

Do Transnational Child-Raising Arrangements Affect Job Outcomes of Migrant Parents? Comparing Angolan Parents in Transnational and NonTransnational Families in the Netherlands

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Abstract

Transnational family literature has established that parent–child separations affect negatively on the emotional well-being of migrant parents. Less attention has been paid to other effects separation can have on these parents’ lives. Building on insights from transnational family studies and organizational psychology, this article explores the potential link between transnational family life and job outcomes. In particular, two potential negative outcomes are analyzed—job instability and job absenteeism—by comparing Angolan parents whose children live in Angola with Angolans who live with all their children in the Netherlands. Based on mechanisms identified by organizational psychology literature, mediation analysis is conducted. Results indicate that transnational family life increases the times migrant parents change jobs, which is partly mediated by low levels of happiness. Further analyses indicate

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that especially transnational parents who have limited contact with their children change jobs more often. No significant differences are found with regard to job absenteeism.

Keywords

transnational families, migrant parents, job outcomes, Angolans, the Netherlands

Introduction

After several decades of migration research that was focused on the migration of intact family units and families being associated with the locus of residence, family migration scholars have turned their focus to transnational family arrangements resulting from international migration (Dreby & Adkins, 2010; Mazzucato & Schans, 2011). Although exact numbers of transnational families worldwide are unknown, today, the number of transnational families seems to be on the rise, with both men and women migrating independently without their families (Dreby, 2007; Madianou & Miller, 2012; Schmalzbauer, 2004; United Nations, 2006). Some argue that this is the result of global capitalism, global inequalities, and the current international division of labor in which individuals are encouraged and at times forced to migrate to ensure the family's economic well-being. Especially, migrants from developing countries tend to take up low-wage service labor that is needed in industrialized countries, while leaving nonproductive family members, such as children, behind (Dreby, 2007; Harper & Martin, 2013; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2001; Peng & Wong, 2016; Schmalzbauer, 2004). Restrictive immigration policies, high migration costs, and difficult living and working conditions in the host country provide disincentives for families to migrate together. Yet some parents prefer to leave their children in their origin country to grow up in familiar cultural environments, supported by extended family (Coe, 2008).

Transnational family scholars have argued that while transnational parenting can provide more financial security to their families, transnational parent-child separation can also have negative consequences for parents and children. It has, for example, been found that parents and children are negatively affected in their emotional well-being and health, and children in their educational performance or aspirations (Dreby, 2007; Harper & Martin, 2013; Horton, 2009; Kandel & Kao, 2001; Parreñas, 2005; Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002; Wen & Lin, 2012; Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012). Yet while family sociology and transnational migration studies have investigated the emotional consequences of transnational family life for children

and their parents, other important consequences for parents' lives are less researched. As Glick (2010) indicates in her review of research on immigrant families, "there has been rather limited attention to the balance of work and family life among immigrants when compared to other domains" (p. 506). And, one aspect that has been neglected in transnational family research in particular is how being in a transnational family affects parents' labor market outcomes, especially since the economic returns of this labor are an important part of transnational parenting (Kandel & Kao, 2001; Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012). The ability to send remittances and provide for the family is the main reason why some parents migrate in the first place and remittances are found to be of major importance for maintaining transnational family relations (Dreby, 2006; Dreby & Adkins, 2010; Harper & Martin, 2013; Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012). In addition, studies from organizational psychology lead us to believe that there are various ways in which transnational parenting can be related to job outcomes. This study therefore aims to contribute to transnational family studies by exploring the association between transnational parents' work and family lives.

Working-class migrants often face downward mobility and economic strain when living in the host country (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). On arrival, opportunities of finding work are often only available in certain low-paid sectors such as cleaning, if at all. Not speaking the new language, qualifications not being recognized, not having a work permit, and discrimination are compounding factors (Spitzer, Neufeld, Harrison, Hughes, & Stewart, 2003; Wright, 2011). The insecure but also inflexible employments migrants often find themselves in can be extra demanding and stressful when a migrant also has caregiving responsibilities, draining energy and time. A lack of kin support and the reluctance of migrants of non-Western origin to use expensive formal child care services only exacerbate the strain these migrants feel (Ornelas, Perreira, Beeber, & Maxwell, 2009; Spitzer et al., 2003). On the other hand, child-raising arrangements in which care is arranged transnationally do not necessarily lift caregiving responsibilities and can also be a cause of stress. Transnational family studies have argued that transnational separation can lead to lower levels of well-being for parents (Aranda, 2003; Haagsman, Mazzucato, & Dito, 2015; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Horton, 2009; Parreñas, 2001; Schmalzbauer, 2004). This in turn can affect concentration and performance at the job. Thus, the rearing of children in the country of origin could have either positive or negative effects on the job outcomes of the parents. Therefore, this study wants to explore this association and does so by comparing the job performance of Angolan parents whose children live in the home country with Angolan parents whose children live with them in the Netherlands while controlling for compounding factors.

