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Workplace worklife balance support from a capabilities perspective

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Introduction

This chapter focuses on workplace worklife balance (hereafter WLB) support across different European countries and presents new findings from a capabilities perspective. Work organizational cultures vary across countries and among workplaces regarding the degree and nature of the worklife balance support offered to working parents. WLB policies are mediated, translated, and sometimes initiated at the firm level. Hence, workplaces affect capabilities for agency freedom to achieve WLB. This chapter confronts a key dimension of the volume: the relation between institutional contexts and workplace support.

Individual capabilities to find a satisfactory WLB are shaped at various levels of society: the state, the workplace, and the household (see Introduction in this volume). This chapter looks at the laws and policies developed in different European countries to reconcile paid work with caring tasks (leave, childcare, and flexible work arrangements) along with the supportive measures developed within firms and organizations. Hence, we consider two institutional factors that affect agency for WLB: public provisions developed by national governments, and policies and arrangements developed by organizations.

Work-family researchers increasingly point out the need to broaden the scope of research in order to shed light on the interactions between public policies at the country level, human resource practices and policies at the organizational level, and employees' needs and expectations at the individual level (Poelmans 2005; Kossek et al. 2010). Cross-national research is needed to capture a multilayered approach. Although there is a growing

body of cross-national research on WLB experiences taking up this challenge (i.e. Lyness and Brumit Kropf 2005; Lewis et al. 2009; Ollier-Malaterre 2009; Abendroth and den Dulk 2011; den Dulk et al. 2012; Nilsen et al. 2012), most cross-national research focuses either on national policies (see for instance Gornick and Meyer 2003; Moss 2012) or on individual WLB experiences (i.e. Poelmans et al. 2003; Spector et al. 2007) and seldom includes the workplace level, while most research focusing on the workplace level are single country studies often conducted in the USA or the UK (see den Dulk and Peper 2009 for a review). There are a few notable exceptions, however, which will be discussed below.

In this chapter we look at workplace support for working parents in relation to country-level public policy. Does extensive public policy encourage employers to develop workplace support or inhibit them? Is it the other way round that the near absence of public policies tends to stimulate a tradition of corporate welfare (Lewis 1997)? These are relevant questions. Having WLB policies both at the state level and within the workplace increases the agency of working parents to make claims at work for WLB. When organizations supplement or extend public provisions they signal that they are willing to support employees to balance work and family demands. Research has pointed out the important role of organizations for implementing WLB policies and that without supportive organizational cultures many employees do not exercise their right to use the existing possibilities (Thompson et al. 1999; Allen 2001; see also other chapters in this volume). Formal entitlements are translated within organizations into claims where requests to use policies are granted or denied. Hence, organizations are conversion sites for WLB capabilities.

Unfortunately, with the available data we were not able to fully analyse how institutional resources at state and workplace level are converted into agency. To fully analyse the conversion of public WLB policies, detailed data on workplace organizational culture is needed. Other chapters in Part Two of this volume take up this issue and offer in-depth investigations of the way organizational culture plays out, shaping or distorting agency and capabilities for WLB in the workplace context. The data analysed in this chapter on workplace support is restricted to public policies and organizational policy practices. However, the cross-national nature of our research allows us to shed light on variations in WLB support, taking into consideration both the level and nature of workplace policies and public provisions at the national level. The central question addressed is: in what contexts—taking into account both workplace and state support—do working parents have most agency and capabilities to achieve WLB?

To answer this question, first we investigate the degree of workplace support in different national contexts across Europe. Since we drew on the *Establishment Survey on Working time and Work-Life Balance 2004–05*

(ESWT), which was conducted in 21 European countries, we were not able to include the Japanese case in this analysis. We then turn to a discussion of how workplace support interacts with state support. A cluster analysis using data from the ESWT survey is presented in the following section, in which we examine whether and to what extent high scores on state policies and different indicators of workplace support cluster. We also investigate what type of organization offers the most capabilities for working parents, looking at country, sector, size, and proportion of women in the workforce. In the conclusion, we present our findings and elaborate on the relevance of cross-national research on WLB support when approaching WLB from a capabilities perspective.

Workplace Worklife Balance Support

Organizations can influence the capabilities and agency freedom of employees to balance work and personal life in various ways. They may offer formal and informal workplace worklife arrangements, such as (enhanced) leave entitlements, childcare support, or flexible work arrangements—such as teleworking, compressed work week, and reduction of working hours (den Dulk 2001; Poelmans et al. 2003; Appelbaum et al. 2005; Kossek 2005; Ollier-Malaterre 2009). Here, a distinction can be made between workplace childcare and enhanced leave arrangements on the one hand, which enable working parents to combine work and family life, and flexible work arrangements, which are not restricted to employees with children (Lee and Kim 2010; den Dulk et al. 2012). Childcare provisions give the possibility of outsourcing care during time at work and allow parents to stay in employment. Leave entitlements, such as parental leave, enable parents to temporarily stay home with young children and not lose their job. Flexible work arrangements allow employees to adapt working hours or place of work to responsibilities outside work, for instance to work from home in case of a sick child or other family member. In addition, organizations may offer supportive arrangements like professional and personal counselling and worklife balance management training (Bardoel et al. 1999; den Dulk 2001). It is important to make this distinction between types of worklife policies and arrangements because research indicates that organizations in different countries not only vary regarding the number of policies introduced but also with respect to the type of policies. Den Dulk and colleagues (2012) show, for instance, that organizations in the UK and conservative welfare states such as the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, and Belgium offer the most workplace childcare and leave arrangements, while organizations in Scandinavian countries have the most extensive flexible

work arrangements. Supportive arrangements like counselling and support groups are reported in particular by workplaces in liberal welfare states where individual responsibility is a central value, such as the USA and the UK, and are less common in organizations operating in other welfare state regimes (den Dulk 2001).

Most studies simply count the number of arrangements present in organizations, and it then becomes clear that public sector and other large organizations take the lead (Goodstein 1994; den Dulk 2001; Evans 2001; OECD 2001; Appelbaum et al. 2005; den Dulk et al. 2010). This is true of almost all European countries (den Dulk et al. 2012). Importantly, the proportion of women in the workforce has been found to be associated with the degree of support offered by the organization (Poelmans et al. 2003; Remery et al. 2003; Lee and Kim 2010), although not all studies confirm this finding (Ingram and Simons 1995; den Dulk 2001; den Dulk et al. 2010). Ingram and Simons (1995) suggest that the skill level of the female workforce might be a significant mediator here, that is whether or not they are easy to replace. Alternatively, when the proportion of women working in the organization is very high, high (potential) utilization costs may be a reason for organizations not to invest in WLB support. Hence, there may be a cut-off point after which the proportion of women no longer has a positive effect. In other words, the relationship between the proportion of female employees and WLB support might actually be curvilinear (den Dulk 2001; den Dulk and Groeneveld 2012).

Simply introducing WLB policies and arrangements is not enough to create a supportive organization, however. Worklife policy needs to be integrated into an organizational culture that is concerned about the responsibilities of employees outside of work. Having a worklife policy in place is a visible indication of the organization's intention to support its employees in balancing work and family, but is not always easy to put into practice. Shared standards, values, and assumptions shape the 'unwritten rules' that determine how the work is done and how people should behave within the organization. When the standards and values within the organization conflict with utilization of worklife policies, employees' capabilities to make claims is seriously impeded (Thompson et al. 1999) and they need to seek relief elsewhere. Research indicates that the emotional support of colleagues and managers is at least as important for reducing conflicts and tensions between work demands and care tasks at home as any practical support in the form of a worklife policy (Behson 2005). However, emotional support alone is insufficient. Abendroth and den Dulk (2011) found in their cross-national study among service workers that instrumental support and emotional support are complementary and that both are needed to find a satisfactory balance between paid work and personal life.

Workplace Worklife Balance Support in the Context of State Support

Research discussed in the previous section on WLB support indicates that not only are there differences in the number and nature of the worklife policies adopted by organizations according to such organizational characteristics as size, sector, and workforce, but these also exist across countries. Cross-national differences in workplace support emphasize the need to study how workplace support relates to the national context in which the organizations operate. This multilevel approach is not only vital to understanding differences between organizations, but also for assessing the capabilities of working parents. A relevant question for agency and capability to achieve WLB is whether, in a context of limited public provisions, organizations step in and develop additional policies and arrangements.

Chapter 2 discussed state policies aimed at enhancing people's WLB across 11 European countries. This overview clearly indicated differences in the level and nature of state policies, despite the existence of various EU directives. Countries vary with respect to leave arrangements, public daycare services, and legislation regarding flexible work arrangements. In some countries the emphasis is on long-term leave arrangements for care of small children, while other governments stimulate part-time work to enable parents to balance work with childcare. Policies are more advanced and generous in some countries than others. Scandinavian and post-socialist countries, for instance, are known for their relatively generous statutory leave policies and public childcare, while in the Netherlands and Germany more recently introduced state support is relatively modest.

It is important to consider how policies are structured and formulated and how they are embedded in the larger societal context. Hobson and colleagues, for instance, show that although Sweden and Hungary both have generous parental leave systems (see Table 6.1) the way this plays out for working parents differs. In Hungary, despite the long and relatively well-compensated parental leave (36 months), take-up among women in employment remains low due to precarious labour market conditions. In addition, the long parental leave reinforces traditional gender roles as it assumes that the mother is the one to take leave. Swedish parental leave, in contrast, is characterized by a strong incentive for fathers to take leave and high flexibility in take-up (see Chapter 3 in this volume). Table 6.1 offers an overview of the different policy measures in 21 European countries.

Differences in state policies across countries have inspired many scholars to develop welfare state classifications in order to compare different policy models and their impact (e.g. Esping-Andersen 1990; Sainsbury 1996; Korpi 2000). Based upon the work of Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999) and Blossfeld and

Table 6.1 State support in 21 European countries, statutory leave and flexible work arrangements, 2012, and children in formal childcare, 2008

Country by welfare regime	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Childcare % children in formal care 2008		Right to reduce hours
				0-2	3-5	
<i>Social democratic regime</i>						
Denmark	18 weeks***	2 weeks***	32 weeks***	65.7	91.5	–
Finland ¹	17.5 weeks***	3–4 weeks***	158 working days***	28.6	74.2	Until the end of 2nd year at school**
Sweden	7 ² weeks***	2 weeks***	480 days***	46.7	91.1	Until the child is 8*
<i>Conservative regime</i>						
Austria	16 weeks***	–	24 months**	12.1	77.6	Until child is 7*
Belgium	15 weeks***	2 weeks***	4 months per parent**	48.4	99.4	–
France	16 weeks***	2 weeks***	36 months**	42.0	99.9	–
Germany	14 weeks***	–	36 months***	17.8	92.7	–
Luxembourg	16 weeks***	2 days***	6 months per parent**	38.6	85.9	–
Netherlands	16 weeks***	2 days***	26 weeks per parent**	55.9	67.1	All employees*
<i>Liberal regime</i>						
Ireland	42 weeks**	–	14 weeks per parent*	30.8	56.4	–
UK	52 weeks**	2 weeks**	13 weeks per parent*	40.8	92.7	–
<i>Mediterranean regime</i>						
Cyprus	16 weeks***	–	3 months per parent*	32.7	73.4	–
Greece	17 weeks***	2 days***	4 months per parent*	15.7	46.6	Until child is 2.5 or 4***
Italy	20 weeks***	–	10 or 11 months**	29.2	97.4	Until the child is 6
Portugal	17 ² weeks***	20 days***	3 months per parent**	47.4	79.2	Until the child is 12*
Spain	16 weeks***	3 weeks***	36 months*	37.5	98.5	Until the child is 8*
<i>Post-socialist regime</i>						
Czech Republic	28 weeks***	–	36 months**	2,2	91,5	–
Hungary	24 weeks***	5 days***	36 months***	8,8	87,1	–
Latvia	19 weeks	10 days***	36 months***	8,1	73,5	Until the child is 1 (only mothers)
Poland	24 weeks***	2 weeks***	36 months**	7,9	47,3	–
Slovenia	15 weeks***	13 weeks**	37 weeks***	33,8	77,5	Until the child is 3**

Notes: * statutory entitlement but unpaid; ** statutory entitlement paid but either at a low flat rate or earning related at less than 66% of earnings or not universal; *** statutory entitlement paid for all or part of the duration to all parents at 66% of earnings or more (Moss 2012).

¹ In Finland 6 working days per week are calculated in leave arrangements.
² In Portugal and Sweden legislation does not refer to maternity leave but the leave is part of parental leave. In Portugal paternity leave is also mentioned under parental leave in the legislation.
³ Luxembourg: in legislation no mention of paternity leave but fathers can use another type of leave at the time of the birth of a child. Greece: paternity leave is paid by the employer but public sector employees do not get paid.
⁴ In Hungary there are two types of parental leave: a higher and lower paid leave: first two years 70% of earnings, third year flat rate payment (Anxo et al. 2007; Moss 2012).

Source: Moss (2012), International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2012; OECD (2011), OECD Family Database, except for Latvia and Cyprus (source for leave arrangements: Anxo et al. 2007).

Drobnič (2001), five different welfare state regimes can be distinguished in Europe: the social-democratic welfare state regime, the conservative regime, the Mediterranean regime, the post-socialist regime, and the liberal regime. Esping-Andersen describes the dominant character of the welfare package in each country in terms of the role of the state, of the family, and of the market, and this classification offers a way of investigating how institutional context influences the level and nature of the WLB support offered by the state and by workplaces (den Dulk 2001).

This classification of welfare state regimes has been challenged and debated in the literature. Most importantly, Esping-Andersen's original typology of three welfare state regimes—the social democratic, the conservative, and the liberal—was criticized for not paying enough attention to gender, the role of the family, and unpaid work (Lewis 1992; Orloff 1993; Plantenga and van Doorne-Huiskes 1993; Sainsbury 1996; Korpi 2000) and, in a revised typology, two additional regime types were added: the Mediterranean and the post-socialist. The Mediterranean regime consists of South European countries characterized by few public worklife policies that support dual-earner families and that also lack support for the traditional breadwinner family as is the case in many conservative regimes such as Germany and Austria (Antonnen and Sipilä 1996). The post-socialist regime represents a fifth cluster. According to Ferrarini (2006), using Korpi's family policy models as a starting point, post-socialist countries combine high levels of both traditional and dual-earner support. During the communist era, women's labour market participation was higher than in most West European countries and was supported by extensive public childcare and long parental leaves. Less attention was paid, on the other hand, to the division of unpaid work at home, which has remained rather traditional (Blossfeld and Drobnič 2001; Tang and Cousins 2005; Nilsen et al. 2012). Today, although post-socialist countries share a common background and legacy, they show very different developments. Some, like Slovenia (see Chapter 9 in this volume), have moved in the direction of the social democratic welfare states, while others have more leaned towards the conservative regime pattern, cutting financial

compensation during leaves and reducing public childcare services, and giving policy support to the traditional family, as is the case in Poland (Ferrarini and Sjöberg 2010).

Despite the fact that post-socialist countries seem to be developing in different directions, they are still treated as having a common regime or model (Ferrarini 2006; den Dulk et al. 2010, 2012; Ferrarini and Sjöberg 2010; Boye 2011). Several West European countries, on the other hand, are a hybrid form or mix of different welfare state regimes. The Netherlands, for instance, is seen as an ambiguous case because it combines the traditional family support characteristic of the conservative regime with several universal social policies that are more in line with the social democratic welfare regime (Sainsbury 1996). Moreover, within the conservative regime, some countries place more emphasis on the role of the state (France, Belgium) while others rely more on employers and the family in combination with modest state support (the Netherlands, Germany). In addition, neoliberal trends in these countries in relation to the restructuring of the welfare state has led to a stronger emphasis on the role of the market; that is worklife policies offered by employers (den Dulk et al. 2012).

However, despite its limitations and the criticism against it, the classification remains a fruitful analytical tool to compare the levels of state and workplace WLB support across countries. According to Gornick and Meyer (2003), classifications that incorporate gender show large similarities to Esping-Andersen's typology, suggesting that 'the welfare state principles underlying these clusters are highly correlated with those that shape family policy' (2003: 23). In social democratic welfare states there is a strong commitment to gender equality, while in the conservative and Mediterranean regimes this is less prevalent, resulting in lower levels of dual-earner support. Table 6.1 shows that social democratic countries—like Sweden, Finland, and Denmark—are characterized by long, well-compensated leaves and high childcare coverage in all age groups. The Mediterranean countries (Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Portugal, and Spain) have shorter and/or lower compensated parental leave as well as low enrolment of children less than 3 years of age in formal childcare. The level of state support present in Japan (not included in Table 6.1) is similar to that of the Mediterranean countries (see Chapter 4 in this volume). In the liberal welfare state regime, men and women are treated as equal despite differences in caring responsibilities, and WLB support is mainly left to market forces and treated as an individual, private responsibility (Plantenga and Van Doorne-Huiskes 1993). Ireland and the UK, which most closely represent the liberal welfare state in Europe, have long maternity leave of which the greater part is unpaid, short unpaid parental leave, and limited public childcare (see Table 6.1). The question is whether workplaces are indeed taking an active role in this regime type given the emphasis

on market forces. The post-socialist countries combine a tradition of state dual-earner support, although support has declined in many instances since the transition, and less attention has been paid towards gender equality as in countries representing the social democratic regime (Pascall and Manning 2000; Kocourková 2002). Moreover, the transition to a market economy has often been accompanied by new experiences of job insecurity and unemployment, which may limit expectations of workplace support. So, what is the relationship between state policies, the wider welfare state context, and workplace WLB support?

Different arguments abound. First, based on institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 1995), it is put forward that public provisions indicate a strong government commitment to WLB and tend to create normative and coercive pressure on organizations to develop additional support (Dobbin and Sutton 1998). According to this argument, the more state support in a country for WLB, the more such support offered by organizations (den Dulk 2001; Poelmans and Sahibzada 2004); and the more state support, the stronger the sense of entitlement of employees to WLB (Lewis and Smithson 2001).

On the other hand, based on economic arguments or the so-called business case, it has been argued that the presence of public policies makes it less likely that employers develop their own additional provisions as it makes no sense for organizations to duplicate existing policies. Rather, it is the absence of public provisions that stimulates organizations to develop policies that gain them a competitive edge over other employers in the recruitment and retention of talented workers. This business case may in particular be strong when the labour market is tight and organizations need to compete for valuable personnel (den Dulk et al. 2010).

Based on the business case argument, we can expect some organizations to step in and offer WLB support when there is only limited state support for working parents. However, the strength of the business case is likely to depend on the organization's specific conditions and characteristics, such as the proportion of female workers or whether the organization is experiencing difficulties recruiting and retaining personnel. According to this argument, variation in workplace support is particularly high in countries where there is little regulation and little state support (den Dulk et al. 2012). So far, research indeed indicates that when public provisions are very limited there are large variations in workplace support along the lines of organizational conditions, with some organizations offering a large number of workplace policies while in other workplaces support for the worklife balance is mainly absent (den Dulk 2001; den Dulk et al. 2012). However, workplace support varies across different types of organizations even in countries with modest public worklife policies (den Dulk et al. 2012). In fact, variations in workplace support are

greater *within* countries than *between* them (den Dulk et al. 2010, 2012; den Dulk and Groeneveld 2012).

Den Dulk et al. (2013) argue that not only does the degree to which economic arguments matter differ across different types of organizations, but so also the impact of institutional pressures. For instance, being a public or a private sector organization is a relevant factor affecting economic considerations as well as the amount of institutional pressure experienced. Public organizations are more in the public eye and are more likely to be evaluated according to government standards and norms, while in private sector companies profit-related arguments tend to be more important. Some public sector organizations are even required to execute government policies, and governments that stimulate employers to offer WLB support create normative pressure in public organizations to conform (Goodstein 1994; Ingram and Simons 1995; den Dulk 2001; den Dulk and Groeneveld 2012).

Large organizations, like public sector organizations, are very visible in society, making them sensitive to institutional pressure to be supportive (Goodstein 1994). However, economies of scale also make the introduction of WLB support relatively cheaper per employee in large organizations compared with smaller ones. The proportion of women in the organization is another relevant factor (Poelmans et al. 2003; Remery et al. 2003). Organizations with a substantial proportion of women (up to a certain point) may benefit more from the effects of WLB support in terms of productivity gains, less absenteeism and turnover than male dominated organizations, since women still bear the largest burden of care responsibilities (Goodstein 1994). A large share of women in the organization can also result in more requests for WLB support, increasing normative pressure to adopt workplace worklife arrangements.

In addition, trade unions can pressure organizations to adopt worklife policies that support employee needs. Whether this is a factor affecting the development of support at the organizational, sector, or national level is not yet clear. Powerful unions are able to influence management's decisions about employee benefits, but may also choose to raise the issue at the bargaining table at sector or national level, leading to the development of public provisions rather than specific workplace support. In particular in the conservative, corporatist regime and in the social democratic regime, unions are important actors operating not only at the company level but at the sector and national level as well (Ollier-Malaterre 2009; Yerkes and Tjeldens 2010). Yerkes and Tjeldens (2010), in their study on collective agreements in the Netherlands, show that collective bargaining may compensate for a lack of state provisions through collective agreements that offer high protection for part-time work and childcare support but also respond to state policies once

they are developed. This suggests a positive relation between state policies and collective agreements.

However, research has also pointed out that unions, as traditionally male dominated institutions, tend not to place worklife issues high on the bargaining agenda (Hantrais and Acker 2005; Haas and Hwang 2013). US research in the 1990s found a negative relation between unionization and workplace worklife balance support (Auerbach 1990; Glass and Fujimoto 1995). In Europe, the (relative) level of unionization in an organization was found to be positively related to the adoption of workplace childcare and leave support, but not to the adoption of flexible work arrangements (Anxo et al. 2007; den Dulk et al. 2012). 'Flexibility has been seen by unions as a management tool to increase flexibility of labour rather than improve the conditions for employees' (Ravenswood and Markry 2011: 489), which may explain the reluctance among unions to support the introduction of flexible work arrangements. However, unions are not only important partners regarding the adoption of state and workplace WLB support but also for increasing employee awareness of existing policies and entitlements (Ravenswood and Markey 2011; Haas and Hwang 2013).

In this section we discussed the existing research on workplace support in the context of state support. However, our focus is not on this relationship per se. Our main interest here is to know where the most support can be found for working parents' capabilities, taking state support as well as organizational support into account. In what contexts do working parents have most capabilities to achieve WLB?

Identifying High Capability Contexts

To examine contexts in which working parents have the most capabilities to achieve WLB, we analysed *Establishment Survey on Working Time and Work-Life Balance 2004–2005* (ESWT) data collected on behalf of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. The ESWT is the only representative data set that offers information on various types of workplace worklife policies in different European countries. Unfortunately, the latest Establishment survey conducted in 2009–10 does not contain data on childcare support and extra leave arrangements, and only limited information on flexible work arrangements. Therefore the ESWT survey conducted in 2004–05 was the most suitable data set to investigate the level and nature of workplace policies in relation to state support within Europe. In total 21 European member states and 21,031 organizations with ten or more employees participated in the project.

Following the capabilities perspective in this chapter we conducted a cluster analysis on the ESWT data set to identify organizational settings that are homogeneous with respect to the capabilities of employees to achieve a good worklife balance. Following the assumption that employees have the most capabilities in a work setting where both state and organizational WLB support are high, the clustering was based on three variables: leave and childcare policies, flexible work arrangements, and state support.

Within the ESWT survey, leave and childcare policies at the workplace were measured by including the following items: (1) allowing employees to use parental leave during the last three years; (2) long-term leave to take care of ill family members; (3) workplace crèche; (4) other forms of childcare support; and (5) support for domestic work (cleaning or shopping services). We gave a score of 1 for each policy as well as for letting employees use parental leave. The score for leave/childcare support within the workplace ranged between zero and five policies offered.

HR managers were asked whether the following flexible work policies were offered by their organization: (1) allowing part-time work according to employee wishes; (2) the possibility of changing from full-time to part-time employment for skilled work; (3) the possibility of changing from full-time to part-time employment for unskilled work; (4) flexible working hours; and (5) working time account (the possibility of saving hours amounting to a full day off). These are all employee-friendly forms of flexibility where the needs of employees are central rather than the needs of the organization, which is generally the case with employer-led flexible work practices (Fleetwood 2007). We gave a score of 1 for each policy the organization offered, except for the possibility for skilled and unskilled employees to change working hours where we gave each 0.5 (to give this policy a similar weight as the other policies). Thus the score for flexible work arrangements at the workplace ranged from 0 to 4 policies offered.

The variable 'state support' is based on the level of state support in 2004–05, when the data on workplace support were collected. The score representing the level of state support in 2004/05 is based on three components of worklife support as discussed earlier: public childcare provisions, parental leave arrangements, and the right to reduce working hours. We rated each country per component on a 4-point scale (high state support (4) to low state support (1)). We rated state support for childcare as high (4) when it generated high capabilities for working parents, that is included the right to a childcare place and high enrolment of children, both under 3 and older; as medium-high (3) when there was substantial enrolment (more than 30%) of children under 3 and older, indicating that parents in most cases were able to use public childcare if they wished to do so, but without a formal entitlement to childcare places (for instance, France and Belgium); as medium-low (2) when there

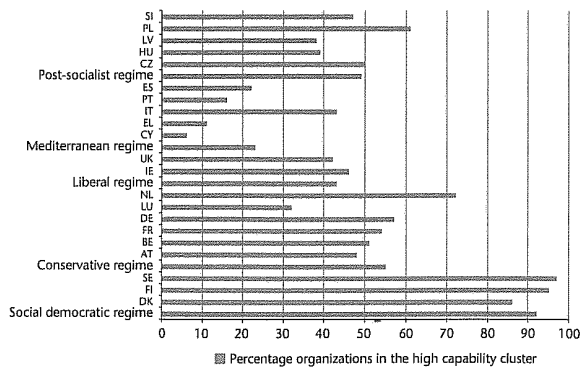
was low coverage of the young age group, but substantial enrolment among children older than 3; and as low (1) when there was very limited public childcare for all age groups.

Regarding parental leave provisions, we took into account length of leave, payment, and leave for fathers, since these are all important conditions affecting the agency and capabilities of mothers and fathers to actually take-up leave (see also Chapter 2). We rated state support for leave as high (4) when it consisted of long, generously compensated leaves, including paternity leave and/or a specific 'daddy quota' for fathers; as medium-high (3) for long leave and leave for fathers, but with more minimal financial compensation; as medium-low support (2) for shorter leave periods, more unpaid leave, and/or the absence of specific leave for fathers; and as low (1) to indicate both the absence of parental and paternity leave.

Regarding flexible work arrangements, we focused on state regulations concerning the possibility of adjusting one's working hours in order to care for dependents or meet other responsibilities. We rated state support for flexible work arrangements as high (4) to refer to the entitlement for all workers to extend or reduce working hours (as is the case in the Netherlands); as medium-high (3) to indicate the presence of an entitlement for working parents to reduce working hours when they have young children (for instance Sweden); as medium-low (2) to indicate a right to *request* reduction of working hours; and as low (1) to reflect the absence of a specific entitlement for workers or only regulations that stimulate employers. All three scores were summated. The state support scores thus ranged from 3 (low) to 12 (high). We used the two-step clustering procedure in SPSS, which is particularly useful for large data sets. This involves a first step of assigning cases to pre-clusters and a second step of hierarchical clustering of the pre-clusters. We arrived at a two-cluster solution that fit the data reasonably well and that could be meaningfully interpreted. The average silhouette width, a measure of cluster cohesion and separation, was 0.5, which means that the clustering of organizations could be considered reasonable. The two-cluster solution distinguishes one cluster of organizations with a high level of capabilities for working parents (high score on all three types of support) from a cluster with limited capabilities (organizations that score low on state and the two types of workplace support). Within the high capabilities cluster, organizations had on average two flexible work arrangements and almost three leave/childcare policies, with the level of state support 8.4. In contrast, organizations in the low capability cluster had on average less than one flexible work arrangement and around one leave/childcare arrangement. State support was also lower in this cluster (7.2).

When considering the division of organizations across countries and welfare state regimes, Figure 6.1 shows that almost all organizations in the social

Worklife Balance



- AT=Austria
- BE=Belgium
- CY=Cyprus
- CZ=Czech Republic
- DE=Germany
- DK=Denmark
- EL=Greece
- ES=Spain
- FI=Finland
- FR=France
- HU=Hungary
- IE=Ireland
- IT=Italy
- LU=Luxembourg
- LV=Latvia
- NL=Netherlands
- PL=Poland
- PT=Portugal
- SE=Sweden
- SI=Slovenia
- UK=United Kingdom

Figure 6.1 Percentage of organizations in the high capabilities cluster

democratic regime (92%) are located in the high capabilities cluster. In contrast, the majority of organizations in the Mediterranean regime are found in the low capability cluster (77%). In the liberal regime, 43% of organizations are in the high capability cluster, compared with 55% in the conservative regime and 49% in the post-socialist regime. A Chi-square test showed that the differences between regime types are statistically significant. Nevertheless, differences between countries within regime types are also there to be seen. Within the conservative regime, Dutch organizations stand out with a relatively high score on state support because of the right of all workers to reduce or extend working hours, and a relatively high score on workplace arrangements regarding childcare and leave.

Figures 6.2 and 6.3 present the percentage of organizations belonging in the high capabilities cluster by sector, size, and proportion of female employees. Public sector organizations fall relatively more often in the high capability cluster (65%) compared with private sector organizations (45%). The extent

Workplace worklife balance support

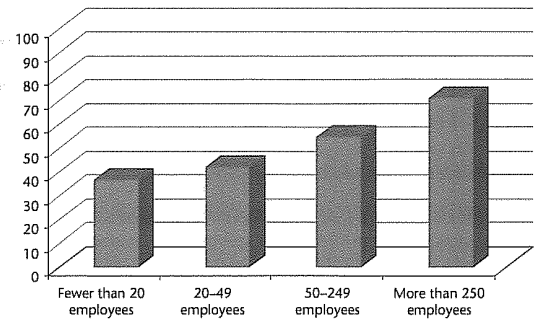


Figure 6.2 Percentage of organizations in the high capabilities cluster by size

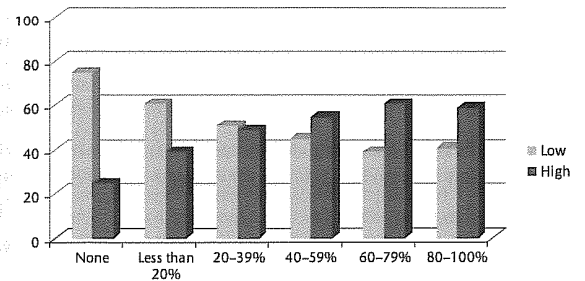


Figure 6.3 Percentage of organizations in the low and high capabilities cluster by proportion of women

to which employees have capabilities to achieve a good worklife balance is positively associated with the size of the organization. Finally, a relationship can be observed between capabilities and the proportion of women in an organization; with a workforce of up to 80% women, capabilities increase with the share of women in the organization. All observed differences are statistically significant.

To check whether the associations between organizational characteristics and the two clusters hold when conducting multivariate analysis we

performed logistic regression analyses, using cluster as the dependent variable. This analysis confirms that employees living in social democratic welfare states, who are employed in the public sector, in large organizations, and in organizations with a relatively large share of female employees, experience the highest capabilities (findings not shown).

Conclusions and Discussion

Existing research tends to concentrate on the number of worklife policies adopted by organizations in relation to the public provisions present in a country. However, few studies look into the accumulation of state and workplace support and none so far have taken a capabilities approach. This chapter applied a capabilities approach (as shown in Figure 1.1, Introduction) to examine in what countries and workplace contexts working parents have the most capabilities and agency freedoms to achieve a WLB. Taking into account both state and workplace policy support, we found that employees working in public sector organizations, large organizations, organizations with a large proportion of women (up to 80%), and organizations operating in social democratic welfare states (Sweden, Finland, and Denmark) have the most capabilities in terms of policy measures. This finding confirms existing research showing that size, being public sector, and proportion of women (up to a certain level) are positively associated with the adoption of worklife policies and arrangements. Research also shows that the generous level of public policies for working parents in social democratic welfare states such as Sweden, Denmark, and Finland is closely followed by some of the post-socialist countries.

The capabilities approach clearly revealed some of the gaps in the existing research. First, most research simply looks at the number of policies offered either by the state or by organizations. This shows that organizations differ in the number of policies they have within and across countries (Goodstein 1994; Ingram and Simons 1995; den Dulk 2001; Poelmans et al. 2003; Remery et al. 2003; den Dulk et al. 2010). Although relevant, this does not tell us much about the capabilities of working parents. It is important to take into account how workplace policies are structured and formulated, and how they are embedded in the organizational and larger societal context. For instance, how do policies at different levels complement each other? Organizations can supplement public provisions by enhancing existing state policies (for instance by offering longer leave or increasing financial compensation) or complement public provisions by offering *different types* of policies, such as flexible working hours or a working time account. Supplementing existing provisions signals that the organization considers WLB an important topic

that they are willing to support, which is an important conversion factor. However, the introduction of *different types* of policies, that is, complementation of public provisions by adopting policies and arrangements not offered by national government, should significantly increase the capabilities of working parents since it increases the number of options parents can choose from. Hence, research that investigates the relation between state and workplace policies should take into account the types of policies introduced and not only the number of policies. The first attempts that do take into account the types of policies introduced indicate that in the social democratic regime, in which the state takes a large share of the responsibility for supporting WLB, organizations tend to offer less support although they do not completely withdraw. Rather, they complement public provisions in those areas in which state support is less salient, such as flexible work arrangements (den Dulk et al. 2012).

Second, despite the fact that research indicates that it is important to investigate the interaction between state and workplace policies for the capabilities of working parents, cross-national data sets that allow such an examination are limited. Currently, the ESTW data collected in 2004–05 is the most suitable data set in Europe. The latest Establishment survey conducted in 2009–10 focuses on different topics and does not repeat the questions on different types of WLB policies. Also, other cross-national data sets, such as the Cranfield Network on Comparative Human Resource Management Survey (CRANET), which collects data at the organizational level, vary their survey questions and in recent years have tended to pay less attention to leave and childcare support issues. Consequently, despite the fact that WLB support is a dynamic, changing policy area in which many developments are to be witnessed, we lack data to map trends and developments regarding different types of workplace support and their interaction with state support.

Third, we need to monitor not only the development of workplace support in relation to public provisions, but also to collect detailed information on how public and workplace provisions are converted into capabilities and agency freedom to achieve a WLB. Data are needed about eligibility conditions and actual take-up both at the national level and within organizations. So far, information on these two issues is both limited across and within countries, making cross-national comparisons and comparisons between different groups of employees impossible (Moss 2012).

Finally, data are needed on existing workplace organizational cultures, to know whether the organizational culture conflicts or supports the take-up of policies (Thompson et al. 1999; see also other chapters in the volume). Currently, the ESTW 2004–05 contains one question only hinting at organizational culture and that is whether the organization considers the WLB of its employees an organizational task (see Chapter 7 in this volume). This is a very

limited indicator and might more reflect the attitude of the HR manager who answered the survey than describe the culture itself. Future research needs to try and incorporate a more extensive measure of organizational culture.

The following chapters address some of the gaps indicated. The chapter by Fagan and Walthery (Chapter 7) discusses flexible work arrangements in terms of eligibility criteria across countries and workplaces, and shows to what extent employees in diverse organization and country contexts are able to adapt their working hours from full-time to part-time or the other way round. Chapters 8 and 9 show how work-intensification trends prevent employees from taking up policies. More specifically, Chapter 8 focuses on the managerial discourse in organizations and its effect on the capabilities of working parents to make claims for WLB.

This chapter has shown that state and workplace policy support interact and that there is inequality in the capabilities of working parents to balance work and family life both between countries and in firms within them. Thus, inequality in access to worklife balance support is dependent on where people live and work.

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