowered satisfaction with work-life balance, whether or not the other partner was, or felt obliged to be, available in leisure time. Hence, individuals' sense of control seems to be crucial for themselves but not for their partners. Workplace resources which can buffer individuals' job demands (Galvin/Schieman 2012; Schieman 2013) do not extend to the family members. This result contradicts the study by Westman et al. (2001), who found that individuals' sense of control also positively affected their partners. Rather, the present study indicates that what is often referred to in health research as "interested self-endangerment" (Krause et al. 2012) has crossover effects on satisfaction with work-life balance in intimate relationships. Interested self-endangerment refers to a behavior where individuals aim at career success and therefore engage in work behavior that threatens their health. Interested self-endangerment is not related to formal work arrangements such as on-call jobs, where individuals must be available for work-related communications. Rather, it is voluntary and lies in individuals' intrinsic motivation to work at the expense of their health. Therefore, these individuals do not necessarily feel dissatisfied with their work-life balance, but, as the study showed, their partners may be unhappy with their (i.e., the other's) work behavior.

The analysis revealed that work contact and availability in leisure time lowered satisfaction with work-life balance in both partners due to work-home conflict. This result supports previous findings that showed that work-related use of electronic communication devices outside regular work hours leads to work-home conflict (Boswell/Olson-Buchanan 2007; Derks/Bakker 2014; Wright et al. 2014). Work contact and availability are boundary-spanning demands, and their effect on satisfaction with work-life balance is not substantially mediated by workplace characteristics such as job pressure or work hours.

Interestingly, work contact and availability was most prevalent in the highest and the lowest occupational groups. We know from previous research that workplace resources such as autonomy and control, which help workers to deal with high job demands, are unequally distributed in the work force (Kelly/Moen 2007; Ortega 2009; Schieman 2006). Thus, work contact and availability in leisure time might impair satisfaction with work-life balance more for lower status groups than for higher status groups. Also, because of their job autonomy, higher status groups might feel less strained by work contact or availability. Moreover, the quality of work contact and availability might vary between status groups. Higher status groups are more likely to give instructions or direct work tasks in leisure time, whereas the lowest status groups are more likely to receive instructions. This might differentially affect satisfaction with work-life balance for different occupational groups. Unfortunately, the role of occupational status for the relation between work contact/availability in leisure time and satisfaction with work-life balance could not be analyzed in the present study due to data limitations. This is a major limitation of the study. Another major limitation is the fact that information on partners' work behavior and workplace characteristics were incomplete. Work contact, availability, and job pressure were not observed for partners. However, these factors might further explain the relationship between work contact, availability, and satisfaction and work-life balance. Work contact, for example, might be even more problematic if both partners responded to work-related communications in leisure time. Further data are needed that allow forms of voluntary work contact and work contact that is part of a formal work arrangement such as on-call work to be distinguished. In addition, as only cross-sectional analyses could be conducted in the present study, the results might be biased by time-invariant unobserved heterogeneity. For future research on intra-individual and crossover effects of work contact in leisure time and/or the use of electronic communication devices, more extensive dyadic panel data will be needed that allow occupational and status differences to be taken into account.

Nevertheless, the present study has taken a first step toward revealing the mechanisms and reasons for the negative effect of work contact on satisfaction with work-life balance in both partners. The results indicate that work behavior that is deleterious to health impairs partners' satisfaction with work-life balance. Occupational health and safety protection must also sensitize workers to the risks of their unhealthy work behavior for their significant others, for example their partners. The message should be that, although workers may be okay with working in leisure time, their partners may not. Rather, their partners are likely to experience conflicts between the work and the home domains and to be dissatisfied with their work-life balance, which can lead to physical and mental health problems. The more boundary-spanning demands exist, and the more the boundaries between the work and home domains become permeable, the greater the need for occupational health and safety protection that takes into account the work-life balance outcomes not only of workers but also of their partners and other family members.

