The effect of work arrangements on perception of work-family balance
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This research used a nationally representative sample of women and men in dual-earner families with children from the 1998 and 2005 time-use cycles of Statistics Canada’s General Social Survey. The work extends knowledge on the effect of the use of three work arrangements: flexible schedules, shift work and self-employment, on respondents’ reported satisfaction with their work-family balance. Results of regression analysis indicated that work arrangements strongly affected work-family balance and did so differently for women and men. For women, some control over the work schedule significantly improved the perception of balance. For men, both self-employment and shift work were negatively related to reported work-family balance. The results support a flexible approach by policy-makers and employers in formulating workplace policies that assist employees in achieving satisfaction with the balance between their family and work responsibilities.

Keywords: work and family; work-family balance; flexible schedules; shift work; self-employment; time use

As Canadian families continue to manage both work and family responsibilities and combine increasing paid work hours with unpaid work such as care for children,
disabled or ill relatives and friends, the ‘struggle to juggle’ is all too familiar. In addition to increasing demands on their time, wages have remained relatively stagnant through the past decade, encouraging workers to increase their paid hours and reducing the amount of discretionary income available for the purchase of convenience goods and services. Achieving balance between work and family life continues to be an elusive goal, and the consequences of trying to meet competing demands can be severe for both families and employers. Consequently, it is not surprising that individuals, families, and employers are interested in finding ways to minimise the experience of conflict. One approach to striking a better balance is by using work arrangements, such as flexible schedules, home-based work, shift work, self-employment, and part-time work, which may facilitate a family’s ability to manage its responsibilities.

The purpose of this research is to examine the effect of three work arrangements – use of flexible schedules, shift work and self-employment – on reported satisfaction with the balance between the work and family lives of Canadian women and men in dual-earner families with children. This work contributes to the literature in three ways: First, by examining actual use of, as opposed to access to, these arrangements; second by extending previous Canadian work; and third, by comparing nationally representative data from two points in time. The results have implications both for families seeking to improve their work-family balance and for employers and policy-makers who are interested in creating effective initiatives that foster work-family balance and help minimise the conflict experienced by their employees.

**Literature review**

Work-family balance is a concept that is frequently explored in the literature in a variety of disciplines. Although there is agreement on the importance of identifying what contributes to balance, there is little agreement on what balance means (Chang, McDonald, & Burton, 2010; Maertz & Boyar, 2011). Work-family balance has been defined subjectively as ‘harmony or equilibrium between work and family domains’ (Chang et al., 2010, p. 2382), and the perception of work-family balance can be measured on a continuum from highly balanced to highly imbalanced (Voydanoff, 2005). Other scholars have defined work-family balance as equal time, equal psychological involvement, and equal satisfaction with one’s family and work roles (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003), or simply the absence of work-family conflict. Here we adopt Voydanoff’s (2005) definition of work-family balance as a ‘global assessment that work and family resources are sufficient to meet work and family demands such that participation is effective in both domains’ (p. 825).

Individuals and families continually struggle to balance the needs and expectations of their work and family roles. Role overload – a perception that the ‘collective demands of multiple roles exceed available time and energy resources’ (Higgins, Duxbury, & Lyons, 2010, p. 847) – is common in Canadian families (Higgins, Duxbury, & Lyons, 2007). Due to the increased pressures associated with managing multiple roles, women and employees with caregiving responsibilities (e.g., child and elder care) are at higher risk for experiencing role overload and work-family conflict (Duxbury, Higgins, & Coghill, 2003). However, work-family conflict can ease as
children age, with the most intense conflict occurring while the children are very young and requiring intensive care (Craig & Sawrikar, 2009).

Although work-family balance is a concern in many countries, national context matters (Lyness & Kropf, 2005). To illustrate, although Canada is often grouped with the USA in cross-national comparisons, these countries are not identical in their outlooks nor their policy approaches. For example, policies that support working parents, such as parental leave and wage protection, are more generous in the Nordic countries than Canada, but more generous in Canada than the USA (Baker, 2006). In their review of the work-family literature published from 1999 to 2009, Bianchi and Milkie (2010) note many work-family policy studies identify the USA as ‘lagging behind’ other nations in creating family-friendly policies, a further indication of the need for country-specific research and cross-national comparisons.

Work-family conflict may be in the direction of work-to-family conflict or family-to-work conflict, with the former predominating in the literature (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). On the basis of a meta-analysis of this literature, Allen, Herst, Bruck, and Sutton (2000) identified three categories of outcomes of work-to-family conflict: work related, non-work related and health related. Work-related outcomes of work-family conflict include increased absenteeism and intention to leave and decreased work performance and commitment to the organisation (Allen et al., 2000; Higgins et al., 2010; Kelly et al., 2008), especially when the conflict originates in the workplace (Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, & Semmer, 2011). In addition to the work outcomes that focus specifically on the impacts on employee performance and behaviour, Kelly et al. (2008) also discuss the impact of work-family conflict on business outcomes that impact the organisation’s performance, such as productivity and financial performance. For example, a 2001 Canadian study estimated the direct and indirect costs of absenteeism as at least $4.5 billion annually (Higgins et al., 2007). The experience of work-family conflict also has been associated with such non work-related outcomes as lower levels of life satisfaction, marital adjustment, marital satisfaction and family satisfaction, as well as such health-related outcomes as increased psychological strain, physical symptoms such as fatigue, depression, alcohol abuse, job burnout, work-related stress (e.g., job tension) and family-related stress (e.g., family distress) (Allen et al., 2000; Higgins et al., 2007).

