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Work Stressors and Partner Social Undermining: Comparing Negative Affect and Psychological Detachment as Mechanisms

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With the mounting evidence that employees' work experiences spill over into the family domain and cross over to family members, it is important to understand the underlying mechanism through which work experiences affect the family domain and what factors may alleviate the adverse impact of work stress. Expanding previous research that mainly focused on the affect-based mechanism (negative affect), the present research investigated a resource-based mechanism (psychological detachment from work) in the relationship linking two work stressors (high workload and workplace incivility) with social undermining toward the partner at home. We also explored the relative strength of the mediating effects of the two mechanisms. In addition, we tested whether relationship satisfaction moderates the proposed effect of detachment on partner undermining. We tested these research questions using two studies with differing designs: a five-wave longitudinal study ($N = 470$) and a multisource study ($N = 131$). The results suggest that stressful work experiences affect the family domain via lack of detachment as well as negative affect, that the two pathways have comparable strength, and that high relationship satisfaction mitigates the negative effect of lack of detachment on partner undermining. In sum, this research extends the spillover–crossover model by establishing that poor psychological detachment from work during leisure time is an additional mechanism that links work and family.

Keywords: the spillover–crossover model, work stressors, psychological detachment from work, social undermining, relationship satisfaction

Many employees report that they suffer from work stress and that work intrudes into their family life (American Psychological Association, 2013, 2017; Eurofound, 2015). This finding is troubling, given the mounting evidence that individuals' work experiences spill over into the family domain and affect their family members (Bakker & Demerouti, 2013). For example, research has shown that employees' work stress shapes their interactions with their spouse and children, which in turn affects the family members' well-being (Cho & Ciancetta, 2016; Hoobler & Brass, 2006). Given the prevalence and broad impact of work stress, it is important to understand the underlying mechanism through which work experiences affect the family domain and factors that may alleviate the adverse impact of work stress.

Previous research on the spillover–crossover process mainly focused on the affect-based mechanism, demonstrating that stress-

ful work conditions lead to negative affects like anger and frustration, which then trigger antisocial behavior toward family members (Repetti, Wang, & Saxbe, 2009; Schulz, Cowan, Cowan, & Brennan, 2004). However, because other mechanisms likely play important roles as well, further research that considers multiple mediators is needed to gain a holistic view of the pathway between work and family (Butler, Song, & Ilies, 2013; Repetti et al., 2009).

The present research contributes to the literature on the mechanisms linking work and family in several ways. First, we broaden our understanding of how work stressors affect employee behavior at home by examining multiple mechanisms. Specifically, we investigate lack of psychological detachment from work (resource-based mechanism) as well as negative affect (affect-based mechanism) as mediators in the relationship between work stressors and the social undermining of the partner at home. This is an important expansion of the spillover–crossover model, given that not all stressors lead to negative emotions (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000). In other words, the affect-based mechanism alone cannot adequately explain whether and how stressors that do not elicit negative emotions may affect employee behavior within the family.

Second, previous research has highlighted considerable variability in how work affects marital behavior such that the adverse impact of work stressors differs depending on family circumstances (Repetti & Saxbe, 2009). Taking this variability into account, we provide insight into the condition in which lack of psychological detachment resulting from work stress is particularly harmful. Specifically, we examine the moderating role of a

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good marital relationship, which has been identified as an important factor that may protect families from adverse effects of work-to-family spillover (Repetti & Saxbe, 2009). By illustrating *when* and *whom* lack of detachment harms, this research answers the call to identify boundary conditions of the relationships among work stressors, detachment, and various outcomes (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015).

Third, we examine two work stressors—high workload and workplace incivility—as antecedents to partner undermining at home. Doing so helps establish the generalizability of the resource-based mechanism between work and family in that the two stressors differ in their nature (because one is task related, whereas the other is social). Furthermore, examining these two stressors can be informative, because they may affect employees' private lives in multiple ways. Studies have shown that incivility may lead employees to react with negative affect such as anger (Bunk & Magley, 2013; Grandey, Tam, & Brauburger, 2002), whereas high workload does not necessarily trigger such emotions. In contrast, poor psychological detachment from work is a typical reaction to both high workload and social stressors such as workplace incivility (Wendsche & Lohmann-Haislah, 2017). In sum, the current study's investigation of the two stressors allows for a better understanding of multiple mediators between work and family.

Theoretical Background and Development of Hypotheses

The detrimental effects of employees' work stress on their private lives have been well documented. An important framework to explain negative effects of work stressors on private life is the spillover–crossover model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2013; Westman, 2002), which posits that strain from the work domain is transferred to the family domain within-person (spillover), followed by a transmission across persons through social interactions, which thereby affects family members' well-being (crossover). Empirical research, for example, has shown that work stressors are related to employees' dysfunctional marital behavior (Repetti et al., 2009) and the impairment of their partners' well-being (Westman, 2002).

To explain the link between work and family, most studies have examined the affect-based mechanism. For instance, workload and negative social interactions at work predicted marital anger and withdrawal via negative mood (Story & Repetti, 2006). Similarly, workload has been shown to predict affects at work and at home, which is related to social behavior within the family (Ilies et al., 2007). In sum, the extant literature provides ample evidence for the affect-based mechanism, showing that work stressors shape employee behavior in the family domain by eliciting certain affective states.

The present research advances our understanding of the spillover–crossover model by testing the dual process underlying the relationship between work stressor and partner social undermining. Previous research (Wang, Liao, Zhan, & Shi, 2011) has noted that work stressors may trigger antisocial behavior at work through heightened negative emotions (affect-based mechanism) as well as through the depletion of resources¹ (resource-based mechanism). On the basis of this, we propose that in addition to the negative affects that work stress elicits, the lack of resources to regulate impulsive and antisocial behaviors may explain why stressed employees behave aggressively in the family context. In

the current research, we do not test the role of resources directly; instead we examine a factor that plays a key role in restoring the resources drained during the workday, namely, psychological detachment from work.

Psychological detachment from work (hereafter “detachment”) refers to a state in which individuals mentally disconnect from work during time off the job (Sonntag, 2012; Sonntag & Fritz, 2007). Even when employees are physically detached from work, they may not psychologically detach from it if they have work-related thoughts during off-job time. Relevantly, studies have shown that work stressor predicts the degree of detachment and that detachment allows employees to replenish the resources (Sonntag, 2012) needed to curb one's own dysfunctional behavior. As such, we conceptualize detachment as a resource-based mechanism through which work stressors influence employee behavior at home.

In the following sections, we first discuss the relationship between work stressors and detachment. We then explain detachment as a resource-based mechanism between work stressors and partner social undermining. Finally, we describe how relationship satisfaction may moderate the relationship between detachment and partner social undermining.

Work Stressors as Antecedents of Poor Psychological Detachment From Work

High workload is a task-related stressor that pertains to quantitative demands (e.g., time pressure). Cropley and Zijlstra (2011) noted that people have difficulty detaching psychologically from work during leisure time when their workload is too high and when they are unlikely to meet work deadlines. With high workloads and unfinished work at the end of the workday, employees find detachment challenging because unfinished tasks tend to impair people's ability to mentally switch off from work (Syrek & Antoni, 2014). Heavy workloads may also lead employees to work during off-job time either to complete unfinished tasks or to prepare for the next workday (Sonntag & Fritz, 2015). In line with these assumptions, previous empirical research has shown that high workload relates to lack of detachment (Sonntag & Fritz, 2007; Wendsche & Lohmann-Haislah, 2017).

Workplace incivility is a social stressor that is characterized as being of lower intensity than workplace aggression and ambiguous intent to harm (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Examples of workplace incivility include speaking in a condescending tone, making demeaning or derogatory remarks, and ignoring or excluding fellow workers (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001). Exposure to workplace incivility is thought to evoke cognitive reactions in employees that make it challenging for them to mentally disengage from work even after the experience has ended (Sonntag & Fritz, 2015). The social and ambiguous nature of workplace incivility may make detaching psychologically from work particularly difficult (Fehm, Schneider, & Hoyer, 2007).

¹ It is noteworthy that negative mood has also been used to indicate depleted self-regulatory resources (Liu et al., 2017). However, in line with the most influential literature on how self-regulatory resources affect aggression (Christian & Ellis, 2011; Rosen, Koopman, Gabriel, & Johnson, 2016; Stucke & Baumeister, 2006; Wang et al., 2011), we think it is useful to distinguish between an affect-based mechanism and a resource-based one.

Lack of detachment due to workplace incivility may be manifested in various ways, including ruminating on the events or completing work tasks that remained undone due to lost time or the inability to concentrate caused by the incivility (Demsky, Ellis, & Fritz, 2014). Consistent with this notion, previous empirical research reported that employees who experienced workplace incivility tended to ruminate on the experience (Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000). Also, various negative social interactions at work were related to lack of detachment (Demsky et al., 2014; Nicholson & Griffin, 2015; Wendsche & Lohmann-Haislah, 2017).

On the basis of theoretical reasoning and empirical evidence, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Workload is negatively related to psychological detachment from work.

Hypothesis 1b: Workplace incivility is negatively related to psychological detachment from work.

Lack of Psychological Detachment From Work as a Mediator Between Work Stressors and Partner Social Undermining

Partner social undermining consists of behaviors directed toward the partner that express negative affect or convey a negative evaluation or criticism (Vinokur & Van Ryn, 1993). In the sense that partner social undermining is a behavioral response resulting from work stressors (Jex & Beehr, 1991), we propose that partner social undermining is a behavioral strain. We further propose that poor detachment mediates the link between work stressors and partner social undermining. The reason is that being unable to detach from work during off-job time deprives workers of opportunities to replenish resources and in fact leads to a further loss of resources (Westman, Hobfoll, Chen, Davidson, & Laski, 2004) that are essential for self-control (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). As these resources become depleted, people behave more impulsively and antisocially (Baumeister & Exline, 1999). Considering that pro-relationship behaviors such as attentiveness and consideration for the partner's perspective require one to expend resources, whereas hostile and self-serving behaviors do not (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991), employees whose resources are depleted (due to poor detachment) are more likely to undermine their partner. Supporting this notion, various studies have shown that poor detachment is linked to a loss of resources, as evidenced by increased exhaustion and fatigue (Derks, van Mierlo, & Schmitz, 2014; Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2008; Wendsche & Lohmann-Haislah, 2017). Furthermore, previous research has indicated that people are less supportive of their partner and exhibit hostile marital behaviors when their psychological availability (i.e., their ability and motivation to direct mental resources toward the partner) is low (Danner-Vlaardingbroek, Kluwer, van Steenberg, & van der Lippe, 2013).

In sum, existing theory and empirical evidence suggest that lack of detachment predicts partner social undermining. Combining the rationale for the effect of work stressors on detachment and the effect of detachment on partner social undermining, we theorize that detachment mediates the link between work stressors and social undermining. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2: Psychological detachment from work is negatively related to partner social undermining.

Hypothesis 3a: Psychological detachment from work partially mediates the effect of workload on partner social undermining.

Hypothesis 3b: Psychological detachment from work partially mediates the effect of workplace incivility on partner social undermining.

Multiple Mediators in the Relationship Between Work Stressors and Undermining

It is important to emphasize that we propose detachment as a partial mediator between work stressors and partner social undermining. Given the presence of other pathways between work and family such as negative affect (Butler et al., 2013; Repetti et al., 2009) and in line with previous empirical research suggesting multiple links between work stressors and aggressive behavior (Wang et al., 2011), we do not expect detachment to fully mediate the relation between work stressors and partner social undermining.

Although scholars have called for investigating multiple pathways between work and family (Butler et al., 2013), which are likely to co-occur, research to date has rarely considered multiple mediators. In a few studies that examined other mediators, the independent effect of each path was not explored. For instance, Barber, Taylor, Burton, and Bailey (2017) have shown that low resources (measured as the employee's self-reported sleep quality) mediate the effect of supervisor undermining on partner undermining without considering the role of negative mood. In another study, strain-based work-to-family conflict (i.e., the interference of work strain with functioning at home; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) was shown to mediate the relation between job demands and partner undermining (Bakker, Demerouti, & Dollard, 2008). Reflecting the degree to which worrying and thinking about work hamper performance at home, strain-based work-to-family conflict in this study is conceptually related to both negative affect and lack of detachment. Therefore, the question of whether the affect-based mechanism is the main channel through which work stressors influence employee behavior at home, or whether alternative mechanisms exist, remains unanswered. Similarly, research on the linking mechanisms between work stressors and an employee's antisocial behavior *at work* has not explicitly examined the potential for multiple pathways. For instance, Wang et al. (2011) proposed an affect-based mechanism and a resource-based mechanism in the relationship between customer mistreatment and employee sabotage without measuring the two mechanisms, and hence were unable to test whether they existed independent of each other.

With this in mind, we simultaneously examine an affect-based mechanism (negative affect) as well as a resource-based mechanism (detachment) in our model as mediators in the relation between work stressors and partner social undermining (Study 2). Doing so not only helps to demonstrate the mediating role of detachment above and beyond the well-established affective pathway between work and family but also allows us to compare the strength of these two paths. No theory exists to guide us toward a

specific hypothesis about the relative strength of the two paths. Worth mentioning, however, are post hoc analyses by Christian and Ellis (2011) that suggest that increased hostility (an affect-based mechanism) may have a stronger mediation effect in the relation between sleep deprivation and interpersonal deviance at work than does decreased self-control (a resource-based mechanism).

The strength of the mechanism may also depend on the work stressor. As noted earlier, not all stressful events trigger the same emotions (Basch & Fisher, 2000). Negative emotions with high activation like anger are the predominant response to disrespectful and unfair behavior such as incivility (Bunk & Magley, 2013; Fitness, 2000), but are not the most typical response to high workload, which can be linked to positive emotions (Tadić, Bakker, & Oerlemans, 2014). Thus, the affect-based mechanism might be particularly pertinent to the effect of incivility on social undermining. In contrast, meta-analytical findings have indicated that both types of stressor have an association with poor detachment to a similar magnitude (quantitative demands: $r = -.28$; social conflict: $r = -.25$; Wendsche & Lohmann-Haislah, 2017), suggesting that the resource-based mechanism plays an important role in explaining the detrimental effects of both stressors. One might therefore suspect that the mediating effect of negative affect is stronger than the effect of psychological detachment for workplace incivility, but that the two effects are equally strong for workload.

Certainly, findings by Christian and Ellis (2011) cannot be directly translated into the current study due to differences in study variables and context, and the idea that the mechanisms vary in magnitude depending on the stressor is tentative. However, they collectively underscore the importance of studying independent effects of multiple mechanisms with different stressors. We pose the following research question:

Research Question: Is there a difference between the strengths of the mediating effect of psychological detachment and that of negative affect depending on the work stressor?

The Moderating Role of Relationship Satisfaction

As mentioned earlier, one needs resources to restrain oneself from behaving impulsively and antisocially (Baumeister & Exline, 1999; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), and poor detachment reduces one's capacity to suppress such behaviors by depriving one of opportunities to restore resources (Westman et al., 2004). Previous research, however, has shown that not only individuals' resource *capacity* but also their *motivation* to exert self-control influences whether they behave antisocially (Brehm & Self, 1989; Muraven & Slessareva, 2003). This motivation is in part determined by the individual's commitment to the relationship partner. For example, research on antisocial behavior at work demonstrated that employees are more motivated to suppress deviant behavior when they intend to stay in the organization (Lian, Ferris, Morrison, & Brown, 2014) and when they are highly committed to organizational rules (Wang et al., 2011).

Following this line of reasoning, we expect that individuals who are committed to their marital relationship are more motivated to suppress antisocial behavior toward the spouse. Given that an individual's commitment to a relationship is highly dependent on his or her relationship satisfaction (Le & Agnew, 2003), it is plausible that high relationship satisfaction spurs one's motivation

to mobilize the self-control resources needed to suppress antisocial behaviors (Brehm & Self, 1989; Muraven & Slessareva, 2003). Such a difference among individuals with varying levels of relationship quality may be particularly salient when self-control resources are limited, such as when a worker fails to detach psychologically from work.

In the sense that current relationship quality determines one's willingness to invest the resources to inhibit antisocial behaviors toward the relationship partner when individuals fail to detach from work, we propose that relationship satisfaction moderates the link between detachment and partner social undermining. Specifically, the detrimental effect of the lack of detachment should be weaker among people in better relationships, because they would likely be more willing to expend energy to curb hostile interpersonal behaviors despite low resources caused by poor detachment. In contrast, those in less satisfactory relationships likely have less motivation to invest further resources to restrain their own antisocial behaviors when their resources are depleted due to poor detachment, thereby making the link between detachment and social undermining more salient.

This assumption leads us to propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Relationship satisfaction moderates the effect of psychological detachment on social undermining such that the effect is weaker when relationship satisfaction is higher than when it is lower.

In relation to Hypothesis 4, we test whether relationship satisfaction moderates the effect of negative affect on social undermining to examine whether it is a unique moderator of the resource-based mechanism.

Next, combining the moderation effect with the reasoning about the mediation effect outlined earlier, we further propose:

Hypothesis 5a: The indirect relation between workload and social undermining through psychological detachment is weaker when relationship satisfaction is higher than when it is lower.

Hypothesis 5b: The indirect relation between workplace incivility and social undermining through psychological detachment is weaker when relationship satisfaction is higher than when it is lower.

The Present Research

This research aims to establish a resource-based mechanism (detachment) in the relationship between two work stressors—high workload and workplace incivility—and social undermining of the partner. Furthermore, we investigate whether the resource-based mechanism is of equal strength to the affect-based mechanism and whether relationship satisfaction moderates the proposed effect of detachment on partner undermining. Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of our research.

To test our model, we used data from two independent studies with different designs. In Study 1, we pilot-tested the plausibility of the causal order of the proposed resource-based mechanism. To examine the hypotheses related to the mediation effect (Hypotheses 1–3), we used data from a five-wave longitudinal study. Mediation hypotheses are hypotheses about causal processes,

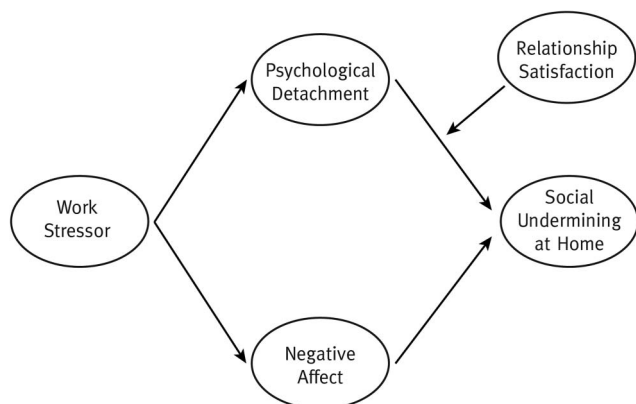


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study.

which require time to unfold (Cole & Maxwell, 2003). Although longitudinal analyses cannot provide evidence for causality when the study design is nonexperimental, longitudinal data allow for testing models that include assumptions about the temporal sequence of predictor, mediator, and outcome (Cole & Maxwell, 2003). Of importance, longitudinal mediation analyses avoid statistical biases inherent in cross-sectional mediation analyses (Maxwell & Cole, 2007).

In Study 2, we tested all five hypotheses and the research question using multisource data in which employees' partners reported social undermining by the focal employees. In some previous studies, work stressors predicted only self-reported but not partner-reported behavior at home (Schulz et al., 2004; Story & Repetti, 2006). It may therefore be possible that stressed individuals who fail to psychologically detach from work perceive their behavior toward the partner as inappropriate, but in actuality that lack of detachment has not led to antisocial behavior. Partner-reported data help to rule out this alternative explanation and to address potential common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012).

Study 1 (Longitudinal Study)

Method

Participants and procedure. We used data from a web-based longitudinal survey, which included five assessments at 2-month intervals. The participants were recruited with the help of master's-degree students from a Swiss university who advertised the study as widely as possible on the Internet, by word of mouth, and among their family members, neighbors, and coworkers.

The sample comprised 663 employees from various jobs. For the following analyses, 470 (51% female) employees who had a partner were included. The mean age of these participants was 33.5 years ($SD = 10.9$). Eight percent had completed only the compulsory years of schooling (~9 years), 52% had completed secondary education (~12 years), 15% had a bachelor's degree, and 25% had a master's or doctoral degree. Ninety-six percent lived in Switzerland, 3% in Germany, and 1% in other countries. Seventy percent of the participants worked full-time (about 42 hr/week; $M = 39.0$,

$SD = 6.0$). Organizational tenure ranged from 0.1 to 35.0 years ($M = 5.2$; $SD = 5.8$). Data were available for 470 individuals at Time 1, 373 individuals at Time 2, 340 individuals at Time 3, 289 individuals at Time 4, and 272 individuals at Time 5. To investigate the potential impact of attrition, differences in study variables were tested among participants who completed the Time 5 assessment and participants who dropped out of the study before Time 5. No significant differences emerged for any variable.

Measures. All surveys were conducted in German. For workplace incivility and social undermining measures, no German version of the surveys was available at the time of data collection. Therefore, a translation-back translation procedure was followed to translate the English measures into German. The first author and another person, each with a Ph.D. in psychology, translated the original version into German, and a bilingual expert back-translated it into English.

Workload was assessed with the four-item scale from the Instrument for Stress-Oriented Task Analysis (Semmer, Zapf, & Dunckel, 1995), a widely used measure in German-speaking countries (Sonnetag & Bayer, 2005). A sample item is "How often were you pressed for time?" The items referred to the past 30 days. Response format ranged from 1 (*very rarely/never*) to 5 (*very often*).

Workplace incivility was assessed using the seven-item scale developed by Cortina et al. (2001). A sample item is "How often have you been interrupted while you were talking?" The items referred to the past 30 days. Responses were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*to very often*).

Psychological detachment from work was assessed using the four-item scale from Sonnetag and Fritz (2007). A sample item is "During leisure time, I forgot about work." The items referred to the past 30 days. The 5-point response scale ranged from 1 (*disagree*) to 5 (*fully agree*).

Social undermining toward the partner was assessed with the six-item Family Undermining Scale from Hoobler and Brass (2006). A sample item is "I sometimes acted in an unpleasant or angry manner toward my partner when I came home from work." The items referred to the past 30 days. The 5-point response scale ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*completely*).

Statistical Analyses. The analyses of structural equation models were conducted using the Mplus 7 program (Muthén & Muthén, 2013). To deal with missing values, we used full-information maximum likelihood estimation to fit models directly to the raw data, which produces less biased and more reliable results compared with conventional methods of dealing with missing data, such as listwise or pairwise deletion (Newman, 2014). Model fit was assessed by the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index, and the root mean square error of approximation, based on recommendations by Hu and Bentler (1999) and MacCallum and Austin (2000). Good fit is indicated by values greater than or equal to .95 for CFI and Tucker-Lewis index and less than or equal to .06 for root mean square error of approximation (Hu & Bentler, 1999). To test for differences in model fit, we relied on model differences in fit indices recommended by Meade, Johnson, and Braddy (2008). According to their simulation, differences in CFI greater than .002 reflect significant changes in fit between models.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations of the measures used. In the analyses, measures were examined as latent variables. Following Little and colleagues (Little, 2013; Little, Rhemtulla, Gibson, & Schoemann, 2013), we used three item parcels as indicators for each construct because they produce more reliable latent variables than individual items.

In the first step, we tested whether measurement invariance across time existed for the latent variables (Schmitt & Kuljanin, 2008). We compared the fit of two measurement models. In the first measurement model, we freely estimated the factor loadings for 20 latent variables measuring workload, workplace incivility, detachment, and social undermining from Time 1 to Time 5 (Model 1). All factors were correlated with each other, and the uniquenesses of individual indicators were correlated over time to account for the consistency in indicator-specific variance (Cole & Maxwell, 2003). The fit of the first measurement model was good (Table 2). The second measurement model was identical to the first, except that we constrained the factor loadings of each indicator to be equal across time (Model 2). If the constrained model fit no worse than the unconstrained model, the constraints are empirically justified and ensure that the latent constructs have the same meaning over time (i.e., metric measurement invariance). Because the fit of the two models differed only negligibly ($\Delta CFI = .0002$), we favored the more parsimonious constrained model and retained the longitudinal constraints on factor loadings in subsequent analyses.

In the second step, we tested the fit of three structural cross-lagged models for each work stressor. In cross-lagged models, a latent variable at Time 2 is predicted by the same variable at Time 1 (the autocorrelation) and other latent variables at Time 1. The cross-lagged paths indicate the effect of one variable on the other, after controlling for the stability of the variables over time (Finkel, 1995). We accounted for variance due to measurement occasion by cross-

sectionally correlating the disturbances of the corresponding factors (Cole & Maxwell, 2003). In the first cross-lagged models (Models 3a and 3b), all structural coefficients were freely estimated. Model fits were good (Table 2). In the second cross-lagged models (Models 4a and 4b), we constrained the stability coefficients (i.e., autocorrelations) to be equal across all four time intervals. The differences in fit between Models 3 and 4 were negligible (for workload, $\Delta CFI < .001$; for incivility, $\Delta CFI = .002$). In the third cross-lagged models (Models 5a and 5b), we additionally constrained all cross-lagged coefficients to be equal across time. The differences in fit between Models 4 and 5 were negligible (for workload, $\Delta CFI = .001$; for incivility, $\Delta CFI < .001$). Consequently, we favored the parsimonious Models 5a and 5b and retained the longitudinal constraints on the structural parameter coefficients (stability coefficients and cross-lagged coefficients) in subsequent analyses.

As shown in Figure 2, workload had a negative lagged effect on detachment ($\beta = -.07, p = .01$). Thus, Hypothesis 1a was supported. However, workplace incivility had no lagged effect on detachment (β s = between $-.04$ and $-.05, p = .09$), disconfirming Hypothesis 1b. In addition, workplace incivility had a direct lagged effect on social undermining (β s = between $.10$ and $.11, p = .02$). In line with Hypothesis 2, detachment had a negative lagged effect on social undermining toward the partner in both the workload and the incivility models (β s = between $-.05$ and $-.06, p = .03$, and $\beta = -.06, p = .02$, respectively).

In the third step, we tested the proposed indirect effect in more detail, following recommendations by Maxwell, Cole, and Mitchell (2011). Because the magnitude of the indirect effect can vary depending on the chosen interval between assessments and because effects may accumulate across multiple intervals, we examined different time periods. We first tested the overall indirect effect of work stressors on social undermining over 8 months (i.e., all paths from work stressors at Time 1 to social undermining at

Table 1
Study 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of the Measures

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1. WL t1	3.12	0.86	(.81)																			
2. WL t2	3.09	0.87	.66	(.84)																		
3. WL t3	2.96	0.88	.57	.68	(.86)																	
4. WL t4	2.94	0.91	.58	.73	.75	(.87)																
5. WL t5	2.97	0.92	.51	.62	.60	.69	(.86)															
6. INC t1	1.83	0.81	.23	.10	.09	.17	.06	(.87)														
7. INC t2	1.71	0.70	.09	.12	.09	.18	.12	.61	(.84)													
8. INC t3	1.69	0.67	.13	.17	.15	.13	.11	.58	.67	(.84)												
9. INC t4	1.64	0.68	.09	.14	.13	.15	.12	.60	.69	.71	(.86)											
10. INC t5	1.64	0.79	.06	.09	.13	.12	.13	.51	.59	.60	.72	(.91)										
11. DET t1	3.49	0.97	-.29	-.22	-.19	-.25	-.19	-.22	-.22	-.25	-.19	-.20	(.92)									
12. DET t2	3.57	0.95	-.27	-.27	-.25	-.34	-.21	-.17	-.24	-.17	-.18	-.15	.62	(.94)								
13. DET t3	3.54	0.97	-.18	-.23	-.29	-.29	-.23	-.15	-.20	-.18	-.14	-.15	.52	.65	(.94)							
14. DET t4	3.60	0.99	-.26	-.35	-.36	-.46	-.36	-.22	-.28	-.23	-.25	-.25	.50	.65	.63	(.94)						
15. DET t5	3.56	1.04	-.14	-.20	-.23	-.37	-.33	-.17	-.28	-.21	-.26	-.26	.55	.59	.63	.65	(.95)					
16. SU t1	1.95	0.82	.34	.19	.18	.23	.09	.33	.23	.22	.22	.21	-.42	-.32	-.25	-.22	-.23	(.90)				
17. SU t2	1.86	0.75	.20	.21	.17	.19	.12	.29	.38	.28	.35	.28	-.29	-.39	-.27	-.30	-.19	.64	(.89)			
18. SU t3	1.83	0.67	.18	.21	.28	.33	.14	.27	.35	.35	.33	.31	-.35	-.34	-.40	-.40	-.32	.60	.65	(.87)		
19. SU t4	1.78	0.77	.16	.22	.26	.32	.13	.21	.33	.33	.40	.31	-.32	-.31	-.31	-.41	-.38	.57	.59	.74	(.91)	
20. SU t5	1.79	0.79	.15	.20	.25	.31	.31	.31	.29	.33	.39	.46	-.33	-.30	-.32	-.43	-.52	.49	.49	.61	.68	(.91)

Note. The α reliabilities are provided in parentheses on the diagonal. WL = workload; INC = workplace incivility; DET = psychological detachment; SU = social undermining toward the partner; t1–t5 = Time 1 to Time 5. Correlations $r > |.10|$ are significant at $p < .05$, two-tailed tests.

Table 2
Study 1: Fit of Models

Model	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [90% CI]
Measurement models					
1. Free loadings	1,846.83*	1400	.98	.97	.026 [.023, .029]
2. Longitudinal constraints on loadings	1,882.06*	1432	.98	.97	.026 [.023, .029]
Structural models for workload					
3a. Free structural coefficient	1,288.52*	828	.97	.96	.034 [.031, .038]
4a. Longitudinal constraints on stability coefficients	1,309.55*	837	.97	.96	.035 [.031, .038]
5a. Longitudinal constraints on stability and cross-lagged coefficients	1,343.43*	855	.97	.96	.035 [.031, .038]
Structural models for workplace incivility					
3b. Free structural coefficient	1,310.60*	828	.97	.96	.036 [.032, .039]
4b. Longitudinal constraints on stability coefficients	1,352.04*	837	.96	.96	.036 [.033, .040]
5b. Longitudinal constraints on stability and cross-lagged coefficients	1,371.81*	855	.96	.96	.036 [.032, .039]

Note. CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CI = confidence interval.
* $p < .05$.

Time 5 that pass through psychological detachment at least once). Following the suggestion by Preacher, Zyphur, and Zhang (2010), we tested the significance of the overall indirect (mediating) effect using the bias-corrected bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI) based on 5,000 bootstrap samples. For workload, the overall indirect effect was .012. The CI for the indirect effect was entirely above zero (unstandardized effect: .002–.032; Mplus provides bias-corrected bootstrap CI for unstandardized effects only), supporting Hypothesis 3a. For workplace incivility, the overall indirect effect was .009. The CI for the (unstandardized) effect included zero (–.001–.029); thus, Hypothesis 3b was not supported. We then tested the overall indirect effect for shorter periods. For workload, the indirect effect was also significant for the 4- and 6-month intervals (.004, 95% CI [.001, .011] and .009, 95% CI [.001, .023], respectively). For workplace incivility, the indirect effects were not significant (for 4 months: .003, 95% CI [–.001, .010]; for 6 months: .006, 95% CI [–.001, .021]). Mirroring the

findings for the effect over 8 months, with shorter time lags only Hypothesis 3a, but not Hypothesis 3b, was supported.

In sum, workload predicted a decrease in detachment, which in turn predicted an increase in social undermining toward the partner. The temporal order of the effects was as expected, and no reversed effects were observed. The findings further indicate that the indirect effect of workload on partner social undermining via lack of detachment is rather small, but it holds for different time lags and accumulates over time. Contrary to our expectation, workplace incivility had no negative lagged effect on detachment.

Study 2 (Multisource Study)

Method

Participants and procedure. Employees from several organizations, working in a variety of jobs, were recruited by master’s

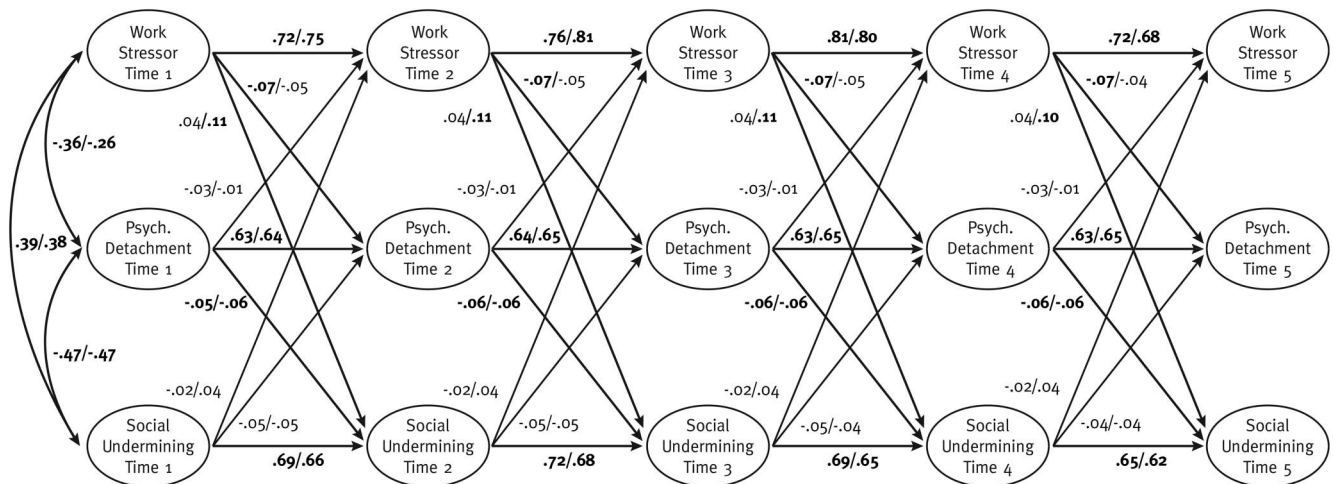


Figure 2. Standardized structural coefficients for the mediation model of work stressors, psychological detachment, and social undermining toward the partner in Study 1. Note. The figure shows only latent constructs and omits observed variables and within-wave correlations of residual variances. Coefficients for the model with workload as the work stressor are presented before the slash, and coefficients for the model with workplace incivility as the work stressor are presented after the slash. Significant coefficients are presented in bold.

degree students enrolled at a Swiss university. The employees were asked to participate in a study about organizational well-being. Individuals were eligible to participate if they had a partner who was also willing to fill in a survey.

We distributed 170 survey packages. A total of 151 employee (self-report) surveys and 147 partner (other-report) surveys were returned by mail, resulting in 131 matched pairs (78% response rate). Most employees were female (58%), with a mean age of 38.7 years ($SD = 12.4$). Two percent had completed only compulsory schooling (~9 years), 36% had completed secondary education (~12 years), 28% had a bachelor's degree, and 34% had a master's or doctoral degree. All participants lived in Switzerland. Fifty-six percent worked full-time (about 42 hr/week; $M = 36.0$, $SD = 8.9$). Organizational tenure ranged from 0.3 to 33.0 years ($M = 7.1$; $SD = 7.7$).

Measures. As in Study 1, workload was assessed by self-report using the four-item scale from the Instrument for Stress-Oriented Task Analysis (Semmer et al., 1995). Responses were measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*very rarely/never*) to 5 (*very often*).

As in Study 1, workplace incivility was assessed by self-report using the seven-item scale developed by Cortina et al. (2001). The original scale was adapted to measure supervisor and coworker behaviors separately, with 14 items in total. Responses were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*very often*).

As in Study 1, psychological detachment from work during leisure time was assessed by self-report using the four-item scale from Sonnentag and Fritz (2007). Responses were measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*disagree*) to 5 (*fully agree*).

Social undermining toward the partner was assessed by the partner's report using the six-item Family Undermining Scale from Hoobler and Brass (2006). The items were revised so partners could report the employees' behavior (e.g., "My partner sometimes acts in an unpleasant or angry manner toward me when s/he comes home from work"). Responses were measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*completely*).

Relationship satisfaction was assessed by self-report using the seven-item scale from Hendrick (1988; German translation by Hassebrauck, 1991). A sample item is "How satisfied are you with your relationship?" Responses were measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*very dissatisfied*) to 5 (*very satisfied*).

Finally, negative affect was assessed by self-report using the Job-Related Affective Well-Being Scale (Van Katwyk, Fox, Spector, & Kelloway, 2000; German translation by Bullinger, Heinisch, Ludwig, & Geier, 1990; Grünh, Kotter-Grünh, & Röcke, 2010).

Participants were asked to indicate how they felt during the past 30 days, using the five most extreme adjectives ("angry," "anxious," "furious," "disgusted," and "frightened") that Van Katwyk et al. (2000) selected for their combination of low pleasure and high arousal affect. Responses were measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*).

Results and Discussion

Table 3 shows the means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations of the measures used. To test Hypotheses 1 to 3, we examined a multiple mediation model using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013). Results are presented in Table 4.

In line with Hypotheses 1a and 1b, workload and workplace incivility were negatively related to detachment ($B = -.18$, $p = .04$, and $B = -.28$, $p = .03$, respectively). In line with Hypothesis 2, detachment had a negative association with partner-reported social undermining in both the workload and the incivility models ($B = -.24$, $p = .02$, and $B = -.26$, $p = .01$, respectively). Finally, the CI for the indirect effect of detachment was entirely above zero, supporting Hypotheses 3a and 3b (for workload, $B = .04$, 95% CI [.004, .125]; for incivility, $B = .07$, 95% CI [.012, .188]). In the context of the research question, results showed that both psychological detachment and negative affect mediated the effect of work stressors on social undermining (Table 4) and that the two indirect effects do not differ significantly for workload ($\Delta = -.005$, 95% CI [-.081, .080]) or for incivility ($\Delta = -.106$, 95% CI [-.302, .074]), suggesting that the two mechanisms are equally strong.

To test Hypotheses 4 and 5, we examined a moderated mediation model (Hayes, 2013) for workload and workplace incivility separately. In these models, the second stage of the proposed mediation chain (i.e., detachment \rightarrow partner social undermining) was moderated by relationship satisfaction. Results are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

As proposed in Hypothesis 4, the effect of detachment on partner social undermining was moderated by relationship satisfaction (workload model, $B = .36$, $p = .03$; incivility model, $B = .35$, $p = .04$). Specifically, the effect was weaker among individuals with higher (+1 SD) relationship satisfaction ($B = .02$, $p = .91$) than among individuals with lower (-1 SD) relationship satisfaction ($B = -.40$, $p < .01$). This pattern is shown in Figure 3. Furthermore, supporting Hypotheses 5a and 5b, the indirect effects of workload and workplace incivility on partner social undermining via detachment were weaker among individuals with

Table 3
Study 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of the Measures

Variables ^a	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Workload	3.25	0.73	(.80)					
2. Workplace incivility	1.54	0.51	.05	(.88)				
3. Psychological detachment	3.44	0.76	-.18*	-.19*	(.88)			
4. Social undermining toward partner	2.00	0.88	.23*	.13	-.28*	(.91)		
5. Relationship satisfaction	4.36	0.59	.04	-.40*	.15	-.35*	(.91)	
6. Negative affect	2.19	0.68	.22*	.47*	-.28*	.27*	-.27*	(.83)

Note. The α reliabilities are provided in parentheses on the diagonal.

^a Social undermining toward the partner was reported by the partner; all other variables were self-reports.

* $p < .05$, two-tailed tests.

Table 4
 Study 2: Unstandardized Effects of the Multiple Mediation Model (Hypotheses 1–3)

Mediator	WS → Mediator	Mediator → SU	Indirect effect WS → Mediator → SU [95% CI]
Work stressor (WS): Workload			
Psychological detachment	-.18* (.09)	-.24* (.10)	.04* [.004, .125]
Negative affect	.20* (.08)	.24* (.11)	.05* [.012, .122]
Work stressor (WS): Incivility			
Psychological detachment	-.28* (.13)	-.26* (.10)	.07* [.012, .188]
Negative affect	.62* (.10)	.29* (.13)	.18* [.045, .355]

Note. SU = social undermining toward the partner; CI = confidence interval. Standard errors are reported in round parentheses. Pairwise comparisons of the indirect effects indicated that they do not differ significantly (for workload: $\Delta = -.005$, 95% CI [-.081, .080]; for incivility: $\Delta = -.106$, 95% CI [-.302, .074]).

* $p < .05$, two-tailed tests.

higher relationship satisfaction (for workload, $B = -.003$, 95% CI [-.061, .036]; for incivility, $B = .008$, 95% CI [-.064, .082]) than among those with lower relationship satisfaction (for workload, $B = .07$, 95% CI [.010, .199]; for incivility, $B = .121$, 95% CI [.024, .319]).

We conducted several post hoc analyses. First, we tested whether relationship satisfaction moderates the relationship between work stressors and detachment, because it is plausible that those who are satisfied with their relationship may be more motivated to psychologically detach from work and focus on the partner during off-job time. Results suggested that relationship satisfaction does not moderate the stressor–detachment relationship for either work stressor (workload model, $B = .13$, $p > .20$; incivility model, $B = -.15$, $p > .20$). Thus, regardless of the level of relationship satisfaction, employees had difficulties to psychologically detach from work when experiencing high work stressors. Second, we examined the moderating role of relationship satisfaction in the link between negative mood and partner social undermining to test whether the proposed moderating effect is specific to the resource-based mechanism. Relationship satisfaction did not moderate the effect of negative mood on partner social undermining (workload model, $B = .33$, $p = .08$; incivility model, $B = .36$, $p = .07$).² Thus, relationship satisfaction seems to be a unique boundary condition for the resource-based mechanism that links work and family.³

In sum, the results supported our hypotheses that work stressors indirectly affect partner social undermining via lack of detachment. This finding aligns with extant research that has demonstrated the detrimental effect of work stressors on employees' private lives due to the difficulty of mentally switching off during off-job time (Demsky et al., 2014; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Importantly, detachment had a mediating effect on social undermining that is comparable with that of negative affect. Furthermore, the effect of poor detachment on social undermining toward the partner was contingent upon the employee's relationship satisfaction. In line with our assumption, lack of detachment had a weaker detrimental effect on people with higher relationship satisfaction than on those with lower relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction was a boundary condition unique to the relationship between detachment and undermining, as it moderated neither the stressor–detachment link nor the negative affect–undermining link.

General Discussion

The objective of the present research was to extend our understanding of how work stressors may lead to dysfunctional behavior at home. To this end, we examined the mediating role of poor psychological detachment as a resource-based mechanism in the relationship of two work stressors (workload and workplace incivility) with social undermining toward the partner. We also explored the relative strengths of a resource-based (detachment) and the affect-based (negative affect) mechanisms. We further investigated whether relationship satisfaction is a boundary condition of the hypothesized effect of detachment on partner social undermining.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Our research makes several important theoretical contributions. First, we advance the literature on the spillover–crossover process (Bakker & Demerouti, 2013) that has examined the affect-based mechanism as the chief underlying reason why stressed employees engage in certain behaviors at home (Barling & MacEwen, 1992; Story & Repetti, 2006). We introduced lack of detachment as a resource-based mechanism by which work stressors affect partner social undermining. That is, poor detachment resulting from work stressors inhibits resource replenishment during off-job time, which in turn increases employees' hostile marital behaviors due to a lack of resources needed to restrain such behaviors. Crucially, our findings indicate that the indirect effects of this resource-based mechanism are equally strong as those of the well-established affect-based mechanism, which reinforces the suggestion that var-

² These estimates come from a model including both mediators (i.e., detachment and negative affect), presented in Tables 5 and 6. Additional analyses with only negative affect as a mediator confirmed the nonsignificant interaction effect of negative affect and relationship satisfaction (workload model, $B = .22$, $p > .20$; incivility model, $B = .24$, $p > .20$).

³ In line with this, a formal test of the moderated mediation effects (i.e., index of moderated mediation; Hayes, 2015) indicated that relationship satisfaction moderated the indirect effect via psychological detachment (for workload, Index = $-.07$, 95% CI [-.19, $-.01$]; for incivility, Index = $-.10$, 95% CI [-.28, $-.01$]), but not the indirect effect via negative affect (for workload, Index = $.07$, 95% CI [-.02, .19]; for incivility, Index = $.22$, 95% CI [-.03, .47]).

Table 5

Study 2: Unstandardized Coefficient Estimates for the Moderated Mediation Model for Workload as Work Stressor (Hypotheses 4 and 5a)

Predictor	First stage (Workload → Mediators)				Second stage (Mediators → Social undermining)			
	Psychological detachment		Negative affect		Social undermining toward the partner			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Workload	-.18*	.09	.20*	.08	.19*	.10	.21*	.10
Psychological detachment (DET)					-.24*	.10	-.19*	.10
Negative affect (NA)					.24*	.11	.17	.11
Relationship satisfaction (RS)							-.48*	.13
DET × RS							.36*	.17
NA × RS							.34	.19
<i>R</i> ²	.03*		.05*		.14*		.26*	
<i>F</i> (<i>dfs</i>)	4.16* (1, 129)		6.24* (1, 129)		6.94* (3, 127)		7.32* (6, 124)	
ΔR^2							.12*	
ΔF (<i>dfs</i>)							6.76* (3, 124)	

* $p < .05$, two-tailed tests.

ious understudied pathways between work and family merit further research (Butler et al., 2013).

In examining the boundary condition of the detachment–undermining link, we found that relationship satisfaction acts as a buffer that attenuates the detrimental effect of lack of detachment on undermining. For individuals with greater relationship satisfaction, poor detachment was not related to social undermining. In contrast, individuals with lower relationship satisfaction engaged in more social undermining after insufficient detachment. Of interest, relationship satisfaction seemed to be a unique moderator of the resource-based mechanism, supporting our assumption that individuals with higher relationship satisfaction are more motivated to protect their relationships than those with lower relationship satisfaction, and thus exert extra resources to restrain themselves from antisocial behavior when resources were depleted. This result aligns with Wang et al.'s (2011) model, which proposes that commitment primarily affects the resource-based mechanism. In short, our findings indicate that a resource-based mechanism is a unique pathway that links work and family and that the spillover process may unfold differently depending on individual characteristics. However, it should be noted that some studies suggest that relationship satisfaction may also moderate the affect-based mechanism. In a diary study by Schulz et al. (2004), high relationship satisfaction attenuated the detrimental effect of negative mood on antisocial behavior toward the partner for men. Somewhat unexpectedly, the effect was stronger for women who were satisfied with their relationship than for women who were unsatisfied.⁴ Taken together, these findings suggest that more research is needed to examine similarities and differences in how various individual characteristics affect the linking mechanisms between work and family.

Next, by considering two unlike work stressors, the current research demonstrates that the mechanisms by which various work stressors affect family life may differ. Further complicating matters, these differences may emerge only over time. In our cross-sectional study, both high workload and workplace incivility were related to poor detachment, which in turn was related to the behavioral strain of partner social undermining. In contrast, in our longitudinal study, workload only indirectly affected undermining

at home through poor detachment, whereas workplace incivility had a direct relation with undermining. Building on the current findings, future research could expand upon and refine the spillover–crossover model by more explicitly testing the relative strengths of the two pathways, which may differ according to the type of work stressor or the time interval between stressor and strain.

The present research findings have significant practical implications as well. First, employees are advised to adopt strategies to effectively detach from work when off the job, because poor detachment could affect not only their own well-being but also that of their family members. Previous studies have shown that mindfulness exercises (Hülshager et al., 2014; but see also Hülshager, Feinholdt, & Nübold, 2015) and a recovery training program (Hahn, Binnewies, Sonnentag, & Mojza, 2011) help employees detach from work. Organizations could facilitate employees' recovery by providing mindfulness and recovery training and encouraging them to create work plans at the end of the workday, a process that Smit (2016) has shown to facilitate detachment. Second, our findings suggest that individuals with lower relationship satisfaction are at particular risk when they recover insufficiently from work. This finding, however, also means that switching off from work during leisure time can be a useful coping strategy to avoid undermining one's partner, especially for individuals who are dissatisfied with the relationship.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

First, the present research used naturalistic study designs that did not allow us to make causal conclusions. Although we examined prospective effects in Study 1, which may inform us about the causal order, even such cross-lagged panel designs cannot yield causal inferences as confidently as experimental designs (Finkel, 1995). Second, our participants were volunteers recruited using a snowball sampling technique and were more educated than Swiss

⁴ Post hoc analyses indicated that gender moderated neither the effect of negative affect nor the effect of psychological detachment on social undermining in our study.