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Appendix

Table A 1 Linear Regression for Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Anchor's work contact in leisure time	-0.354*	-0.238	-0.187	-0.150	0.032	0.072
	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.16)
Anchor's availability in leisure time		-0.682**	-0.542*	-0.513*	-0.194	-0.100
		(0.26)	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.25)
High time pressure (anchor)			-0.527**			-0.258+
			(0.16)			(0.15)
High work load (anchor)			-0.721***			-0.345*
			(0.17)			(0.16)
Anchor's work hours				-0.063***		-0.037***
				(0.01)		(0.01)
Partner's work hours				-0.002		0.001
				(0.01)		(0.01)
Anchor's work-home conflict					-6.903***	-5.903***
					(0.57)	(0.58)
Partner's work-home conflict					-0.891*	-0.963*
					(0.40)	(0.41)
Occupational groups						
Managers	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
Professionals	0.170	0.098	0.144	0.251	-0.098	0.048
	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.33)	(0.35)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Technicians, associate professionals,	0.214	0.154	0.084	0.258	-0.013	0.048
	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.28)	(0.28)
Clerical support workers	0.109	0.026	-0.040	0.041	-0.186	-0.160
	(0.41)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.36)	(0.36)
Services and sales workers	-0.229	-0.257	-0.311	-0.187	-0.355	-0.322
	(0.39)	(0.38)	(0.37)	(0.38)	(0.33)	(0.33)
Craft and related trades workers	0.051	-0.017	-0.049	0.151	-0.143	-0.031
	(0.41)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.41)	(0.35)	(0.35)
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	-0.317	-0.412	-0.558	-0.154	-0.722	-0.585
	(0.55)	(0.56)	(0.55)	(0.55)	(0.47)	(0.48)
Elementary occupations	-0.472	-0.515	-0.488	-0.606	-0.749+	-0.749+
	(0.49)	(0.48)	(0.49)	(0.48)	(0.44)	(0.44)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Public sector	-0.079	-0.050	-0.081	-0.005	0.052	0.060
	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.29)	(0.28)	(0.26)	(0.26)
Fixed-term contract	-0.243	-0.245	-0.187	-0.163	-0.061	-0.009
	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.19)
Anchor's monthly net individual income	-0.000**	-0.000**	-0.000+	-0.000	-0.000*	-0.000
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Partner's monthly net individual income	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Anchor's years of education	-0.021	-0.028	-0.030	-0.037	0.007	-0.004
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Partner's years of education	0.001	0.002	-0.010	-0.010	0.018	0.004
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Female anchor	-0.196	-0.236	-0.165	-0.306	-0.257	-0.274
	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.22)	(0.22)
Anchor's age	-0.068	-0.070	0.010	-0.083	0.012	0.038
	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Anchor's age squared	0.001	0.001	-0.000	0.001	-0.000	-0.001
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Partner's age	-0.015	-0.011	-0.055	-0.018	-0.046	-0.070
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Partner's age squared	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.001
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Anchor's migration background	-0.125	-0.124	-0.096	-0.102	-0.095	-0.075
	(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.21)	(0.20)
Partner's migration background	0.359	0.363	0.247	0.315	0.202	0.137
	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.29)	(0.29)
Anchor's Eastern German origin	-0.444	-0.414	-0.409	-0.135	-0.404	-0.249
	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.26)	(0.26)
Partner's Eastern German origin	-0.100	-0.082	0.070	-0.047	-0.165	-0.062
	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.25)	(0.24)
Relation between respective working times						
Both partners full-time	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
Anchor full-time, partner other arrangement	0.327	0.308	0.195	0.359	0.193	0.201
	(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.22)	(0.24)	(0.21)	(0.22)
Partner full-time, anchor other arrangement	0.928***	0.944***	0.845***	0.206	0.756**	0.297
	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.24)	(0.28)	(0.23)	(0.26)
Both partners other arrangement	0.420	0.495	0.440	-0.015	0.518	0.214
	(0.37)	(0.37)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.35)	(0.35)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Relationship status						
Living apart together	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
Cohabiting	1.314**	1.326**	1.137**	1.501**	1.090**	1.142**
	(0.46)	(0.44)	(0.42)	(0.46)	(0.39)	(0.39)
Married	1.367**	1.372**	1.255**	1.434**	1.118**	1.143**
	(0.46)	(0.44)	(0.41)	(0.46)	(0.39)	(0.38)
Monthly net household income	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Age of youngest child in months	0.002	0.002	0.001	0.002	0.000	0.001
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Number of children						
No children	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
One child	-0.143	-0.160	-0.125	-0.335	-0.123	-0.216
	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.29)	(0.27)	(0.27)
Two children	-0.504+	-0.522+	-0.516+	-0.705*	-0.296	-0.428+
	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.26)	(0.26)
Three and more children	-0.413	-0.431	-0.480	-0.587+	-0.064	-0.230
	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.29)	(0.28)
Constant	7.300*	7.418*	7.447*	10.113***	7.925**	9.343***
	(2.98)	(2.96)	(2.93)	(3.02)	(2.58)	(2.65)
R-squared	0.10	0.11	0.17	0.15	0.27	0.30
N	790	790	790	790	790	790

Data source: 2015/2016 German Family Panel (pairfam).

WSI

Note: OLS regression models; robust standard errors on parenthesis; unweighted; dependent variable: satisfaction with work-life balance, controls: anchors' sex, sample.

