European top managers' support for work-life arrangements

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(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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Introduction

1.1   RESEARCH PROBLEM

Work-life arrangements have increasingly become an integral part of the organization of work in recent decades. Governments and organizations introduced policies such as telecommuting, flextime, part-time hours, and various types of leave and child care arrangements (Ollier-Malaterre, McNamara, Matz-Costa, Pitt-Catsouphes & Valcour, 2013). This increase in work-life arrangements has not been a silent process of change. The pros and cons were a vivid subject of public debate in many countries, as well as in supranational organizations like the EU. One of the key discussion points in this debate has been the consequences for organizations of providing work-life arrangements. According to proponents, work-life arrangements make organizations more effective, increase employee productivity and attract high-skilled employees; opponents of work-life arrangements say that they make the organization of work more difficult because they undermine teamwork and decrease employee productivity (see: Allen, 2001; De Ruijter & van der Lippe, 2009; Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999). The broad spectrum of opinions about work-life arrangements is reflected in the fact that organizations vary greatly in the extent to which they offer them to employees (e.g. Den Dulk, 2001; Den Dulk, Peters & Poutsma, 2012; Den Dulk, Groeneveld, Ollier-Malaterre & Valcour, 2013). Flextime and telecommuting, for example, are inherent to the way work is organized at Microsoft (Microsoft, 2007). Its former CEO, Bill Gates, is famous for introducing the 'New World of Work' (Gates, 2005), which incorporates work-life arrangements such as flextime and telecommuting. In his White Paper, Gates states '*The New World of Work, then, is the central battleground in the war for talent. Microsoft sees two promising strategies for employers competing for these skilled and increasingly important knowledge workers: make your organization independent of time and place; and prepare for the new face of the workforce*' (Gates, 2007, p. 10). The CEO of Yahoo!, Marissa Mayer, on the other hand, recently restricted telecommuting because she felt it was unfavorable for the company (Kolhatkar, 2013), stating that '*to become the absolute best place to work, communication and collaboration will be important, so we need to be working side-by-side. That is why it is critical that we are all present in our offices*' (*CNNMoney*, February 25, 2013). These examples show that top executives, such as CEOs, CFOs and members of boards of directors (referred to hereafter as 'top managers'), are central to work-life arrangements, as they are the ones who decide whether or not their organization provides them (Bardoel, 2003; Duxbury & Haines, 1991; Kossek, Dass & DeMarr, 1994; Lee, McDermid & Buck, 2000; Milliken, Martins & Morgan, 1998; Peters & Heusinkveld, 2010; Van der Lippe, 2004).

In addition, we know that the organizational culture is essential for employees having actual access to using the arrangements formally available (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; Eaton, 2003; Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner & Hanson, 2009; Kossek, Lewis & Hammer,

2010; Mescher, Benschop & Doorewaard, 2010; Thompson et al., 1999). Besides deciding which arrangements are formally available, top managers also have a great influence on the organizational culture. For example, they can stimulate lower level managers to allow employees access to policies or set an example by using work-life arrangements themselves stimulating work-life arrangements to get integrated throughout the organization. This shows that top managers are important for both the decisions about adopting work-life arrangements in their organizations and the organizational culture shaping employee's access to work-life arrangements.

Researchers have seldom included topmanagers directly in studies towards the provision of work-life arrangements. We therefore know little about why they decide to adopt or stimulate them or to refrain from doing so. This is important information, however, because it helps us understand why work-life arrangements are or are not provided in organizations. After all, 'strategy and other major organizational choices are made by humans, primarily top executives, who act on the basis of idiosyncratic experiences, motives and dispositions' (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996, p. 2-3). The aim of this dissertation is therefore *to understand top managers' support for work-life arrangements in their organization.*

1.1.1 Managers' support for work-life arrangements

Different types of decisions about work-life arrangements, made by different types of managers within organizations, play an important role in whether they are used by employees (Poelmans, Greenhaus & Las Heras Maestro, 2013). The types of managers important for work-life arrangements are top managers (Lee et al., 2000; Milliken et al., 1998; Warmerdam, Den Dulk & Van Doorne-Huiskes, 2010), Human Resource (HR) managers (Kossek et al., 1994; Milliken, Dutton & Beyer, 1990; Morgan & Milliken, 1992), and direct supervisors (Den Dulk & De Ruijter, 2008; Poelmans et al., 2013; Powell & Mainiero, 1999). As the persons responsible for personnel matters, HR managers must recognize the need for work-life arrangements and bring them to the attention of the top management of the organization. Top managers then make decisions regarding their adoption (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Kossek et al., 1994; Milliken et al., 1998; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). When work-life arrangements are adopted they become part of the organization's policies. Top managers are also in a position to direct and stimulate the implementation of work-life arrangements throughout the organization (Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004) – for example by explicitly encouraging their use, stimulating an organizational culture accepting of the use of arrangements by employees, or encouraging direct supervisors to allow their use by employees as it is generally up to direct supervisors to decide whether individual employees are permitted to actually make use of the arrangements (Den Dulk & De Ruijter, 2008; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004; Powell & Mainiero, 1999). This means that top managers' support for work-life arrangements is likely to affect both the adoption

and implementation of these arrangements within organizations. In this dissertation, attention is paid to the role of the HR manager and top manager. Because HR managers are central to bringing work-life arrangements to the attention of top managers, the first empirical chapter of this dissertation focuses on HR managers, after which the focus of the remaining chapters shifts to top managers.

In this dissertation the focus lies on the support of top managers for the adoption and implementation of work-life arrangements in the organization. Although most studies towards the provision of work-life arrangements focus on their formal adoption, the presence of formal arrangements does not guarantee that employees will benefit from them (Allen, 2001). Employees do not always capitalize on formal policies offered by the organization (Kossek et al., 1999). An unsupportive culture in the workplace is cited as the main reason for this gap between policy and practice (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; Eaton, 2003; Kossek, Barber & Winters, 1999; Thompson et al., 1999). Top managers can affect this and stimulate a supportive culture in the organization through supporting the implementation of work-life arrangements throughout the organization. This dissertation therefore focuses on top managers' support for work-life arrangements that goes further than their formal adoption alone.

1.1.2 Work-life arrangements

Work-life arrangements are organizational policies that directly support the combination of professional, private or family life (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2004; Kossek et al, 2010; Plantenga & Remery, 2005; Scheibl & Dex, 1998). There are different types of work-life arrangements that top managers can decide to adopt, for example the timing (flextime) and location of the work (telecommuting). These practices are most commonly available to people with desk jobs, with technology now making it possible for them to do their work anytime and anywhere (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg & Kalleberg, 2005; Van der Lippe & Schippers, 2005). However, employees who need to be present in the workplace, for example in production or health care settings, can also be offered some flexibility in their work hours, for example through self-organizing and self-rostering of teams. Another option is the adjustment of working hours, for example part-time work. A further type of work-life arrangement involves leave policies, such as maternity, paternity and parental leave as an extension of government regulations. Organizations can extend and complement statutory leave regulations by offering employees additional pay during leave, more leave time, or more lenient circumstances (Den Dulk, 2001). Other kinds of leave arrangements such as sabbaticals or short-term care leave also belong to this category. A final type of work-life arrangement involves services, such as on-site child care, dependents-care provisions, laundry services, etc. Although the idea many have of work-life arrangements is that it contributes to the work-life balance of employees, they are not always beneficial for them. Drawbacks of work-life arrangements mentioned are

the blurring of the distinction between work and private life as employees can now work anytime anywhere, causing employees to never 'switch off' (Chesley, 2005; Fenner & Renn, 2010; Kelly, Moen & Tranby, 2011). This is important to keep in mind when discussing work-life arrangements.

1.1.3   The national context

Top managers' support for work-life arrangements is potentially shaped by the national context in which they operate, in several ways. One of the main reasons organizations in Europe provide work-life arrangements is because they are required by law to do so (Bardoel, Tharenau & Moss, 1999). Also statutory policies provided by the government have consequences for organizations; for example, leave policies remove employees from the workforce for a certain period of time, with organizations being left to adjust. These statutory work-life policies also offer a basis for top managers' decision-making concerning additional or supplementary work-life arrangements because they are likely to relate their organizational strategy in this regard to the government's work-life policies (in line with: Den Dulk, Peters, Poutsma & Ligthart, 2010; Den Dulk et al., 2012; 2013). Organizations do not merely respond passively to government policies; they are also actively influencing the decision making, with top managers acting as influential players in society who are therefore in a position to influence these decisions (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2000). It is thus important to relate the adoption of work-life arrangements by organizations to the national context of statutory work-life policies. In an effort to take the national context explicitly into account, this dissertation focuses on Europe, with its wide variety of government regulations concerning work-life arrangements (Casper, Allen & Poelmans, 2014; Den Dulk & Groeneveld, 2012; Den Dulk et al., 2013). Most of the chapters focus specifically on Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and the United Kingdom, selected specifically because they ensure variation in the national context. I will now briefly review the cultural context and legislative work-life policies in each of these countries.

   Finland. As one of the Scandinavian countries, work-life policies are part of the national cultural values in Finland and the government is providing an extensive system of public child care facilities. Great emphasis is placed on gender equality and both men and women are assumed to spend time working and caring for dependents (Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2013; Lewis, Campbell & Huerta, 2008). Most employees in Finnish society work full time. Those who work part-time generally have young children, as parents have the right to work part-time until the end of their child's second year of school (Niemistö, 2011). Scandinavian countries are known for their emphasis on gender equality and their focus on enabling both men and women to pursue a full-time career (Lewis, Knijn, Martin & Ostner, 2008). Finland also pursues these ideals, but differs from the rest of Scandinavia in that it also wants parents of young children to be able to stay at home. Finland has therefore developed the option of 'care leave,' which allows parents of children under

three years of age to remain at home with them without losing their job. During this period, parents receive compensation from the government in the form of a 'home care allowance' (Niemistö, 2011).

The Netherlands. In the Netherlands, many employees, particular female ones, use part-time work hours as a strategy for maintaining a healthy work-life balance and meeting child care needs (Portegijs, Cloïn, Keuzenkamp, Merens & Steenvoorden, 2008; Täht & Mills, 2012). Dutch law gives employees a statutory basis for working part-time by giving them the right to request an extension or reduction of working hours, with employers only being able to refuse if they can truly claim that it would severely harm the organization. At the time of the data collection, mothers received 16 weeks of maternity leave and fathers two days of paternity leave, both on full pay. After these periods, both parents are entitled to parental leave for 26 times their weekly work hours; this is unpaid leave unless otherwise agreed in a collective labor agreement. Many parents use this to work part-time for a certain period. The Dutch government actively tries to involve organizations in work-life arrangements by enacting basic legislation and encouraging employers to supplement it (Den Dulk & Spenkelink, 2009; Remery, Van Doorne-Huiskes & Schippers, 2003).

Portugal. Compared to other southern European countries, Portugal has a high full-time female employment rate (Lewis et al., 2008b). Full-time work and long work hours are common. Nonetheless, the public child care system in Portugal is rather limited; with child care being viewed as a private matter and families generally organizing care for young children themselves (Das Dores Guerreiro & Pereira, 2007; OECD, 2014). In order to make this feasible, the maternity/paternity leave system is quite advanced. At the time of the interviews, the leave system was no longer divided into maternity, paternity and parental leave but combined it all under the name of 'parental leave'. The period is 120 (100 percent payment) or 150 days (80 percent payment), depending on the level of payment. Six weeks of this period are reserved for the mother to be taken in the initial period after giving birth. The remaining period may be divided between the parents, with a bonus of 30 days when both parents share the leave in order to encourage male involvement (Wall & Leitão, 2012).

Slovenia. The government of Slovenia, which represents post-communist Europe, is very active in providing work-life policies as a legacy from its past. The country's state work-life policies have their historical starting point in the period of state socialism, when full employment of both men and women was the norm (Den Dulk, Peper, Sadar, Lewis, Smithson & van Doorne-Huiskes, 2011). Today, full time positions are the norm for both men and women (Sayer & Gornick, 2012). The Slovene government provides an extensive system of maternity/paternity leave arrangements and an extensive child care system (Stropnik & Šircelj, 2008; Van der Lippe, Jager & Kops, 2006), which – unlike many other post-communist countries – continued after 1990 (Mrčela & Sadar, 2011). In 2007 the

Slovene government began actively promoting work-life arrangements in organizations by awarding a 'family-friendly certificate' to those employers that meet the requirements, allowing organizations to show that they are family-friendly employers.[1]

United Kingdom. Following a liberal philosophy, the British government has long left the reconciliation of work and care to families with the help of services provided through the market economy. This is still the main philosophy underpinning work-life policies, and child care, for example, is seen as a private issue that should be solved by market supply and demand (Van der Lippe et al., 2006). From 1999 onwards, in response to European legislation, the U.K. has developed a system that focuses on long but relatively low paid maternity leave amounting to 39 weeks in total. It also introduced legislation giving employees the right to request flexible work hours (Lewis et al., 2008a) and in recent years, the government has chosen to actively promote flextime among employers. Part-time work and job sharing are also quite common in British society and employees in these jobs are protected by legislation, with the same employment protection and many of the social rights as employees in full-time positions (Van der Lippe et al., 2006). However, part-time jobs are generally lower level positions, with part-time employees often being overqualified for their jobs (Yerkes, Standing, Wattis & Wain, 2010).

1.2   THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

There is a vast body of literature about the provision of work-life arrangements by organizations. Authors have examined the adoption of these arrangements within organizations from various theoretical starting points, three of which have been central in the literature: institutional/neo-institutional theory, business case argumentation, and the managerial interpretation approach. These theoretical starting points can also be applied to understanding top managers' support for work-life arrangements.

1.2.1   Institutional/neo-institutional theory

The earliest studies on work-life arrangements often drew from institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977), which is based on the idea that organizations follow social rules and conventions (Ingram & Simons, 1995). There are various pressures in society that push organizations to follow these social rules and conventions, known as institutional pressure. Applied to work-life arrangements, this means, for example, that legislation (coercive pressure) or collective agreements designed to support people's work-life balance obliges organizations to provide employees with certain types of work-life arrangements, such as parental leave. In addition, legislation may also encourage a social climate in which organizations are expected to support

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1   Source: http://europa.eu/epic/practices-that-work/practice-user-registry/practices/family-friendly-company-certificate_en.htm

employees in combining work and private responsibilities (Den Dulk, 2001). This puts pressure on organizations to adopt work-life arrangements. This social climate might in turn enhance the 'sense of entitlement' (Cook, 2004; Lewis & Haas, 2005) to work-life arrangements felt by employees and professional groups within the organization. They put pressure on organizations to adopt these arrangements (normative pressure) by expecting that they comply with the social climate and conventions (Oliver, 1991). Finally, because they are uncertain what to do, organizations copy what others in their field are doing (mimetic pressure).

The main criticism about institutional theory was that it ignored the strategic choices that decision-makers within organizations make in response to institutional pressures (Oliver, 1991). It presents organizations as passive and without any initiative. In response, some researchers argued that the adoption of work-life arrangements by organizations is the result of active and strategic decision-making by managers who are free to choose how to respond to institutional pressures (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Oliver, 1991; Osterman, 1995). According to this new take on institutional theory, known as neo-institutional theory, decisions can range from compliance to complete rejection (Oliver, 1991).

Studies applying neo-institutional theory formulated hypotheses concerning which organizational characteristics make organizations more susceptible to institutional pressures and therefore more likely to comply with institutional pressures (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995). They argued, for example, that organizations with a large proportion of female employees, large organizations, and organizations in the public sector are more susceptible to institutional pressures. Although these studies recognize that decision-makers can choose strategically how to respond to institutional pressures, they did not specify how these strategic decisions are made and what role the decision-makers play. To specify how strategic decisions are made, more recent studies added elements of business case argumentation to neo-institutional theory (Den Dulk, 2001; 2005; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Osterman, 1995; Plantenga & Remery, 2005), while others added managerial interpretation of the environment to explicitly recognize managers as actors who make the strategic decisions (Bardoel, 2003; Goodstein, 1994; Kossek et al., 1994; Milliken et al., 1998; Osterman, 1995).

1.2.2 Business case argumentation and neo-institutional theory

Business case argumentation was added by researchers to neo-institutional theory to specify how strategic decisions concerning the adoption of work-life arrangements are made by decision-makers within organizations (Den Dulk, 2001; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Dex & Scheibl, 2001; Osterman, 1995). According to business case argumentation, organizations adopt work-life arrangements when the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs (Den Dulk, 2001), contributing to the achievement of organizational goals. Organizational goals are

not necessarily limited to profit maximization, as suggested by neo-classical economic theory (Glass & Fujimoto, 1995). Today's organizations tend to have other goals as well, such as a good reputation, status in society and harmonious employment relations (Den Dulk, 2001; Den Dulk et al., 2010). Strategic decisions concerning the adoption of work-life arrangements therefore tend to be based on cost-benefit considerations and ultimately need to contribute to one of the organization's goals.

When business case argumentation is applied together with neo-institutional theory to managerial decision-making regarding the adoption of work-life arrangements, managers will take the specific costs and benefits of work-life arrangements for their organization into account and will also respond to social rules and conventions. Top managers can strategically decide to follow social rules and conventions because they contribute to the organizational goal of social legitimacy. In this case, both business case arguments and institutional pressures make the same predictions as to whether or not work-life arrangements will be adopted. However, social rules and conventions can also lead decision-makers to making decisions that are not in the organization's direct interest. To illustrate, when a certain type of work-life arrangement is common in society and thus very institutionalized, for example flextime, top managers might decide to adopt this arrangements simply because it is standard practice to do so, even though it is cheaper and easier to have employees working the same hours (Tolbert & Zucker, 1983).

Most studies applying business case argumentation combined with neo-institutional theory to work-life arrangements do not explicitly recognize the decision-making role of managers (Warmerdam et al., 2010). In this line of literature, that role is generally left implicit, treating the organization as if it were somehow making the decisions itself. The focus is on the relationship between organizational/national context and the provision of work-life arrangements (Den Dulk et al., 2010). Decision-makers are inherent in the theory, but are generally taken for granted, rather than being observed directly. This dissertation adds to the literature by applying this theoretical framework to top managers' support for work-life arrangements. Theoretical implications are observed at the level of the decision-making actor rather than assumed as the underlying mechanism through which arrangements work out at the organization's level, offering a more direct insight into the decision-making that defines the organization's approach to work-life arrangements.

1.2.3 Managerial interpretation perspective and neo-institutional theory

Researcher have added the managerial interpretation perspective to neo-institutional theory to explicitly add the idea that organizations do not passively respond to institutional pressures, but are the result of active decision making on the part of managers. This perspective emphasizes the importance of managers' subjective interpretation of the institutional environment. According to the managerial interpretation approach, managers

must first become aware of the need for certain policies. Once that has happened, they must make an active decision to push for the introduction of those policies before they are actually adopted by the organization (Milliken et al., 1998). Applied to work-life arrangements, this means that managers must become aware of the need for such arrangements and which possibilities there are. For example, they must recognize the difficulties employees have in combining their work and family responsibilities, and they must know about possible work-life arrangements that can make this easier for employees (Morgan & Milliken, 1992). After recognizing this need and exploring what options are available, managers must decide that it would be good to do something for their employees by offering them work-life arrangements and then push for their adoption. This theory emphasizes that managerial factors are important for the adoption of work-life arrangements. It also emphasizes that the subjective interpretation of managers is important, for example how they interpret their employees' need for work-life arrangements (Bardoel, 2003). Differences in managers' subjective interpretations of the environment will account for differences in the adoption of work-life arrangements between organizations in the same institutional context (Bardoel, 2003; Goodstein, 1994; Kossek et al., 1994; Morgan & Milliken, 1992).

So far, this theoretical framework has been applied mainly to the role that HR managers play in the adoption of work-life arrangements, and not to top managers. Scholars have shown that when HR managers are aware of the need for work-life arrangements (Goodstein, 1994; Milliken et al., 1998) and they see them as beneficial for the organization (Bardoel, 2003; Goodstein, 1994; Morgan & Milliken, 1992), their organizations provide more work-life arrangements. Research has also revealed that when HR managers describe the top management as supportive of work-life arrangements, their organizations provide more work-life arrangements (Bardoel, 2003; Kossek et al., 1994). This shows that both the interpretation by HR managers and the support of top managers are crucial to implementing work-life arrangements in organizations. This dissertation adds to the existing literature on work-life arrangements by applying the managerial interpretation theory to the roles of both HR managers and top managers regarding the adoption of work-life arrangements.

1.3 OVERARCHING RESEARCH QUESTION AND EMPIRICAL APPROACH

Managers' support is crucial if work-life arrangements are to be offered to employees: HR managers must recognize the need for these arrangements and bring this to the attention of the top managers who make the actual decisions about their adoption and implementation. Nevertheless, few studies on work-life arrangements have investigated top managers directly (Warmerdam et al., 2010). We therefore have only limited knowledge of when

and why top managers decide to support work-life arrangements in their organization and how this relates to the different layers of context: the organization and the national context. The setting of this research is Europe. The overarching research question is therefore: *Why do top managers in Europe support work-life arrangements or refrain from supporting them, and how is this related to the organizational and national context?*

In this dissertation I approach the research problem from both a qualitative and a quantitative angle using mixed research methods (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The mixed-method approach makes it possible to gain a more diverse and in-depth perspective on how managers regard work-life arrangements than a single methodology would provide. This approach is especially suitable given that the topic of top managers' support for work-life arrangements is still fairly unexplored territory: it makes it possible to test theories quantitatively and generate new knowledge using qualitative methods, which is important given that we have limited knowledge of the topic. The mixed methods approach and data collection will be explained more thoroughly in Chapter 2. For each of the empirical chapters in this dissertation, I decided which method best suited the specific question being addressed. This means that, even though the overall nature of the dissertation is defined by the use of mixed methods, the individual empirical chapters take varying approaches: quantitative (Chapters 3 and 4), mixed methods (Chapter 5) or qualitative (Chapter 6).

1.4   OVERVIEW OF THE EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS

Although a large body of literature has focused on the work-life arrangements that organizations offer employees, very few studies have focused on top managers as the decision-making actors for these arrangements. The empirical chapters of this dissertation take a stepwise approach to gain a better understanding of why managers support work-life arrangements in their organizations. Each chapter looks at managers' support for work-life arrangements from a different angle, using a different method and accordingly filling a slightly different gap in the knowledge that explains why top managers would support work-life arrangements or refrain from doing so. This has resulted in four empirical chapters, which are presented below. The empirical chapters of this dissertation were originally written as independent journal articles and can therefore be read separately. *Table 1.1* provides an overview of the empirical chapters.

Table 1.1: Overview of the empirical chapters

Chapter	Focus	Where	Nature
3	The national and organizational context in which HR managers with a positive attitude towards work-life arrangements can convince top managers of the need to provide them	EU27	Quantitative (survey design)
4	Conditions decisive for the support of top managers for work-life arrangements	Finland, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, U.K.	Quantitative (experimental design)
5	National differences in the considerations of top managers to support work-life arrangements	Finland, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, U.K.	Mixed methods
6	Changes in the considerations of top managers to support work-life arrangements over time	Netherlands	Qualitative

1.4.1 Chapter 3: When HR managers' attitudes matter for work-life arrangements

In the first empirical chapter, the focus is on the relationship between HR managers' attitude and the provision of work-life arrangements by the organization. The aim is to understand how the attitude of the HR manager towards work-life arrangements is related to the provision of work-life arrangements by the organization and in which organizational and national contexts HR managers with a positive attitude make the biggest difference. Previous research has shown that the attitude of HR managers is positively related to the provision of work-life arrangements. Organizational and national characteristics are also affecting their provision in a sense that they make it more likely or less likely that they are provided (Bardoel, 2003; Goodstein, 1994; Milliken et al., 1998; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). However, it is unclear how HR managers' attitudes interact with organizational and national characteristics. Is it for example easier for HR managers to advocate work-life arrangements in one context than the other, making their attitudes more relevant for the provision of work-life arrangements? This empirical chapter contributes to the literature by looking at how the relationship between HR managers' attitudes and the provision of work-life arrangements is reinforced by the organizational and national context. The central research question is: *What is the association between the HR manager's attitude toward work-life arrangements and the range of work-life arrangements provided by the organization, and how is this relationship shaped by the characteristics of the organization and the country?* This chapter is quantitative in nature and it presents concrete hypotheses about the interaction between HR managers' attitudes and organizational and national characteristics. It draws on data from the large-scale 2004/2005 Establishment Survey of Working Time and Work-Life Balance, conducted among almost 19,000 establishments located in 21 European countries (EFILWC, 2005b). Multilevel modeling is used to test the hypotheses.

1.4.2 Chapter 4: Top managers' support for work-life arrangements in Europe

In the fourth chapter, the unit of analysis shifts from HR managers to top managers. The specific focus lies on the conditions under which top managers are willing to support the implementation of work-life arrangements throughout their organization. These conditions are derived from theories common in the literature focusing on the provision of work-life arrangements: neo-institutional theory, business case argumentation and the managerial interpretation approach. This chapter contributes to the literature by applying these theories to top managers support for work-life arrangements, which allows testing these theories on the level of actor decisions. Conditions tested to be decisive for top managers' support for work-life arrangements are the type of work-life arrangements at stake, the financial costs involved, the expected return in employee commitment, the target group of employees and the approach of other organizations in the direct environment of the organization of the top manager. Also, characteristics of the top managers themselves, their organizations and the countries they belong to are considered. The central question is: *Under which conditions do top managers support the provision of work-life arrangements in their organization and how does this vary between organizational and national contexts?* To capture conditions decisive for top managers' support for work-life arrangements, the research involved developing and conducting a vignette experiment among over 200 top managers in five European countries (Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and the U.K.). Multilevel analysis was used to analyze the data.

1.4.3 Chapter 5: Understanding national differences in top managers' support

In the fifth chapter, the focus is on gaining an in-depth understanding of national differences in top managers' support for work-life arrangements. Work-life arrangements originate from the Anglo-Saxon countries, but found their way into organizations located in other countries (Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). Cross-national studies consistently show national differences in the provision of work-life arrangements by organizations (e.g., Den Dulk et al., 2010; 2012; Lambert & Kossek, 2005). Recent research suggests that not only the extent to which work-life arrangements are provided varies between countries, but also how managers within these organizations regard them (Den Dulk et al., 2011; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). In the Anglo-Saxon countries, work-life arrangements are evaluated in business terms, what has been associated with the readiness to adopt work-life arrangements by organizations in these countries (Lee et al., 2000; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). A recent study suggests that this is not how they are viewed everywhere. This chapter adds to the literature by focusing on exploring whether top managers considerations to support work-

life arrangements vary between countries and how these considerations are related to the national context, starting from the question: *How do the considerations of top managers whether to support work-life arrangements vary between countries and how can this be understood in relation to the national context?* To capture national variations in top managers' considerations, the research used a mixed method approach that combines data from the vignette experiment with data taken from semi-structured interviews with 78 top managers in Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and the U.K. The chapter compares separate multi-level models for each of these countries; it also compares the results of the analysis of the semi-structured interviews across countries and relates them to the national and organizational context. By using both qualitative and quantitative information, this chapter gives us a rich understanding of how top managers' support for work-life arrangements is related to the national context.

1.4.4 Chapter 6: Changes in top managers' considerations during a time of economic crisis

The final empirical chapter expands on the previous chapters and the literature by first establishing and understanding the full breadth of top managers' considerations to support work-life arrangements and then analyzing whether and how these considerations may have changed over time. To track these changes over time, the research focused on the Dutch situation. This chapter studies the changes in top managers' considerations during a time when the economic crisis hit the Netherlands, making it possible to study what such conditions do to top managers' considerations regarding work-life arrangements. To this end, the chapter addresses two questions: 1) *What are the considerations of Dutch top managers regarding organizational work-life arrangements, and how can these considerations be understood?* 2) *Did the considerations of Dutch top managers regarding organizational work-life arrangements shift between 2008 and 2011, and, if so, how can such a shift be understood?* This chapter is based on 13 follow-up interviews collected by myself for this dissertation and 13 interviews held in 2008 in the context of another study (for more information, see Warmerdam et al., 2010). Because the interviews were repeated, it was possible to detect changes in the considerations of top managers.

1.5 CONTRIBUTIONS

This dissertation contributes to the literature in several ways. First, so far scholars have mainly explicitly studied decisions about work-life arrangements as allowance decisions made by supervisors (e.g. Casper, Fox, Sitzman & Landy, 2004; Den Dulk & De Ruijter, 2008; Klein, Berman & Dickson, 2000), neglecting the adoption and implementation decisions that make work-life arrangements available to employees in the first place. By focusing

on top managers, I explicitly bring the decision-making actors about the adoption and implementation of work-life arrangements into the realm of research and take the first step towards filling this gap in knowledge. Filling this gap in knowledge will contribute to the understanding why work-life arrangements are provided and implemented within organizations or not. Second, the focus lies not only on top managers support for the adoption of work-life arrangements as part of the formal organization's policies, but also on their support for implementing the arrangement throughout the organization. Formal policies are often not enough for employees to benefit from them (Allen, 2001), as their access to them can be hampered by especially the organizational culture (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2004; Eaton, 2003; Kossek et al., 1999; Thompson et al., 1999). By including top managers support for the implementation of work-life arrangements, I look at their support beyond the line of formal adoption. Third, by combining several theoretical approaches in this dissertation, I approach the topic of work-life arrangements from several angles, providing a richer understanding of why they are or are not supported by top managers. This brings together two strands of literature: the strand that explicitly recognizes managers as decision-makers for work-life arrangements and the importance of their subjective interpretation of the environment, which leaves out *how* managers arrive at these decisions (Milliken et al., 1998; Morgan & Milliken, 1992), and the strand that emphasizes active and strategic decision-making regarding work-life arrangements in relation to the organizational and national context, which leaves managers as decision-makers out of the story (Den Dulk, 2001; Den Dulk et al., 2010; 2012; 2013; Dex & Scheibl, 2001; Osterman, 1995). In practice this means that in this dissertation neo-institutional theory, business case argumentation and the managerial interpretation approach are applied to understanding top managers' support for work-life arrangements. Fourth, data was collected especially for this dissertation from over two hundred top managers of organizations in five different European countries (Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and the U.K.). This data is unique in providing information on a large group of very hard-to-reach respondents. The cross-national perspective allows looking into how the national context is related to top managers' support for work-life arrangements, as national differences are consistently found in research on work-life arrangements (Den Dulk et al., 2010; 2012; Lambert & Kossek, 2005). Fifth, by adopting a mixed method design combining quantitative and qualitative data, I have been able to study the support of top managers for work-life arrangements from different angles, offering a deeper understanding of the reasons and conditions under which they decide to support work-life arrangements.

Chapter 2

Data collection

For this dissertation I made use of the large dataset of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (chapter 3). However I also collected extensive data myself from over 200 top managers located in five European countries (chapters 4-6). This gave me a rich dataset with data from a hard to reach population, namely top managers. This chapter describes and accounts for this data collection.

2.1   DESIGN OF THE DATA COLLECTION

The data collected for this dissertation consisted of two elements: a vignette experiment and semi-structured interviews with top managers. A deliberate decision was made to collect two different types of data, producing a richer source of information for understanding the support of top managers for work-life arrangements. Top managers are a very hard population to include in research, which is probably why they have so far not featured as respondents in studies focusing on the adoption of work-life arrangements, even though this literature recognizes that top managers are the ones who make the adoption decisions (Duxbury & Haines, 1991; Kossek et al., 1994; Lee et al., 2000; Milliken et al., 1998). Because there has been no survey of top managers, we know little about their support for work-life arrangements. Approaching the topic from different angles by using several methods therefore seemed a promising way to gain a thorough understanding of the perspective of top managers.

A decision was taken to develop and conduct a vignette experiment because it offers a suitable approach to understanding decisions, particularly if we regard the adoption of work-life arrangements as the outcome of the strategic decisions of top managers. In a vignette experiment, respondents are presented with a small story in which factors potentially decisive for decisions are varied systematically (Rossi & Anderson, 1982). Varying these factors makes it possible to see which are ultimately decisive for top managers' decision to support work-life arrangements. The aim of the vignette experiment as such was to test the conditions decisive for top managers' support for work-life arrangements.

Also semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the considerations underlying top managers' decision to adopt work-life arrangements in their organizations, or to refrain from doing so. Semi-structured interviews are 'sufficiently structured to address specific topics related to the phenomenon under study, while leaving space for participants to offer new meanings to the study focus' (Galletta, 2013, p.24). This study benefits from the in-depth approach because the literature offers only limited knowledge of how top managers view work-life arrangements. Semi-structured interviews are a rich source of information leading to insight and a good way to explore a topic from the perspective of the actors themselves. The interviews provided an understanding of the considerations that top managers themselves indicated underpin their decisions. Together with the vignette experiment, they make it possible to understand why top managers would adopt and implement work-life arrangements or refrain from adoption and implementation.

2.2   GETTING RESPONDENTS

A step-wise approach was taken to selecting top managers to be included in this study. I first selected the countries and then the top managers in these countries. This section explains the reasons for selecting these particular countries and top managers.

2.2.1   Selection of countries

To ensure variety in the national context, countries from different corners of Europe were selected, with each one representing a different type of welfare state regime (Esping-Andersen, 1999). In addition, medium-sized countries were selected to ensure that the labor markets did not vary too greatly. The countries selected were Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and the U.K..

2.2.2   Selection of top managers

The criteria for inclusion in the study were: a position as a top manager (CEO, CFO member of a board of directors) in an organization with at least ten employees. When an organization had more than one top manager, which is the case with boards of directors, there was asked for the top manager with most responsibility for HR issues to take part in the study. The cut-off point of ten employees was chosen because laws and regulations tend to be different for very small organizations. The sample of top managers participating in a semi-structured interview overlaps with the sample of top managers participating in the vignette experiment in the sense that the top managers who participated in a semi-structured interview also participated in the vignette experiment. In each country, twice as many top managers participated in the vignette experiment as in the semi-structured interviews. This was because a larger group of top managers was needed to analyze the vignette experiment, whereas the goal of the semi-structured interviews was saturation, requiring a smaller number of participants.

A form of non-probability sampling was adopted known as maximum variation sampling to select the top managers for both the vignette experiment and the semi-structured interviews. The aim was to include top managers in the study who represented a wide variety of characteristics. A maximum variation approach was chosen rather than a more traditional probability (random) sampling approach because top managers are part of the elite of society and particularly hard to get access to (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Goldstein, 2002). A nonprobability sampling method is more suitable in this case because a probability sampling procedure is likely to have produced a very low response rate and therefore have a very slight chance of being random. A more diverse population could be reached by combining other sampling methods. In the vignette study, the random elements were contained within the vignettes themselves ensuring randomization on

this level of the analyses. For the semi-structured interviews the goal was saturation rather than random representation. The characteristics for which the aim was maximum variation were chosen because previous studies had associated them with the provision of work-life arrangements. This meant involving top managers from small, medium-sized and large organizations, from both public- and private-sector organizations, from a wide variety of organizational types, and both male and female top managers (Den Dulk et al., 2010; Goodstein, 1994; Milliken et al., 1998). Care was taken to select top managers from similar organizations in each country to facilitate cross-country comparisons. In total, 202 top managers responded to the survey that included the vignette experiment, and 78 top managers participated in a semi-structured interview. *Table 2.1* shows the characteristics of the top managers included in the study by country.

Table 2.1: Characteristics of the top managers and their organizations included in this study

Variable	Category	Finland %	Netherlands %	Portugal %	Slovenia %	U.K. %
Sex	*Male*	78	73	76	46	74
Sector	*Private*	67	56	76	93	61
Size	*Small*	21	48	39	37	58
	Medium	43	25	33	51	16
	Large	36	27	28	12	26
Type	*Financial sector*	6	4	4	12	3
	Government	9	6	2	2	10
	Research, consultancy & Planning	18	17	10	15	23
	Private services	24	17	10	17	16
	Health care and education	3	21	2	2	3
	IT	3	10	10	5	7
	Retail	9	6	8	2	10
	Production	12	8	25	29	7
	Transport, energy & public services	6	2	10	7	0
	Other	9	5	10	7	23
N		33	48	49	41	31

2.3   DESIGNING THE INSTRUMENTS

Two different data collection instruments were developed: 1) a questionnaire, including the vignette experiment and 2) a topic list, including probes for the semi-structured interviews.

2.3.1 Development of the questionnaire with vignette experiment

The vignette experiment was based on the theoretical framework, which combines neo-institutional theory, business case argumentation and the managerial interpretation approach. Factors potentially decisive for top managers' support for work-life arrangements were deduced, namely 'type of work-life arrangement,' 'costs,' 'expected gain in employee commitment,' 'target group of employees' and 'approach of other organizations' (see Chapter 4 for detailed information about how these factors were deduced from the theoretical framework). These factors were included in the vignettes as varying elements of the hypothetical stories. Factors potentially decisive for top managers' support for work-life arrangements had to be varied systematically between the different vignettes. This meant that they needed to contain multiple variations, called 'factor levels' (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). The following step was to decide on the different levels at which the factors would occur in the vignettes. For example, it was expected that the costs of work-life arrangements are decisive for top managers' support. The first factor level was therefore that 'the implementation of the policy requires a financial investment,' while the second level was that 'no extra financial costs were to be expected in the long run.' In this way, all six vignette factors were divided into various levels. These factor levels were then combined in all possible ways to form the entire population of vignettes (see Chapter 4 for more detailed information). This complete population consisted of 96 vignettes. Because it would have been too much to ask the responding top managers to evaluate them all, each questionnaire contained a sample of six vignettes. There had to be enough variation between the vignettes in a single questionnaire to avoid irritating the respondents, and the interactions that could be tested validly needed to be controlled. The assignment of vignettes to a questionnaire was therefore controlled by dividing the 96 stories into 16 subsets of six vignettes (called a fractional factorial design; Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). Subsets were assigned to questionnaires and the order of the vignettes in the questionnaire was randomized to avoid any order effect.

After designing the vignettes, background questions were formulated, which were needed to take characteristics of the top managers and their organizations into account. Background questions about the top managers' personal situation were included in the questionnaire containing the vignette. The background questions concerning facts about their organization, for example number of employees and sector, were formulated in a separate questionnaire. Top managers could either respond to this second questionnaire

personally or ask the HR department to do it for them and send it back by prepaid envelope at a convenient time. I chose to work with two separate questionnaires to avoid asking top managers questions that they did not necessarily have to answer personally, because their time is generally scarce.

After developing the questionnaire and vignettes, I discussed them with experts at universities in each of the countries under study.[1] Following these discussions, the vignettes and questionnaires were formulated in a way that they are relevant and applicable in every country and therefore comparable in a cross-national setting. They were then translated into the language of each country to ensure that the top managers understood them completely. After the translation was completed, the vignettes and survey questions were translated back in English to ensure that the meaning remained the same.

A pilot designed to test the vignettes and questionnaires was held in all five countries. Top managers who had volunteered (mainly from the researchers' networks) filled out the questionnaire and provided feedback. In some cases they did this digitally, while in others they met personally with the researchers. After receiving the feedback from the top managers, the researchers revised some of the questions to improve understanding. The questionnaire was designed to last no more than ten minutes. Reducing the time it takes to fill out the questionnaire made it less of a burden for top managers, increasing the chance that they would participate.

2.3.2 Development of the semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews tend to be structured in a sense that the topics to be discussed are standardized, but the order of these topics varies. Therefore, a topic list rather than a fully structured interview is brought along. For the semi-structured interviews in my data collection, a topic list for interviews conducted in 2008 was used to compile a topic list for the semi-structured interviews (for the study using this topic list of 2008, see Warmerdam et al., 2010). The list was adjusted to reflect the aims of the current study. This involved removing some topics from the list and adding others. However, the basis remained the same. The topics covered top managers' views regarding several types of governmental and workplace work-life arrangements, considerations regarding providing/refraining from work-life arrangements (why?), and the conditions under which work-life arrangements are provided. The interview was designed to last no more than 45 minutes, as top managers have very busy schedules. Limiting the time of the interview made it more likely that top managers would participate.

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1   Finland: Dr. Charlotta Niemistö, Portugal: Prof. Maria Das Dores Horta Guerreiro, Slovenia: Prof. Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela, U.K.: Prof. Jane Falkingham.

The topic list was originally designed in Dutch and then translated into English. The English version was discussed with the experts in all the countries included in this study, after which it was adjusted. This meant that the questions concerning statutory work-life arrangements were altered to fit the local situation.

Together with the experts in the countries under study, it was decided that I would conduct the interviews myself in English, with the exception of Portugal. In the case of Portugal, it was decided that I would conduct some of the interviews in English, but that the expert and another interviewer trained by me would conduct the remainder in Portuguese. The interviews would then be transcribed and the transcription translated into English. This decision was taken because the expert reasoned that an interview in English would be too much of a barrier for most top managers in Portugal. The experts in the other countries decided that an interview in English would not be a problem for top managers in their country.

After making the topic list fit all countries in this study, I set up a pilot study in all of these countries. There were two test interviews with top managers in each country. The pilot interviews helped me understand the situation in each country and get the timing of the interviews right. After the pilot interviews, the probes were adjusted to get the information needed in all countries. The fade-in question was also dropped because it took up too much time and because top managers did not need time to get used to being interviewed.

2.4 THE DATA COLLECTION

Together with the experts in the countries included in the study, a sampling approach was designed that was then adapted to ensure the best way to approach top managers in each country. Different methods were used to find and select top managers: personal networks (used in all the countries under study), business leader organizations (Slovenia and Finland), snowball sampling (all the countries under study), social media (the Netherlands and the U.K.), contacting the managers 'cold' after selecting them from the internet (Finland, Portugal, and the U.K.) and contacting the same top managers who participated in the earlier interview in 2008 for a follow-up interview in 2011 (the Netherlands). Because different methods were used to find respondents, a reliable response rate cannot be calculated. For example, it is hard to know how many top managers responded to our call on social media.

After selecting top managers through these various channels, I sent them a letter. I decided to send the letters by regular mail from the Netherlands because (in all cases except the Netherlands) a letter from a foreign university would stand out. In many cases this roused the curiosity of the top managers, improving the chance of them actually reading the letter. The letter inviting the top managers to take part in a semi-structured

interview also announced that they would receive a phone call. In the week after they had received the letter, a research assistant in each country under study called the top manager to ask whether she or he was willing to participate. This active approach was taken to improve the response rate. The phone calls meant that the top managers did not have to do anything themselves, lowering the risk of them forgetting to respond and also providing an additional opportunity to explain the study. With the exception of the Netherlands and the U.K. the research assistants placed the phone calls because they spoke the language of the country. This increased the success of the phone calls, because although the top managers spoke English well, that was not necessarily the case for their receptionists or secretaries. Whenever a top manager agreed to an interview, an appointment was scheduled for a face-to-face interview. The aim was to conduct a one hour interview, with 45 minutes for the interview, ten for the questionnaire and five minutes of additional time. However, whenever a top manager had less time to spare, the semi-structured interview was adjusted to make the most of the time available. It was not a problem that not every top manager was presented with every question; the information in all the interviews together added up to the point of saturation. Shorter interviews simply meant that more interviews were needed to reach saturation. The top managers picked the location of the interview, which in almost every case meant their own office. The researcher traveled to the offices to conduct the interviews, taking along a small gift to thank the top manager for participating. After obtaining the subject's consent, the researcher recorded the interview. Afterwards, all semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim before being analyzed.

The top managers selected to participate in the vignette experiment only were sent a letter of invitation by regular mail or e-mail, whichever was most convenient. A questionnaire was included when the invitation was sent by regular mail. The e-mails contained a unique link to the questionnaire (to identify the top managers who responded). A week after sending the invitations, the researchers called the top managers or sent them an e-mail to ask whether they were willing to participate to enlarge the response.

The initial results of the study were presented to the participating top managers in the form of a report summarizing the main findings.[2] They had been promised the report when they were approached to participate and it allowed them to benchmark their own take on work-life arrangements against that of other organizations in their own and other countries.

In the following chapters the data presented here will be applied to answering the research questions[3]. In chapter 3, the large dataset of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions will be used. In chapter 4 to 6, the data collected by myself and described in this chapter will be used.

2   This report is available on request.

3   Data available on request.

Chapter 3

**When HR managers'
attitudes matter for
work-life arrangements[1]**

ABSTRACT

This chapter investigates the relevance of HR managers' attitudes toward work-life arrangements for the provision of these arrangements in different organizational and national contexts. As a starting point is taken that a favorable organizational or national context enhances this association, because it will be easier to convince the top management of the need for these arrangements. This idea is put to the test by using data from 21 European countries and almost 19,000 establishments from the 2004/2005 Establishment Survey on Working Time and Work-Life Balance. The results of the hierarchical models show that organizations whose HR manager has a favorable attitude tend to provide a wider range of work-life arrangements. When the HR manager is part of a public-sector organization, this association is enhanced, indicating that in those organizations, HR managers can more easily advocate the need to provide work-life arrangements. The same holds for HR managers in countries with a high level of gender equality. However, a national context with many state work-life policies appears to have the opposite effect, causing HR managers' attitudes to be less relevant for providing work-life arrangements. This implies that the difference HR managers with a positive attitude towards work-life arrangements can make for the provision of these arrangements depends on the context of the organization and country.

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Along with the steady rise of dual-income families, European governments have introduced policies to facilitate the combination of work and family responsibilities (Deven & Moss, 2002; Fine-Davis, Fagani, Giovannini, Høgaard & Clarke, 2004; Gornick & Meyers, 2003). Organizations can offer supplementary or substitutive work-life arrangements to further ease the burden of combining work with family responsibilities for their employees (e.g. Appelbaum et al., 2005; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009; Poelmans, Chinchilla & Cardona, 2003; Wood, Menezes & Lasaosa, 2003), such as on-site child care facilities, part-time work, flexible schedules and telecommuting. These work-life arrangements are increasingly part of the HR practices of organizations (Batt & Valcour, 2003). Previous studies often focused on organizational and national characteristics to explain the provision of work-life arrangements (e.g. Bardoel et al., 1999; Den Dulk et al., 2010; 2012; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Osterman, 1995; Poelmans et al., 2003; Wood et al., 2003). Others argued that it is critical to understand how the personal attitudes and subjective interpretations of managers within the organization are relevant for the provision of work-life arrangements, as in the end it is they who make the decisions about such policies (Bardoel 2003; Kossek et al., 1994; Maxwell, 2005; Milliken et al., 1990; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). In this chapter we bring these two lines of research together by studying the importance of managerial attitudes for the provision of work-life arrangements in relation to the organizational and national context.

The human resource management literature recognizes that managers play an active role in deciding on the organizational HR strategy, of which work-life arrangements form a part (Batt & Valcour, 2003; Child, 1972; Daft & Weick, 1984; Milliken et al., 1998; Miller & Wilson, 2006). It has been argued that various categories of managers within organizations are relevant for the adoption of work-life arrangements: HR managers (Kossek et al., 1994; Milliken et al., 1990; Morgan & Milliken, 1992) and top managers (Lee et al., 2000; Milliken et al., 1998; Warmerdam et al., 2010). HR managers are responsible for personnel issues, including work-life issues. Hence, they are the managers who must recognize the need for such arrangements. They also act as 'gatekeepers' by bringing the need for work-life arrangements to the attention of top managers, who generally make the adoption decisions (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Kossek et al., 1994; Milliken et al., 1998). As such, HR managers play a crucial role in the organizational strategy regarding work-life arrangements. Therefore, as a first step in this dissertation the focus lies on this role of HR managers of bringing the need for work-life arrangements under the attention of the top management.

Researchers have pointed out major differences between organizations with respect to the work-life arrangements they provide (e.g., Davis & Kalleberg 2006; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Goodstein, 1994; Milliken et al., 1998; Wood et al., 2003). Furthermore, it is more

common for organizations in some countries than in others to offer work-life arrangements as an extension of public provisions (Den Dulk et al., 2010; 2012; 2013; Lewis, 2003; Lewis & Haas, 2005; Lyness & Kropf, 2005; Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). Some organizational and country characteristics therefore seem favorable for the provision of work-life arrangements, such as large organizations, public sector organizations and a high level of gender equality in the country. It may be easier for HR managers to translate a positive attitude toward work-life arrangements into actual arrangements in an environment with characteristics already favorable for the provision of work-life arrangements, because other relevant actors within the organization for the adoption of these policies may be more receptive for their arguments. Thus, the relation between the attitude of HR managers and the actual provision of work-life arrangements might depend on the context, making it relevant to study this relation taking the organizational and national context explicitly into account. Until now, managerial attitudes and organizational or national characteristics have only been studied independent of each other, looking at which factors explain the provision of work-life arrangements best (Bardoel 2003; Kossek et al., 1994; Milliken et al., 1998). To our knowledge it has not been studied whether they reinforce each other. Therefore, this chapter adds to the literature by studying the relevance of managerial attitudes in relation to the context of the organization and country. The following research question is adopted: *What is the association between the HR manager's attitude toward work-life arrangements and the range of work-life arrangements provided by the organization, and how is this relationship shaped by the characteristics of the organization and the country?*

To this end, data on 21 European countries and over 19,000 establishments taken from the 2004/2005 Establishment Survey on Working Time and Work-Life Balance (ESWT) are used. To date, only a few studies on the provision of work-life arrangements have taken a cross-national perspective (e.g. Den Dulk et al., 2010; 2012; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009), while none of these focused specifically on managerial attitudes. Using this unique dataset with data of many organizations in a large range of countries, gives the opportunity to fill this gap in knowledge.

3.2   THEORY

Many studies into work-life arrangements start from the position that the institutional context affects whether organizations pursue these arrangements. Institutional theory is based on the idea that institutional pressures influence organizations to react similarly to the environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Traditionally, institutional theory treats the organization as a passive actor that responds to institutional pressures in the environment. Nevertheless, there tend to be differences in organizational

responses to the same institutional environment. For example, some organizations in the same institutional context chose not to develop any work-life arrangements, while others offer their employees a wide range (Den Dulk et al., 2010; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). With these different responses in mind, Oliver (1991) developed a model in which the strategic responses of organizations to the same institutional context can vary from full compliance to complete rejection. This forms the basis for neo-institutional theory, which acknowledges that organizations in similar macro contexts can respond differently to that context. Although neo-institutional theory recognizes that active decisions are made, it does not explicitly recognize managers as the actors within organizations to make these decisions.

In order to account for managers making the decisions regarding work-life arrangements in organizations, researchers have incorporated the managerial interpretation perspective into neo-institutional theory (e.g. Bardoel, 2003; Kossek et al., 1994; Milliken et al., 1998; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). They state that differences in organizational responses to the institutional environment can be accounted for (in part) by how this environment is salient to the managers within these organizations: managers need to be aware of the need for certain policies (Daft & Weick, 1984; Dutton & Duncan, 1987; Kraatz & Moore, 2002; Sharma, 2000). Applied to work-life arrangements, this means that HR managers within the organization need to be aware of a changing workforce, as this is the characteristic of the environment to which work-life arrangements apply. This includes there being more women, more dual-income families and more single parents in the workforce who are in need of policies that help them combine responsibilities at home and at work. HR managers need to interpret these developments as important to their organization before work-life arrangements can be adopted by the organization (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Goodstein, 1994; 1995; Kossek et al., 1994; Milliken et al., 1990; 1998; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). HR managers interpreting these developments as relevant for their organization will have a favorable attitude toward workplace work-life policies and argue for their provision. Consequently, the hypothesis is formulated: *1) The HR manager's attitude toward work-life arrangements is positively associated with work-life arrangements provided by organizations.*

3.2.1 The organizational context

In the integrated framework combining neo-institutional theory and the managerial interpretation approach, the institutional context puts pressure on managers within organizations to react in a certain way. Institutional pressure creates a normative climate for work-life arrangements (Den Dulk, 2005; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Lyness & Kropf, 2005). Managers have to align organizations' policies with this normative climate in order to gain social legitimacy for the organization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Milliken et al.,

1998). Furthermore, a normative climate might increase individuals' sense of entitlement to work-life support, resulting in employees putting pressure on managers to provide work-life arrangements because they expect or demand it (Cook, 2004; Goodstein, 1994; Lewis & Haas, 2005; Lewis & Smithson, 2001; Poelmans, 2003; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). Previous research has shown that larger organizations tend to be more sensitive to this normative climate because they are more visible and therefore they are more inclined to do what is expected of them and public sector organizations because their success depends on a good societal reputation to which work-life arrangements contribute (Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Goodstein, 1994; Wood et al., 2003). Therefore, large organizations and public sector organizations tend to provide more work-life arrangements. Furthermore, it has been argued that female employees tend to have a larger sense of entitlement to work-life arrangements because these arrangements are often associated with women, who are generally still the main caregivers in the family, or at least perceived as such (e.g. Milliken et al., 1998). However, this relation has been found by some (Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Goodstein, 1994), but not by others (Bardoel et al, 1999; Glass & Fujimoto, 1995; Ingram & Simons, 1995). A larger organizational size, more female employees or a public-sector organization have thus been argued to be favorable characteristics for the provision of work-life arrangements.

The implication of neo-institutional theory, i.e. that some organizational characteristics make managers more sensitive to institutional pressure, can be extended to the difference HR managers can make for the provision of work-life arrangements. When HR managers view work-life arrangements as relevant for the organization, they can use the need for social legitimacy or the need to attract and retain female employees as arguments to pressure for the adoption of work-life arrangements. Consequently, HR managers with a favorable attitude toward work-life arrangements can make a greater difference for the provision of work-life arrangements in organizations with favorable characteristics for these arrangements. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated: *2a) The context of a large organization-; b) an organization in the public sector-; c) or an organization with a larger proportion of female employees - will reinforce the positive association between the HR manager's favorable attitude toward work-life arrangements and the provision of these arrangements*.

3.2.2 The country context

Different country characteristics might result in pressure on organizations to provide work-life arrangements (Devinney, 2009; Pache & Santos, 2010). This makes it hard for organizations to respond to 'the' institutional context, as this context has multiple dimensions and pressures. More recent cross-national studies into work-life arrangements therefore investigated country characteristics separately rather than taking the welfare state regime into account. Two important characteristics of the macro context found to be relevant in influencing the provision of work-life arrangements by organizations are: 1) the level of state work-life policies (Den Dulk & Groeneveld, 2012; Den Dulk et al., 2012; 2013; Lewis, 2003; Lewis & Haas, 2005) and 2) the level of gender equality (Den Dulk et al., 2010; Lyness & Kropf, 2005). State work-life policies are policies and services that the state gives its citizens to help them combine responsibilities at work and home (e.g., public child care). Gender equality implies equal opportunities for men and women (UNDP, 1995) and is a sign that women are a valued part of the workforce in a country.

Reasoned from neo-institutional theory, state work-life policies create a normative climate in which supporting employees in combining work and family life is seen as normal (Lewis & Smithson, 2001). Also, a high level of gender equality might create a normative climate that favors work-life arrangements, as they are often associated with helping women achieve a position in the labor market (Korabic, Lero & Ayman, 2003; Lyness & Kropf, 2005; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). This normative climate can also enhance the employees' sense of entitlement to work-life support, which puts even more pressure on organizations to provide work-life arrangements (Lewis & Haas 2005; Lewis & Smithson, 2001; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). Extensive state work-life policies or a high level of national gender equality can therefore be seen as favorable for the provision of work-life arrangements. When HR managers view work-life arrangements as relevant for the organization, they can also use these pressures to advocate the need for work-life arrangements. It is not only that organizations tend to be more sensitive to employees' need for work-life arrangements in countries with a high level of gender equality or extensive state support; we also expect it to be easier for the HR manager to sell the need for work-life arrangements in such circumstances. Consequently, an HR manager with a favorable attitude toward work-life arrangements can make a greater difference to the provision of work-life arrangements when the country context is also favorable, i.e. when the government is also providing extensive work-life policies or when the level of gender equality is higher. Hence, the hypothesis is: *3a) A country context with many state work-life policies-; and b) a country context with a high level of gender equality - will reinforce the positive association between the HR manager's favorable attitude toward work-life arrangements and the provision of these arrangements.*

3.3 DATA, OPERATIONALIZATION AND METHODOLOGY

3.3.1 Data

The data source used for this chapter is the Establishment Survey on Working Time and Work-Life Balance (ESWT) conducted by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EFILWC). This survey focuses on work time arrangements that are likely to affect work-life balance (EFILWC, 2005a). This dataset is particularly useful for the purpose of this chapter because it contains a measure of HR managers' attitude towards work-life arrangements, which is combined, with rich data of the organizational context in a large range of countries. This large range of countries allows us to take the national context into account and disentangle several aspects of this national context (i.e. gender equality and state work-life policies). To our knowledge there is no other dataset combining a cross-national approach in such a large number of countries with a measure of HR managers' attitudes.

The data collection took place in 2004 and 2005 and focuses on establishments. An establishment can be defined as: '…the local unit or the reporting unit where work takes place' (EFILWC, 2005a, p.7), for example different factories belonging to the same company. According to this definition, there is no difference between a company and an establishment in an organization with only one unit, but there is a difference between a company and an establishment in an organization with multiple units. Reasons for selecting by establishment rather than by organizational level were the fact that establishments are by definition located in only one country, while organizations can be located in multiple countries (EFILWC, 2005a). Establishments belonging to the same organization are not included.

The dataset contains information about establishments in 21 European countries: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Luxembourg, Sweden, the U.K., the Czech Republic, Cyprus (the Greek-speaking part), Hungary, Latvia, Poland and Slovenia. In total, HR managers from 21,031 establishments responded to the telephone survey. If available, employee representatives of the same establishments also responded to a survey. However, in this chapter, we only use data from the management survey, in which one HR manager per establishment took part. If the establishment had multiple HR managers, the most senior HR manager answered the questions. Only private and public establishments with ten or more employees were included in the survey. The ESWT aimed to include all sectors in the study. Nevertheless, due to sampling problems, public organizations belonging to either the education or the health care and public sector are likely to be underrepresented in the sample. Additionally, the agriculture and activities-of-households sectors are not covered by the sample (for more information, see EFILWC, 2005b). The response rate

varied among countries, with the lowest rate in Italy (11 percent) and the highest in Finland (54 percent), although the response rate is not completely comparable between countries due to differences in the sampling procedures (EFILWC, 2006).

Respondents with missing information on the dependent or independent variables were deleted from the analysis, leaving 18,383 establishments for further analysis. This means that 12.6 percent of the cases had a missing value on one of the variables included in the analysis. To check whether this quite substantial proportion of missing values mattered, the sample reduced by the cases with missing values on at least one of the variables has been compared to the complete sample on the characteristics included in the analysis. The two samples did not differ from each other on these characteristics, meaning that the missing values are not selective on these characteristics[23]. Therefore, it was decided to use the sample excluding the cases with missing values.

3.3.2 Operationalization

3.3.2.1 *Work-life arrangements: dependent variable*
Previous studies varied in their approach to measuring the provision of work-life arrangements. Some researchers counted the number of work-life arrangements (Bardoel, 2003; Osterman, 1995); others looked at whether none, one or multiple arrangements are offered (Den Dulk et al., 2010); some separately looked at different types of work-life arrangements (Davis & Kalleberg, 2006) and some combined two of these approaches (Glass & Fujimoto, 1995; Milliken et al., 1998). Because in this study the focus lies in how the attitude of the HR manager towards work-life arrangements is associated with the provision of work-life arrangements in general, it was opted to look at the range of work-life arrangements provided. It is moreover interesting to look at the range of work-life arrangement provided, because a wide variety of work-life arrangements allows employees to choose what fits their personal circumstances and needs best and it potentially offers employees more choice than many work-life arrangements of a similar type.

To measure the range of work-life arrangements, they were divided into the following categories: 1) the possibility of working part-time (three variables), 2) the possibility of working flextime (two variables), 3) leave policies (three variables) and 4) services (three variables). The part-time work category and the flexible schedule category both contain arrangements that affect work time, and researchers often decide to combine

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2   More information regarding the ESWT can be found on the website of the Economic and Social Data Service: http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=5655, which archives and distributes the ESWT data, sampling report and technical report.

3   The final dataset covers thirteen different sectors: 1) Mining and quarrying, 2) Manufacturing industries, 3) Electricity, gas and water supply, 4) Construction, 5) Retail, repair, 6) Hotels and restaurants, 7) Transport, storage and communication, 8) Financial intermediation, 9) Real estate, renting and business activities, 10) Public administration, 11) Education, 12) Health and social work, 13) Other community, social and personal services.

them into one category. Nevertheless, it was decided to differentiate between them because the option of working part-time is of a different nature than other kinds of work time arrangements (see also Fagan & Walthery, 2011). First of all, part-time requests are often a one-time decision and do not vary over a short time period. A request to work a flexible schedule, on the other hand, may mean that work hours vary from week to week. Furthermore, working part-time changes the magnitude of the job significantly, while flexible work hours only change the time of day or week during which the job is carried out but not the magnitude. *Table 3.1* shows the variables making up each of the four categories of work-life arrangements.

Next, the range of work-life arrangements being offered in the four distinct categories was calculated. To do so, for each category of arrangements, we first indicated whether an establishment offered at least one of the arrangements in the category (1) or none of the arrangements in the category (0). The four resulting dichotomous variables were added together, resulting in a variable ranging from 0 (no arrangements provided) to 4 (all categories of arrangements are provided). This variable is distributed approximately normally and is used as the main dependent variable in the analysis.

Table 3.1: Work-life arrangements of organizations in Europe

Variables making up the categories of work-life arrangements	Establishments providing the arrangement (%)
Category: working part-time	
1 Part-time work for the sake of the employee	42.8
2 Option of part-time work for unskilled laborers	43.0
3 Option of part-time work for skilled laborers	44.4
Category: flextime	
4 Flexible working hours for the sake of the employee	33.6
5 Possibility for employees to accumulate hours to take time off	34.5
Category: leave	
8 Possibility of long term leave for employees who have to care for ill, disabled or elderly family members	43.4
9 Possibility of long term leave for further education	42.3
10 Possibility of long term leave for any other purpose	29.7
Category: services	
11 Availability of kindergarten or crèche	3.2
12 Availability of other forms of professional help for child care	2.2
13 Availability of professional help for household management	1.0

Source: Establishment Survey on Working Time and Work-Life Balance (2004/2005)

3.3.2.2 Independent variables

The HR manager's attitude. HR managers indicated on a scale from 1 (it is not the task of the company at all) to 10 (the company should definitely consider the private responsibilities of its employees) their thoughts on the following question: 'In your opinion, to what extent should a company take into consideration the private responsibilities of its employees in its work organization and working time regulations?' Although in the ESWT dataset, the attitude of the HR manager is measured using this single item variable (and not a multiple-item measure), we still opted to use this dataset. We chose to do so, since we are interested in the interplay between the HR manager's attitude and the national and organizational context and this dataset is unique in a sense that it provides this information in many different countries. The variable is distributed approximately normally and included in the analysis as a continuous variable.

Size. Dummies were created, as the original categorization is not normally distributed and transforming the data does not result in a satisfying distribution. To minimize the number of dummies, the final variable encompassed four categories, with the first category consisting of small organizations with less than 100 employees, the second category of organizations with 101 to 249 employees, the third category of organizations with 250-499 employees and the fourth category of organizations with over 500 employees. The variable was added to the analysis as three dummy variables, with small organizations as the reference category.

Sector. The sector to which the establishment belongs was added to the analyses, with a distinction being made between the public and the private sector. The variable was coded as a dummy variable, with the private sector as the reference category.

Proportion of female employees. The proportion of female employees in the establishment consisted of seven categories, starting with no female employees (0) and increasing by increments of 20 percent up to only female employees (7). It was entered in the analysis as a continuous variable by taking the midpoint of the seven categories.

Gender equality. Previous studies on workplace work-life policies that include an indicator for national gender equality used the Gender Development Index (GDI) (Den Dulk & Groeneveld, 2012; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Lyness & Kropf, 2005) of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). However, in this chapter it was chosen to include the UNDP's Gender Empowerment Measure because this indicator is a better measure of differences in national gender equality in the developed world and, as such, for the countries included in this chapter.[4] The GEM value can range from 0 (very low gender

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4   The GDI takes into account differences between men and women in terms of life expectancy and literacy rates, characteristics that are likely to be relatively similar among developed countries. National gender equality in developed countries focuses on equality in opportunities, which the GEM captures much better than the GDI by focusing on women's participation in politics, their access to professional opportunities and their earning power compared to that of men (UNDP, 1995). The UNDP states that 'the GEM is concerned with the use of capabilities to take advantage of the opportunities of life' (UNDP, 1995: p.73).

equality) to 1 (complete gender equality). For the countries included in this chapter, the GEM values for 2003 range from 0.518 (Hungary) to 0.831 (Sweden) (UNDP, 2003). The values were centered on zero before being entered in the analysis. We used imputation based on matching to replace the missing values for France and Luxembourg. For 2003, one of the four variables making up the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), namely 'seats in parliament held by women', was available for France and Luxembourg. The value of Singapore (11.8) for 'seats in parliament held by women' was closest to that of France (11.7); we therefore decided to use Singapore's GEM value for France (GEM = 0.594). The value of the UK (17.1) was closest to that of Luxembourg (16.7), which is why we chose to use the UK's GEM value for Luxembourg (0.675). Excluding countries one by one did not show some countries to be particularly influential.

State work-life policies. The rating system for state work-life policies in Europe developed by Den Dulk and Groeneveld (2012) is used. They based their rating on extensive desk research. Thus far, this rating system has been proven to be valid in several publications (Den Dulk & Groeneveld, 2012; Den Dulk et al., 2010; 2013). The rating system was based on three components of state work-life policies: parental leave arrangements, public child care provisions and flexible work options. Each component was rated on a four-point scale, ranging from 1 (low level of state support) to 4 (high level of state support). For more details on the manner in which the different components were rated, we refer to the publication by Den Dulk and Groeneveld (2012). It was chosen to add up the scores for the three components, resulting in a scale for state work-life support ranging from 3 to 12. The overall score was preferable because we were mainly interested in the overall effect of state work-life policies and not in the effects of the separate elements. The values were centered on 0 before being entered in the analysis. *Table 3.2* shows the values for each country. There are differences in the mean score for the different welfare state regimes, with the social democratic regimes providing the most extensive state work-life policies (average 10.33) and the liberal welfare state regimes providing the least policies (average 5).

3.3.2.3 Control variable

We control for the economic situation of the company as an indication of its ability to implement new policies.

Table 3.2: Characteristics of the countries included in this chapter

Country	GEM 2003[A]	State work-life policies [C,D]
Finland	0.801	10
Sweden	0.831	11
Denmark	0.825	10
United Kingdom	0.675	6
Ireland	0.683	4
Belgium	0.695	6
Germany	0.776	8
France	0.594[B]	8
The Netherlands	0.794	9
Austria	0.782	8
Luxembourg	0.675[B]	6
Portugal	0.647	8
Greece	0.519	7
Spain	0.709	6
Italy	0.561	8
Cyprus	0.542	4
Czech Republic	0.579	7
Latvia	0.576	6
Hungary	0.518	7
Poland	0.549	7
Slovenia	0.582	9

Notes: A: Source: UNDP (2003).

B: The GEM values for France and Luxembourg were missing. This value is imputed based on matching on the variable 'seats in parliament held by women', which is one of the four variables making up the GEM variable. The value of Singapore (11.8) was closest to that of France (11.7); therefore it was chosen to use the GEM value of Singapore for France. The value of the UK (17.1) was closest to that of Luxembourg (16.7). Therefore we used the GEM value of the UK for Luxembourg.

C: For more information on the operationalization of state work-life policies see: Den Dulk & Groeneveld, 2012.

D: State provisions around parental leave, public child care and flexible working hours together make up the variable 'state work-life policies'.

3.3.3   Method of analysis

To be able to take the hierarchical structure of the data into account –with the establishments at the first level and the countries at the second level– a linear multilevel random intercept regression model was applied, in which countries are the random factor. The first model is an empty model, showing the proportion of variance at the establishment level and the proportion of variance at the national level. This model serves as a reference point. Next, a model for the attitude of the HR manager, organizational characteristics and national characteristics was developed in order to test the first

hypothesis. In the third model, the organizational size, sector and proportion of female employees were added in interaction with the attitude of the HR manager, forming a test for the second hypothesis. In the fourth model, the level of national gender equality (GEM) and state work-life policies were added in interaction with the attitude of the HR manager, constituting a test for hypotheses 3.

3.4   RESULTS

3.4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 3.3 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables included in this chapter. On average, organizations in this chapter provide almost two of the four possible categories of workplace work-life arrangements. The HR managers serving as respondents for this chapter tend to have a somewhat favorable attitude toward work-life arrangements, with an average score of 5.16. However, there is considerable variation in the answers given, with the standard deviation being 2.64. Most organizations included in this chapter are small organizations with fewer than 100 employees; they are in the private sector, and approximately forty percent of their employees are women. The state work-life policies and the GEM have an average value of zero because they are centered.[5]

Table 3.3: Descriptive statistics of dependent, independent and control variables

Variables	Categrories	N	Range	Mean	SD
Dependent variable					
Work-life arrangements		18383	0-4	1.96	0.96
Independent variables					
HR managers' attitude (positive)		18383	1-10	5.16	2.64
Size		18383			
	<100	-	0/1	0.68	NA
	100 - 249	-	0/1	0.15	NA
	250 - 499	-	0/1	0.09	NA
	>500	-	0/1	0.08	NA
Sector (public)		18383	0/1	0.22	NA
Female proportion in establishment		18383	0-100	40.81	28.88
State work-life policies[A] (positive)		21	-3.68-4.32	0.00	1.67
GEM[A] (positive)		21	-0.15-0.16	0.00	0.10
Control variable					
Economic situation		18383	1-4	3.03	0.63

Source: Establishment Survey on Working Time and Work-Life Balance (2004/2005)
Note: A: Centered on country sample

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5   The correlation between GEM and state work-life policies is 0.487.

3.4.2 Models

Table 3.4 shows the results of the hierarchical analysis, with the range of work-life arrangements as the dependent variable. Based on *model 1* (the empty model), we calculated the intra-class correlation was calculated. The calculation reveals that 15 percent of the variance in the provision of work-life arrangements is located at the country level. The other 85 percent is located at organization level, meaning that there are substantial differences between countries in the range of work-life arrangements offered by organizations.

Model 2 includes the HR manager's attitude and organizational and country characteristics, testing whether there is a positive association between that attitude and the range of work-life arrangements offered by organizations (hypothesis 1). The model shows that the attitude of HR managers is, as we expected, positively and significantly associated with the range of work-life arrangements[6].

Model 3 includes the interactions between the HR manager's attitude toward work-life arrangements and the organizational characteristics (size, sector and proportion of female employees), putting hypothesis 2a, b and c to the test. Contradicting our expectations (2a), the attitude of the HR manager does not get stronger reinforced the larger the organization, as there only seems to be an interaction between these variables in medium sized organizations (250-499 employees), but not in large organizations (over 50 employees). In line with the expectations (2b), the interaction between the HR manager's attitude and public sector organizations is positive and significant. Apparently, it is easier for HR managers to translate a favorable attitude into actual work-life arrangements in public-sector organizations. Furthermore, it seems that a favorable attitude of the HR manager makes less of a difference in organizations with a high proportion of female employees compared to organizations with fewer female employees, as the interaction is significant but negative (2c). This means that part a and c of hypothesis 2 are refuted.

Model 4 includes the attitude of the HR manager in interaction with state work-life policies (hypothesis 3a) and national gender equality (hypothesis 3b). The results show that the interaction between the HR manager's attitude and state work-life policies is negative and significant, which contradicts hypothesis 3a. The interaction between the GEM and the HR manager's attitude is positive and significant, which is in line with hypothesis 3b.

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6   It was chosen to report only unstandardized coefficients, because random slope models are affected by linear transformations (Hox, Moerbeek & van de Schoot, 2010) and our goal is not to compare different variables (to which the standardized coefficients would help interpretation).

Table 3.4: Hierarchical models for the provision of work-life arrangements

		Model 1 (empty model) B (SE)	Model 2 B (SE)	Model 3 B (SE)	Model 4 B (SE)
Constant		1.932 (0.082)**	1.222 (0.067)**	1.156 (0.069)**	1.219 (0.067)**
Main effects					
HR managers' attitude		-	0.041 (0.002)**	0.051 (0.009)**	0.040 (0.002)**
Size	*<100*	ref	ref	ref	ref
	100-249	-	0.373 (0.018)**	0.493 (0.039)**	0.373 (0.018)**
	250-499	-	0.504 (0.022)**	0.594 (0.052)**	0.503 (0.022)**
	>500	-	0.607 (0.023)**	0.620 (0.050)**	0.605 (0.023)**
Sector	*Private*	ref	ref	ref	ref
	Public	-	0.114 (0.016)**	0.050 (0.035)	0.114 (0.016)**
Female proportion in establishment		-	0.006 (0.000)**	0.007 (0.000)**	0.006 (0.000)**
State policies		-	0.036 (0.033)**	0.036 (0.033)	0.060 (0.034)+
GEM		-	2.145 (0.642)**	2.148 (0.642)**	1.806 (0.655)**
Interaction effects					
Size * attitude	*<100*	ref	ref	ref	ref
	100-249	-	-	0.002 (0.009)	-
	250-499	-	-	-0.021 (0.011)**	-
	>500	-	-	-0.015 (0.012)	-
Sector * attitude	*Private*	ref	ref	ref	ref
	Public	-	-	0.012 (0.006)*	-
Female proportion * attitude		-	-	-0.000 (0.000)**A	-
State policies * attitude		-	-	-	-0.005 (0.002)**
GEM * attitude		-	-	-	0.064 (0.027)*
Control variable					
Economic Situation		-	0.035 (0.010)**	0.035 (0.010)**	0.035 (0.067)**
R^2 *(organizational level)*		-	13%	13%	13%
R^2 *(country level)*		-	51%	51%	52%
N *(organization)*		18383	18383	18383	18383
N *(country)*		21	21	21	21

Source: Establishment Survey on Working Time and Work-Life Balance (2004/2005)
Notes: **p<0.01
  *p<0.05
  +p<0.10 (two-tailed tests).
  A: the value of this estimate is: -0.0002676 (0.0000831)**, the value is this small because of the scale of the variables (as the unstandardized coefficients are reported because random slope models are used.

3.5   CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This large-scale, cross-European study, focused on how a positive attitude of the HR manager toward work-life arrangements can make a difference for the provision of work-life arrangements given the organizational and country context. It can be concluded that in line with previous research, a favorable attitude of the HR manager is positively associated with the provision of work-life arrangements (Milliken et al., 1998). However, this study adds to the literature by showing that the difference a positive attitude of HR managers can make for the provision of work-life arrangements depends on the organizational as well as the national context. This new insight shows that the relevance of managerial attitudes should be looked upon in relation to the context. Furthermore, it suggests that HR managers can more easily advocate the need for work-life arrangements in one context than in another.

In this chapter it is shown that especially the context of public-sector organizations reinforces the positive association between a positive attitude on the part of HR managers and the provision of work-life arrangements. This indicates that in those organizations HR managers can more easily advocate the need to provide work-life arrangements. Conversely, the effects of larger organizations and a large proportion of female employees – both favorable contexts for the provision of work-life arrangements on itself – appear to be not positively reinforcing the relation between the attitude of the HR manager and the provision of work-life arrangements. This study indicates that the context of a large organization and the presence of an HR manager with a positive attitude towards work-life arrangements are independently of each other favorable for the provision of work-life arrangements. In an organizational context with a large proportion of female employees an HR manager with a positive attitude towards work-life arrangements makes even less of a difference for their provision than in organizations with a smaller proportion of female employees. Apparently, the advocacy of HR managers for work-life arrangements is not needed in organizations with a large proportion of female employees while this HR manager can make an essential difference in organizations with fewer female employees. Moreover, based upon this study it can be concluded that in countries with a high level of gender equality HR managers can make a bigger difference for the provision of work-life arrangements than in countries where the level of gender equality is lower. A practical implication of this result is that if a government wants organizations to provide work-life arrangements to employees, it will be more successful if it simultaneously enhances national gender equality through policies both at the national level and within organizations (for example by requiring written plans within organizations to enhance gender equality) *and* target HR managers with the message that it is necessary to support the work-life balance of their employees.

Although a high level of national gender equality and a high level of state work-life policies go hand in hand in the Scandinavian countries, this chapter indicates that they have divergent reinforcing effects on the relation between the attitude of the HR manager towards work-life arrangements and the provision of these arrangements. On the one hand, the association between the HR manager's attitude toward work-life arrangements and the provision of these arrangements is reinforced by a high level of national gender equality with national gender equality in itself also having a positive association with the provision of work-life arrangements. On the other hand, the level of state policies was found to have no association with the provision of work-life arrangements in organizations and the positive relation between the attitude of the HR manager and the provision of work-life arrangements was weakened by it. That the context of many state work-life policies weakened the positive association between the HR manager's attitude and the provision of work-life arrangements, might be explained by that in societies where the state provides extensive work-life policies they are often seen as a government responsibility (Den Dulk et al., 2012). So even though the HR manager personally believes that the organization should support the work-life balance of employees, the rest of the organization is likely to think differently. Therefore, it will be harder for HR managers with a favorable attitude to convince others of the need for their provision. The finding that a high level of gender equality and many state work-life policies have a divergent effect, is consistent with the claim of other research that there can be conflicting institutional demands within the same macro context (e.g. Devinney, 2009; Pache & Santos, 2010). Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of disentangling the characteristics of the macro context.

In this study, the reinforcing effect of a public sector organization or a high level of national gender equality is explained by the idea that HR managers can more easily convince the top management within such an environment of the need for their provision. Although this mechanism is based upon the suggestion of others about how the adoption of work-life arrangements works within organizations (Kossek et al., 1994; Milliken et al., 1998), this mechanism is not directly observed in this study or in these other studies. A study focusing on the process of how work-life arrangements find their way through the decision-making layers of an organization might be a future step to fully understand the managerial processes around the adoption of work-life arrangements.

The large scale set-up of this study taking into account managers of a large number of organizations in 21 European countries first of all made it possible to test the relation between the attitude of the HR manager towards work-life arrangements and the actual provisions of these policies on a large scale in many different contexts. Moreover, it also allowed to put the idea to the test that the difference HR managers can make for the provision of these policies might vary between organizations and countries. Even though

this generated new insights, some limitations of this chapter should be mentioned. The cross-sectional design made it impossible to investigate the causality of the relationships. As such, this chapter shows associations rather than causes. In future research, the use of panel data would improve our understanding of the processes at work by allowing us to disentangle the causal mechanisms. Furthermore, the measure used for national gender equality, the GEM, is a combined measure that takes into account differences between men and women in their political participation, access to professional opportunities and earning power. We therefore cannot distinguish between the mechanisms involved. More research that disentangles these different aspects of gender equality is needed to fully understand these mechanisms. In addition, we are aware that HR managers' attitudes are affected by individual experiences (Hopkins, 2005; Klein et al., 2000). In further research, the empirical focus could lie on personal characteristics and the experiences of HR managers.

Finally, in future cross-national data to be collected from organizations, a more detailed measure should be included. This would involve developing an instrument consisting of multiple items that capture attitudes toward work-life arrangements. Previous studies focused on HR managers' *awareness* of work-life balance issues and societal developments that make work-life policies necessary, their *subjective interpretation* of these work-life policies' relevance for their organization, and their *attitudes* (Kossek et al., 1994; Milliken et al., 1998). Ideally, the new instrument will capture all these elements. Even though the HR manager's attitude was measured with only a single item in this chapter, it nevertheless proved significant and its effect dependent on the context, which indicates the importance of including managerial attitudes when studying the provision of work-life arrangements and the need to contextualize these attitudes. Excluding them or studying them without context leaves out part of the story.

Chapter

4

European top managers' support for work-life arrangements[1]

ABSTRACT

Top managers decide to what degree their organization offers employees work-life arrangements. This study focuses on the conditions under which they support such arrangements. A factorial survey of 202 top managers in five European countries was conducted in 2012. The analyses are based on 1064 vignettes. Implications are drawn from an integrated framework of neo-institutional theory, business case argumentation and the managerial interpretation approach. Results show that top managers simultaneously consider multiple conditions in deciding upon their support for work-life arrangements, i.e. the costs involved, the return in terms of employee commitment, and the type of arrangement, having a preference for flextime and telecommuting over leave policies and part-time hours. In addition, they favor work-life arrangements designed for all employees above work-life arrangements granted to specific employees. How top managers weigh certain conditions depends on the organizational and national context. The results imply that top managers support work-life arrangements both because they see it as a business case and because they follow social norms. Their personal characteristics, however, do not seem to explain their support for work-life arrangements.

4.1   INTRODUCTION

CEOs, CFOs and members of boards of directors – hereafter referred to as 'top managers' – are of vital importance to work-life arrangements offered by organizations to help their employees combine work and private responsibilities (Bardoel, 2003; Kossek et al., 1994; Milliken et al., 1998; Van der Lippe, 2004). Most importantly, as the central decision-making actors, top managers decide whether to provide work-life arrangements beyond the statutory minimum (Elbanna, 2006; Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996; Ginsberg, 1988) and which types of arrangements will be offered. Options include paid parental leave, paid leave to take care of sick family members, flextime, reduced hours and telecommuting. Previous research acknowledges that it is ultimately top managers who decide on the organizations' strategy regarding the adoption of work-life arrangements (Bardoel, 2003; Milliken et al., 1998; Kossek et al., 1994; Osterman, 1995). Some studies proofed the relevance of top managers' attitudes for the adoption of work-life arrangements, by indirectly studying them through reporting of HR managers (Bardoel, 2003; Kossek et al., 1994; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). Nonetheless, in the literature explaining the provision of work-life arrangements by organizations, there are very few studies focusing directly on top managers (see for an exception of a Dutch study: Warmerdam et al., 2010). Instead, the literature treats the organization as if somehow making the decision to provide work-life arrangements itself (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). However, as has been noted in the management literature, decisions about the organizations' strategy, of which work-life arrangements are part, 'are made by humans, primarily top executives' (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996, p. 2-3). In order to account for the fact that the provision of work-life arrangements is the outcome of active and strategic decision making of top managers, within this chapter a first step is taken to explicitly include them in the literature about work-life arrangements. Hereto, the focus lies on understanding under which conditions top managers implement work-life arrangements throughout their organization. The focus lies on support for implementation rather than only the adoption, as work-life arrangements can also be formally adopted as just 'window dressing' without employees actually benefitting from them.

Top managers are situated in simultaneously the organizational and national context (Den Dulk et al., 2011; 2013). Previous research has revealed systematic differences between various types of organizations in the work-life arrangements they provide. For example, public sector and larger organizations tend to offer a broader spectrum of arrangements (e.g., Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Goodstein, 1994; Wood et al., 2003). There are also national differences in organizations' work-life arrangements (e.g., Den Dulk et al., 2010; 2012; 2013; Lewis, 2003; Lewis & Haas, 2005; Lyness & Kropf, 2005; Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). This implies that top managers relate their evaluation of work-life arrangements to the organizational and national context. After all,

these differences between organizations and countries find their way into organizational practices through the decision making of top managers. In this chapter we take this idea forward and add to the literature regarding the provision of work-life arrangements by organizations through studying under which conditions top managers support work-life arrangements and relating this to the organizational and national context. The research question is: *Under which conditions do top managers support the provision of work-life arrangements in their organization and how do the conditions decisive for their support vary between organizational and national contexts?*

Within the literature, the provision of work-life arrangements by organizations has been approached from two different angles. The first approach emphasizes the strategic aspect of the provision of work-life arrangements (Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Den Dulk, 2001; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Plantenga & Remery, 2005), while the second approach emphasizes that work-life arrangements follow from human decisions and focuses on the subjective interpretation of (mainly HR) managers (Milliken et al., 1998; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). By focusing on top managers, which are the human actors within organizations that make strategic decisions about work-life arrangements, this study combines these two approaches. Hereto, neo-institutional theory is combined with business case argumentation and the managerial interpretation approach and applied to top managers' support for work-life arrangements. Studying the implications of these theories on the actor level has the advantage of observing the decisions more directly. This will give insight in the micro-level decision-making leading to the provision of work-life arrangements on the organizational level, forming an additional test for these theories on the micro level rather than the meso-level (organization) on which they are generally tested.

To be able to study top managers' support for work-life arrangements and to be able to relate this to the organizational and national context, unique data was collected among top managers from a wide range of organizations in five different European countries: Finland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Slovenia and Portugal. This particular selection of countries from the different corners of Europe ensures variety in the national context, as they differ with regard to their welfare state regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990; 1999; 2009). A total of 202 top managers in these five countries participated in the survey. We have taken a novel approach to capturing the conditions under which top managers of these countries support work-life arrangements by adopting a 'vignette study' (also called a factorial survey). In a factorial survey, the respondents are asked to respond to descriptions of hypothetical situations, called vignettes (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010; Rossi & Anderson, 1982; Wallander, 2009). This approach has already been successful in examining the allowance decisions by supervisors and attorneys to allow work-life arrangements (Den Dulk & De Ruijter, 2008; Klein et al., 2000; Powell & Mainiero, 1999) and will in this study be applied to top managers' decisions regarding the provision of work-life arrangements.

A factorial survey is especially suitable to gain understanding of decisions, in this case the decision of top managers to support work-life arrangements, because it allows taking factors simultaneously into account that together affect a decision. The advantage of a factorial survey design over a traditional survey design is therefore that the former allows disentangling these conditions affecting decisions that are normally hard to distinguish (Wallander, 2009). Hence, it allows looking at the conditions ultimately decisive for top managers to support work-life arrangements. An additional advantage is that confronting top managers with several such factors is more realistic than a traditional survey, as decision situations are also complex in real life (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010).

4.2   THEORY

Most studies towards the adoption of work-life arrangements by organizations incorporate neo-institutional theory. This theory is based on the idea that organizations follow social rules and conventions (Ingram & Simons, 1995). There are various sources in society that push organizations to follow these, called institutional pressure, such as laws and regulations (coercive pressure), expectations of employees and professional groups within the organization (normative pressure), and other organizations (mimetic pressure) (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This means that top managers will support work-life arrangements when doing so is reinforced, is in line with what is expected of them or in line with what others are doing. Neo-institutional theory incorporates the idea that active and strategic choices are made by managers, who choose how to respond to institutional pressures (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Oliver, 1991; Osterman, 1995). To further understand how these strategic decisions are made, within one strand of literature researchers incorporated business case argumentation. Applying business case argumentation to top managers, who are the actors responsible for the prosperity of the organizations, means that top managers will strategically choose to support work-life arrangements when they feel benefits outweigh the costs and thus contribute to achieving the organization's goals, or at the very least are not counterproductive. To account for the subjective decision making of managers, other researchers incorporated the managerial interpretation approach into neo-institutional theory (e.g., Milliken et al., 1998; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). According to this approach, managers must first signal the need for work-life arrangements, after which they have to make the active decision to push for their adoption (Milliken et al., 1998). Applied to top managers, this theory implies that the personal awareness of top managers about employees' needs for these arrangements is crucial for their adoption.

    The implications of these three major approaches within the literature will now be applied to understanding the conditions decisive for top managers' support for work-life

arrangements. This means that their support will be related to the costs and benefits of work-life arrangements (business case argumentation), the norms and conventions regarding the provision of work-life arrangements (neo-institutional theory) and their personal awareness (managerial interpretation approach). This allows looking into the mechanisms formulated in the various theoretical approaches on the level of the decisions being made by top managers whether to support work-life arrangements. Thereafter, the conditions decisive for top managers' support will be contextualized by relating the relevance of the conditions to the organizational and national context.

4.2.1 Conditions decisive for top managers' support for work-life arrangements

According to business case argumentation, top managers weigh costs and benefits of work-life arrangements when deciding upon their support for these arrangements. There are different types of costs associated with work-life arrangements. A first type is their potential for disrupting employee output. Work-life arrangements can potentially lower employee output when they remove employees from the workforce, either wholly (leave arrangements) or in part (part-time work). When employees take a longer period of leave, top managers need to hire replacements or rearrange the work (Powell & Mainiero, 1999). It varies between different types of work-life arrangements how great their potential for disrupting employee output is. Therefore, top managers might be expected to evaluate work-life arrangements separately. We expect top managers to be more supportive of work-life arrangements that allow employees to continue to work full time, because this does not jeopardize employees' output. This is predominantly the case with flextime and telecommuting, which change employee schedules and work locations, but not their output. After all, flextime allows employees to determine when they start and end their working days, but their working hours remain the same. Telecommuting allows doing your work from a different location, but does not change the hours employees work. This is different for work-life arrangements such as part-time working hours and leave policies, as these arrangements result in employees working less or no hours (for a certain period of time). From this the hypothesis follows: *1) Top managers are more supportive of flextime and telecommuting than leave and part-time hours.*

Another type of costs associated with work-life arrangements is financial investments. Supervisors may need to be retrained in how to supervise employees when flexible work hours or telecommuting are introduced because they can no longer evaluate employees based on their presence which costs money (Den Dulk & De Ruijter, 2008; Powell & Mainiero, 1999). In addition, the work-life arrangements themselves might require a financial investment, for example if the organization supplements statutory unpaid parental leave with additional pay during the leave period. When top managers base their

support for work-life arrangements on a cost-benefit analysis, this implies that they are likely to support work-life arrangements when the financial costs involved are low. Hence, we hypothesize: *2) The fewer financial costs associated with work-life arrangements, the more likely it is that top managers will support them.*

There are also various organizational benefits associated with work-life arrangements. One of these benefits is that it enhances employee commitment (Haar & Spell, 2004; Konrad & Mangel, 2000; Lambert, 2000; Muse, Harris, Giles & Field, 2008). Top managers might regard this beneficial for the organization, because the prosperity of many organizations depends on its employees. Committed employees will remain in the organization and work hard. Enhanced employee commitment is linked to work-life arrangements through the principle of reciprocity: when employees feel that they are getting something from the organization (e.g. work-life arrangements), they are willing to do something in return and feel extra commitment to their job (Lambert, 2000; Osterman, 1995). Here we put to the test whether top managers actually are more supportive of work-life arrangements when they expect it to increase employee commitment. In line with this, we hypothesize: *3) It is more likely that top managers will support work-life arrangements when they are expected to increase employee commitment.*

Another benefit of work-life arrangements mentioned in the literature is that they contribute to attracting and retaining employees (Barney, 1991; Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Den Dulk, 2001; Jones, Willness & Madey, 2013; Mescher et al., 2010; Osterman, 1995; Poelmans et al., 2003; Turban & Greening, 1996; Wood et al., 2003). A quality-motivated and high-talent workforce can be a source of competitive advantage for an organization (e.g. Barney, 1991). Top managers might be able to make their organization more competitive by offering specific employees who are exceptionally good at what they do custom work-life arrangements as a personal favor (Caligiuri & Givelekian, 2008; Hornung, Rousseau & Glaser, 2009). This will tie the employee to the organization purely for rational reasons: it will be very hard to get the same benefits at another organization (Davis & Kalleberg, 2006). In addition, offering work-life arrangements to high-performing employees might be cheaper than offering them to all employees. Hence, we expect top managers to favor work-life arrangements aimed at the best employees, leading to hypothesis: *4) Top managers are more likely to support work-life arrangements aimed at high-performing employees as opposed to work-life arrangements meant for all employees in the organization.*

According to neo-institutional theory, organizations in the same field put mimetic pressure on organizations to also provide work-life arrangements when they do so. The underlying reasoning to this is that organizations copy the market leaders in their field, because it is hard to oversee the whole environment (Cook, 2004; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In addition, they do so because they need to solidify their competitive position.

If they do not provide equally attractive benefits for employees, they might lose the battle for the best employees (Cook, 2004). Hence, top managers are likely to follow the conventions in their field with regard to work-life arrangement. In line, it is to be expected that: *5) Top managers are more likely to support work-life arrangements when their competitors also do so.*

Neo-institutional theory entails that top managers will follow social norms regarding work-life arrangements. Previous studies have shown that a social norm for organizations to provide work-life arrangements might stem from a high level of national gender equality (Den Dulk & Groeneveld, 2012; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Lynes & Kropf, 2005). The underlying idea is that when the level of gender equality is high, an effort to bridge inequalities between men and women in the labor market is valued. Work-life arrangements are often associated with helping women achieve a position in the labor market and are as such valued in those countries (Korabic et al., 2003; Lyness & Kropf, 2005; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). The Gender Inequality Index of 2011 (UNDP, 2011), shows that gender equality in 2011 was highest in the Netherlands (rank 2), followed by Finland (rank 5), Portugal (rank 19), Slovenia (rank 28) and the U.K. (rank 34). In line with the argument that top managers will follow social norms and be more supportive when the level of gender equality is higher, it is hypothesized: *6) Top managers in the Netherlands and Finland are more supportive of work-life arrangements than those in Portugal, Slovenia, and the U.K..*

According to the managerial interpretation approach, managers need to be aware of the need for work-life arrangements before they will support their introduction. The more salient issues around the combination of work and private life are to the top manager, the more he/she will see the value of work-life arrangements. Some personal characteristics make it more likely that top managers are aware of the need for these arrangements (Hambrick & Mason, 1984; Hopkins, 2005; Klein et al., 2000). For example, work-life arrangements are often associated with women in the labor force (Den Dulk, 2001). Therefore, female top managers might be more aware of the issue of work-life balance. Furthermore, top managers that personally used work-life arrangements in the past or are currently using them might be more aware of their value to employees. In line it is hypothesized: *7) Female top managers and top managers that have personal experience with the use of work-life arrangements are more likely to support work-life arrangements than male top managers and top managers that have never used work-life arrangements personally.*

4.2.2 Organizational and national variations in conditions decisive for top managers' support

The conditions that are ultimately decisive for top managers' support for work-life arrangements might vary between top managers of different organizations or countries. Scholars have argued that organizational characteristics are related to the provision of work-life arrangements because different types of organizations have also different goals (Den Dulk et al., 2010). When different goals are important, it is likely that top managers base their decision whether to support work-life arrangements on other conditions of work-life arrangements. Within the literature, it is consistently found that public sector organizations provide more work-life arrangements than private sector organizations (Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Goodstein, 1994; Wood et al., 2003). Private-sector organizations tend to be profit-driven, while public-sector organizations are more concerned about public legitimacy (Den Dulk, 2001). The difference between these types of organizations is explained by that because of their greater reliance on public legitimacy, public sector organizations and NGO's are more sensitive to norms within the society to provide work-life arrangements (e.g. Goodstein, 1994). When this argumentation is applied to top managers, top managers of public and private organizations are first of all likely to attach different importance to the costs involved in implementing work-life arrangements. Because private-sector organizations are profit-driven, their top managers are more likely to focus on the financial costs of work-life arrangements, letting these costs be decisive for their support. Hence, it is expected that: *8) The negative relationship between the financial costs of work-life arrangements and the support of top managers for these arrangements is stronger for top managers at private-sector organizations than for top managers at public-sector organizations/NGOs.*

On the other hand, because public legitimacy is important to public-sector organizations and NGOs (Goodstein 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995), their top managers are likely to stress how work-life arrangements affect the public reputation of the organization (Den Dulk, 2001). The provision of work-life arrangements is only likely to contribute to the public legitimacy of the organization when their work-life arrangements target all employees and not only high-performing ones. Providing work-life arrangements only to high-performing employees may be seen as unfair and therefore as harmful rather than beneficial for the organization's public reputation. Top managers at organizations for which social legitimacy is important, i.e. public-sector organizations, might regard this as more important as attracting and retaining the best employees through customized work-life arrangements only for those employees. As a result, top managers at public-sector organizations and NGOs are more likely to support organization-wide work-life support than reserve it for the best performers. In line it is hypothesized that: *9) Top managers of public-sector organizations/NGOs have a preference for work-life arrangements for*

all employees over work-life arrangements only for high-performing employees, while top managers of private sector organizations prefer work-life arrangements for high-performing employees.

Unlike organizational differences that result from variation in organizational goals, scholars have argued that national differences result from variation in institutional pressures (Den Dulk et al., 2010; Lewis & Haas, 2005). It was already mentioned that the level of gender equality might result in different social norms regarding the provision of work-life arrangements. However, there is more than one source of institutional pressure within societies, which all might be relevant in its own way for top managers support for work-life arrangements as they can entail conflicting pressures (e.g. Den Dulk et al., 2013; Devinney, 2009; Pache & Santos, 2010). Another form of institutional pressure mentioned in the literature as relevant for the provision of work-life arrangements is the extent of state provisions around combining work and family. Based upon neo-institutional theory, scholars have argued that this pressures organizations to do the same because it enhances a normative climate in which supporting the work-life balance of employees is valued (Lewis, 2003; Lewis & Haas, 2005). However, others have reasoned based upon business case argumentation that organizations provide less work-life arrangements when the state provides many, because the government is already taking care of it (Den Dulk et al., 2010). Recently, Den Dulk and colleagues (2010) found that both argumentations are true: in countries with a high level of state support, organizations provide less work-life arrangements in a similar domain as where the state support is provided, for example leave policies, but more in domains where the state is not involved, such as telecommuting or flextime. In Finland, public expenditure on family policies tends to be relatively high and the government provides universal services, such as a broad range of leave arrangements (Niemistö, 2011). Also, the Slovene government offers an extensive system of maternity and paternity leave policies and a universal day-care system (Stropnik & Šircelj, 2008), a holdover from before 1990. For the other three countries the leave arrangements are less extensive, although still prevalent because they must all comply with EU legislation (Saraceno, 2011). In line we expect: *10) Top managers in Finland and Slovenia will be more supportive of flextime and telecommuting, and less supportive of parental leave and parental leave for fathers than top managers in the Netherlands, Portugal and the U.K..*

4.3   DATA, OPERATIONALIZATION AND METHODOLOGY

4.3.1 Data

Data collection took place from November 2011 until February 2013 among top managers at a broad range of organizations in the Netherlands, U.K., Slovenia, Portugal and Finland. Managers were selected if they: a) held a position in the highest ranks of their organizations, such as CEO, CFO or being a member of a board of directors (our definition of top manager) and b) were a top manager of an organization with at least ten employees. We selected the cut-off point of ten employees because government regulations often do not apply to, or are different for, very small organizations. When more than one top manager was leading the organization, such as in the case of a board of directors, there was asked for the top manager most involved in HR issues to take part in the study.

Because top managers are part of the social elite, they are particularly hard to access (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Goldstein, 2002). We worked with experts in the countries under study to develop the best approach to accessing top managers. Different methods were used: personal networks (all countries), organizations of business leaders (Slovenia and Finland), snowball sampling (all countries), social media (the Netherlands and the U.K.) and a cold call approach after pre-selection on the internet (Finland, Portugal, and the U.K.). Specific care was taken to get a similar selection of organization types in each country. The combination of strategies gave us access to a hard-to-reach population, resulting in a sample of 202 top managers in five countries. Owing to the different methods used to find respondents, a reliable response rate cannot be calculated. For example, it is hard to know how many top managers responded to our call on social media. This also means that our sample is not necessarily a random sample of the complete population of top managers. Our sample is comparable to the 2009 European Company Survey (Eurofound, 2010) in terms of the proportion of private-sector organizations, but we do have an oversampling of large organizations with more than 500 employees (largest category in the European Company Survey).

4.3.2 The vignette study

To study the conditions under which top managers support work-life arrangements, a vignette study was adopted (also referred to as a factorial survey design) featuring vignettes and some background questions. A vignette is a hypothetical description of a situation in which certain factors that are considered relevant to a decision are systematically varied in the form of a short story (Rossi & Anderson, 1982). Top managers were given descriptions of hypothetical situations in which a manager in their own organization proposes to urge supervisors to permit employees to take up a certain type of work-life arrangement. Top managers' support for work-life arrangements was operationalized as to whether or not

they agreed to proposed idea in the vignette. We chose this rather than focusing only on formal policies in organizations – a common approach in the literature (e.g. Den Dulk et al., 2010) – because formal adoption of work-life arrangements does not mean that employees actually benefit from them (Allen, 2001). By focusing on whether work-life arrangements in itself are encouraged within the organization, we aim to understand the conditions under which top managers are willing to support active adoption of these arrangements. Each hypothetical situation features conditions of the specific work-life arrangement, discussed below.

4.3.2.1 Vignette factors and factor levels: independent variables

The work-life arrangements covered in the hypothetical situations, known as vignette factors, are based on the concepts set out in the hypotheses. They are 'type of organizational work-life arrangement', 'costs', 'employee commitment', 'employee target group' and 'other organizations'. Together with experts in the relevant countries, we chose work-life arrangements that were not required by law but that supplement statutory policies. Each vignette factor has two or more variants, called factor levels, which we varied systematically between hypothetical situations. *Table 4.1* reviews the six factors and their factor levels. For analysis purposes, we created dummies for the factor levels. The reference categories in the table are indicated by a zero. They are included in the analyses as independent variables.

Table 4.1: Vignette factors and factor levels

	Factor	Factor levels
1	Type of organizational work-life arrangement	• four-day work week (part-time hours)* • (fully)paid parental leave • (fully)paid parental leave for fathers • short-term care leave • working from home on a structural basis for one day a week (telecommuting) • flextime
2	Costs	• the implementation of the policy requires a financial investment* • no extra financial costs in the long run
3	Employee commitment	• it is unclear whether it increases employee commitment to the organization* • increases employee commitment
4	Employee target group	• all employees* • exceptionally well performing employees
5	Other organizations	• other organizations in your field also plan to promote this policy* • stimulation of this policy makes you a precursor compared to other organisations in your field

Note: * Reference category

When the factor levels of the five different factors are varied systematically, a total vignette population of 96 different vignettes can be created (calculated by multiplying the number of factor levels for each factor: 6^{type} x 2^{costs} x $2^{commitment}$ x 2^{whom} x $2^{other\ organizations}$). We divided the 96 stories into 16 subsets of 6 vignettes and presented each top manager with a subset of 6 vignettes (called a fractional factorial design; Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). We chose to assign each top manager a subset, because it would have been too much to ask top managers to respond to the entire population of vignettes. This ensured that each vignette was assessed at least 8 times and at most 17 times (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010), with an average of 12.4 assessments per vignette. The order in which the respondent responded to the six vignettes varied randomly to avoid order effects. The vignettes and background questions were translated into Dutch, Finnish, Slovenian, English and Portuguese, allowing top managers to respond to the questions in a familiar language and ensure complete understanding. Below is an example of how the vignettes were formulated. The alternative factor levels are shown in brackets.

> Example of a vignette
>
> One of your organization's managers suggests to stimulate supervisors to permit flextime *[paid parental leave; paid parental leave for fathers; short term care leave; a four-day workweek; working from home for one day a week on a structural basis]* to exceptionally well performing employees *[employees]*. Implementation of this policy requires a financial investment *[will not cost the company anything extra in the long run]* and it increases employee commitment to the organization *[it is unclear whether it causes an increase in employee commitment to the organization]*. Stimulation of this policy makes you a precursor compared to other organizations in your field *[other organizations in your field also have plans to promote this policy]*.

4.3.2.2 Judging the vignettes: dependent variable

The top managers were asked to indicate whether they 'would agree to this proposal (yes/no)'. This is the dependent variable.

4.3.2.3 Top managers and organizations: independent, moderating and control variables

After responding to the vignettes, the top managers were asked to answer some additional questions about themselves and their organization. The sector to which the organization belongs was added to the analyses so as to distinguish between the private sector and other sectors. This variable was coded as a dummy variable, with the private sector as the reference category. Countries were added to the model as dummy variables, with the Netherlands as the reference category. In addition, two country groups were created[2]:

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2   This was done to limit the number of cross-level interactions to test hypothesis 10.

1) Finland and Slovenia, and 2) the Netherlands, Portugal and the U.K.. Sex was added as a dummy variable, with male as the reference category. Finally, the use of work-life arrangements by top managers was calculated by combining a variable about the past use of work-life arrangements by top managers (yes/no) and another variable about their current use of these arrangements (yes/no). If top managers answered 'yes' to any of these variables, they got a '1' for the variable 'personal use of arrangements', if not a '0'. The variable was added to the analyses as a dummy variable.

Several of the characteristics of the top managers and their organizations were added to the analysis as control variables. As larger and financially healthy organizations are in a better position to provide work-life arrangements (Den Dulk et al., 2010), we controlled for size and financial situation. Because the size of the organization is not normally distributed, three size categories were created: small organizations with 10 to 100 employees, medium-sized organizations with 101 to 1000 employees, and large organizations with more than 1000 employees. The categories used are different than those in the previous chapter, with a larger middle category (up to 1000 employees versus up to 500 in the previous chapter) and rating organizations with only over 1000 employees as large. It was chosen to do so because this sample contains an oversampling of (very) large organizations. By putting the cut-off point at 1000, we are able to see differences within this category of large organizations. The categories were added to the analyses as dummy variables, with small organizations as the reference category. For the financial situation of the organization, we asked the top managers to rate their organization's financial status. The answer categories were growing, stable, shrinking slightly and shrinking. The categories were added to the analyses as a continuous variable. There is also controlled for age of the top manager, because younger managers might be more familiar with the idea of work-life arrangements. It was added as a continuous variable.

4.3.3 Method of analysis

One key characteristic of a factorial survey design is that the vignette, and not the respondent, is the unit of analysis. Since each top manager was asked to rate six vignettes, it could be argued that the vignettes are nested within the top managers. A common approach to analyzing vignette data is multilevel models (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). Because of the dichotomous dependent variable, we used a logistic multilevel regression model in which top managers were the random factor and in which the top manager's response to the vignette was the dependent variable.

The dataset contained 1212 vignettes nested in 202 top managers. We dealt with missing values by means of list-wise deletion, resulting in a total of 1064 vignettes nested in 189 top managers on which the models are based. This means that we lost 12 percent due to missing values on the first level (the vignettes) and 6 percent on the second level (the top managers). The lost cases did not vary on the variables in the models from the

cases included in the final sample, indicating that the missing values were not selective on those variables. *Table 4.2* shows the number of vignettes and the number of top managers per country included in the analyses.

To test the hypotheses, four different models were developed. The first is an empty model with no explanatory variables. This was used to calculate the intraclass correlation coefficient, which shows the proportion of variance at the top manager level and the proportion of variance at the vignette level. The second model is a random intercept model, used as a test for the first seven hypotheses. All vignette factors, the characteristics of the top managers and their organizations, the countries and the control variables were added to this model. The third model is a random intercept, random slope model including cross-level interactions between the sector of the organization and the vignette characteristics 'costs' and 'target group of employees', as a test for hypotheses 8 and 9. The fourth model is also a random intercept, random slope model including cross-level interactions, however this time between country and the vignette characteristic 'different types of work-life arrangements'.[3] To limit the number of interactions the two groups of countries were used in interaction with the types of work-life arrangements. This forms a test for hypothesis 10.

Table 4.2: Number of vignettes and top managers per country

Country	Number of vignettes	Number of top managers
Finland	166	31
The Netherlands	268	47
Portugal	257	45
Slovenia	209	37
The United Kingdom	164	29
Total	**1064**	**189**

4.4   RESULTS

4.4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 4.3 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables in the analysis. Top managers supported 66 percent of the vignettes. Most of the top managers in this chapter work for private-sector organizations (72 percent). Even though, we have an oversampling of large organizations compared to the complete population of organizations, still the majority of respondents belong to small organizations (40 percent). Another 26 percent work for large organizations with 1000 employees or more.

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3   A separate model for the interaction between country and the different types of work-life arrangements was run rather than include them in model 3 to limit the number of cross level interactions and therefore the number of random slopes.

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics of dependent, independent and control variables

Factor/Variable	Factor level /Category	Range	Mean/Prop.	SD
Dependent variable				
Top managers' support		0/1	0.66	-
Vignette factors (level 1)				
Type of work-life arrangement	*Paid parental leave*	0/1	0.17	-
	Paid parental leave for fathers	0/1	0.17	-
	Short-term care leave	0/1	0.17	-
	Telecommuting	0/1	0.16	-
	Flextime	0/1	0.17	-
	Part-time hours	0/1	0.17	-
Costs	*No investment*	0/1	0.50	-
	Investment	0/1	0.50	-
Commitment	*Increasing*	0/1	0.51	-
	Unclear whether increasing	0/1	0.49	-
Employee target group	*Employees*	0/1	0.50	-
	Exceptionally well performing employees	0/1	0.50	-
Other organizations	*No*	0/1	0.50	-
	Yes	0/1	0.50	-
Other variables (level 2)				
Country	*The Netherlands*	0/1	0.24	-
	Finland	0/1	0.15	-
	Portugal	0/1	0.24	-
	Slovenia	0/1	0.21	-
	U.K.	0/1	0.16	-
Sector	*Private*	0/1	0.72	-
	Other	0/1	0.28	-
Sex	*Male*	0/1	0.69	-
	Female	0/1	0.31	-
Personal use of arrangements		0/1	0.58	-
Control variables				
Age	*In years*	30 - 67	48.20	9.06
Size	*Small*	0/1	0.40	-
	Medium	0/1	0.34	-
	Large	0/1	0.26	-
Financial situation	*Growing - shrinking*	1 - 4	2.22	0.93

Notes: N vignettes = 1064
N top managers = 189
N countries = 5

The financial situation of their organizations is stable on average (mean of 2.22 on a scale from 1 (growing) to 4 (shrinking)). Most of the top managers are male (69 percent) and they are an average of 48 years old. The correlations between the level-two variables are not so high as to preclude their being included in the models together[4].

4.4.2 Models

Table 4.4 shows the results of the multilevel logistic regression models with which the hypotheses are tested.[5;6;7;8] Based on an empty model (not shown), the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) has been calculated, which is 0.25, showing that 25 percent of the variance can be attributed to the top manager/organization/country level and 75 percent to the vignette level. *Model 1* shows the result of the multilevel random intercept model. The model indicates that in general, top managers are least favorable towards part-time work, as all other types of work-life arrangements are valued significantly more positive by the top managers. When the exponent of the b-value is taken, the odds ratios can be calculated. These show from most supported to least supported by top managers: 1. flextime: top managers are 6.5 times more likely to support flextime than part-time work (odds ratio: $e^{1.87} = 6.5$, $p < 0.01$); 2. telecommuting (odds ratio: $e^{1.35} = 3.9$, $p < 0.01$); 3. short-term care leave (odds ratio: $e^{1.25} = 3.5$, $p < 0.01$); 4. parental leave for fathers (odds ratio: $e^{0.94} = 2.6$, $p < 0.01$); 5. parental leave (odds ratio: $e^{0.46} = 1.6$, $p < 0.01$); and 6. part-time work (reference category). Also all differences between the b-values of the different types of work-life arrangements are significant.[9] These results confirm the first hypothesis, which stated that top managers would be more favorable towards flextime and telecommuting than leave arrangements and part-time hours. In line with the second hypothesis, top managers are more likely to support work-life arrangements when no financial investments are required, as opposed to when additional costs are involved (odds ratio: $e^{0.48} = 1.6$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, top managers are also more likely to support work-life arrangements when an increase in commitment is to be expected than when the returns in terms of commitment are unclear (odds ratio: $e^{0.46} = 1.6$, $p < 0.01$), confirming hypothesis 3. In contradiction to the expectations in hypothesis 4, the model shows that in general, top managers tend to support work-life arrangements more when they are aimed at all employees than when they are aimed only at high-performing employees

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4   Correlations not shown. Available on request.

5   Multilevel random intercept models have also been calculated using another dependent variable in which top managers were asked to rate the idea proposed in the vignette on a scale of 1 (very negative) to 10 (very positive). The results were similar.

6   Fixed effect models were also calculated to test for robustness. Fixed effect models represent a stricter test of whether top managers are actually responding to the factors included in the vignette. The results were similar.

7   Controlling for the vignette set assigned to each top manager made no difference (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010).

8   Controlling for the percentage of female employees did not change the results.

9   Based on a chi-square test in Stata.

Table 4.4: Hierarchical models for top managers' support for work-life arrangement

Variables	Categories	Model 1 B (SE)	Model 2 B (SE)	Model 3 B (SE)
Cons.		-1.19 (0.82)	-1.26 (0.93)	0.23 (1.03)
Vignette factors (level 1)				
Type of work-life arrangement	*Part-time work*	ref	ref	ref
	Paid parental leave	0.46 (0.25) [+]	0.60 (0.28) [*]	0.28 (0.32)
	Paid parental leave for fathers	0.94 (0.26) [**]	1.10 (0.28) [**]	0.84 (0.36) [*]
	Short term care leave	1.25 (0.26) [**]	1.36 (0.30) [**]	2.10 (0.65) [**]
	Telecommuting	1.35 (0.27) [**]	1.68 (0.32) [**]	1.66 (0.62) [**]
	Flextime	1.87 (0.29) [**]	2.33 (0.34) [**]	2.04 (0.38) [**]
Costs	*Investment needed*	ref	ref	ref
	No investment needed	0.48 (0.16) [**]	0.37 (0.20) [+]	0.64 (0.20) [**]
Commitment	*No increase expected*	ref	ref	ref
	Increases	0.46 (0.16) [**]	0.55 (0.19) [**]	0.50 (0.21) [*]
Employee target group	*All employees*	ref	ref	ref
	Well performing employees	-0.95 (0.16) [**]	0.12 (0.29)	-1.22 (0.23) [**]
Other organizations	*Do not provide it*	ref	ref	ref
	Also provide it	0.08 (0.16)	0.11 (0.17)	0.18 (0.20)
Other variables (level 2)				
Country	*The Netherlands*	ref	ref	ref
	Finland	0.61 (0.35) [+]	0.52 (0.40)	-
	Portugal	0.70 (0.31) [*]	0.38 (0.36)	-
	Slovenia	2.12 (0.38) [**]	1.84 (0.45) [**]	-
	UK	0.24 (0.34)	0.41 (0.39)	-
Country categories	*The Netherlands, Portugal & U.K.*	ref	ref	ref
	Finland & Slovenia	-	-	0.68 (0.47)
Sector	*Private*	ref	ref	ref
	Public/NGO	-0.06 (0.26)	0.87 (0.39) [*]	-0.33 (0.35)
Sex	*Male*	ref	ref	ref
	Female	-0.01 (0.25)	0.04 (0.29)	0.16 (0.33)
Personal use of arrangements	*No*	ref	ref	ref
	Yes	0.26 (0.23)	0.16 (0.26)	0.30 (0.31)
Interactions				
Sector * costs		-	0.83 (0.40) [*]	-
Sector * target group of employees		-	-2.98 (0.55) [**]	-
Finland/Slovenia * paid parental leave		-	-	0.70 (0.59)

Table 4.4: Hierarchical models for top managers' support for work-life arrangement *(Continued)*

Variables	Categories	Model 1 B (SE)	Model 2 B (SE)	Model 3 B (SE)
Interactions				
Finland/ Slovenia * paid parental leave for fathers		-	-	0.87 (0.70)
Finland/Slovenia * short term care leave		-	-	0.38 (0.92)
Finland/Slovenia * telecommuting		-	-	2.39 (1.18) *
Finland/Slovenia * flextime		-	-	0.09 (0.65)
Control variables				
Age		-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Size	*Small (10-100)*	ref	ref	ref
	Medium sized (101 – 1000)	-0.20 (0.26)	-0.13 (0.29)	-0.31 (0.36)
	Large (>1001)	0.13 (0.29)	0.29 (0.33)	-0.02 (0.39)
Financial situation of the organization		-0.04 (0.12)	-0.01 (0.14)	0.01 (0.16)
Model specifications				
Random intercept		0.96 (0.27)	0.81 (0.34)	2.08 (0.64)
Random slope	*Costs*	-	0.00 (0.00)	-
	Whom	-	3.53 (1.29)	-
	Paid parental leave	-	-	0.00 (0.00)
	Paid parental leave for fathers	-	-	0.67 (2.13)
	Short term care leave	-	-	9.76 (6.47)
	Telecommuting	-	-	8.24 (6.64)
	Flextime	-	-	0.00 (0.00)
N *(vignettes)*		1064	1064	1064
N *(top managers)*		189	189	189
Wald chi^2 (df)		119.01 (20)	107.65 (22)	71.75 (22)
Log likelihood		-575.07	-539.76	-576.33

Note: **p<0.01
*p<0.05
$^{+}$p<0.10 (two-tailed tests)

(odds ratio: $e^{-.95}$ = 0.4, p < 0.01). The model does not confirm hypothesis 5 stating that top managers are more likely to support work-life arrangements when their competitors do so, as this vignette factor is not significant. Contradicting hypothesis 6, top managers in the Netherlands seem least supportive of work-life arrangements. However, there are no significant differences with top managers in the U.K.. Top managers in Slovenia are most supportive of the work-life arrangements proposed in the vignettes. They are 8.3 times more likely to support them than top managers in the Netherlands (odds ratio: $e^{2.12}$

= 8.3, p < 0.01). The model does not support hypothesis 7, female top managers are not more likely than male top managers to support work-life arrangements and top managers that have personally used work-life arrangements in the past are equally likely to support work-life arrangements as those who have not. Finally, sector, organizational size and financial situation did not produce systematic differences between top manager's ratings, nor did the age of the top manager.

Model 2 includes the interactions between vignette factors and organizational characteristics. The model shows that, contrary to expectations in hypothesis 8, the costs associated with work-life arrangements are more important to top managers in public-sector organizations and NGOs than they are to top managers in private-sector organizations. Furthermore, the model shows that top managers of both private and public-sector organizations and NGOs prefer work-life arrangements available to all employees as opposed to only high-performing employees. Nevertheless, in line with hypothesis 9, this preference is much stronger among top managers at public-sector organizations and NGOs.

Model 3 includes the interactions between the types of work-life arrangements and the countries in this chapter. The model shows that hypothesis 10 is partly supported. Top managers in Finland and Slovenia are more supportive towards telecommuting than top managers in the other three countries. However, this is not the case for flextime, nor are they less supportive of leave policies going beyond the statutory minimum.

4.5   CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Since the rise of dual earner families, scholars have been interested in whether and why organizations provide work-life arrangements to employees to support them in combining responsibilities at work and in their private lives. Insofar, this literature has generally sidestepped the decision making actors and treated the organization as if somehow making the decisions regarding the adoption and implementation of work-life arrangements itself. However, in fact it is top managers within the organizations that make these decisions (Elbanna, 2006; Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996; Ginsberg, 1988). This chapter contributes to the literature regarding the provision of work-life arrangements by introducing top managers as the decision-making actors regarding the provision of work-life arrangements. Through means of employing a factorial survey design in five European countries, the conditions under which top managers decide to support work-life arrangements are explored. Based upon the conditions found to be relevant for top managers' support for work-life arrangements, it can be concluded that top managers support work-life arrangements both because they see it as a business case and because they follow social norms. It is in line with business case argumentation that they support work-life arrangements when there are few financial consequences for the organization

and when the arrangement is likely to contribute to employee commitment. However, the preference of top managers for work-life arrangements targeted at all employees over work-life arrangements especially for high performing employees suggests that they are also sensitive to societal norms. After all, providing work-life arrangements only to well performing employees is cheaper (Caligiuri & Givelekian, 2008) but it might also jeopardize social legitimacy. Especially in a context where equal treatment of employees is valued, which is more the case in European countries than in the United States. Therefore, this result may have especially turned up given the study population of top managers in the European context of this study. That top managers prefer work-life arrangements to target all employees also suggests that in this context work-life arrangements found their way into organizations' regulations and practices: work-life arrangements are not seen as a special to employees but as general terms of employment.

Although a common idea is that personal experiences and characteristics matter for managers' support for work-life arrangements (Hambrick & Mason, 1984; Hopkins, 2005; Klein et al., 2000), no evidence was found for this being the case for top managers. Male and female top managers are equally supportive of work-life arrangements and it does not matter for top managers' support whether they themselves used or are currently using work-life arrangements. Their decisions about the general organizational approach towards work-life arrangements seem to be based more on business considerations and social norms rather than personal experiences. It could be that they experience decisions regarding work-life arrangements primarily in their role as top managers being responsible for the prosperity of the organization, which results in them linking it to the needs of the organization and keeping their personal perspective and experiences out of the consideration. This might be especially the case because the idea of work-life arrangements is already quite common in society and top managers deciding to support them are no longer pioneers. Therefore, their personal vision might be less relevant for the decision.

Based upon the results of this chapter it can moreover be concluded that how heavily top managers weigh certain conditions of work-life arrangements depends on the organizational context as well as the national context. Regarding the organizational context, mainly the division between top managers of public- and private sector organizations was found to matter. Top managers of public sector organizations were more concerned with providing work-life arrangements to all employees equally than top managers of private sector organizations, reflecting the greater reliance on social legitimacy of public sector organizations. In addition, the costs of work-life arrangements appear to be more relevant to top managers of public-sector organizations, which is especially understandable given the context of economic crisis and recession during the data collection period (2012/2013). Public expenditure was under pressure, and public organizations were slashing costs and downsizing to avoid high government debt. As a

result, top managers at public-sector organizations may have been more sensitive to all cost-related matters, including work-life arrangements. That the conditions on which top managers' support for work-life arrangements also depend on the national context is shown by the finding that top managers in Finland and Slovenia more strongly prefer telecommuting over other work-life arrangements than top managers in the other countries in this study. This shows that it varies between countries to which extent different types of work-life arrangements are supported by top managers.

Based upon this study it can moreover be concluded that of the different types of work-life arrangements, telecommuting and flextime are generally most supported by top managers. An explanation is that those arrangements have fewest consequences for employee output because they do not alter the amount of work hours employees put in (Powell & Mainiero, 1999). However, this support should also be seen in the light of the developments of the last decade. The rapid technological developments have made it increasingly easy to adopt these arrangements within organizations. Laptops, mobile phones and wide spread internet connections have made it easier to work flexible in time and space for employees that work from a desk. Even more so, employers nowadays also use these policies to the advantage of the organization reducing office space by allowing employees to telecommute. Given these developments, it might be unsurprising that top managers are especially supportive of telecommuting and flextime. Nevertheless, managers and supervisors down the hierarchy of the organization might not share this, as research shows they see these arrangements as disturbing for the organization of work (Den Dulk & De Ruijter, 2008). Therefore, top managers clearly supporting work-life arrangements throughout the organization, might be especially relevant for employee access to these types of work-life arrangements.

This study contributed to the field of work-life arrangements by applying the three most common theories in the literature to the decision making of top managers whether to support work-life arrangements. By doing so, we were able to observe the actor-level implications of these theories directly. The innovative approach of a vignette study has been essential to do so, because it allowed disentangling the conditions decisive for top managers' support. This has taught us that top managers make their decisions regarding work-life arrangements both based on business case considerations and expectation in society about what the organization's approach to work-life arrangements should be, but not on their personal experiences. In addition, the larger societal context in the form of societal expectations seem more important than other organizations in the direct environment of the organization for top managers' support, as top managers were not more supportive of work-life arrangements already supported by other organizations in their field. This implies that a combination of neo-institutional theory and business case argumentation seems the most fruitful for understanding the provision of work-

life arrangements, as their actor-level assumptions are supported by our observations among top managers. Thus, a theoretical focus on normative and coercive pressures in combination with business case arguments will most likely give the best insight in why work-life arrangements are provided.

This chapter has a number of limitations. First of all, this chapter included a relatively small number of top managers per country. Future studies could cover more top managers to ensure the robustness of the results. Second, because only five countries were included in this chapter, it was only possible to explore cross-country differences. Future research could extend this study to a larger number of countries so as to test the origins of these differences. Third, the vignette characteristics included in this chapter were a selection of possible conditions on which top managers base their decisions. Another condition not explicitly included is the possibility of using work-life support to attract and retain employees. Future research could broaden the scope of conditions taken into account. This chapter has given insight in the conditions on which top managers base their support for work-life arrangements, which has shown that top managers take multiple conditions simultaneously into account and support work-life arrangements when they see them contributing to organizational goals or when they social norms expect them to.

Chapter

5

A business case or social responsibility? How top managers' support for work-life arrangements relates to the national context[1]

ABSTRACT

Work-life arrangements provided by organizations originate from the Anglo-Saxon context and found their way into organizations located in other countries. Nevertheless, most of our knowledge about their provision is based upon the Anglo-Saxon context. Recent studies suggest however that beyond national differences in the extent to which they are provided lies that work-life arrangements are viewed differently in different countries. This raises the question to which extent our common understanding of why work-life arrangements are provided by organizations is equally applicable in every country. Starting from the three most common theories in the field of work-life arrangements, the managerial interpretation approach, business case argumentation and neo-institutional theory, this chapter explores how the considerations of top managers to provide work-life arrangements vary between countries and how this variation can be understood in relation to the national context. A mixed method approach is adopted combining a vignette experiment with semi-structured interviews involving top managers in five European countries. The analyses show that although there are many similarities in top managers' considerations across countries, there are also clear national differences. Their considerations are closely related to how work-life arrangements are framed in their country in general, as a business case and/or as a social responsibility. Additionally, top managers align work-life arrangements with common work practices in their country.

5.1   INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, work-life arrangements offered by organizations to employees in order to support them in combining work and private life have become increasingly common in many societies. Work-life arrangements originate from the Anglo-Saxon countries, but found their way into organizations located in other countries (Den Dulk, 2001; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). Nevertheless, international comparative research regarding the adoption of work-life arrangements is still scarce, as the majority of studies stem from this Anglo-Saxon context (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). The cross-national studies that are there consistently show national differences in the provision of work-life arrangements by organizations (Den Dulk et al., 2010; Den Dulk et al., 2012; Lambert & Kossek, 2005). Even though the number of cross-national studies is rising, our understanding of how the national context plays a role in the adoption of work-life arrangements by organizations is still beyond our understanding of the organizational context, and researchers have therefore called for more context sensitive research (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013; Powell, Francesco & Ling, 2009).

Most research that takes the national context into account focused on national differences in the extent to which work-life arrangements are provided by organizations (Den Dulk et al., 2010; 2012; Lambert & Kossek, 2005). Recent studies suggest that how managers within these organizations regard them, underlies (part of) this variation (Den Dulk et al., 2011; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). In the Anglo-Saxon countries, work-life arrangements are evaluated in business terms, which has been associated with the readiness to adopt work-life arrangements by organizations in these countries (Lee et al., 2000; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). However, it seems that this is not how they are viewed everywhere. Managers regarding work-life arrangements as a social issue and therefore the responsibility of the government rather than a business issue in France has been given as an explanation for the lower provision of work-life arrangements in this country (Ollier-Malaterre, 2009), raising the question to what extent our common understanding of why organizations adopt work-life arrangements is transferable to countries beyond the Anglo-Saxon context. This study by Ollier-Malaterre (2009) shows that how managers view work-life arrangements might be a fruitful step forward to get a better understanding of how the provision of work-life arrangements is related to the national context. This chapter therefore aims to explore whether considerations of managers to adopt work-life arrangements vary between countries and how these considerations are related to the national context.

To understand why organizations adopt work-life arrangements, very few studies have looked directly at the decisions being made or focused on the main decision making actors regarding the adoption of work-life arrangements (Warmerdam et al., 2010). Instead, the literature has focused on the relation between organizational and national characteristics

and the provision of work-life arrangements (e.g., Den Dulk et al., 2010; Den Dulk et al., 2013; Goodstein, 1994). These studies have treated the organization as if somehow making the decisions to adopt work-life arrangements itself. Others looked at the relation between the provision of work-life arrangements and the attitudes of HR managers or the presumed attitudes of top managers as reported by HR managers (e.g., Milliken et al., 1998; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). Nevertheless, to be able to explore directly what the considerations are behind the provision of work-life arrangements and to understand how this might relate to the national context, it seems more promising to look directly at the primary decision makers regarding work-life arrangements. These are the top managers of organizations - such as CEOs, CFOs and members of boards of directors (Bardoel, 2003; Duxbury & Haines, 1991; Elbanna, 2006; Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996; Ginsberg, 1988; Kossek et al., 1994; Lee et al., 2000; Milliken et al., 1998; Peters & Heusinkveld, 2010; Van der Lippe, 2004; Warmerdam et al., 2010). This study adds to the literature by focusing on how top managers' considerations whether to provide work-life arrangements are related to the national context. Thereto, it focuses on the support of top managers for work-life arrangements in a selection of countries from the far corners of Europe: Finland, Portugal, Slovenia, the Netherlands and the UK. The overarching research question is therefore: *How do the considerations of top managers whether to support work-life arrangements vary between countries and how can this be understood in relation to the national context?*

To explore how considerations of top managers are shaped by the national contexts they operate in, a mixed method approach is adopted (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Specifically, a vignette experiment (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010; Wallander, 2009) is combined with semi-structured interviews (Boeije, 2010; Galletta, 2013). With the vignette experiment it is intended to capture national differences in the conditions under which top managers support work-life arrangements. This provides insight in whether top managers of different countries prefer different types of work-life arrangements and whether they take different conditions into consideration. For example are the costs and the return in employee commitment decisive for top managers in one country but not in other countries? This is combined with semi-structured interviews to enhance our knowledge about the underlying considerations of top managers and to detect considerations that may be overlooked in the vignette experiment. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews can give insight in which ways top managers support is shaped and linked to the national context. Thus, we add to the literature by deepening our understanding of differences in workplace work-life arrangements across countries. This is done by taking the original approach of focusing on top managers as the main decision makers regarding these arrangements in organizations adopting a mixed method approach.

5.2 THEORETICAL APPROACH

In order to understand why the considerations of top managers to support work-life arrangements would vary between countries, it is needed to understand why top managers would support work-life arrangements in the first place. We will relate this to the national context to deduct how the considerations of top managers are shaped by it. The literature applies three major theoretical approaches to the adoption of work-life arrangements by organizations. The managerial interpretation approach places managers central: they first have to interpret the environment and regard work-life arrangements relevant for their organization before work-life arrangements will be adopted (e.g., Milliken et al., 1998; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). Even though by this approach the role of managers is emphasized, the approach does not tell us when and why top managers consider support for the combination of work and personal life relevant. Business case argumentation and neo-institutional theory give more insight in these considerations.

Top managers are responsible for the prosperity and continuity of the organization. Therefore business case arguments are likely to play a role in their decision making as these arguments center on the organization's interest. When business case argumentation is applied to work-life arrangements, they are adopted when benefits outweigh the costs and consequently there is a business case for them (Den Dulk et al., 2010; Dex & Scheibl, 2001; Osterman, 1995). Following this theory, top managers' considerations are likely to center around the costs and benefits of work-life arrangements, such as the financial investment, difficulties different types of work-life arrangements cause the organization in terms of the organization of work, returns in terms of enhanced employee commitment (Lambert, 2000; Osterman, 1995) and the attraction and retention of well performing employees (Barney, 1991; Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Den Dulk, 2001; Osterman, 1995; Poelmans et al., 2003; Wood et al., 2003). Kossek and Friede (2006) showed that business case arguments can indeed be found in most managerial perspectives on work-life arrangements. National differences in considerations of top managers whether to support work-life arrangements are however not to be expected based upon this theoretical approach. Regardless the context, top managers are expected to consider the costs and benefits of work-life arrangements for the organization.

Business case argumentation is often combined with neo-institutional theory in the literature about work-life arrangements in organizations (e.g. Cook, 2004; Den Dulk, 2001). Neo-institutional theory implies that top managers take societal norms and conventions regarding enhancing the work-life balance of employees into account in determining their support for work-life arrangements. There are different channels through which pressure to align work-life arrangements with societal norms and conventions can be put on top managers (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Laws and regulations are a source of pressure because they are enforced. An extensive system of laws and regulations may be

conducive to a normative climate that favors work-life arrangements (Den Dulk, 2001), which in turn raises employee expectations. If a society generally regards organizations as responsible for supporting employees' work-life balance, employees might feel entitled to such arrangements (Lewis, 1997; Lewis & Smithson, 2001). In addition, top managers might not always know what they should do regarding work-life arrangements because they cannot fully assess the consequences. They might therefore copy others, for example successful competitors (Cook, 2004; Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995). Neo-institutional theory thus implies that top managers' considerations whether to support work-life arrangements center around laws and regulations, societal norms and conventions, employee expectations and the approach of other organizations, meaning that when the context is different their considerations might also vary. Since top managers are embedded in different national and cultural contexts they may regard work-life arrangements differently. The national context of the countries included in his study will now be discussed.

5.3   DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRIES

5.3.1 Legislative leave and public child care

There are different types of state work-life policies. The countries included in this study have, among other things, introduced policies in the domain of leave and public child care. The statutory leave arrangements related to childbirth vary considerably between the countries in this chapter. All countries have incorporated maternity/paternity/parental leave into their national legislation because they must all comply with EU legislation (Saraceno, 2011). The EU legislation resonates through national legislation in different ways, however (Lewis et al., 2008b). This is illustrated by *Table 5.1*, which shows that both the length of and the pay during leave periods vary between countries. For example, the length of full-pay paternity leave varies considerably, with the shortest periods in the Netherlands (2 days) and the U.K. (0 days on full pay, but 10 days at a flat-rate) and the longest period in Finland (18 days) and Slovenia (15 days). Portugal (5 days) falls in between. The extensive leave policies in Finland and Slovenia probably create, and are a reflection of, a normative climate in society in which supporting employees' work-life balance is valued. This could mean that top managers in these countries are more prone to support work-life arrangements, as this is in line with the normative climate. However, this is not necessarily in the same domain (Den Dulk et al., 2010). The extensive system around leave policies can also mean that top managers in these countries do not see leave arrangements as their responsibility, as the government is already taking care of it quite extensively (Den Dulk et al., 2013). The same might be true for child care. When governments provide an extensive system of (free or cheap) public child care, top

managers might be less inclined to provide on-site crèches within their organization. Of the countries in this study, the public child care facilities are most extensive in Finland and Slovenia.

5.3.2 Working hours culture

Besides leave arrangements and public child care, reduced working hours are another type of work-life arrangements. The prevalence of part-time work also varies considerably between the countries in this study. This means that top managers are likely to look differently upon part-time work: in countries where it is common, employees might expect them and also they themselves might regard it as something normal because their provision is part of the social norms and/or the legal system. Part-time work is most common in the Netherlands, where it is formalized in legislation. Dutch law gives employees the right to ask their employer to adjust their work hours; the employer can only refuse if it can show that this will seriously harm the organization. In addition, part-time employees have the same social rights as employees in full-time positions. The Netherlands has a 'one-and-a-half earner model' family system. Women's labor force participation rate is fairly high, but a large percentage of women work part-time (Vlasblom, Echtelt & Voogd-Hamelink, 2015). Part-time work hours are thus a strategy that many female employees use to maintain a healthy work-life balance and meet child care needs (Täht & Mills, 2012). Part-time work is also quite common in British society and employees in part-time jobs have the same employment protection and many of the same social rights as employees in full-time positions (Van der Lippe et al., 2006). However, part-time jobs are generally lower-level positions and the relevant employees are often overqualified (Yerkes et al., 2010). Part-time work is exceptional in Finland and Slovenia, with employees commonly only working part-time as part of a parental leave arrangement (Niemistö, 2011; Stropnik & Šircelj, 2008). In these countries, the assumption is that both men and women work and care for dependents (Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2013; Lewis et al., 2008a). Like Finland and Slovenia, Portugal also has a full-time work culture. However, in contrast to the other two, it is not common for Portuguese employees to work part-time as a parental leave option: employees (mothers) either work full time or not at all (Das Dores-Guerreiro & Pareira, 2007).

5.3.3 Flexibility

Flextime and telecommuting are two other types of work-life arrangements. The ongoing technological developments have made it easier for especially knowledge workers to work at any time and any place, which has stimulated these kinds of work-life arrangements. Also the increased flexibility of the labor market has contributed to their development. Although these societal and labor market developments are apparent in all countries

under study, there are also national differences in how they are discussed in the public debate and whether and how they found their way into organizations. In the Netherlands, these developments are part of a discussion around the 'new way of working' as a new management concept around the organization of work. In the new way of working, the physical workspace is an open space with shared desks to encourage interaction and creativity. In addition, in these workplaces the work is designed to become less time- and space-dependent (Bijl, 2007), allowing employees to work from home and to be flexible around their starting and ending times of the job. The British government has long regarded the reconciliation of work and care as the responsibility of families, with the help of services provided through the market economy (Van der Lippe et al., 2006). However, more recently it introduced legislation giving employees the right to request flexible work hours (Lewis et al., 2008), and it has chosen to actively promote flextime among employers by arguing that it is good for business. Flextime is thus seen as one of the most important ways to help employees reconcile work and private life. This is less the case for telecommuting. In Portugal, care is seen as a private matter and families generally organize child care themselves (Das Dores-Guerreiro & Pereira, 2007; OECD, 2014). Nonetheless, flextime is quite common in Portuguese organizations, although telecommuting is almost nonexistent (Das Dores-Guerreiro & Pereira, 2007). Since 2007, the Slovene government has chosen to actively promote work-life arrangements in organizations by awarding a 'family-friendly certificate' to eligible employers showing that they are good to their employees. To earn it, organizations increasingly began introducing such arrangements as flextime and telecommuting.[2] Based on a shared cultural value of gender equality (Daly, 2011), the Finnish government encourages organizations to make it easy for both men and women to work full time while reconciling their work and family responsibilities; in response, organizations offer flextime and other arrangements. That telecommuting and flextime are becoming more common in all societies under study might make top managers see the provision of these types of work-life arrangements as something expected of them.

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2   Source: http://europa.eu/epic/practices-that-work/practice-user-registry/practices/family-friendly-company-certificate_en.htm

Table 5.1: Overview of statutory policies around leave for young parents, part-time work and public child care as in place during the time of data collection (2011-2013)

	Leave	Part-time working hours	Child care
Finland[A]	Maternity leave : 105 days fully paid. Paternity leave: 18 weekdays fully paid with an additional 12 days if the father takes at least 12 days of parental leave. Parental leave: 158 weekdays to be divided among the parents, fully paid. Additional leave: 'care leave' as an extension of parental leave until the child is 3. Not paid by the employer, but the employee receives a flat-rate 'home care allowance' from the government.	Possible to shorten weekly or daily working hours up to when the child finishes their second year of school. Not paid by the employer, but parents receive 'home care allowance' from the government on a flat rate.	Municipalities are obliged to provide a day care facility to children. The fee depends on the income of the parents.
The Netherlands[B]	Maternity leave: 16 weeks (=112 days) fully paid. Paternity leave: 2 days fully paid. Parental leave: 26 times the weekly work hours (can be taken as part-time), unpaid.	People who have been employed by the same employer for at least one year have the right to request reduced or extended work hours. This request can only be refused by the employer if it would severely threaten the work process.	Child care is organized by the market (private sector organizations). Parents are financially compensated based upon their income. Compensation is paid by the government and organizations (through taxes).
Portugal[C]	Maternity leave: 6 weeks of the total time of parental leave is reserved as maternity leave for the mother. Paternity leave: 30 days additional parental leave when both parents share the parental leave. Parental leave: 120 days fully paid.	No regulation.	Child care is organized by the market.
Slovenia[D]	Maternity leave: 105 days fully paid. Paternity leave: 90 days, of which 15 are fully paid and 75 are paid at the minimum wage. Parental leave: 260 days full time or 520 part-time on full pay, to be divided between the parents.	Parents of children up to six may work part-time, the difference in hours is paid by social security based upon a minimum wage.	Publicly organized, heavily subsidized to make it affordable for parents.
U.K.[E]	Maternity leave: 6 weeks paid at 90%, 33 weeks at a flat rate. Paternity leave: 2 weeks at a flat rate. Parental leave: 13 weeks unpaid.	Part-time employees have the same rights as full time employees and should be treated equally favorable.	Organized by the market, paid by parents.

Notes: A: Source: Niemistö, 2011
B: Source: Den Dulk & Spenkeling, 2009
C: Source: Das Dores-Guerreiro & Pareira, 2007; Wall & Leitao, 2014
D: Source: Mrčela & Sadar, 2011; Stropnik & Šircelj, 2008
E: Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-leave-policies

5.4   DATA AND METHODOLOGY

5.4.1 Data

Both the vignette study and the semi-structured interviews were conducted between November 2011 and February 2013. The groups overlap in that top managers who participated in a semi-structured interview also responded to the vignette study at the end of the interview. As top managers are among the elite of society, they are particularly hard to access (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Goldstein, 2002). With the help of local experts, a plan was designed for approaching top managers in each country. Different methods were used: personal networks (in all countries), business leaders' organizations (Slovenia and Finland), snowball sampling (all countries), social media (the Netherlands and the U.K.) and internet selection (Finland, Portugal, and the U.K.). Care was taken to recruit top managers from a wide range of organizations, but similar organizations in each country. When more than one top manager was leading the organization, such as in the case of a board of directors, there was asked for the top manager most involved in HR issues to take part in the study. These combined approaches led to a total of 202 top managers responding to the survey (which included the vignette experiment) and 78 top managers participating in a semi-structured interview. *Table 5.2* shows the number of participants per country for the vignettes and for the semi-structured interviews. The vignettes and background questions were translated in Dutch, Finnish, Slovenian, and Portuguese, allowing the top managers to respond to the questions in a familiar language to ensure complete understanding. Most of the interviews were conducted in English; the exception was Portugal, where the majority of interviews were conducted in Portuguese and transcribed and translated afterwards.

Table 5.2: Number of participants

	Number of participants -vignette study-	Number of participants -interviews-
Finland	33	15
The Netherlands	48	15
Portugal	49	14
Slovenia	41	18
U.K.	31	16

5.4.2 Design of the vignette study

A vignette is a description of a hypothetical situation in which certain factors that are considered relevant to a decision are systematically varied in the form of a small story, in this case the decision to support work-life arrangements (Rossi & Anderson, 1982). Top managers were given descriptions of hypothetical situations in which a manager in their own organization proposes encouraging supervisors to permit employees to use a certain type of work-life arrangement. Top managers were asked to say whether they 'would agree to the proposal' (yes/no). This dummy was included in the analysis as the *dependent variable*.

Within the vignettes, factors derived from the theoretical framework that are relevant for top managers' support for work-life arrangements were systematically varied. From the theoretical framework we derived to be relevant for top managers' support for work-life arrangements: type of work-life arrangement, costs, expected return in terms of employee commitment, attracting well performing employees to the organization (operationalized as employee target group) and what other organizations do with regard to work-life arrangements. To systematically vary the vignettes with regard to these factors, different variants for each factor were formulated, called factor levels. The factor level (shown between brackets) for each factor are 'type of work-life arrangement' (a. four-day work week/ b. paid parental leave/ c. paid parental leave for fathers/ d. short term care leave/ e. working from home on a structural basis for one day a week (telecommuting)/ f. flextime), 'costs' (a. the implementation of the policy requires a financial investment/ b. no extra financial costs in the long run), 'employee commitment' (a. it is unclear whether it increases an employee commitment to the organization/ b. increasing employee commitment), 'employee target group' (a. exceptionally well performing employees/ b. all employees) and 'other organizations' (a. other organizations within your field also have plans to promote this policy / b. stimulation of this policy makes you a precursor compared to other organizations in your field). The different factor levels of a factor were varied systematically between hypothetical situations.

When the factor levels of the 5 different factors are varied systematically, a total vignette population of 96 different vignettes can be created ($6^{\text{type of work-life arrangement}} \times 2^{\text{costs}} \times 2^{\text{commitment}} \times 2^{\text{employee target group}} \times 2^{\text{other organizations}}$). We divided the 96 stories into 16 subsets of 6 vignettes and presented each top manager with a subset of 6 vignettes (called a fractional factorial design; Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). It would have been too much to ask top managers to respond to the entire population of vignettes, so a subset was assigned to each one. This ensured that each vignette was assessed at least 8 and at most 17 times (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). The order in which the respondent was presented with the six vignettes was varied randomly to avoid order effects. Below is an example of a vignette. The alternative factor levels are italicized and in brackets.

Example of a vignette

One of your organization's managers suggests to stimulate supervisors to permit working from home for one day a week on a structural basis *[paid parental leave; paid parental leave for fathers; short term care leave; a four-day workweek; flextime]* to employees *[exceptionally well-performing employees]*. Implementation of this policy requires a financial investment *[will not cost the company anything extra in the long run]* and it increases employee commitment to the organization *[it is unclear whether it causes an increase in employee commitment to the organization]*. Other organizations in your field also have plans to promote this policy *[Stimulation of this policy makes you a precursor compared to other organizations in your field]*.

The factors were included in the analyses as *independent variables,* with a dummy for each factor level. As *control variables*, sector, size and financial situation of the organization were added, as well as the gender, age and use of work-life arrangements by top managers themselves, as these are suggested or found to be associated with the provision of work-life arrangements (Den Dulk et al., 2010; Hopkins, 2005; Klein et al., 2000).