Angolans predominantly migrated as asylum seekers to the Netherlands, while most transnational parents that have been studied are labor migrants (Rask, Warsame, & Borell, 2014). The postconflict setting in Angola and the asylum procedure have created different transnational family arrangements in comparison with labor migrants, which can affect the effect transnational separation has on their lives in the Netherlands (Dito, Mazzucato, & Schans, 2017; Haagsman & Mazzucato, 2014). Particularly now with a growing refugee population and the current “refugee crisis,” we need to understand the transnational engagements of refugees and how that affects their lives better. Especially, as research has shown that, just like other migrants, transnational activities are important in refugee’s lives and this can affect their life in the host country (Al-Ali, Black, & Koser, 2001; Horst, 2008; Rask et al., 2014). And, as this study shows, the same holds true for transnational family life. Moreover, as a result of the fact that numerous Angolans went through the same migration trajectory many Angolans have similar socioeconomic and migration status, which makes it easier to single out the association between transnational family life and job outcomes.

Work and Family Life

Significant research attention has been given to the difficulties people face balancing work and family life and on factors leading to favorable job outcomes. Yet no such research has been conducted among families in which care is arranged transnationally. Based on two bodies of literature—work–family conflict and the happy productive worker thesis—a theoretical framework is proposed to investigate the effects transnational parent–child separation has on job outcomes of migrant parents. This literature has mainly studied job outcomes by looking at job performance while the current study concentrates on job instability and absenteeism. Although the particular outcomes are thus slightly different, we can still draw important lessons from this literature.

Work–Family Conflict

Although not particularly focused on migrants, occupational stress research on work–family interactions has shown that both work and family life are negatively affected when demands of one domain affect the other (Adams, King, & King, 1996; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Lapierre & Allen, 2006). Workers with child care responsibilities, for example, experience difficulties with juggling family and work, which can result in conflict when demands of participation in the family domain are incompatible with

demands in the work domain and vice versa (Adams et al., 1996). A long-standing and extensive literature has consistently shown that work and family life are intrinsically and reciprocally related. Higher levels of work interfering with family are related to poor family role performance, burn-out, and health complaints (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Conley, 1991; Burke, 1988; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Voydanoff, 2005). Conversely, family-to-work conflict is also associated with lower job satisfaction, less organizational commitment and more distress at the job (Frone et al., 1992; Voydanoff, 2005; Wiley, 1987).

The extent to which family life creates strain on work and vice-versa is related to the nature of family, care and work arrangements, and structural and social demands of the family (Grzywacz et al., 2007; Kossek, Jason, & Noe, 2001). A worker whose spouse stays at home to take care of the children is less likely to experience family-to-work conflict than a family of dual earners or a single parent with preschool-aged children (Adams et al., 1996). Especially, family support is of importance as it relieves the employee of family-related responsibilities and offers the employee more time and energy to fulfil responsibilities at work (Lapierre & Allen, 2006). If working parents have family to help with caregiving when children are sick, they are less likely to experience work-family conflict (Kossek, 1990). Ethnicity, gender, age, marital status, social class, and occupation are also important (Voydanoff, 2002). The presence of children, moreover, is more likely to affect job participation of mothers than that of fathers as they are often seen as the primary caregiver (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999).

Caregiving decisions are only linked to lower levels of well-being and increased conflict when they do not fit the family or work environment. For example, research has shown that the more one is devoted to caregiving the less one is able to commit to an organization, which can affect job performance (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). Hence, well-being and job outcomes are affected negatively when the carer has to make sacrifices in one role to fulfil another. However, what appears to be most important for the perceptions of work-family conflict are not so much the type of care arrangement used but the satisfaction the parent has with the caregiving arrangements (Kossek et al., 2001).

In transnational families, the provision of everyday practical care (containing e.g., provision of food, taking care of children when they fall ill, picking the children up from school, and attending events of the children) is not given by the migrant parent in the host country but by a caregiver in the country of origin. Based on the work-family conflict thesis, it can therefore be hypothesized as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Migrant parents whose children are in the country of origin, experience less family-to-work conflict than parents who live with their children in the host country and this leads to favorable job outcomes, as measured by job stability and attendance.

Happy Productive Worker Thesis

Research on well-being has consistently shown that happiness is related to various forms of success. Success leads to happiness but longitudinal research also shows that happiness can predict success (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). People who generally have positive emotions are more sensitive to rewards in their environment and are more likely to move toward rather than shun rewarding situations (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Therefore, they are more optimistic about future events and are more proactive, resilient, and less prone to stress symptoms (Wright, Cropanzano, & Bonett, 2007). People who have negative emotions, instead, become more disengaged with the world and are less optimistic that their hard work will lead to success (Wright, Cropanzano, Denney, & Moline, 2002). Positive and negative affect or happiness can be ingrained in the personality of an individual, but may also be rooted in the person's current life circumstances or a combination of these (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

Based on the above, we can assume that "satisfied and psychologically well employees are more likely than those less satisfied and psychologically well to have the resources necessary to foster and facilitate increased levels of job performance" (Wright et al., 2007, p. 97). In other words, happiness stimulates activity and work involvement. This is captured in the happy productive worker thesis developed by some organizational theorists, which posits that workers who are happy perform better at their job than do employees who are unhappy (Wright et al., 2002; Wright et al., 2007). Although this thesis was received with skepticism at first, a small but growing body of empirical research has found support for the happy productive worker thesis. Evidence from cross-sectional but also longitudinal research corroborate that happy workers enjoy multiple advantages in comparison with unhappy workers, and, most important, perform better at their job. Staw, Sutton, and Pelled (1994) found that employees who had positive emotions had greater pay 18 months later, more social support on the job and received better performance evaluations. Similarly, studies by Wright, Cropanzano, and colleagues using various methods and research designs have found that well-being leads to better job performance even when controlling for age, gender, education, and tenure at the organization (e.g., Cropanzano & Wright, 1999, 2001; Wright et al., 2002; Wright et al., 2007; Wright & Staw, 1999).

People with high levels of subjective well-being are more likely to secure job interviews, appear to secure better jobs, show superior performance and productivity, are more efficient, can handle managerial jobs better, are less likely to show counterproductive workplace behavior, get more support from coworkers, and are more satisfied with their job (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Happy people receive good performance evaluations and are satisfied with their jobs and consequently, they are less often absent from work, less likely to want to quit, and less likely to experience job burnout or withdrawal (Donovan, 2000; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Finally, gender, education, ethnicity, wealth, marriage, and family support are important resources that can act as coping mechanisms.

The above body of knowledge has implications for transnational families. Various qualitative studies have indicated that when migrant parents live separated from their children they are emotionally affected. If they do not have regular physical contact with their children, parents experience difficulties in maintaining strong emotional bonds with their children. This loss of intimacy and the fact that parents long to be with their children can lead to stress, feelings of guilt, loneliness, and even to depression (Aranda, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Horton, 2009; Parreñas, 2001; Schmalzbauer, 2004). These qualitative findings are partly corroborated by a larger scale study which shows that parents who live separated from their children generally experience lower subjective well-being than parents who live with their children, although contextual factors play an important role (Haagsman et al., 2015). Hence, bringing these two bodies of literature together, we can posit the opposite hypothesis than the one aforementioned:

Hypothesis 2: Migrant parents whose children live in the country of origin will have unfavorable job outcomes, as measured by job instability and absenteeism, in comparison with migrant parents who live with their children in the host country due to their lower subjective well-being.

In the remainder of this article, these two contradictory hypotheses are tested. Before doing so, a short description of the group under study is given.

Migration Context

This article draws on data collected among Angolan migrant parents in the Netherlands, a non-Western country of origin. The majority of the evidence for the happy productive worker thesis and work–family conflict, however, comes from Westernized industrialized countries in which happiness is highly valued. Other cultures can hold different definitions of success (Lyubomirsky

et al., 2005). Also, the extent to which and the way in which individuals experience work–family conflict is dependent on the broader sociocontextual circumstances and norms and values regarding work and family that are dominant in society (Grzywacz et al., 2007). For example, if hard work is valued and seen as necessary for family well-being and work–conflict is not interpreted as being stressful, it will less likely affect well-being and job or family outcomes. Therefore, these theses might not apply to the same extent to Angolans. Below the Angolan migration flow and the position this group holds in the Netherlands will be shortly described, as that might affect the outcomes of the analyses.

Major migration from Angola began at the end of the 1990s as a result of a war that lasted until 2002. The Angolan migrants in the Netherlands originated predominantly from middle-class families. The main reasons for migration were fear of being forced to fight in the army, the shortage of study and work opportunities in Angola, and poverty (van Wijk, 2008). The Netherlands became a major destination country for Angolan asylum seekers because of its favorable asylum policies for this group of migrants at the time. Until 2002, it was relatively easy for Angolans to apply for asylum in the Netherlands, especially for Unaccompanied Asylum seeking Minors (UAM), that is, asylum seekers younger than age 18 migrating without parents or other family members (van Wijk, 2007). Consequently, about half of the Angolan migrants in the Netherlands came as an UAM resulting in a rather young Angolan population. Resulting, at its peak in 2004, in over 12,000 Angolans residing in the Netherlands (Central Bureau for Statistics, 2015). Yet as many Angolans have returned or were forced to return after the war ended in 2002, only around 8,500 Angolans remain in the Netherlands today (Central Bureau for Statistics, 2015).

Because Angolans, and new immigrant groups in general, do not belong to the major migrant groups in the Netherlands, they are understudied and consequently there are no official data on their labor market participation. However, some general trends can be established based on our data and reports of others. First, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2008) reports that in 2000, 20% of the Angolans living in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries had received tertiary education, which is similar to our data in which 20% has received vocational training or higher. Second, asylum seekers generally integrate more slowly into the labor market as they are not allowed to work when awaiting asylum and traumas can stand in the way of labor market participation (van Heelsum, 2005). Nevertheless, Angolans have been in the Netherlands for quite some time and a large proportion was able to receive residence permits and is consequently legally residing in the Netherlands. Furthermore, UAMs received a Dutch

education resulting in good Dutch language proficiency and a better position in the labor market than many other new migrant groups. That is, the UAMs that came in before 2001. After 2001, less opportunities were given to UAMs. Nonetheless, our data indicate that Angolans have a relatively good position in the labor market, with only 1% being unemployed and 18% being in unskilled labor. Moreover, no differences are found in the occupational status of transnational and nontransnational Angolan parents (Haagsman, 2015). Thus, the fact that many Angolans followed a similar migration trajectory and hence have received similar opportunities that have resulted in a population with relatively good and comparable socioeconomic status in comparison with other new immigrant groups.

Data and Analysis

The present research draws on survey data collected in the TCRAF-Eu project¹ investigating the functioning of transnational families among Angolan migrant parents in the Netherlands. The survey collected data from both transnational parents and parents who live with all their children in the Netherlands. Having both groups allows exploring specifically the effect of the separation. To be eligible for this study, respondents had to have children younger than age 21 living in the host or origin country, have lived in the Netherlands for more than 1 year consecutively, and had to be older than 16 years when coming to the Netherlands. Purposive sampling resulted in 139 transnational and 167 nontransnational Angolan parents (for more details about the data collection and characteristics of the transnational and nontransnational families in this study, see Haagsman, 2015).

Variable Constructions

Two job outcomes are studied: absenteeism and job stability. These are indicators that are easy to quantify and are more objective than other measures often used such as assessment by the employer (Pelled & Xin, 1999). The first is measured by days absent in the past 3 months and the second by the number of times the migrant changed jobs while being in the Netherlands. Both are treated as continuous variables. The variable days absent is positively skewed, thus, a logarithmic form is used to create a normally distributed variable. In some economic studies, job mobility is considered a positive outcome as it can reflect change to better jobs, promotion, and wage growth (Rosenfeld, 1992; Sicherman & Galor, 1990). However, in the Angolan case, changing jobs is a result of their insecure labor position and not because of career improvement. In fact, the data show that Angolans who were in

high-skilled labor and of higher socioeconomic status have had significantly less job changes than those in unskilled and skilled labor and of low socioeconomic status.

To test the first part of the hypotheses concerning the mediating role of work-to-family conflict, the following statements were used: "Worrying about my children interferes with my ability to get things done at work" and "I often miss work because I am worried about my children." Respondents could answer on a five category Likert-type scale, from *have not experienced* (0), *experienced but not at all stressful* (1) to *extremely stressful* (4). These two items were combined in one scale and averaged, with higher scores indicating increased conflict. A reliability assessment shows that the scale is reliable with a Cronbach's alpha of .74. From this measure, a binary variable was created because it was skewed. The value 0 was given to those who experienced no stress (0-1) and the value 1 was given to those who experienced various levels of stress (2-5). While we report on the binary variable, the continuous variable and binary variable resulted in similar findings.

The other mediating variable pertaining to the second set of hypotheses is happiness. Happiness was assessed using a 5-point scale ranging from *not happy* to *very happy*. To account for skewness, a binary variable was created by recoding the first three answer categories in *unhappy* (0) and the last two as *happy* (1). To analyze the robustness of the results, the same models were reestimated with a measure of mental health status, namely the 12-item General Health Questionnaire developed by Goldberg (1992). We also ran the analyses with happiness as a continuous variable. All these analyses produced virtually similar results.

In examining (a) the association between transnational parent's work and transnational family lives and (b) the role of family-to-work conflict and subjective well-being, various commonly used controls are taken into account to avoid statistical confounds. Controls included age, sex, marital status, education, years in the Netherlands, socioeconomic status, social network, Dutch language proficiency, and whether the respondent has young children (younger than 8 years). Because only three Angolans are undocumented, legal status is not included. Educational attainment was determined using an 11-point scale, ranging from (1) *no schooling* to (11) *finished university*. To capture socioeconomic status a dummy variable is included on house ownership as earnings or other similar measures could lead to problems of endogeneity. House ownership is a more long-term and stable measure of socioeconomic status. The social network of the respondent is divided in two variables, one measuring the number of family members in the Netherlands and the other measuring the number of friends living in the Netherlands. Two respondents indicated to have over a 100 friends. We have dealt with these outliers by grouping these

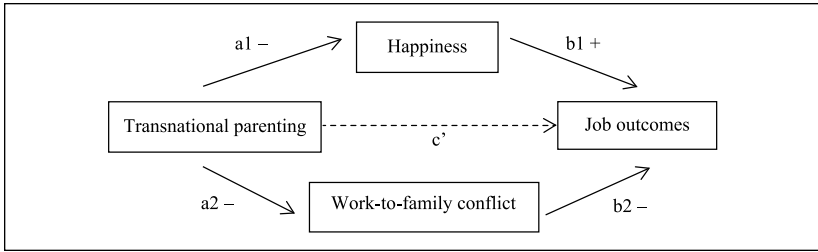


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the mediation analysis.

Note. Indirect effects ($a1 * b1$ and $a2 * b2$); direct effect (c'); total effect [$(a1 * b1) + (a2 * b2) + c'$]; Percentage of total effect mediated = indirect effects/total effect.

together with the few respondents who indicated they had 100 friends. A log transformation is applied to correct for the skewed distribution of the social network variables. Finally, to assess Dutch language proficiency respondents were asked to indicate whether they had experienced difficulties communicating in the Dutch language, from (0) *have not experienced*, (1) *not at all stressful* to (4) *extremely stressful*. Hence, higher scores indicate more problems with speaking the Dutch language and higher stress levels.

Analytical Strategy

The hypotheses developed above pertain to the mechanism explaining differences in job outcomes between transnational parents and nontransnational parents. On the one hand, we can expect transnational parents to be less happy which unfavorably affects their job outcomes. On the other hand, we can expect transnational parents to experience less family-to-work conflict leading to favorable job outcomes than nontransnational parents. These hypothesized relationships are depicted in Figure 1.

Binary mediation analysis is used to test these hypotheses. This analysis follows the mediation analysis as proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), but accounts for the binary nature of the mediating variables. The approach used to test mediation is to run four regression models per outcome variable. The first condition for mediation is showing that transnational parenting relates to the outcome variable. Second, transnational parenting should relate to the mediating factors happiness and family-to-work conflict, as tested by Equations 2 and 3. The final step establishes whether transnational parenting is associated with the job outcome variables while controlling for the mediating factors (Equation 4). Control variables were included in all equations to help avoid statistical confounds.

$$\text{Job outcomes} = 0 + (b_1 \text{ Happiness} + b_2 \text{ Family-work conflict}) + c \text{ Transnational parenting} + d \text{ covariates} +$$

(Equation 1 + 4)

$$\text{Mediator} = 0 + a \text{ Transnational parenting} + d \text{ covariates} +$$

(Equation 2 + 3)

According to Baron and Kenny (1986) if path c' in Figure 1, that is, the coefficient on transnational parenting, is close to 0 and nonsignificant when including the mediating factors and the indirect effects are significant, full mediation is found. As the two mediating variables are binary and hence part of the model is nonlinear, Stata's "binary_mediation" command is used to calculate total, indirect, and direct effects, as well as the proportion of the total effect mediated. This method standardizes the coefficients before computing the direct and indirect effects. Bootstrapping with 5,000 replications was undertaken to increase statistical power and bias-corrected nonparametric confidence intervals are utilized as the mediated effects are unlikely to be normally distributed (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002; Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Variance inflation factors were below 1.7, indicating that multicollinearity among the independent variables within the models is not a serious concern.

The original sample consisted of 306 Angolan respondents. For this analysis, parents who have children both in the country of origin and in the Netherlands are omitted because this would not allow exploring the different mediation paths of interest and test opposite hypotheses. Missing data and the above criterion reduced the sample to 255 Angolan respondents, including 86 transnational parents.² Finally, because job absenteeism only applies to people in employment, results for the model regarding job absenteeism are based on respondents in employment at the time of interview, which resulted in 181 respondents.

Results

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics of the included variables. Looking at the mediating factors, it is found that the majority of Angolans indicate to be happy (77%) and experience limited family-to-work conflict (33%). On a scale from 0 to 5, the average score is 0.87 ($SD = 0.89$). Finally, on average

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Transnational parenting ^a	0.34	0.47	0	1
Happiness ^b	0.77	0.42	0	1
Family-to-work conflict ^c	0.33	0.50	0	1
Age	33.60	6.28	23	59
Sex ^d	0.50	0.50	0	1
Marital status ^e	0.16	0.37	0	1
Education	7.21	2.18	0	11
Years in the Netherlands	14.31	4.46	0	25
Housing ^f	0.87	0.33	0	1
Number of friends in the Netherlands	31.47	39.21	0	294
Number of family members in the Netherlands	4.52	11.08	0	98
Dutch proficiency	1.36	1.05	0	4
Child < 8 years ^g	0.61	0.49	0	1
Job instability	2.00	1.97	0	9
Job absenteeism	2.41	4.01	0	24

Note. Superscripts indicate reference categories that include (a) nontransnational parent; (b) unhappy; (c) no work-to-family conflict (d) male; (e) married/in a relationship; (f) room, student housing, institution, other; and (g) no children < 8 years of age.

Source. TCRAf-Eu Angolan parent survey, The Netherlands 2010-2011.

Angolans report having changed jobs in the Netherlands twice and have missed on average 2.4 days of work in the 3 months prior to the interview.

Mediation Analysis

To test the hypotheses, we turn to regression analyses. Following the four steps as proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), it was first tested whether transnational parenting is associated with job absenteeism and job instability. These results are displayed in Table 2. Model 1 shows that transnational parents do not significantly differ from nontransnational parents in terms of the days they were absent from their jobs in the past 3 months. Model 2, however, indicates that, *ceteris paribus*, transnational parents change jobs 0.89 times more often ($p < .01$) than nontransnational parents. Thus, the first condition for mediation is only met for job instability and not for job absenteeism. Therefore, we only continue with the next steps of the mediation analysis for job instability.

Figure 2 presents the results of the mediation analysis graphically and presents us with the relevant coefficients for each step of the mediation analysis.

Table 2. Results of Mediation Analyses for Job Outcomes.