 +p < .10 *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

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Anchor's work hours				-0.063***		-0.037***
				(0.01)		(0.01)
Partner's work hours				-0.002		0.001
				(0.01)		(0.01)
Anchor's work-home conflict					-6.903***	-5.903***
					(0.57)	(0.58)
Partner's work-home conflict					-0.891*	-0.963*
					(0.40)	(0.41)
Occupational groups (anchor)						
Managers	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
Professionals	-0.290	-0.276	-0.235	-0.323	-0.240	-0.219
	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Technicians, associate professionals,	-0.652+	-0.641+	-0.649+	-0.725*	-0.468	-0.495
	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.29)	(0.29)
Clerical support staff	-1.206**	-1.190**	-1.187**	-1.194**	-0.546	-0.559
	(0.44)	(0.45)	(0.45)	(0.43)	(0.36)	(0.36)
Services and sales workers	-0.270	-0.265	-0.269	-0.309	-0.206	-0.219
	(0.43)	(0.43)	(0.43)	(0.43)	(0.38)	(0.37)
Craft and related trades workers	-0.975*	-0.962*	-0.969*	-1.079*	-0.865*	-0.896*
	(0.46)	(0.46)	(0.46)	(0.47)	(0.39)	(0.39)
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	-0.985+	-0.967	-0.955	-0.993+	-0.762	-0.764
	(0.59)	(0.59)	(0.59)	(0.56)	(0.49)	(0.49)
Elementary occupations	-0.750	-0.741	-0.738	-0.709	-0.391	-0.383
	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.46)	(0.46)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Public sector	-0.370	-0.375	-0.390	-0.441	-0.040	-0.077
	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.35)	(0.34)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Fixed-term contract	-0.105	-0.105	-0.094	-0.101	-0.045	-0.042
	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.22)	(0.22)
Monthly net individual income	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Partner's monthly net individual income	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Anchor's years of education	-0.067	-0.066	-0.066	-0.048	-0.032	-0.030
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Partner's years of education	0.010	0.010	0.006	-0.002	0.051	0.043
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Female anchor	-0.479+	-0.472+	-0.469	-0.289	-0.624*	-0.573*
	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.29)	(0.28)	(0.25)	(0.25)
Anchor's age	-0.128	-0.128	-0.116	-0.112	0.192	0.196
	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.19)
Anchor's age squared	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.000	-0.003	-0.003
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Partner's age	0.135	0.134	0.131	0.116	-0.015	-0.018
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Partner's age squared	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	0.000	0.000
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Anchor's migration background	0.334	0.334	0.339	0.408	0.362	0.381
	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.26)	(0.22)	(0.22)
Partner's migration background	-0.367	-0.368	-0.399	-0.376	-0.504	-0.522
	(0.39)	(0.39)	(0.40)	(0.41)	(0.34)	(0.35)
Anchor's eastern German origin	-0.106	-0.112	-0.124	0.204	-0.079	-0.016
	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.32)	(0.29)	(0.29)
Partner's eastern German origin	0.196	0.192	0.251	0.227	0.074	0.130
	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.30)	(0.28)	(0.28)
Relation between respective working times						
Both partners full-time	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
Anchor full-time, partner other arrangement	0.798**	0.801**	0.793**	0.163	0.309	0.171
	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.25)	(0.25)
Partner full-time, anchor other arrangement	0.174	0.171	0.178	0.175	0.278	0.281
	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.32)	(0.25)	(0.27)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Relation between respective working times						
Both partners other arrangement	0.441	0.427	0.438	-0.038	0.843*	0.731
	(0.43)	(0.43)	(0.43)	(0.43)	(0.36)	(0.38)
Relationship status						
Living apart together	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
Cohabiting	0.271	0.269	0.208	0.352	0.540	0.513
	(0.60)	(0.60)	(0.59)	(0.61)	(0.50)	(0.50)
Married	0.637	0.636	0.594	0.613	0.851	0.817
	(0.61)	(0.61)	(0.60)	(0.62)	(0.50)	(0.50)
Monthly net household income	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Age of youngest child in months	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.003	0.002	0.002
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Number of children						
No children	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
One child	-0.383	-0.380	-0.370	-0.548	-0.637*	-0.661*
	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.32)	(0.32)
Two children	-0.340	-0.337	-0.346	-0.583+	-0.417	-0.483
	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.27)	(0.28)
Three and more children	0.206	0.210	0.187	-0.128	-0.131	-0.225
	(0.38)	(0.39)	(0.38)	(0.39)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Constant	7.628*	7.605*	7.668*	9.892**	6.080	6.656
	(3.83)	(3.83)	(3.74)	(3.76)	(3.58)	(3.57)
R-squared	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.13	0.36	0.36
N	790	790	790	790	790	790

Data source: 2015/2016 German Family Panel (pairfam). **WSI**

Note: OLS regression models; robust standard errors on parenthesis; unweighted; dependent variable:
partner's satisfaction with work-life balance; controls: anchors' sex, sample.

+p < .10 *p <.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < .001