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### Men's Job and Partner Roles: Spillover Effects and Psychological Distress

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Center for Research  
on Women

**MEN'S JOB AND PARTNER ROLES:  
SPILLOVER EFFECTS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL  
DISTRESS**

by **Rosalind C. Barnett**  
**Nancy L. Marshall**

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## **Abstract**

What is the relationship between the quality of men's job and partnership roles on the one hand and men's mental health on the other? This question was addressed in a random sample of 301 men, ages 25-40, in dual-earner couples. Predictions were made from both main-effects and two interaction-effects models of this relationship. More specifically, negative-spillover effects, as predicted by the role-stress model, were estimated both from work-to-home and home-to-work. Positive-spillover effects, as predicted by the role-enhancement model, were estimated from home-to-work and from work-to-home. The general finding was that the effects are additive not interactive, thus supporting the main-effects model. With respect to spillover effects, there was some support for the role-stress model, but no support for the role-enhancement model. The relationship between job stress and psychological distress was exacerbated among men who had troubled relationships with their partners.

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How do men's experiences in their work and family roles relate to their levels of psychological distress? Only recently has the relationship between men's multiple roles and men's psychological distress received systematic attention (Barnett, Marshall, & Pleck, 1991; Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Schilling, 1989). For the most part, however, research has been marked by strong assumptions and the absence of theory. The primary assumption has been that although men occupy work and family roles, their job role is central their psychological health. Thus, there is an enormous body of literature on workplace stress and health/illness (Karasek & Theorell, 1990), and on the effects of unemployment on men's mental health (Liem, Atkinson, & Liem, 1985).

Research on men's family roles has focused primarily on occupancy not quality, that is, on whether men are married or not, or fathers or not. Thus, we know that married men compared to single men live longer, have fewer hospital days, lower rates of depression and lower incidence of alcoholism (Bernard, 1982). The relationship between parental status and health outcomes has received less attention and has resulted in conflicting findings. Some researchers report that, compared to men who are employed and married, those who are also fathers report fewer symptoms of depression and psychophysiological distress (Gore & Mangione, 1983); others do not (Barnett & Marshall, 1991a).

Until recently, little attention has been paid to the relationship between the quality of men's work and family roles on the one hand and their psychological distress on the other (Barnett, Marshall, & Pleck, 1991). Yet research on women's multiple roles and mental health suggest that a focus on role quality is more fruitful than a focus on role occupancy (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Barnett & Marshall, 1991b; Kotler & Wingard, 1989). With respect to multiple roles, the important research question is, how does the quality of men's experiences in their job and partner roles combine to influence their experience of psychological distress? Also of interest is whether these relationship differ for men who are fathers or not.

Theoretical treatments of how work and family roles combine to generate stress concentrate primarily on women and multiple roles. It remains to be seen how well these theories predict men's experiences. There are two major approaches, each of which has generated a stream of research. The first suggests that there is a contagion of stressful experiences between two role domains. Thus problems at work are thought to arouse feelings of distress which result, in turn, in the experience of stress at home. Typically, contagion is established by showing a correlation (cross-sectional or time-lagged) between indices of stress in one domain and indices of stress in the second (Bartolome & Evans, 1979; Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Wethington, 1989; Crosby, 1984; Evans & Bartolome, 1984). Because the job role is believed to be the main source of stress for men (Weiss, 1990) and because of the belief that work-to-home contagion is stronger for husbands than for wives (Pleck, 1977), most research on contagion in men has focused on work-to-home contagion (Pearlin & McCall, 1990; Small & Riley, 1990; Staines, 1980; Weiss, 1990). Home-to-work contagion, however, has also been studied (Crouter, 1984; Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Wethington, 1989).

It is important to note that, with few exceptions (Crouter, 1984), researchers have focused on negative contagion, that is, on the contagion of stressful experiences from one role domain to the other. It is equally possible, of course, for there to be positive contagion,

that is, the contagion of rewarding experiences from one domain to the other. To illustrate, a positive relationship with his boss generates feelings of elation, which, in turn, result in rewarding experiences at home. Contrary to expectations, time-lagged studies report little evidence of negative work-to-home contagion for married men or women (Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Wethington, 1989; 1990)<sup>1</sup>. Most surprising, negative home-to-work contagion, which was thought to be more prevalent among women, was more prevalent among men. Using daily diary data, Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Wethington (1989) demonstrated that for men but not women: (1) overloads at home lead to overloads at work; and (2) spouse arguments lead to work arguments. Based on their findings the researchers concluded that: "Women are able to avoid the contagion of home stress into the workplace ... whereas the inability of men to prevent this kind of contagion is pervasive" (Bolger et al, 1990 p.179). It is important to note that this approach leaves unexamined the nature of the association between contagion and any mental-health consequences, which is the question addressed in this paper.

The second line of research, which has also focused almost exclusively on women, addresses the relationship between role stress and psychological distress. Earlier independent-effects models of this relationship have been superseded by interaction-effects models. To illustrate, an independent-effects model posits that the relationship between experiences in, for example, the job role and distress is unrelated to differences in experiences in a family role, e.g., the partner role. Research focusing solely on the relationship between the quality of men's experience in the job role and their mental health implicitly assumes such a model. An independent-effects model is also implied in the seminal work of Gove and his associates (Geerken & Gove, 1983; Gove & Tudor, 1973), who concluded that men's comparative mental-health advantage over women was attributable to their occupancy of both work and family roles. If men had problems in one arena, they had an alternate (by implication, independent) source of self-esteem. Finally, clinical accounts of men's psychological development are consistent with an independent-effects model. Compared to women, men are thought to be more emotionally invulnerable and to have more "rigid boundaries", i.e., to compartmentalize affective experiences.

In contrast, an interaction-effects model assumes that the relationship between the quality of experience in one role and level of distress varies as a function of the quality of experience in another role. Two interaction-effects models shape most current research: the role-stress model and the role-expansion model. The role-stress model focuses on stressors and predicts an interaction-effect such that the stressors in the two roles have effects on an outcome state that are greater than the sum of the constituent stressors. The role-expansion model focuses on role-related rewards and predicts an interaction effect such that rewards in one role mitigate the effect of stressors in another role on an outcome state.

To illustrate, the role-stress model predicts that under conditions of a troubled relationship with his partner, the effect of job stress on mental health would be exacerbated. Operationally, this model predicts a negative-spillover effect (i.e., a negative-interaction effect) of concerns in one role on the relationship between the quality of experience in the other role and distress. The role-expansion model makes exactly the opposite prediction - social and emotional resources available in the partner role mitigate the relationship between a poor job and psychological distress. Operationally, this model predicts a positive-

spillover effect (i.e., a positive-interaction effect) of rewards from one role on the relationship between role-quality in the second role and psychological distress<sup>2</sup>. Consistent with this prediction, having a rewarding job buffered employed women from the negative mental-health effects of troubled relationships with their children (Barnett & Marshall, in press; Barnett, Marshall, & Sayer, 1991).

In this analysis, we are able to test predictions from both the role-stress and the role-expansion models, because we collected men's assessments of role concerns (stressors) and role rewards (resources) in their job and partner roles. Moreover, because these concerns and rewards reflect persistent and important characteristics of these roles (see Measures section below), there is reason to believe that they are related to psychological distress over long periods. Indeed, previous research using these measures found a significant association between changes over a two-year period in job-role quality and changes over the same time period in psychological distress, in a sample of women in multiple roles (Barnett, Marshall, & Singer, in press).

### Operationalizing the Interaction-Effects Models

To demonstrate spillover effects on psychological distress, one has to show that the interaction between the experiences in the two roles accounts for a significant proportion of the variance in psychological distress, over and above that accounted for by the main effects of the experiences in the two roles. While an interaction between the quality of experiences in two roles will test the existence of spillover, to test predictions from the two interaction-effects models, we need to distinguish between negative- and positive-spillover effects. To do this, we use two different measures, one of the positive aspects, or rewards, of a role, and the other of the negative aspects, or concerns, of a role. We then examine whether either the rewards of Role A, or the concerns of Role A, interact with the overall quality of Role B (Barnett & Marshall, in press). If there is an interaction between the rewards of Role A and the overall quality of Role B, we can examine a graph of this relationship to determine whether there is a positive-spillover effect from Role A to Role B, that is, whether men with rewards in Role A are at reduced risk for psychological distress compared to other men with similar experiences in Role B. Similarly, if there is an interaction between the concerns of Role A and the overall quality of Role B, we can examine a graph of this relationship to determine whether there is a negative-spillover effect from Role A to Role B. We can also test for positive- and negative- spillover effects from Role B to Role A by examining whether the rewards or the concerns of Role B interact with the overall quality of Role A.

### Hypotheses

The interaction-effects analyses permit us to test predictions from the independent-effects and the two interaction-effects models: the role-stress and the role-expansion models. More specifically, we estimate main effects of job-role and partner-role quality as well as negative- and positive-spillover effects from home-to-work and work-to-home in a random sample of 301 Massachusetts men in dual-earner couples, ages 25-40. The analyses address the following four research questions: (1) Do rewards at the job mitigate the negative mental-health effects of a poor-partner role?; (2) Do concerns at the job exacerbate the

negative mental-health effects of a poor-partner role? (3) Do rewards in the partner role mitigate the negative mental-health effects associated with a poor-job role?; and (4) Do concerns in the partner role exacerbate the negative mental-health effects associated with a poor-job role? In addition to the main-effects model, we estimate positive- and negative-interaction effects from partnership-to-job and from job-to-partnership, resulting in a total of eight interaction-effects models.

We test the following five hypotheses concerning the relationship between job-role and partner-role quality, based on predictions from the independent-effects and the role-expansion and role-stress models.

#### Independent-Effects Model

1. Job-role quality and partner-role quality will each have significant main effects on men's psychological distress.

#### Role-Expansion Model

2. Rewards in the job role mitigate the relationship between poor role partner-role quality and psychological distress.

3. Rewards in the partner role mitigate the relationship between poor job-role quality and psychological distress.

#### Role-Stress Model

4. Concerns in the job role exacerbate the relationship between poor partner-role quality and psychological distress.

5. Concerns in the partner role exacerbate the relationship between poor job-role quality and psychological distress.

### **Method**

#### Sample

The data for these analyses come from the first wave of a three-wave data collection (over two years) of a stratified, random sample of 301 employed men, aged 25 to 40, and their employed wives or partners (who varied in parental status). The sample was drawn from the town lists of all residents of two Boston-area towns. These towns were selected because they were socioeconomically diverse and included a large proportion of working women<sup>3</sup>. The participation rate among the eligible couples whom we were able to contact was 68%. (See Barnett & Marshall, 1991 for a complete description of the sampling procedures.)



The population of these towns is overwhelmingly White, so therefore is the random sample we obtained, thus we are unable to examine racial differences. The actual racial composition of the sample was as follows: 96% Caucasian, 1% Hispanic, 1% Black, and less than 1% Native American and Other. To have obtained an analyzable sample of Black or Hispanic couples would have required a sampling design beyond the scope of the project.

The average age of the men in the sample is 35.01 years ( $SD = 4.30$ ). Of the 301 men, 57% have children. On average, these men have 1.06 children ( $SD = 1.04$ ). And, on average, they have completed 16 years of schooling, i.e., they completed a college degree ( $Mean = 16.40$ ,  $SD = 2.34$ ). There was a wide range of educational attainment among the men in this sample; 37% had not completed 4 years of college, whereas 40% had some graduate education.

### Procedures

Subjects were interviewed separately in their homes or offices by trained interviewers. The interviews were conducted between the fall of 1989 and the spring of 1990. They took about 1 1/2 hours and covered many aspects of the men's and women's lives, including the rewards and concerns in each of their social roles, as well as measures of psychological distress, physical health, and subjective well-being. Prior to the interview, subjects received a packet of forms to be filled out and returned to the interviewer. Each couple received \$25 for participating.

### Measures

Psychological distress. Psychological distress was assessed by the anxiety and depression subscales of the SCL-90-R, a frequency of symptoms measure (Derogatis, 1975). Subjects indicate on a 5-point scale (from 0 = not at all, to 4 = extremely) how often in the past week they were bothered by each of 14 symptoms of anxiety and 10 symptoms of depression. The decision to combine the scales into a psychological distress score was based on the high correlation ( $r = .80$ ) between the scales and on the similarity in the pattern of correlations between the anxiety and depression scales and the other variables of interest in the study<sup>4</sup>.

The SCL-90-R has high levels of both internal consistency and test-retest reliability. In this sample, coefficient alpha was .86 for depression and .80 for anxiety. These figures are similar to those reported by Derogatis (1983). Satisfactory test-retest correlations (.82 for depression and .80 for anxiety) have also been reported (Derogatis, 1983).

The scoring has been reversed so that high scores indicate good mental health, i.e., low distress.

Role rewards and role concerns. Positive and negative aspects of the roles of worker and partner were assessed by reward and concern scales. For this study these scales were piloted tested, revised and expanded following focus groups with 40 employed married men in dual-earner couples. (See Baruch & Barnett, 1986; Barnett & Marshall, 1991 for a full discussion of the development of these scales).

For each role, respondents are asked to think about their situation as it is right now and to indicate on a 4-point scale (1 = not at all, to 4 = extremely) to what extent, if at all, each of the items is rewarding (or of concern)<sup>5</sup>. (The number of items differ across roles; for the role of worker, there are 33-reward and 28-concern items; for the role of partner, there are 26-reward and 26-concern items.) For example, for the role of paid worker, each subject was asked how rewarding she found "the job security" and to what extent was "the job's not using your skills" a concern. For the role of partner, each man was asked how rewarding he found "having a partner who is a good friend" and how much of a concern was "not getting enough attention from your partner" (items comprising the reward and concern scales are shown in the Appendix). Each subject received two scores for each social role: a reward score and a concern score.

Test-retest reliability coefficients, calculated on a 10% random subsample retested within 1-3 months of the initial interview, were .68 for both job rewards and job concerns<sup>6</sup>, .91 for partner rewards, and .95 for partner concerns. Internal consistency reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for job rewards was .89; for job concerns, .87; for partner rewards, .93; and for partner concerns, .89.

**Overall-role quality.** Overall-role quality was conceptualized as the balance between the positive and negative aspects of a role, and was operationalized as the differences between the reward and the concern scores for each role, adjusted for scale length. This score provides an index of the overall quality of experience men have in their job and partner roles. The difference score was selected for analyses rather than the separate rewards and concerns scores because it captures an important aspect of subjective role quality (Bradburn, 1969; Lowenthal & Chiriboga, 1973). In addition, previous research indicates that overall-role quality is associated with psychological distress, cross-sectionally and longitudinally (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Baruch & Barnett, 1986; Barnett, Davidson, & Marshall, 1991; Barnett, Kibria, Marshall, & Pleck, 1991; Barnett & Marshall, 1991b).

## Results

Correlations between the reward and concern scores for the job and partner roles are shown in Table One. Within each role, rewards and concerns are negatively correlated. Employed men who report more positive experiences at work, report fewer negative experiences at work; similarly, employed husbands who report more positive experiences in their partner role, report fewer concerns with their partners. These moderate negative correlations between the rewarding and problematic aspects of these roles are expected, because "good" jobs tend to be high on rewards and low on concerns while "bad" jobs tend to have problems in more than one area" (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, p. 166). In fact, the magnitude of the correlations between the job rewards and job concerns scores ( $r = -.29$ ) indicate that the job rewards score explains only 8% of the variance in the job concerns score; fully 91% of the variance in the job concerns score is unique to that measure. Similarly, partner rewards and partner concerns are correlated  $-.48$ ; 77% of the variance in partner concerns is unique to that measure.

Table One

Intercorrelations Between Job and Partner Rewards and Concerns

	Job Concern	Partner Reward	Partner Concern
Job Reward	-.29***	.37***	-.03
Job Concern		.04	-.34***
Partner Rewards			-.48***

Note. N = 301.

\*\*\* p < .001

The correlations between the reward and concern scores in each role and psychological distress range between  $r = -.22, p < .001$  and  $r = -.41, p < .001$  and are in the expected direction; job and parent rewards are correlated positively with low distress, job and parent concerns are correlated negatively. Role concerns account for approximately 13.0% of the variance in psychological distress, whereas role rewards account for roughly 5.0%.

As expected, the correlation between overall job-role quality and psychological distress (reversed) ( $r = .35, p < .001$ ) and between overall partner-role quality and psychological distress (reversed) ( $r = .38, p < .001$ ) were positive and significant. Employed men who report more positive experiences at work, on balance, report fewer symptoms of psychological distress. Employed husbands who report more positive experiences in their partner role, on balance, compared to those who report fewer positive experiences, also report better mental health.

To test the five hypotheses, we estimated a series of simultaneous regression models, all of which included as control variables: age, occupational prestige, household income, and education. In addition, to take into account differences in parental status, we included as a control a dummy variable (1 = has children, 0 = has no children). To further explore the role of parental status in each of the four interaction-effects analyses, we tested a three-way interaction term of the form, parental status X the two-way interaction of interest. Finally, to test for multi-collinearity, tolerance statistics were computed for each model.

#### Hypothesis One: Job-Role Quality and Partner-Role Quality will each have Significant Main Effects on Men's Psychological Distress

To test the independent-effects model, we estimated a simultaneous regression model with job-role and partner-role quality as the independent variables. The model was significant [ $F(7, 285) = 14.08, p < .001, R^2 = .26$ ]; men who report positive- overall role quality in their job and partnership roles also report low levels of psychological distress (Table Two). Thus, Hypothesis One received support.

#### Hypothesis Two: Rewards in the Job Role Mitigate the Relationship between Poor Partner-Role Quality and Psychological Distress

To test the job-to-home positive-spillover version of the role-expansion model, we estimated a simultaneous regression model with the following independent variables: job rewards, partner-role quality, and the interaction term, job rewards X partner-role quality (Table Three). The interaction term was not significant, nor was the increment to  $R^2$  above that associated with the main-effects model significant, indicating no evidence of a positive-spillover effect from job to partnership. Graphing the interaction term also failed to show any positive-spillover effect. Hypothesis Two was not confirmed; the relationship between poor partner-role quality and psychological distress was not buffered by rewards on the job.

Table Two

Main Effects of Job-Role Quality and Partner-Role Quality

Predictor	B <sup>a</sup>	SE <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>c</sup>
Age	-.09	.13	-.04
Education	.64	.30	.15
Occupational Prestige	-.11	.04	-.19
Household Income	-.01	.01	-.04
Parental Status	2.18	1.18	.11
Job-Role Quality	4.51***	.85	.28
Partner-Role Quality	4.88***	.77	.34

$$R^2 = .26$$

Note. N = 292

a Unstandardized regression coefficient

b Standard error

c Standardized regression coefficient

\*\*\* p < .001

Table Three

Interactive-Effects Model: Positive-Spillover Effects

Predictors	Spillover			Spillover		
	From Job to Partner			From Partner to Job		
	B <sup>a</sup>	SE <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>c</sup>	B <sup>a</sup>	SE <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>c</sup>
Age	-.17	.13	-.07	-.13	.13	-.06
Occupational Prestige	-.12	.04	-.20	-.11	.04	-.18
Education	.71	.30	.17	.62	.31	.15
Household Income	-.01	.01	-.02	-.01	.01	-.06
Parental Status	2.52	1.14	.13	2.24	1.14	.11
Job-Role Quality				15.81*	6.78	1.01
Job Rewards	4.02**	1.37	.16			
Partner-Role Quality	4.90***	.81	.33			
Partner Rewards				4.19**	1.26	.19
Job Rewards x						
Partner-Role Quality	-3.52	2.08	-.09			
Partner Rewards x						
Job-Role Quality				-3.23	2.04	-.68
	R <sup>2</sup> = .21			R <sup>2</sup> = .21		

Note. N = 292

a Unstandardized regression coefficient  
b Standard error of the unstandardized regression coefficient  
c Standardized regression coefficient  
\* p < .05; \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001.

Finally, the three-way interaction term, parental status X job rewards X partner-role quality did not result in a significant increment to  $R^2$  above that associated with the two-way interaction model. Job rewards did not buffer men in dual-earner couples from the negative mental-health effects of a poor relationship with their partners, whether they were fathers or not.

**Hypothesis Three: Rewards in the Partner Role Mitigate the Relationship Between Poor Job-Role Quality and Psychological Distress**

To test the home-to-work positive-spillover version of the role-expansion model, we estimated a simultaneous regression model with the following independent variables: partner rewards, job-role quality, and the interaction term, partner rewards X job-role quality (Table Three). The interaction term was not significant, nor was the increment to  $R^2$  above that associated with the main-effects model significant, indicating no evidence of a positive-spillover effect from partnership to home. Graphing the interaction term also failed to show any positive-spillover effect. Hypothesis Three was not confirmed; the relationship between poor job-role quality and psychological distress was not buffered by rewards in the partner role. Finally, results of the three-way interaction analysis indicated that parental status did not affect this relationship.

The results of the above two analyses call into question the predictions of the role-expansion model for men. At least among men in dual-earner couples, the rewards they experienced in one of their two social roles (partner or job) did not mitigate the negative mental-health effects associated with problems in their other role.

**Hypothesis Four: Concerns in the Job Role Exacerbate the Relationship Between Poor Partner-Role Quality and Psychological Distress**

To test the job-to-home negative-spillover version of the role-stress model, we estimated a simultaneous regression model with the following independent variables: job concerns, partner-role quality, and the interaction term, job concerns X partner-role quality (Table Four). The interaction term was not significant, nor did its inclusion result in an increment to  $R^2$  significantly greater than that associated with the main-effects model. Among men in dual-earner couples, if their relationships with their partners were troubled, their distress was high, but it was not exacerbated if they experienced concerns on the job. Thus, Hypothesis Four did not receive support. Finally, the three way interaction term, parental status X job concerns X partner-role quality was not significant.

**Hypothesis Five: Concerns in the Partner Role Exacerbate the Relationship Between Poor Job-Role Quality and Psychological Distress**

To test the home-to-job negative-spillover version of the role-stress model, we estimated a simultaneous regression model with the following independent variables: partner concerns, job-role quality, and the interaction term, partner concerns X job-role quality (Table Four). The interaction term was significant and its inclusion resulted in a .012 increment to  $R^2$  ( $p < .05$ ) above that associated with the main-effects model.

Table Four

Interactive-Effects Model: Negative-Spillover Effects

Predictors	Spillover			Spillover		
	From Job to Partner			From Partner to Job		
	B <sup>a</sup>	SE <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>c</sup>	B <sup>a</sup>	SE <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>c</sup>
Age	-.10	.13	-.04	-.14	.13	-.06
Occupational Prestige	-.11	.04	-.18	-.11	.04	-.19
Education	.47	.30	.11	.44	.29	.10
Household Income	-.01	.01	-.06	-.01	.01	-.06
Parental Status	2.18	1.10	.11	2.32	1.08	.12
Job-Role Quality				-2.18	3.36	-.14
Job Concerns	-7.86***	1.35	-.31			
Partner-Role Quality	4.95***	.75	.34			
Partner Concerns				-9.71***	1.46	-.34
Job Concerns x						
Partner-Role Quality	2.52	1.91	.07			
Partner Concerns x						
Job-Role Quality				4.39*	2.09	.45
	R <sup>2</sup> = .27			R <sup>2</sup> = .29		

Note. N = 292

a Unstandardized regression coefficient

b Standard error of the unstandardized regression coefficient

c Standardized regression coefficient

\* p < .05; \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001.



As can be seen in Figure One, when men in dual-earner couples experienced high concerns in their relationships with their partners, the association between a poor job and distress was exacerbated, and this finding was not affected by the men's parental status. Thus, the role-stress model was supported, at least with respect to home-to-work negative spillover.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

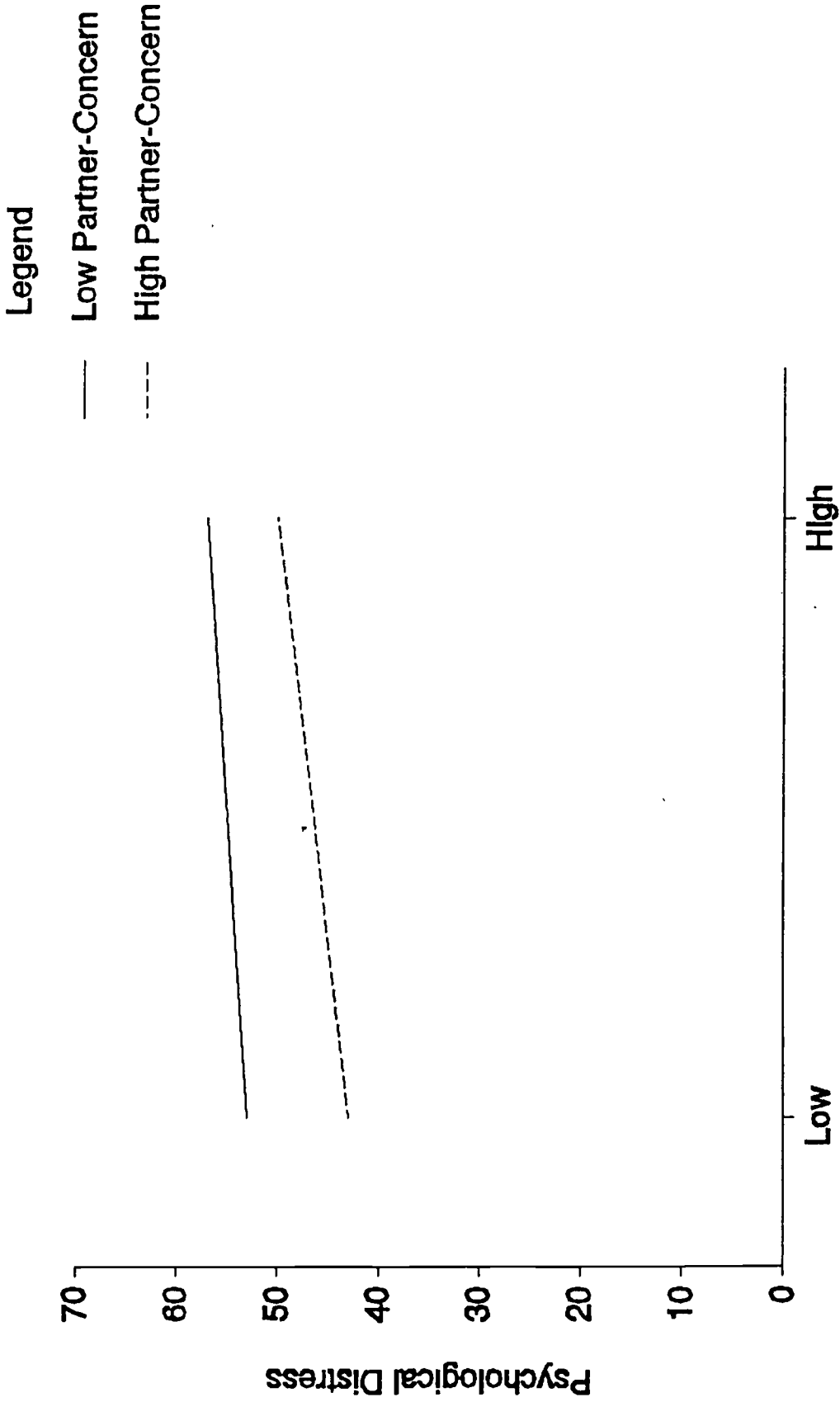
The main finding in this sample of White men, ages 25-40, in dual-earner couples, is that experiences in their job and partner roles have primarily independent not interaction effects on psychological distress. With one exception, the association between the quality of experience in a role and symptoms of psychological distress does not depend on the level of concern or reward experienced in the other role.

Three of the four analyses designed to test the two interaction-effects models of the relationship between experiences in roles and psychological distress yielded non-significant findings. The two predictions based on the role-expansion model received no support; rewards in the role of partner did not mitigate the relationship between job-role quality and distress, nor did rewards in the job-role offset the relationship between partner-role quality and distress. The psychological distress of men who experience job stress is not less if they are rewarded in their relationship with their partner. Conversely, the distress associated with reports of negative partner relationships is not less if job rewards are high. It appears that although men reap psychological benefits from rewards in each of their roles, these role-related rewards do not enable them to copy better with stresses in their second role.

One of two predictions based on the role-stress model was disconfirmed, one was confirmed. Concerns in the job role did not compound the negative mental-health effects of a poor partnership. There was, however, a negative-spillover effect from partner-to-work. The distress associated with poor job-role quality is exacerbated if men have concerns in their relationships with their partners. This finding is consistent with the previous report that the effect of partnership conflict the night before on job-related arguments the next day was stronger among men than women (Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Wethington, 1989).

The absence of evidence supporting these interaction-effects models raises the possibility that they apply, as originally formulated, to women but not to men. However, recent evidence (Barnett & Marshall, in press), indicates that among employed women, the effects on psychological distress of subjective experience in their job and parental roles are primarily independent. It appears that, at least when considering periods of time greater than a day or two, both men and women compartmentalize role-related affective experiences such that their effects on psychological distress are primarily independent.

Men's parental status did not affect these relationships, confirming the finding from previous studies of women that after controlling for occupational prestige and household income, family-role status per se is not a significant predictor of mental-health status. Men's



**Job-Role Quality**

INTERACTION EFFECT OF PARTNER CONCERNS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB-ROLE QUALITY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

parent-role quality, in contrast, has been related to their physical-health reports (Barnett & Marshall, 1991a), suggesting that future research address the relationship between the quality of men's parental-role and their psychological distress (Bartolome & Evans, 1979).

Finally, the men in this sample were all in dual-earner couples and were predominantly White. It is possible that the findings would be different among men in more traditional marriages and Black men. Because of race and class differences in the importance of family, positive experiences at home might mitigate job stress in studies of minority and working class men. Thus, future research needs to use a more diverse sample to adequately test the role-expansion model as it applies to men.

## Footnotes

1. Arguments at work, however, were significantly related to arguments with spouses on the same day for men but not women.
2. This relationship was found in a study of spillover effects and physical health in a sample of employed mothers (Barnett, Davidson, & Marshall, 1991).
3. In one town, 70.1% of women aged 20-54 were employed in 1980, according to the U.S. Census:1980. In the other, 75.2% of women ages 20-50 were employed in 1980, according to the U.S. Census: 1980.
4. In addition, Cronbach alpha for the combined scale was .90, indicating that the items measure a common underlying construct. However, there is disagreement in the literature about the validity of combining subscale scores. Some researchers argue that combining scores is problematic (e.g. Newmann, 1986), others argue for combining scores (e.g., Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, & DeLongis, 1986).
5. For both the reward and the concern scales, the "not-at-all" response option was used to mean both that the item was not applicable -- that is, it was irrelevant to the relationship -- and that it was applicable but either not at all a reward or not at all a concern.
6. A likely explanation for the relatively low test-retest reliability coefficients for the job scores is that the reinterviews took place amidst general concern about the Massachusetts' economy and massive layoffs in companies and industries in which many of the subjects, their spouses, or their friends were employed.

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## **Appendix**

### **Role Quality Measures**

#### **Job Role Quality**

We're interested in learning about both the good things and the bad things in different parts of adults' lives -- the gratifying or rewarding things and also the problems and difficulties. I'm going to be reading you some lists of these -- both the good parts and the bad parts.

First, I'll start with a list of the things people have said are gratifying or a source of reward at their jobs. For each one, I'd like to know when you think about your own job, right now, how much, if at all, it is a rewarding part of your job.

(REWARDS:) When you think about your current job, how much, if at all, are the following items a rewarding part of your job: (1) Not at all, (2) Somewhat, (3) Considerably, or (4) Extremely? We'd like you to think about how it is right now. We're not asking how you wish it were, but how it actually is.

How rewarding is:

1. Challenging or stimulating work.
2. Liking your co-workers.
3. The income.
4. Being able to work on your own.
5. The job security.
6. The recognition you get.
7. Doing work you consider significant.
8. Your supervisor's respect for your abilities.
9. Being needed by others.
10. Being able to set your own work schedule.
11. Your work contributing to the good of a larger community.
12. Having a variety of tasks.
13. Having hours that fit your needs.

14. Being able to work as part of a team or group.
15. Your job being flexible enough that you can respond to non-work situations.
16. Liking your supervisor.
17. Making good money compared to other people in your field.
18. Being able to make decisions on your own.
19. Your supervisor's concern about the welfare of those under him/her.
20. The sense of accomplishment and competence you get from doing your job.
21. Having the authority you need to get your job done.
22. Having friendly co-workers.
23. The job's fitting your skills.
24. The appreciation you get.
25. The opportunities for advancement.
26. The freedom to decide how you do your work.
27. Your supervisor paying attention to what you have to say.
28. Having an impact on other people's lives.
29. The opportunity for learning new things.
30. Helping others.
31. Having supportive co-workers.
32. The benefits your job offers, for example, paid sick leave.

Now I'd like to turn to the problems. These are statements from other men about their concerns about their jobs.

(CONCERNS:) When you think about your current job, how much, if at all, are the following items a concern for you: (1) Not at all, (2) Somewhat, (3) Considerably, or (4) Extremely? We'd like you to think about how it is now.

How much of a concern is:

1. The job's dullness, monotony, lack of variety.
2. Having little chance for the advancement you want or deserve.
3. The job's not using your skills.
4. Your supervisor's lack of competence.
5. Lack of respect at your workplace for someone who does your job.
6. Having to do tasks you don't feel should be a part of your job.
7. Being exposed to illness or injury.
8. Lack of job security.
9. Having to juggle conflicting tasks or duties.
10. The income.
11. Having too much to do.
12. Your supervisor's lack of appreciation for your work.
13. Facing discrimination at your job because of your race, religion, or ethnic background.
14. Making less money than other people in your line of work .
15. The physical conditions on your job (noise, crowding, temperature, environmental hazards, etc.).
16. The possibility of unemployment.
17. The job's taking too much out of you.
18. Your supervisor's having unrealistic expectations for your work.

19. Facing discrimination at your job because of your sex or gender.
20. Having to do things against your better judgment.
21. The job's being physically strenuous.
22. Limited opportunity for professional or career development.
23. Having to deal with emotionally difficult situations.
24. Not being able to get your own job done because of other people or red tape.
25. Lack of support from your supervisor.
26. The sexual harassment you experience.
27. Making less money than you feel you deserve.
28. People in jobs like yours being laid off or unemployed.

### Partnered Rewards and Concerns

Now I'm going to read a list of good things and bad things adults have mentioned about (marriage/relationships). When you think about your relationship with your (wife/partner), how much, if at all, is each of the following items a rewarding part of your relationship: (1) not at all, (2) somewhat, (3) considerably, or (4) extremely? We'd like you to think about how it is now. We're not asking how you wish it were, but how it actually is.

How rewarding is:

1. Having a partner who is easy to get along with.
2. Your partner's doing her fair share at home.
3. The physical affection.
4. Your partner being proud of you.
5. Your partner's financial contributions to the household.
6. Your partner's appreciating you.
7. Your partner actively encouraging you.
8. Your sexual relationship.
9. Your partner's contributing her fair share to the family's finances.
10. Good communication.
11. Socializing as a couple.
12. Your partner's backing you up in what you want to do.
13. Your partner's concern for members of your family, such as your parents, brothers or sisters, etc.
14. Your partner's finding you physically attractive.
15. Enjoying the same activities.
16. Having a partner who really talks to you.
17. The ability of you and your partner to work out conflicts.
18. Having a partner who is a good friend.

19. Doing things together for fun.
20. Your partner doing her share to make the relationship work.
21. Your partner liking you as a person.
22. Being able to disagree without threatening the relationship.
23. Your relationship with your partner's family.
24. Having a partner who is a good listener.
25. Your partner giving you constructive criticism when you need it.
26. Having a lot in common with your partner.

**(CONCERNS:)** Now I'll read you some statements from other people about concerns and difficulties in their relationships. When you think about your relationship with your (wife/partner), to what extent, if at all, is each of the following items a concern for you: (1) not at all, (2) somewhat, (3) considerably, (4) extremely? We'd like you to think about how it is now.

How much of a concern is:

1. Poor communication.
2. Conflicts over money.
3. Your partner's job or career problems.
4. Your partner not understanding who you really are.
5. Your partner wanting more than you can give emotionally.
6. Not getting enough attention from your partner.
7. Your partner not doing her share at home.
8. Your partner's job instability.
9. The lack of physical affection.
10. Your partner's not being home enough.
11. Your partner being emotionally dependent on you.
12. Arguing or fighting.
13. Your partner being too self-absorbed.
14. Your partner not backing you up in what you want to do.
15. Lack of companionship.
16. Your partner's personal problems right now.
17. Your partner not being tuned in to you.
18. Your sexual relationship.
19. Your partner being critical of you.

20. Not getting along.
21. Your partner being faithful to you.
22. Your partner being overly involved in her job.
23. Your partner not earning enough.
24. Your partner taking you for granted.
25. Having to do more than your fair share.
26. You and your partner not feeling emotionally connected to each other.