In order to achieve balance between the competing spheres of work and family, accommodations (Beaujot, 2000) or adaptive strategies (Gareis, Barnett, & Brennan, 2003) are often needed, and making changes to paid work is one way to adapt. Gareis and colleagues (2003) found accommodations in paid work were more likely to be made by women than men, even when women have invested years in education and training. However, the benefits of improving balance between work and family life may far outweigh the costs, with benefits extending to society: ‘Both families and communities will benefit if people have the time and energy to develop meaningful relationships with their neighbors and actively participate in the lives of their spouses and children’ (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001, p. 5).

This balance, however, seems to be elusive. In Health Canada’s 2001 National Work-Life Conflict Study, in which 10,000 employed Canadians were surveyed, just 10% of respondents provided positive commentary on their work-life balance, whereas 50% were negative (Duxbury et al., 2003). In the same study, only 4% of participants had positive comments about their employer’s role in their ability to achieve balance between work and family. Of those that made comments, a flexible
work schedule, a supportive work environment, and explicit support for work-life balance were cited as organisational initiatives that respondents found helpful in their attempts to balance these two spheres (Duxbury et al., 2003).

In the remainder of this literature review, we review the conceptual framework and consider previous research on paid and unpaid work. Because work arrangements can have a positive or negative impact on the efforts of families to balance work and family commitments and expectations, current literature on a variety of work arrangements will be explored.

**Conceptual framework**

Human ecology theory, a systems approach to the study of families, provides the orientation for this research. In this theory, family systems interact with, and are mutually dependent on, the systems in their environment (Berry, 2003; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Of particular interest here are the relationships between families and the economic environment. Beaujot (2000) and colleagues (Beaujot, Ravanera, & Burch, 2005) have elaborated on these interactions with their earning and caring framework. This framework views earning and caring as the two basic activities of families. These activities are interdependent and change with the life circumstances of families.

The emphasis on individuals as more than just employees in the paid labour force is crucial in order to better understand the complex bi-directional relationship between earning and caring roles. The interactions are not only between individuals’ paid and unpaid roles, but also between families and society. In this exchange, families participate in the paid labour force in order to support their members and society is concerned with families because they produce workers and support the paid labour force. Society, then, has a vested interest in work arrangements, employment conditions and employee work-life balance.

**Paid work and work arrangements**

Over the past 25 years, Canadian men and women have been spending more time in paid work. In 2011, the labour force participation rate of women aged 25–44 years was 82%, just 9% points lower than that of men (Statistics Canada, 2012). The rigidity of the traditional Monday to Friday, 9–5-workday provides little accommodation for the caring responsibilities of family members and lack of control for workers. Perceived control over one’s work schedule can lead to a more positive perception of work-life balance (Hayman, 2009; Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001; Kelly, Moen, & Tranby, 2011). In addition, employees who perceive the availability of flexibility and use flexible work arrangements, both formally and occasionally, have been shown to have increased engagement and longer employment with their employer (Richman, Civian, Shannon, Hill, & Brennan, 2008), and less work-life conflict (Hayman, 2009). Furthermore, employees in organisations that offer family-friendly policies, which are not federally mandated, may feel both that they are privileged and that their employer cares about them. ‘Work-family initiatives affect productivity because employees increase their effort in exchange for working in a more supportive work environment’ (Kelly et al., 2008, p. 332), which in turn helps the company reach its goals. The use of flexible schedules, shift work,
self-employment, home-based work and part-time work are all work arrangements that can introduce some measure of flexibility into the work schedule.