Table 6
 Study 2: Unstandardized Coefficient Estimates for the Moderated Mediation Model for Workplace Incivility as Work Stressor (Hypotheses 4 and 5b)

Predictor	First stage (Incivility → Mediators)				Second stage (Mediators → Social undermining)			
	Psychological detachment		Negative affect		Social undermining toward the partner			
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Incivility	-.28*	.13	.62*	.10	-.03	.17	-.17	.10
Psychological detachment (DET)					-.26*	.10	-.23*	.10
Negative affect (NA)					.29*	.13	.27*	.12
Relationship satisfaction (RS)							-.50*	.13
DET × RS							.35*	.17
NA × RS							.36	.19
R ²	.04*		.22*		.14*		.26*	
F(df _s)	4.80* (1, 128)		36.79* (1, 128)		5.57* (3, 126)		6.42* (6, 123)	
Δ R ²							.12*	
Δ F(df _s)							6.55* (3, 123)	

* $p < .05$, two-tailed tests.

workers in general (Federal Statistical Office, 2014). This might limit the generalizability of our findings, although the magnitude and impact on the findings are unclear. On the one hand, highly educated individuals tend to react less vehemently to stressors (Almeida, 2005). On the other, highly educated individuals (or those with high socioeconomic status in general) tend to be less able to unwind from work during off hours (Cromptley & Zijlstra, 2011). Future research on the associations among work stressors, detachment, and social undermining within the family would benefit from using probability samples (Grzywacz, Carlson, & Reboussin, 2013). Third, although resource depletion was proposed as the reason why lack of detachment leads to undermining, this was not directly measured in our study. However, existing evidence supports our argument that lack of detachment relates to a further drain on resources (Sonnetag, 2012; Westman et al., 2004), a draining that in turn increases impulsive and aggressive

interpersonal behaviors (Baumeister & Exline, 1999; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Future research to examine each step of the resource-based mechanism linking work and family is warranted.

The current research used a five-wave longitudinal design at 2-month intervals to test the effects of work stressors on detachment over a rather long period. The lagged effects were generally small, although the indirect effect of workload on social undermining via poor detachment seems to accumulate over time. This corroborates recent meta-analysis about prospective effects of work stressors and strain (Ford et al., 2014), showing that the (corrected) effect of work stressors on psychological strain is rather small ($\beta = \sim .04$) for short time lags (i.e., less than a year) but tends to increase over time. Thus, prolonged exposure to work stressors seems to lead to a loss of resources, possibly resulting in increased antisocial behavior in the long run. But existing studies indicate that work stressors may also trigger antisocial behavior toward family members in the short run (Repetti et al., 2009). It is noteworthy that our research is mute about such short-term effects. As mentioned earlier, the strength of the affect- and resource-based pathway likely depends on the type of stressors, the temporal solution of the stressor-strain relationship, or a combination of both. Arguably, the effects of incivility on detachment might be rather short-lived as shown in a previous diary study (Nicholson & Griffin, 2015). This may in part explain the null relationship between incivility and detachment from our longitudinal study, as the longer time interval may not have captured the effect of incivility on detachment. Because research that adopts a shorter time interval might be more suitable for examining different pathways through which work stressors influence employees' behavior at home, we call for more research using a daily diary approach.

In the present research, we examined relationship satisfaction as a moderator, but its role is likely manifold. For instance, relationship satisfaction had a direct relation with social undermining ($r = -.35$), suggesting that employees with low relationship satisfaction behave more antisocially. Alternatively, social undermining may negatively affect the partner's satisfaction with the relationship, in turn reducing the focal employee's own satisfaction (Westman et al., 2004). We therefore encourage researchers to

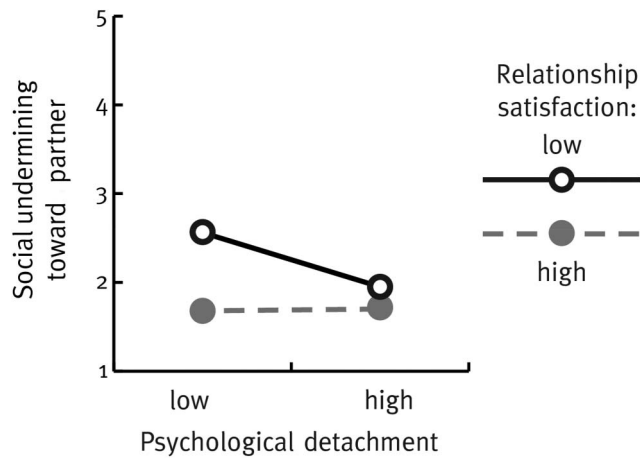


Figure 3. Moderating effect of relationship satisfaction in Study 2. Predicted values for partner-reported social undermining toward the partner depending on employee's self-reported psychological detachment and relationship satisfaction.

examine the complex role of the employee's as well as the partner's relationship satisfaction in the spillover–crossover process.

Expanding the current research, future researchers may want to explore other potential moderators of the resource-based mechanism in the spillover–crossover model. Although we focused on the detachment–strain link, the stressor–detachment link is likely to be moderated by an employee's resources (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). As a resource in the family domain, spousal recovery support, which refers to behaviors that generate and promote opportunities and experiences to help the spouse to recover from work, was shown to facilitate various recovery experiences such as detachment (Park & Fritz, 2015). It is thus plausible that employees whose spouses support their recovery are better able to mentally switch off from work after stressful work experiences, thereby attenuating the stressor–detachment link. Support at work is also an important resource that can mitigate the negative effects of work stressors on detachment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). If employees know they can rely on their coworkers and supervisors when they need help, they might dwell less on particular work stressors. Last, some individual differences may moderate the stressor–detachment link. Employees who are heavily invested in their work (i.e., high work centrality) have been shown to experience more difficulty in psychologically detaching from work (Wendsche & Lohmann-Haislah, 2017). Because these individuals tend to spend more time and invest more energy in work-related thoughts and activities, the impact of work stressors on detachment may be amplified.

Conclusion

The present research broadens our understanding of the mechanisms by which work stressors affect family life by establishing detachment as a resource-based pathway between work and family. Findings from two studies—a longitudinal study and a multi-source study—suggest that stressful work experiences lead to poor detachment, which is likely to cause antisocial behavior toward the partner. Importantly, the indirect effect of the resource-based mechanism was comparable with that of the affect-based mechanism. Last, high relationship satisfaction mitigated the detrimental effects of poor detachment from work on marital behavior.

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