	Model 1	Model 2
	Job absenteeism (n = 181)	Job instability (n = 247)
Transnational parenting ^a	-0.10 (0.15)	0.89 (0.29)**
Age	-0.00 (0.01)	0.05 (0.02)*
Sex ^b	0.75 (0.14)***	0.21 (0.26)
Marital status ^c	0.03 (0.22)	0.43 (0.35)
Education	0.01 (0.03)	0.10 (0.06)
Years in the Netherlands	0.02 (0.02)	0.06 (0.03)
Housing ^d	-0.25 (0.21)	0.06 (0.41)
Number of friends in the Netherlands (log)	-0.06 (0.04)	0.08 (0.08)
Number of family members in the Netherlands (log)	0.03 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.12)
Dutch proficiency	0.06 (0.07)	-0.18 (0.12)
Child < 8 years of age ^e	0.48 (0.16)**	0.33 (0.31)
R ²	.24	.13

Note. Superscripts indicate reference categories that include (a) nontransnational parent; (b) male; (c) married/in a relationship; (d) room, student housing, institution, other; (e) No children < 8 years of age. Standard errors in parentheses

Source. TCRAF-Eu Angolan parent survey, The Netherlands 2010-2011.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001 (one-tailed test).

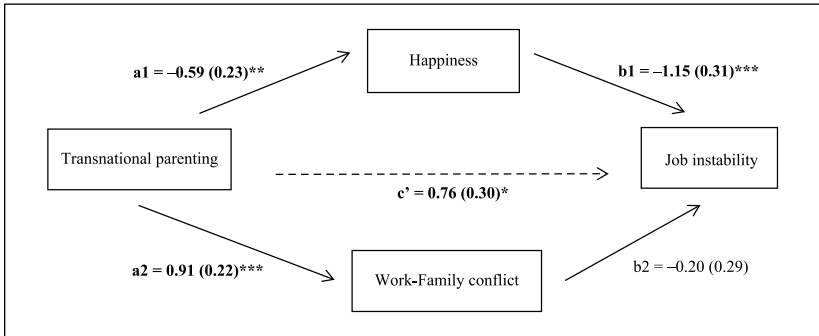


Figure 2. Mediation model job instability with binary mediators.

Note. Indirect effects (a1 * b1 and a2 * b2); direct effect (c'); total effect [(a1 * b1) + (a2 * b2) + c']; percentage of total effect mediated = indirect effects/total effect (20%); Pseudo R² = .20; Unstandardized ordinary least squares coefficients presented, paths a1 and a2 are unstandardized logit coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses.

Source. TCRAF-Eu Angolan parent survey, The Netherlands 2010-2011.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001 (one-tailed test).

Table 3. Test of Mediation With Bootstrapped Results for Job Instability.

Mediator	B coefficient	Bias-corrected CI	
		Lower	Upper
Indirect effect			
Happiness	0.07	0.01	0.15
Conflict	-0.02	-0.08	0.03
Total	0.05	-0.03	0.13
Direct effect	0.18	0.05	0.33
Total effect	0.23	0.09	0.38
Proportion of total effect mediated	0.20		

Note. The way to interpret the confidence intervals (CIs) is as follows: If 0 lies within the interval range, no mediation is found.

Source. TCRAf-Eu Angolan parent survey, The Netherlands 2010-2011.

Table 3 displays the indirect, direct, and total effects and the proportion of the total effect mediated with bias-corrected confidence intervals after bootstrapping. Although not presented, the model includes the same control variables as in Table 2. The second step of mediation requires the independent variable to be related to the mediating variable. Path a_1 represents the association between transnational parenting and happiness and a_2 between transnational parenting and family-to-work conflict. As graphically evidenced in Figure 2, both paths are significant. First, as posited in Hypothesis 2, transnational parents report to be less happy than nontransnational parents. Second, although transnational parenting is significantly associated with family-to-work conflict as postulated in Hypothesis 1, it is not in the expected direction. Instead of transnational parents reporting family-to-work conflict less often they report family-to-work conflict more often. And this is a significant difference.

As step two of mediation has been found, we continue with the third and final step to investigate whether the relation between transnational parenting and job instability is eliminated or its effect diminished when including the mediating variables, hence happiness and family-to-work conflict. This is captured in path c' of the mediation model illustrated in Figure 2. If full mediation is found the effect of transnational parenting on job instability should disappear. This is not what is found. Angolan transnational parenting remains significantly related to job instability when including the mediating variables. Additionally, family-to-work conflict is not significantly associated with job instability and hence does not act as a mediator, thereby refuting Hypothesis 1. The second hypothesis is partly confirmed. Lower levels of happiness are significantly related to more job change. *Ceteris paribus*, respondents

reporting to be unhappy change jobs 1.15 times more often than happy respondents ($p < .001$). Plus, as displayed in Table 3, the indirect effect of happiness is significant, but not substantial ($B = .07$) as only 20% of the effect of transnational parenting is mediated through happiness. Thus, happiness does not fully explain the association between transnational parenting and job instability. In the next section, the analysis is taken one step further by looking at possible differences between transnational parents.

Analysis With Transnational Parents

The finding that transnational parents experience more not less family-to-work conflict indicates that even though transnational parents do not provide direct care, they do feel that their child caregiving responsibilities affects their work. Thus, transnational separation does not necessarily relieve migrant parents of all child caring burdens. As Kossek et al. (2001) indicate, what is more important for experiencing family-work conflict is not the type of care arrangements but the satisfaction with this arrangement. Mazzucato (2011) has argued that a malfunctioning transnational child-raising arrangement in which parents feel their child is not being taken care of properly, can prevent the transnational parent from doing the job well because of lack of concentration or because worries can lead to sleepless nights. Yet when arrangements work well, transnational parenting is less problematic. As explored elsewhere, it seems that transnational child-raising arrangements that are poor or ill-functioning can affect the relationships parents retain with their children and also affect happiness (Haagsman & Mazzucato, 2014; Haagsman et al., 2015). Therefore, one of the reasons why differences between transnational parents and nontransnational parents regarding job instability might be found could be that some of these transnational parents have ill-functioning transnational child-raising arrangements causing them to experience stress and consequently to perform less well at their jobs.

To investigate the association between poor functioning transnational child-raising arrangements and job instability, a regression analysis was run including only transnational parents. A poor parent-child relationship could not be included as a measure of poor functioning arrangements because of collinearity. Therefore, the amount of contact the parent has with the child is used as a proxy for poor functioning child-raising arrangements as previous analyses indicate this to be the most important factor in explaining poor relationships with children (Haagsman & Mazzucato, 2014). In addition, upholding contact is one of key ways to maintain family ties and to engage in transnational parenting (Carling, Menjivar, & Schmalzbauer, 2012; Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012). The amount of contact is a continuous measure, coded

Table 4. Amount of Contact With Child on Job Instability of Transnational Parents.

	Job instability (<i>n</i> = 82)	
	B (SE)	β
Happiness ^a	-1.39 (0.44)**	-0.35
Family-to-work conflict ^b	0.33 (0.64)	0.07
Age	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.03
Sex ^c	0.64 (0.46)	0.15
Marital status ^d	0.35 (0.56)	0.07
Education	0.30 (0.14)*	0.25
Years in the Netherlands	0.11 (0.05)*	0.28
Housing ^e	0.28 (0.45)	0.07
Number of friends in the Netherlands	0.05 (0.11)	0.04
Number of family members in the Netherlands	-0.15 (0.20)	-0.08
Dutch proficiency	-0.07 (0.21)	-0.04
Child < 8 years of age ^f	-0.01 (0.46)	-0.00
Amount of contact with child	-0.41 (0.16)*	-0.28
<i>R</i> ²	0.44	

Note. SE = standard error. Superscripts indicate reference categories that include (a) unhappy; (b) no work-to-family conflict; (c) male; (d) married/in a relationship; (e) room, student housing, institution, other; and (f) no children < 8 years of age.

Source. TCRAf-Eu Angolan parent survey, The Netherlands 2010-2011.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ (one-tailed test).

(1) not at all, (2) once or twice a month, (3) once a week, (4) a few times a week, and (5) everyday (mean is 3.43). Results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 4. This analysis reveals that especially poor functioning transnational child-raising arrangements are associated with job instability. That is, Angolan transnational parents who have limited contact with their children have changed their jobs in the Netherlands more often. One unit decrease in contact leads to 0.41 more job changes. Next to happiness ($\beta = .35$) the amount of contact with the child is also one of the most important predictors of job change ($\beta = .28$) in this regression model.

Discussion and Conclusions

This article aimed to complement research on transnational families by investigating absenteeism and job stability of transnational parents. While the growing body of literature on transnational families has examined how migrant parents raise their children transnationally and how they are affected

in their well-being by the separation, it has not explicitly focused on labor market outcomes. This is an important gap in the literature because the fact that these parents have been found to suffer emotionally from the separation could affect their lives in other areas, such as in their professional lives. Therefore, this study set out to explore whether job outcomes are associated with transnational parenting. By combining insights from organizational psychology with transnational family studies, two opposing hypotheses have been examined. On the one hand, it was hypothesized that transnational parents would experience less family-to-work conflict because direct care of their children is provided in the country of origin. On the other hand, based on the happy productive worker thesis, it was hypothesized that as transnational parents are found to display low subjective well-being, job outcomes would be less favorable.

Based on the results of the mediation analyses, the first hypothesis can be refuted. Angolan transnational parents experience more family-to-work conflict instead of less. Additionally, family-to-work conflict did not mediate the association between transnational parenting and favorable job outcomes. The second hypothesis is only partly confirmed. First, Angolan transnational parents significantly changed jobs more often than nontransnational parents (job instability), but no difference is found with regard to job absenteeism. Second, Angolan transnational parents' job changes are in part mediated by their lower happiness, but only by 20%. Hence, the direct effect of transnational parenting remains important. Further analyses indicate that especially transnational parents who are in limited contact with their children in Angola experience more job instability. Thus, it was argued that transnational parents, who engage less in transnational parenting or who are involved in poor functioning transnational child-raising arrangements, are especially affected by the parent-child separation in terms of unfavorable job outcomes.

Several implications can be drawn from this exploratory research relevant for the study of transnational families. First, it is important not to overstate the extent that transnational separation affects parents' job outcomes. Only differences are found with regard to job instability, not for absenteeism. Also, the finding that especially poor functioning transnational child-raising arrangements are associated with job instability implies that when arrangements work well, transnational parenting is less problematic.

Nonetheless, the fact that Angolan transnational parents report higher family-to-work conflict and more job instability suggests that transnational parent-child separation can affect migrant parents in other areas besides emotional well-being. Although care is arranged transnationally and involves limited physical contact, parents continue to be actively engaged in raising their children. Even at a distance, migrant parents keep in constant contact

with their children and are affected by their children's needs and well-being (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; Horton, 2009; Parreñas, 2001). The finding that caring for a child can negatively affect transnational parents in their job outcomes, more than nontransnational parents, is perhaps because parents have less control over the care of their child, for example, in terms of parental authority, and what is happening in the country of origin (Aranda, 2003; Bernhard, Landolt, & Goldring, 2009; Parreñas, 2001). By extension, especially for Angolan transnational parents with limited contact with their children in the origin country, job instability is prevalent. It has been demonstrated empirically that limited contact is associated with poor parent-child relationships, which can cause poor parental emotional well-being (Haagsman & Mazzucato, 2014; Haagsman et al., 2015). Poorly functioning arrangements can keep transnational parents from performing well at the job because worries can lead to loss of concentration or sleepless nights (Mazzucato, 2011).

Although this exploratory study has hinted at possible associations between transnational parenting and job outcomes, future research should investigate this association among different migrant groups, as the Angolan case is quite particular. First, sub-Saharan African families are fluid and the extended family plays an important role in child rearing. As many other sub-Saharan African countries, Angola has a history of child fostering in which children are relocated to other households for extended periods of time (McDaniel & Zulu, 1996; Øien, 2006). In this context, transnational parenting is less of a break from child rearing norms than in communities where copresent parenting is the norm. The mediation between transnational parenting, happiness, and job outcomes could therefore be stronger among other migrant groups.

In addition, the postconflict context of Angola is important to consider. Trauma from war can increase effects of family separation because refugees are extra sensitive to additional disruption (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2002). Furthermore, leaving a child in a postconflict/conflict and thus unsafe setting can lead to worry and anxiety (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2002). Also, the war has led to family dislocation, breakup of affective bonds and, hence, fragmented care networks because almost all families have lost a member through war violence (Nzatzola, 2006). These fragmented care networks limit the pool of good caregivers and could lead to worries regarding child care, which can result in increased work-family conflict and loss of concentration at work. In fact, a study indicates that Angolan children in transnational families show lower emotional well-being than children in transnational families in Nigeria and Ghana; countries that have comparable child-raising norms (Mazzucato et al., 2015). This suggests that transnational family separation may have a larger impact on children living in a postconflict setting, which in turn can

affect transnational parents' well-being. Finally, war and postconflict settings can keep family members from being in regular contact and lead to long and unplanned separations. This can lead to strained relationships, which are also found to affect parental well-being (Haagsman et al., 2015).

There are potential limitations of this study that have to be taken into consideration. First, measures of job outcomes in this study are objective measures that can be asked to respondents themselves. Some studies investigating job outcomes or performance use supervisory ratings. Although this latter measure is less objective, it can capture the phenomenon of people feeling stressed and performing less well at the job, while still keeping their job. The measures used in the current study are more conservative as they measure days absent from a job and whether someone keeps a job. Consequently, the effects of transnational parenting on job outcomes may be underestimated, which might explain why no difference is found with regard to job absenteeism. At the same time, the fact that some results are significant is all the more telling given the conservative measures used.

Second, the sampling strategy might have led to some bias. Random sampling is not possible in this study that requires specific inclusion criteria and as a result the data are not nationally representative. Third, the analysis is based on a relatively small number of observations and hence has limited statistical power, especially with regard to the last analysis including only transnational parents. Fourth, the data are cross-sectional and we can therefore not be conclusive about the causality of the effects. In particular, the association between well-being and job outcomes may reflect reverse causation and should therefore be interpreted as associations. Longitudinal organizational behavioral research has proved job performance and well-being are bidirectional and hints at the reciprocal nature of the relation. Thus, the mediation analysis should be treated as descriptive. Future qualitative and longitudinal studies are required to validate the mediational relations and explore the different mechanisms that are at play.

Despite these limitations, this research is a first attempt to study the association between transnational parenting and job outcomes. It does so by bringing together previously separate bodies of literature: organizational psychology and transnational family studies. This study indicates that transnational parenting can affect job outcomes of parents and thus have direct consequences for participation in the host society. This is especially true when parents and children are in limited contact leading parents to worry more about their children. Matters that happen thousands of miles away can negatively affect migrants' lives in the receiving country significantly and in various ways. However, when arrangements work well, transnational parenting is less problematic.

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Notes

1. For more information on the project, refer to www.tcra.nl. The questionnaire and the codebook can also be obtained here.
2. Two respondents indicated to have changed jobs 20 times while being in the Netherlands; these outliers have been omitted from the analyses.

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