Flextime allows employees to choose the beginning and ending time of their days, within organisational parameters (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, Wright, & Steen, 2006) and can be either a formal policy or informal benefit (Golden, 2009). Flextime has been shown to help employees who have this option to better balance work and family life when compared to their co-workers on traditional, fixed schedules (Hayman, 2009), because schedule flexibility allows employees to arrange their schedules in ways that allow for such activities as personal appointments, being home when children arrive home from school, or completion of household labour (Noe et al., 2006), thereby reducing employees’ work pressure and work-life conflict (Russell, O’Connell, & McGinnity, 2009). However, Canadian women with and without children had similar rates of flextime use: roughly one third of women in both categories reported use of flextime (Statistics Canada, 2003). Moreover, women had lower rates of participation in flextime compared to men, perhaps because those with access to flextime were most likely to be highly educated managers and those in professional positions where men outnumber women (Statistics Canada, 2003). In addition, flextime is rarely offered across the board within an organisation and can often be distributed selectively or dispensed as a perk or benefit to employees at the discretion of a manager (Golden, 2009; Kelly & Kalev, 2006). The results suggest that women may perform work or hold positions that are less compatible with the access to flextime arrangements because women’s participation rates in flextime were lower than men’s (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Shift work can have a very different impact on the ability to manage work and family. This work arrangement may be chosen to facilitate family care of children, but research reports consistently negative health effects such as increased likelihood of obesity (Park, 2009), sleep disorders and psychological and physical illness from shift work (Lombardi, Folkard, Willetts, & Smith, 2010). Shift work has also been shown to negatively impact families and to create specific challenges with marital satisfaction, involvement in childcare and maintaining family relationships (Regehr, Dimitropoulos, Bright, George, & Henderson, 2005). Although parents working non-standard hours have been found to spend more time with their children, they spend less time with their spouse, are less involved in child-related activities, and get less sleep than parents working standard daytime hours (Wight, Raley, & Bianchi, 2008; Williams, 2008). Finally, working an irregular shift has been found to decrease men's satisfaction with work-family balance (MacDonald, Phipps, & Lethbridge, 2005; Williams, 2008).

Although shift work has been shown to have a strong negative work-to-family spillover, not all types of shift work have the same impact. In a study comparing types of shift work (e.g., evening, night, rotating and split), researchers found that rotating shift work had the highest negative spillover (Grosswald, 2003). In addition, employees working split, irregular and on-call shifts have been found to be the least satisfied with their work-family balance (Williams, 2008). The constant family schedule adjustments required by rotating shift work can cause frustration at home, may limit the employment options for the shift worker’s partner, and increase the likelihood of a traditional division of household labour (Preston, Rose, Norcliffe, & Holmes, 2000).
Self-employment is a work arrangement men and women are turning to in greater numbers. The number of Canadians, both male and female, who are self-employed has been steadily growing since 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2007) and in 2010, 16% (i.e., 2.7 million) of the Canadian workforce was self-employed (Statistics Canada, 2011). Self-employment rates are higher for women with parenting responsibilities, but women with more family responsibilities are more likely to be entering non-professional versus professional self-employment (Budig, 2006). This means that women choosing self-employment to meet family demands may be downshifting, find themselves under-employed and earning lower wages. Women moving to self-employment for professional reasons (e.g., career advancement, to bypass the glass ceiling) more closely resemble their male self-employed counterparts in earnings, advancement and involvement in household activities (Budig, 2006).

Regardless of the motivation to pursue self-employment there are advantages and disadvantages of this work arrangement. Although self-employment may promise more freedom and independence, it is also associated with longer work hours, more work-family conflict, and a higher risk of stress compared to working for an organisation (Parasuraman, Purohit, & Godshalk, 1996). Hughes (2003) found that the majority of women entered self-employment for autonomy, to create their own work environment, to challenge themselves, and to focus on work they found to be meaningful, results consistent with earlier findings that, compared with traditional employees, the self-employed experience more freedom, independence and self-fulfilment (Parasuraman et al., 1996). On the other hand, these women were disappointed with the time pressure (McLellan & Uys, 2008), lack of job security, and lower incomes (Hughes, 2003), but were satisfied with their work.

Flexibility in work arrangements can also extend to the location of work. Home-based work is ‘the broad term for doing one’s work away from a centrally located office’ (Noe et al., 2006, p. 90). The proportion of Canadians who work from home increased from 17 to 19% between 2000 and 2008 (Turcotte, 2010). The most common reasons for working at home were that it was a requirement of the job (25%) or that their working conditions at home were better (23%), whereas just 9% reported they worked from home to balance care responsibilities (Turcotte, 2010). Telework may afford employees an increased ability to balance work and family obligations, as well as choosing their most productive times to work (possibly late at night or early morning) (Baruch, 2000) or working around their children’s daily schedule (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson, & Andrey, 2008). The three groups that are most likely to work from home are women, those who are married, and employees with children (Golden, 2008). Mothers often make the transition to home-based work in an attempt to both work in the paid labour force while also minding children. However, Hilbrecht and colleagues (2008) found that, even though teleworking mothers with school-aged children found working from home offered the flexibility they needed and improved their quality of life, they still found themselves bearing the primary responsibility for caregiving and housework with little to no personal or free time.

Although home-based work such as telecommuting is often associated with an improved work-life balance, Madsen (2003) found that employees who worked from home two days a week actually had increased levels of conflict between time spent on paid and unpaid work compared to those employees who worked in a conventional office. In fact, when work and home take place in the same space this can aggravate
the conflict between the two spheres (Berke, 2003; Russell et al., 2009). Family-run businesses can face the same concern where the two worlds are inextricably linked, and the boundary lines between work and family are blurred (Duncan, Zuiker, & Heck, 2000), which makes achieving balance an even greater challenge. However, short-term teleworking can be an alternative to dropping out of the workforce altogether when faced with family or life demands that a traditional work arrangement will not accommodate (Baruch, 2000).

Part-time employment can also be an important work arrangement. Dropping from full- to part-time employment can be a strategic decision to improve balance between work and life (Moen & Sweet, 2004; Russell et al., 2009); however, there can be both positive and negative consequences to this decision. Societally, women continue to be seen as predominantly responsible for childcare and managing the interface between work and family; not surprisingly, women then are most often the partners who drop to part-time status to support family needs (Moen & Sweet, 2004). Dropping to part-time employment has been associated with better work-family balance (Peters, den Dulk, & van der Lippe, 2009), increased schedule flexibility (Golden, 2008), improved time management, and life satisfaction, especially for women (Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000), but it comes at a cost: career progress, life-time earnings, pension eligibility, benefits and general economic well-being can be negatively affected (Moen & Sweet, 2004; Tomlinson, 2006; Townson, 2005). Research shows that women in part-time employment accept jobs of lower quality and with lower pay and are often over-qualified for their jobs (Statistics Canada, 2003). Therefore, women employed part-time may see an improved ability to balance by keeping their foot in the professional door, maintaining their skills, and contributing some income; however, they may find themselves professionally stagnant, still being mainly responsible for childcare and household labour, but with less relational power (Tomlinson, 2006).

Reported work-family balance is also affected by the enjoyment of work – both paid and unpaid. Frederick and Fast (2001) found that both employed women and men reported substantial increases in work-family balance and overall life-satisfaction if they enjoyed their paid work. Women also reported higher satisfaction with work-family balance if they enjoyed domestic work.

Unpaid work: household work and care activities

The rich literature on unpaid work emphasises the importance of considering time in household work and care activities when considering perceptions of work-family balance. Over the past two decades, the total time spent in work (paid plus unpaid) has increased, with little difference between Canadian women and men in total hours worked (Marshall, 2006). The gender differences lie in the distribution of paid and unpaid work. Although men have increased their participation in unpaid domestic work and women’s involvement has declined slightly over the years, women perform an average of 4.3 hours per day of unpaid work compared with 2.7 hours per day for men (Beaujot & Liu, 2007). Thus, even though women benefit from involvement in paid labour, they suffer more stress than men with regard to juggling paid and unpaid work. Moreover, women continue to bear primary responsibility for managing the family schedule. The gendered division of household labour increases with marriage and the arrival of children (Coltrane, 2000; Marshall, 2011), and
women are more likely than men to shoulder accommodations to changes over the life course in the family’s needs for paid and unpaid work (Beaujot & Liu, 2007).

Employees with children face an additional challenge, balancing the needs of their children and their employer, in addition to their own needs and desires and are more likely to report work and family conflict (Zukewich, 2003). Having children creates a point of transition in the paid work experiences of both men and women. Decisions regarding childcare can be hard, and the choices families make are guided by their beliefs and values and the availability of acceptable childcare (Rose & Elicker, 2010), all of which can influence the workforce participation of women. Women often experience a work interruption, whereas men may increase their hours at work to compensate for loss of their partners’ income (Beaujot, 2000). For women, the responsibilities of childcare can lead to accommodation strategies, such as dropping to part-time employment or leaving employment altogether (Hill, Martinson, & Ferris, 2004). In addition, mothers and fathers both spend more time on unpaid work than the childless, which leads to an intensifying of the time crunch for parents (Fast & Frederick, 1998).

Children are not the only recipients of care; individuals and employees provide informal care for a variety of people: disabled or ill relatives, friends and seniors (Arksey, 2002). Recent data show that of the 3.8 million Canadians who provided care to adults with a disability or a chronic health problem, 2.2 million were employed and half were also caring for children 15 years and younger (Fast et al., 2010). Elder care comes at a price, both economic and non-economic. Economic costs to the caregiver include out-of-pocket expenses, unpaid labour and employment-related costs (e.g., loss of work hours or benefits) (Fast, Williamson, & Keating, 1999; Lero, Keating, Fast, Joseph, & Cook, 2007). Non-economic costs of caregiving are impacts on the caregiver that decrease well-being or quality of life (Fast et al., 1999). Therefore, balancing informal caregiving responsibilities with family and employment demands can cause considerable stress. Both providing elder care and experiencing the costs of providing this care will likely become more common as Canada’s population continues to age.

In summary, increased demands from paid work and family life mean work-family balance is a major concern for many families. Changing work arrangements is a potential means to accommodate competing demands, but the evidence as to which arrangements are most effective in assisting families is mixed, and few studies examine the effect of work arrangements while accounting for time in paid and unpaid work. This research extends previous work on the 1998 General Social Survey (GSS) data (MacDonald et al. 2005) by examining the effect of work arrangements on perceived work-family balance using data from 1998 to 2005.

Previous literature has identified dual-earner parents as the demographic group most susceptible to time crunch given their multiple roles and demands on their time; therefore, this study focuses on this group to answer the following research question: Holding constant respondents’ time spent in earning and caring activities and individual and family characteristics, do work arrangements significantly affect reported work-family balance in dual-earner Canadian families? On the basis of human ecology theory and the earning and caring framework, work-family balance is seen to be affected by individual characteristics, such as gender; family characteristics, such as presence of children in the home; resources, such as household income and the labour of a spouse; time spent in earning and caring
activities, and economic system characteristics, such as work arrangements. Based on the review of the literature, we expect use of flexible schedules to be positively associated with work-family balance and use of shift work to be negatively associated with work-family balance for both women and men. Given the mixed results in the literature, we do not predict a direction of association for self-employment.

Method

Data

A sample of employed Canadians aged 18–64 years in dual-earner families with children was selected from each of the 1998 and 2005 cycles of the GSS, an annual survey conducted Statistics Canada. The GSS is designed to collect data on current and emerging social issues, and the central content of the survey is cycled. In both the 1998 and 2005 cycles, time use is the focal content of the GSS. Detailed measures of time use are collected from a stratified random sample of households in the ten provinces. One randomly selected respondent, aged 15 years or older, in each sampled household is asked to provide detailed information on his or her time use for a 24-hour recall day as well as information on socioeconomic characteristics and well-being. Information is collected via computer assisted telephone interviewing, and data collection occurs over all days of the week over the calendar year in order to capture daily and seasonal variation in time use. In the 1998 survey, the response rate was 77.6% with data collected from 10,749 of 13,860 eligible households; in 2005 the response rate was lower, at 58.6%, but data were collected on a larger number of respondents (19,567) as the number of eligible households had increased to 33,470 (Bechard & Marchand, 2006; Statistics Canada, n.d.).

Dependent variable

The dependent variable, satisfaction with work-family balance, was measured with a dichotomous variable where one equalled satisfaction and zero equalled dissatisfaction.

Independent variables

The models contained independent variables on three work arrangements: flexible schedules, shift work and self-employment. The models also contained independent variables to control for the respondent’s education, enjoyment of paid and unpaid work, household income, age of the youngest child, time in paid and unpaid work and spouse or partner’s paid work.

Respondent’s level of education was measured with three dummy variables: a bachelor’s degree or higher, some post-secondary education and a high school diploma or less education (the omitted category).

Respondents were asked to rate their enjoyment of paid work and their enjoyment of household work on likert-type scales. Their responses were used to create two variables, enjoyment of paid work and enjoyment of household work, where enjoying the work was coded one and not enjoying the work was coded zero.
Household income was reported in ranges that varied in size, thus the respondent’s income was recoded to the midpoint of the range. A continuous variable for age of the youngest child (18 years of age or younger) in the respondent’s household was measured in years.

The data-sets contain both detailed measures of respondents’ reported time use over the previous 24-hour period and estimated time spent in some activities over the previous week. A previous study of the effect of work arrangements on stress and satisfaction with balance using the 1998 GSS data utilised the weekly estimates (MacDonald et al., 2005); we use the variables from the recall day. Both measures have advantages and disadvantages. Often people are more likely to report having spent time in an activity during the previous week than during the previous day, but these weekly estimates can be inaccurate to the extent respondents have more difficulty recalling how much time was spent over 7 days last week than they do with a prompted recall of the previous 24 hours. The 24-hour recall data will be more accurate, but the particular day recalled may not be a typical one for the respondent. However, we would expect atypical days, for example, days on which the respondent stayed home to care for a sick child or days on which the respondent worked overtime, to average out over the large sample of respondents in the analyses. For this research, time in paid work and time in unpaid work, that is, time in care of household adults and time in care of non household adults, were continuous variables taken from the 24-hour recall data. Due to multi-collinearity, we included continuous measures of time in care of adults and the previously mentioned variable of age of the youngest child to control for caregiving demands, rather than a measure of time spent in household work.1

Two variables controlled for the spouse or partner’s work. A continuous variable measured the respondent’s estimate of the spouse’s time in paid work, and a dichotomous variable coded one if the spouse was employed part-time (30 or less hours per week) and zero if the spouse was employed full-time (more than 30 hours per week) were included in the model.

The respondent’s work arrangements consisted of three dichotomous variables: having a flexible schedule, that is, a schedule that allowed the respondent to choose the time at which the work day begins and ends, shift work and self-employment. For both flexible schedule and self-employment, a code of one equalled the respondent had the work arrangement. Shift work was coded one if the respondent worked anything other than a regular daytime shift and zero otherwise. Kelly and colleagues (2008) note there are inconsistent results in the literature on the role of work-family policies due to a focus on the availability of these policies, as opposed to their use. Here we use information on use of these work arrangements. Although information on the respondent’s use of home-based and part-time work were available, these data could not be used in the multivariate models due to multi-collinearity with the other work arrangements.

Analysis

Because the dependent variable was dichotomous, logistic regression analysis was used to determine the effect of work arrangements on reported satisfaction with work-family balance for this sample of dual-earner families with children. As noted previously, multi-collinearity existed in the data, a problem encountered in previous
research on work arrangements using the 1998 GSS data (MacDonald et al., 2005). After examining the bivariate correlations, we fit the best models for 1998 and 2005, while controlling for individual and household characteristics. Equations for women and men were estimated separately as there was no reason to assume that the same set of variables would explain reported satisfaction with work-family balance for both women and men. All analyses were weighted to be representative of the population in the 10 provinces. Descriptive characteristics of the sample are reported in Tables 1 and 2.

The use of work arrangements by dual-earner Canadian families with children changed over the eight-year period covered by this research. The use of flexible schedules rose between 1998 and 2005; however, men used this work arrangement more than women in both years (e.g., 48.5% for men compared to 44.4% for women in 2005) (Table 1), which supports previous findings that women often have less access to flextime (Golden, 2008). In contrast, there was a drop in participants reporting employment in shift work, although more men participated in this work arrangement than women in both 1998 and 2005. Similarly, higher proportions of men in both years (21.1% in 1998 and 25.6% in 2005) reported being self-employed compared to women (11.7% in 1998, 15.8% in 2005), and the changes in rates of self-employment were small. Finally, similar proportions of women and men reported being satisfied with their work-family balance, and the proportion reporting satisfaction increased from 1998 to 2005. In 1998, roughly 65% of both men and women responded that they were satisfied with their work-family balance; in 2005, 70.7% of female respondents reported being satisfied compared to 77.6% of male respondents.

Reported household incomes were high and the average age of the youngest child ranged from just over eight years in 1998 in families of male respondents to just over nine years in 2005 in families of female respondents, indicating that respondents tended to be relatively more affluent, on average, than the Canadian population and to have older children (Table 2). Time in paid work rose for men between 1998 and 2005 and remained constant for women; however, men consistently spent more hours than women in paid work (e.g., 7.6 hours for men compared to 5.7 hours per day for women in 2005) (Table 2).

Results

Work-family balance in 2005

In 2005, women’s satisfaction with their work-family balance was significantly associated with the amount of time spent in paid work, educational attainment, household income, enjoyment of paid and domestic work and having a flexible schedule (Table 3). With every additional minute of paid work, women were marginally less likely to report being satisfied with their work-family balance. Women who had some post-secondary education and those who held a bachelor’s degree or higher were much less likely than those with a high school diploma or less to report being satisfied. Although household income explained a significant portion of the variance in the model, it marginally decreased women’s odds of being satisfied with work-family balance. Women who enjoyed domestic work had 60% higher odds of being satisfied than those who did not, and in the most dramatic result,
those who enjoyed their paid work were more than eight times more likely to be satisfied with their work-family balance than those who did not. With respect to work arrangements, having a flexible schedule had a strong association with work-family balance: Women with flexible schedules had 75% higher odds of being satisfied with their work-family balance than those who did not.

Table 1. Counts and frequencies for categorical model variables, 1998 and 2005.

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<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse employed part time</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible schedule</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift work</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-based work</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time work</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with work-family balance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Descriptive statistics for continuous model variables, 1998 and 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women (n = 458)</td>
<td>Men (n = 560)</td>
<td>Women (n = 552)</td>
<td>Men (n = 686)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income</td>
<td>71,481.99</td>
<td>36,114.22</td>
<td>75,129.05</td>
<td>35,675.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of youngest child</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>8.29</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in paid work (minutes)</td>
<td>341.57</td>
<td>265.64</td>
<td>441.23</td>
<td>300.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in care of household adults (minutes/day)</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>26.46</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>29.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in care of non household adults (minutes/day)</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>31.03</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>21.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse’s time in paid work (minutes/day)</td>
<td>43.17</td>
<td>16.13</td>
<td>33.57</td>
<td>11.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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As was the case for women, men’s satisfaction with their work-family balance was significantly associated with educational attainment, the amount of time spent in paid work, and enjoyment of paid work (Table 3). The work arrangements of shift work and self-employment were also significant for men. Having some post-secondary education decreased the odds of being satisfied with work-family balance by 41% and having a bachelor’s degree or more education decreased the odds by 51%. Each additional minute in paid work was associated with a marginal decrease in the odds of satisfaction. The odds that a man will consider his work-family balance as satisfying were over six times higher for men who enjoyed their paid work compared to those who did not. Shift work and self-employment both decreased the odds of satisfaction with work-family balance, and did so by 45% and 48%, respectively.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some post-secondary education</td>
<td>0.495***</td>
<td>0.572*</td>
<td>0.374***</td>
<td>0.594*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree or higher</td>
<td>0.670</td>
<td>0.467**</td>
<td>0.476**</td>
<td>0.489**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment of paid work</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>8.318***</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>6.545***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment of household work</td>
<td>1.615**</td>
<td>1.595**</td>
<td>1.300</td>
<td>1.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income</td>
<td>0.998</td>
<td>0.991***</td>
<td>1.005</td>
<td>0.981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of youngest child</td>
<td>1.023</td>
<td>1.015</td>
<td>1.017</td>
<td>1.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in paid work</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.999**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.999***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in care of household adults</td>
<td>1.017*</td>
<td>1.008</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in care of non household adults</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1.004</td>
<td>1.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse’s time in paid work</td>
<td>0.994</td>
<td>1.010</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse employed part-time</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1.343</td>
<td>0.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Schedule</td>
<td>1.100</td>
<td>1.752**</td>
<td>0.883</td>
<td>1.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift work</td>
<td>0.889</td>
<td>1.328</td>
<td>0.490***</td>
<td>0.552***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>1.870</td>
<td>0.680</td>
<td>0.683</td>
<td>0.518***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.926**</td>
<td>0.755</td>
<td>3.022***</td>
<td>2.287*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox &amp; Snell $R^2$</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$N$</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.10; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01.

As was the case for women, men’s satisfaction with their work-family balance was significantly associated with educational attainment, the amount of time spent in paid work, and enjoyment of paid work (Table 3). The work arrangements of shift work and self-employment were also significant for men. Having some post-secondary education decreased the odds of being satisfied with work-family balance by 41% and having a bachelor’s degree or more education decreased the odds by 51%. Each additional minute in paid work was associated with a marginal decrease in the odds of satisfaction. The odds that a man will consider his work-family balance as satisfying were over six times higher for men who enjoyed their paid work compared to those who did not. Shift work and self-employment both decreased the odds of satisfaction with work-family balance, and did so by 45% and 48%, respectively.

### Work-family balance in 1998

For women, satisfaction with work-family balance was significantly associated with education, enjoyment of household work, and time spent caring for household adults (Table 3). Women with some post-secondary education were less likely to be satisfied with their work-family balance than women who had a high school diploma or less education. Women who enjoyed household work were 62% more likely to be satisfied with their work-family balance than their counterparts who did not enjoy household work. Time spent in care of household adults also made a difference for women, with an additional minute spent in such care increasing satisfaction with work-family balance by just under 2%.
In 1998, higher levels of education and working shifts were associated with less work-family balance for men (Table 3). Men with some post-secondary education were 63% less likely, and those with a bachelor’s degree or more were 52% less likely to be satisfied with their work-family balance than those with a high school diploma or less education. Men who worked non-standard shifts were half as likely to be satisfied with their work-family balance as those who worked a regular schedule.

Discussion
The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between the use of three work arrangements – flexible schedules, shift work and self-employment – on reported satisfaction with the balance between work and family life among Canadians in dual-earner families with children. The study contributes to the literature by examining use, instead of availability, of these work arrangements, extending previous Canadian research on the role of work arrangements, and comparing nationally representative data at two points in time.

Our expectation that use of flexible schedules would be positively associated with the perception of balance between work and family life was confirmed only for women in 2005. Having a flexible schedule increased the odds of being satisfied with work-family balance by 75% for these women in 2005. Although women may not have access to flextime as frequently as men, it appears that for those women who are able to control the start and end of their day, this control has a sizable positive impact on how they perceive the balance between their work and family life. This result may indicate that employers who offer flexible scheduling, when appropriate and possible, may make life a little easier on the mothers in their workforce. However, in order for men or women to use such policies, managers must be well informed about, explicit in their support for, and facilitate on behalf of, their employees’ usage of the policies available (Kelly et al., 2008). The literature shows that such managerial support benefits the organisation. Employees who feel satisfied with their work and family balance because of a benefit offered by their employers, such as flextime, will likely be less likely to leave and perhaps be willing to put in extra effort (Kelly et al., 2011; Richman et al., 2008; Scandura & Lankau, 1997), while at the same time producing cost savings at the organisational level by minimising the costs associated with turnover (Golden, 2009).

Interestingly, having a flexible schedule was not significantly associated with satisfaction with the balance between work and family life for men in dual-earner families with children. This result is particularly interesting because men used flextime at higher rates than women. Perhaps flextime is a more meaningful work arrangement for those who hold the position of primary caregiver. That is, since mothers are still seen by themselves and society as the parent predominantly responsible for caregiving, and most often are the parent who coordinates the schedules of other family members, they may be the group that has the most to gain from flexibility in their own schedules. If so, flextime would have a greater impact on a mother’s perception of balance between work and family responsibilities.

Our expectation that shift work would be negatively associated with work-family balance was confirmed for men, but not for women. In both 1998 and 2005, men working non-standard shifts, that is, all shift types other than regular day shift,
were much more likely to report dissatisfaction with the balance between their work and family lives; this result supports previous findings by MacDonald and colleagues (2005). The perceived imbalance due to shift work is of concern for men, because of the negative implications shift work has on personal health and family wellness (Lombardi et al., 2010).

As noted earlier, large numbers of Canadian men and women are turning to self-employment (Statistics Canada, 2011). However, Loscocco (1997) found that self-employed women spent more time on family responsibilities whereas self-employed men spent more time on paid work, which may explain our findings that self-employed men were much more likely to report a lack of satisfaction with the balance between their work and family lives. This result may be due to a difference in what motivates some men and women to become entrepreneurs. As noted earlier, some women may be turning to self-employment as a means of accommodating family demands (e.g., to cutback hours) (Budig, 2006), whereas proportionally more men than women may be turning to self-employment for professional reasons, leading to increased hours in paid work, therefore decreasing their perceived balance.

Enjoyment of paid and unpaid work and educational attainment were significant in more than one equation. Not surprisingly, enjoying domestic work had a positive association with satisfaction with work-family balance for women but not for men. We find, as did Frederick and Fast (2001), that if women enjoyed their household tasks, they were more likely to report feeling balance. However, the most dramatic result for both women and men was the strong positive association with enjoying paid work. These results support earlier work that found satisfaction with work-family balance was positively affected by enjoyment of paid work for both women and men (Frederick & Fast, 2001).

Educational attainment beyond a high school degree was negatively linked to perceived balance for both men and women. This finding may be a result of the kinds of jobs held by those with university or advanced degrees. These jobs are more likely to be more demanding on one’s time, hold more responsibility and perhaps have required more personal investment to attain, therefore contributing negatively to perceived balance between work and family life. It is also possible that the technology associated with some of these jobs blurs the distinction between family and work time. Such technological advancements (e.g., cell phones, handheld wireless devices) mean that employees can more easily remain connected to work while at home and in some cases this connection may be expected by the employer.

**Limitations**

Although the GSS time-use cycles provide an appropriate, high-quality source of information for this research, some limitations exist. The variables used in this research were more effective in explaining satisfaction with work-family balance in 2005 than in 1998, but in general the models had low explanatory power. This result is not unusual in research using these time data (see, e.g., MacDonald et al., 2005), and future data collection efforts that include gathering more information on the family, work and community contexts could be of use in gaining a clearer picture of the role of work arrangements by allowing researchers to control for...
other relevant variables. Because the GSS focuses on collecting detailed time use information from one respondent, there is limited information on the time use and other characteristics of the spouse or partner (such as work arrangements) in couple households. It would be useful to have more information on the spouse or partner’s time use and to have that data from the spouses or partners themselves. In addition, more information on specific occupations, industries and the work arrangements available to particular employees, as well as information on the types of benefits and arrangements for childcare and elder care that are available, would be helpful in further understanding the relationship between earning and caring in dual-earner families.

Finally, multi-collinearity constrained the models. For example, variables for part-time work and home-based work, although available in the data, could not be used due to multi-collinearity. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the 1998 and 2005 time-use cycles of the GSS are an important data source for exploring questions of work-family balance in Canadian households.

Conclusions
In conclusion, the results showed that having a flexible schedule had a strong positive association with work-family balance for women, although it is recognised that some industries and occupations cannot accommodate this flexibility, and that women often create this flexibility for themselves by working part-time or turning to self-employment. Self-employed workers, however, did not find these work arrangements facilitated their work-family balance, which supports the recent findings of Russell and colleagues (2009). Men’s and women’s models showed that the greater the time spent in paid work, and the higher the educational status, the less satisfied respondents were with their work-family balance. These findings may point to a value shift, whereby home and family are becoming increasingly important to people compared to career goals.

For both men and women the enjoyment of paid work had a strong impact on the experience of work-family balance. For employers, this finding indicates that efforts to improve the enjoyment of work can pay-off in employees who are more satisfied with the balance in their lives, and the possible benefits of increased work performance, morale and commitment, and decreased turnover and absenteeism. For employees, even small adjustments that improve the enjoyment of paid work may have substantial positive effects on the perceived balance of earning and caring activities.

This comparison of the role of work arrangements in the lives of Canadian dual-earners in 1998 and 2005 points to the importance of tracking change in variables associated with work-family balance over time. Between 1998 and 2005 the use of these arrangements changed, as did the economic context, and policies at the organisational and government levels. This research provides a foundation for future comparative work with new series of Canadian time data and for comparisons with similar data from other countries. Future work that extends the analysis to other segments of the population that have difficulty in finding balance between their work and family lives, such as single employed parents and low-income employees is warranted. A better understanding of the work-family balance across a variety of
family types would be valuable for both employers and policy-makers to ensure policy development addresses the needs of all families.

Acknowledgements
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Note
1. Although there was a slight decrease in time spent in housework by women and a slight increase by men between 1998 and 2005, women still reported much more time spent in unpaid domestic work than men in both time periods, with women averaging 2.5 hours per day compared to men who averaged 1.5 hours per day on household work.

Notes on contributors
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References