5.4.3 Design of the semi-structured interviews

The main goal of the semi-structured interviews was to explore top managers' considerations around supporting work-life arrangements or refraining from support, so that a cross-country comparison could be made later. The interviewer had a topic list, including probes, to ensure that all topics were discussed (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). The interviews covered at least the following work-life arrangements: leave policies, adjustment of work hours (to part-time), telecommuting, flextime, and on-site child care. The interviews took place at a location chosen by the top managers, which in all but one case meant their own offices. Before the interview began, the managers were assured that everything they said would be anonymous and confidential. The majority of the interviews took no longer than an hour owing to the top managers' time constraints. After the top manager had given his or her consent, all interviews were recorded and transcribed.

5.4.4 Methods of analyses

The data from the vignette experiment and the semi-structured interviews were analyzed separately. The multilevel nature of the data from the vignette experiment, with vignettes nested in top managers and the binary dependent variable, led us to use multilevel logistic regression analysis. A separate model was run for every country to detect national differences in the conditions that are decisive for top managers' support.

Missing values were dealt with by means of list-wise deletion, resulting in a total of 1064 vignettes nested in 189 top managers on which the models are based. This means that 12 percent was lost due to missing values on the first level (the vignettes) and 6 percent on the second level (the top managers). In the Netherlands, no top managers were dropped from the analyses because of missing values, in the U.K. two, in Slovenia four, in Finland one and in Portugal two.

The semi-structured interviews were analyzed using MAXQDA. To start with, open coding was applied to allow topics to emerge from the data (Boeije, 2010). Next, axial coding was entered, organizing and grouping top managers' considerations for supporting or not supporting work-life arrangements. This was followed by grouping these considerations by shared nature, for example 'positive impact on the organization'. Finally, the 'table of code frequencies' was used to identify which considerations were mentioned by top managers in which country. This tool was used to indicate when something was mentioned in one country and not mentioned at all in another, or when something was mentioned many more times in one country than in another, allowing us to detect any variation across countries. The goal of this process was to distinguish differences in considerations mentioned by top managers between countries, not to quantify them. Bearing in mind these possible national differences, it was compared with the original data to see whether there were actual differences in the considerations top managers' gave in different countries. This produced an overview of considerations shared by top managers across countries and reasons specific to top managers in one or more countries. After detecting national similarities and differences based on both the vignette experiment and the semi-structured interviews, the results of both methods were compared. Next, the national differences and similarities revealed by both the vignette study and the semi-structured interviews were interpreted by linking them to the explanations top managers gave in the semi-structured interviews.

5.5 RESULTS

5.5.1 Vignette study

Table 5.3 shows a separate multilevel logistic regression model for each of the five countries. The models show that there are national differences in the extent to which different types of work-life arrangements are supported by the top managers in this study. These differences mainly seem to reflect the rejection of part-time work hours in Finland, Portugal and Slovenia, whereas this is less so in the U.K. and least in the Netherlands. Second, the models show that different conditions (factors) included in the vignettes are significant in each country. It should be noted that none of the conditions is of overriding significance in all countries. The costs associated with work-life arrangements appear

especially decisive for top managers in Finland, but also in the U.K.. Top managers in the Netherlands, Finland and Slovenia regard an increase in employee commitment as important. Top managers in Finland, the U.K. and the Netherlands find it important to offer work-life arrangements to all employees equally, and not specifically to well-performing ones. This is not the case in Portugal and in Slovenia. Finally, top managers in the U.K. find it particularly important that other organizations also offer work-life arrangements.

5.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

Table 5.4 shows the considerations of top managers to support work-life arrangements or to refrain from support. A distinction is made between those that are shared by top managers of all countries and those that are particular to top managers in specific countries. As the first column shows, six main categories of consideration were detected: 1) perceived impact on the organization; 2) perceived institutional pressure; 3) remuneration; 4) personal view: seeing it as something either good or bad; 5) setting requirements to secure the organizations' interest; 6) social responsibility of the organization. The second column shows the content of the considerations given by top managers across countries. Most categories are regarded as important by top managers in each country, meaning that they share many considerations around the provision of work-life arrangements. The third column shows national differences in the contents of the categories. There are no outstanding national differences in the categories 'remuneration' and 'personal view,' but notable national differences in others. Top managers in Finland, the Netherlands and the U.K. tended to mention cost reduction, while top managers in Finland and Slovenia said they would not offer certain types of work-life arrangements, mainly leave policies and on-board child care, because they regard it a government responsibility. Top managers in the Netherlands and the U.K. supported work-life arrangements because they help attract and retain employees, because employees expect it, and because other organizations also offer them. Only in Portugal did top managers say they did not support arrangements because they went against the social norm. Furthermore, the practice in the Netherlands turns out to be that top managers in the Netherlands set many more requirements on work-life arrangements than their counterparts elsewhere to secure their organization's interest. Finally, top managers in Slovenia and Finland mentioned much more often that their colleagues in the other countries that they provide work-life arrangements because they feel it is their social responsibility.

Table 5.3: Separate hierarchical logistic models by country for top managers' support for work-life arrangements log odds (S.E.)[A]

Variables	Categories	Finland log odds (SE)	Netherlands log odds (SE)	Portugal log odds (SE)	Slovenia log odds (SE)	U.K. log odds (SE)
Cons.		-0.31 (3.29)	3.40 (1.94)*	-2.06 (1.43)	3.05 (2.23)	-0.95 (1.94)
Vignette factors						
Type of work-life arrangement	Part-time hours	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
	Parental leave	0.42 (0.72)	-0.82 (0.54)	1.58 (0.52)**	1.70 (0.83)*	-0.32 (0.69)
	Parental leave for fathers	1.73 (0.78)*	-0.90 (0.53)+	1.88 (0.54)**	1.57 (0.76)*	1.20 (0.70)+
	Short-term leave for care	2.22 (0.80)**	0.70 (0.52)	1.98 (0.55)**	0.60 (0.69)	1.46 (0.73)*
	Telecommuting	2.86 (0.88)**	0.01 (0.51)	2.46 (0.60)**	2.14 (0.87)*	1.07 (0.73)
	Flextime	1.99 (0.77)*	1.04 (0.55)+	3.44 (0.68)**	2.41 (0.95)*	1.19 (0.71)+
Costs	No investment	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
	Investment	-1.42 (0.49)**	-0.34 (0.31)	-0.16 (0.33)	-0.37 (0.49)	-1.00 (0.43)*
Commitment	Increases	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
	Unclear whether it increases	-0.86 (0.48)+	-0.83 (0.33)*	-0.28 (0.34)	-0.86 (0.52)*	-0.79 (0.45)+
Employee target group	Employees	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
	Exceptionally well-performing employees	-1.50 (0.53)**	-1.88 (0.33)**	-0.06 (0.33)	0.86 (0.50)+	-2.63 (0.49)**
Other organizations	Yes	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
	No	0.16 (0.46)	0.12 (0.31)	0.39 (0.33)	-0.37 (0.51)	-0.86 (0.43)*
Control variables						
Sector	Private	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
	Other	-0.31 (0.84)	0.32 (0.48)	-0.08 (0.62)	0.43 (1.36)	-0.64 (0.59)
Size	Small (10-100)	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
	Medium (101 - 1000)	-0.19 (1.02)	-0.05 (0.54)	0.08 (0.56)	0.66 (0.79)	-2.13 (0.63)**
	Large (> 1001)	-0.40 (1.10)	0.65 (0.53)	0.30 (0.64)	-0.04 (1.11)	-0.48 (0.59)
Sex	Male	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
	Female	0.51 (1.03)	-0.18 (0.54)	0.07 (0.56)	-0.27 (0.72)	0.19 (0.52)
Personal use of arrangements	No	ref	ref	ref	ref	ref
	Yes	1.37 (0.76)+	-0.23 (0.52)	0.44 (0.54)	-0.02 (0.82)	0.26 (0.59)
Age		0.02 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)	-0.06 (0.04)	0.11 (0.04)**
Financial situation		-0.00 (0.54)	0.41 (0.26)	-0.19 (0.24)	0.22 (0.42)	-0.64 (0.31)*
Model specifications						
Random intercept		2.04 (1.24)	0.81 (0.48)	1.12 (0.61)	1.19 (0.88)	0.00 (0.00)
Wald chi² (df)		24.56 (16)	43.82 (16)	32.81 (16)	17.49 (16)	38.05 (16)
N (vignettes)		166	268	257	209	164
N (top managers)		31	47	45	37	29

Notes: **p<0.01
*p<0.05
+p<.10

ref = reference category
A: Controlling for the vignetset assigned to each top manager made no difference.

Chapter 5

Table 5.4: National differences and similarities in top managers' considerations regarding their support for work-life arrangements

Main category	Content of the category	
	Considerations found among top managers across countries	*Additional considerations only apparent in some countries*
1. Perceived impact on organization	• Top managers support work-life arrangements when they see them as: more productive and effective, good for the organizational culture, increasing employee commitment, a win-win situation, and when they facilitate the organization of work and customer services • Top managers refrain from support when they see them as: harming productivity, harmful for the organizational culture, making the organization of work difficult, hindering customer service, or too costly • Top managers support arrangements when they contribute to a good societal reputation or help the organization stand out as a modern employer	○ Top managers support arrangements because they help reduce costs **(Finland, Netherlands, U.K.)** ○ Top managers support arrangements because they are a strategy to attract and retain employees **(Netherlands, U.K.)**
2. Perceived institutional pressure	• Top managers follow legislation • Top managers do not support arrangements if other organizations also do not provide them • Top managers do not support arrangements if employees do not expect and do not request them	• Top managers refrain from supporting some types of policies because they feel that is the governments' responsibility **(Finland, Slovenia)** • Top managers feel arrangements should be in line with the full-time work hours culture in their country **(Finland, Portugal, Slovenia)** • Top managers support arrangements because employees expect them and their expectations must be met **(Netherlands, U.K.)** • Top managers support arrangements because they feel the need to keep up with other organizations that also do so **(Netherlands, U.K.)** • Some top managers mentioned refraining from support because they feel it would be against the social norm **(Portugal)**
3. Remuneration	• Top managers see work-life arrangements as compensating for lower pay, especially in the public sector.	
4. Personal view	• Top managers do or do not support work-life arrangements because they see them as something good or bad	
5. Setting requirements to secure organization's interest	• Top managers set requirements, such as block hours, reachability and flexibility from employees in return for the flexibility they receive	• Coordinate with colleagues, minimum number of work hours, attending meetings, employees should have good reasons **(Netherlands)** • Ensure the right balance between what they give to employees and what employees give in return **(Netherlands, U.K.)**
6. Social responsibility of organization	• Top managers support work-life arrangements because they feel it is their social responsibility to do so, according to them it is part of being a good employer	• Top managers very often mentioned that the most important reason to support arrangements was because they feel it is the right/humane thing to do **(Finland, Slovenia)** • Top managers emphasize that they support arrangements because they contribute to employee satisfaction and happiness **(Slovenia)**

5.5.3 Understanding national similarities and differences

Both the vignette experiment and the semi-structured interviews revealed national similarities and differences in top managers' considerations to support work-life arrangements. Both methods in many cases lead to the same result. However, some were only detected in the results of one or the other method. The most obvious national similarities and differences will now be discussed and interpreted, using the explanations top managers themselves gave during the semi-structured interviews. It will be indicated whether these observations are derived from the results of both methods or only one of them.

5.5.3.1 Part-time work and working hours culture.

Top managers evaluate work-life arrangements against the working hours culture common in their country. The results of the vignette study show that of all the various types of work-life arrangements, Finnish, Slovenian and Portuguese top managers are particularly unsupportive of part-time work hours. The results of the semi-structured interviews reveal a key reason preventing top managers of these countries from supporting part-time work: it clashes with the general work hours culture in their country, where employees tend to work full time. These top managers associated part-time work with student work or with parental leave (referring to the initial period of the mother's reentry to work after childbirth). Part-time work is therefore seen as something for these particular groups, but not as a work-life arrangement that should be accessible for employees in general in their organization. Top managers in the Netherlands and the U.K. did not have the same disregard for part-time work in the vignette experiment, and they were also more positive towards part-time work in the semi-structured interviews. To them, it was integrated into both society at large and their organizations in particular. Their acceptance therefore seems to reflect the general acceptance of part-time work in these countries. However, this showed more in the semi-structured interviews and vignette experiment with top managers in the Netherlands than with those in the U.K.. In the U.K., top managers regarded part-time work as a special favor to employees or specific to certain types of (lower-paid) jobs, while in the Netherlands it is common practice and supported by top managers for employees in a wider range of jobs.

'I think in the case of people that have been at the business quite a long time, they are kind of very dedicated staff and I believe that to get the right people, it is not a good business to lose them out. If somebody can manage their work load within 3 working days, I don't see what is wrong with that at all. As long as people are time efficient and organized. And if we have to bring in an additional person to cover those extra two days, than we would. I am quite happy to work around that.'
U.K., male, NGO, small organization[3]

'We have a high level of flexibility with regard to part-time work. And not only for women, we have also a lot of men who work part-time. Especially in the younger generation, who prefer to work four days a week or like to work from home for one day a week to be able to perform their roles there as well.'
The Netherlands, male, IT, small organization[4]

5.5.3.2 Framing work-life arrangements as a business strategy

Top managers in all of the countries believed that work-life arrangements should have a positive impact on the organization or should at least not be counterproductive. This is in line with business case argumentation. They mentioned to support work-life arrangements, because they contribute to organizational goals for example through boosting their organization's reputation and its status as a modern employer. Top managers of public sector organizations in particular cited a good reputation as an important reason to provide work-life arrangements. They stated that they have to set an example and 'walk the talk' because they are part of the government and the government promotes work-life arrangements. Top managers of larger organizations especially mentioned that offering work-life arrangements gives them an opportunity to stand out, as they considered the work-life issue to be an important contemporary development. For example, in Slovenia it was one of the reasons for providing work-life arrangements and obtaining a 'family-friendly certificate.' Nonetheless, framing work-life arrangements as a business case was more apparent in some countries than in others. British, Finnish and Dutch top managers, frame work-life arrangements in terms of business strategy more than top managers in Portugal and Slovenia. This is illustrated by the vignette experiment showing that the costs associated with work-life arrangements were important for top managers in Finland and the U.K. in order to support work-life arrangements. Costs were cited as a key reason in the semi-structured interviews with top managers in the Netherlands, Finland and the U.K., who said that they saw work-life arrangements as a cost-reduction option. A

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3   Quotes are original and verbatim. Language and grammatical errors have not been corrected.

4   Quotes from the interviews in the Netherlands and Portugal have been translated from Dutch and Portuguese. Original quotes are available on request.

further illustration is that compared to top managers in the other countries, top managers in the Netherlands and the U.K. were more eager to use work-life arrangements as a strategy to attract and retain employees. For top managers in Slovenia and Portugal, these considerations were less apparent.

> *'Well it's definitely. And for me primarily that's what I do - it's important for me to grow my business, it's important for me to have the right types of people in the business. And there's a massive untouched talent in professional women out there who are not meeting their expectations because employers don't recognize the fact that they need to be a bit more flexible around what these people can offer. So I've just taken a different approach.'*
> **U.K., male, research/consultancy/planning, large organization**

5.5.3.3 Framing work-life arrangements as a social responsibility

Top managers in Slovenia and Finland are more prone to consider work-life arrangements as a social responsibility than their counterparts in the other three countries. In the semi-structured interviews, they far more often stated that they support such arrangements because they know they are good for employees (i.e. their work-life balance) and they feel a social obligation to support their employees' well being than their colleagues in other countries. They stressed this in particular with regard to flextime and telecommuting, but did not consider it their responsibility to extend leave policies or offer on-site child care. The fact that framing work-life arrangements as a business case is also central to top managers' rhetoric in Finland (see previous paragraph), shows that both types of arguments (business case and social responsibility) are central to top managers in this country. Because framing work-life arrangements as a social responsibility is not something that is generally derived from one of the theoretical frameworks applied in the literature (viz. the managerial interpretation approach, neo-institutional theory of business case argumentation), it was not included in the vignettes, making it impossible to detect this national difference there. The fact that this result was missing in the vignettes does not indicate that the results of the two methods contradict each other, but rather that something was captured in the semi-structured interviews that was not included in the vignettes.

> *'I think it's only natural to support our employees in the times of change, and when you get baby, or start up the family it's a big change and I think we are quite committed to support that change. I think that's not an issue.'*
> **Finland, male, service company, medium-sized organization**

> *'I believe that organizations have to be aware that the family is an important thing, not thing, but it's very important for the people. And they have to assure that the people can combine on the most proper way the obligation in the company and at home. So to support with different programs.'*
> **Slovenia, female, service company, medium-sized organization**

5.5.3.4 Government's or organization's responsibility?

Top managers relate their support for work-life arrangements to what the government is doing. They state to adhere to the law and regardless of any national differences concerning statutory requirements and length of leave, top managers mention that they simply accepted the law for what it was and dealt with the leave arrangements because it was normal for them. Nevertheless, top managers only extend government regulations by offering supplementary work-life arrangements when they feel it is their responsibility to do so and not that of the government. The semi-structured interviews showed that top managers in Finland and Slovenia see the extensive legislative framework concerning leave policies and the public child care system in both countries as something they do not feel responsible for supplementing. They do not go beyond these statutory employee rights because they see them as extensive enough and because they do not see them as the responsibility of organizations but rather as a government task. Also, because the public child care system is rather inexpensive, top managers feel no need to support their employees' daily child care needs.

> *'Well, we don't have special policies. But we have all the respect, you know, for the families. This in fact in Slovenia a matter of the overall, let's say, of the social framework of the wellbeing in Slovenia in a way [...] is really very highly developed.'*
> **Slovenia, male, production company, medium-sized organization**

5.5.3.5 Providing work-life arrangements because it is expected

Top managers are more inclined to support work-life arrangements when they are firmly anchored in society. The results of the semi-structured interviews show that in the Netherlands and the U.K., top managers supported work-life arrangements because employees expected them, which is generally due to social norms and conventions favoring such arrangements. Some top managers in Portugal, on the other hand, refrained from offering work-life arrangements because it was uncommon to do so and would even go against the social norm. These national differences can be understood by looking at how common work-life arrangements are in a certain country. In the U.K. and the Netherlands, top managers said that work-life arrangements already have quite a long history and are common in society, whereas in Portugal top managers said that they are not common.

5.6   CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter it was aimed to explore whether considerations of organizations to adopt work-life arrangements vary between countries and how these considerations are related to the national context. Based upon the results of this chapter we conclude that there are clear national differences in top managers' considerations whether to support work-life arrangements. Top managers' considerations are related to the national context, because: 1) top managers assess work-life arrangements against the background of government policies, 2) they assess work-life arrangements against the work hours culture in their country, and 3) they frame work-life arrangements in terms of business case and/or corporate social responsibility, depending on which framing is common in their country. Based upon these results we can conclude that in order to understand whether and why work-life arrangements are adopted by organizations, it is important to explicitly consider the larger national context in which they operate. After all, the national context determines the type of work-life arrangements top managers are willing to support and the reasons why they are willing to do so.

An extensive system of state work-life policies around leave policies and child care, such as in Finland and Slovenia, results in top managers not feeling responsible for supplementing them. Because they do not consider it their task, they do not even see it as an option to do so. This is different for top managers in countries where state work-life policies are less extensive, such as in the Netherlands, Portugal and the U.K.. Top managers in these countries more often considered extending the state policies available, for example by extending the duration of leave, extending the pay employees would receive while on leave or by offering on board child care. Even though these practices were still not widely supported, it led to greater diversity.

It can moreover be concluded that top managers evaluate their support for work-life arrangements against common practice around the organization of work in their country leading to similar practices in the same country. That top managers take the organization of work common in their country into account means that top managers in Finland, Portugal and Slovenia were not supportive of part-time work, as these countries have a full time working hour culture. In the Netherlands and the U.K. where part-time work hours are more common, top managers were less inclined to disregard it implying that considerations of top managers are not solemnly considerations around the impact for their individual organization, but that common practices are also important. This shows that top managers do not only look at practices of their direct competitor in order to stay in the race for the best employees, but also align their approach to work-life arrangements with practices common in society at large. This might result in it being hard to introduce new practices in organizations until they gain enough ground.

Chapter 5

This study shows that our common understanding of organizations adopting work-life arrangements because it is regarded a business case and because of institutional pressure, is not equally applicable in every country. In some countries work-life arrangements are evaluated more in terms of a business case while in others they are evaluated more in terms of a corporate social responsibility, showing that business case arguments do not play an equal role everywhere. This result also sheds new light on the recently raised question by researchers whether work-life arrangements are mainly provided out of economic reasons or because of institutional pressures (Den Dulk et al., 2013). These results imply that differences in the extent to which top managers emphasize business case arguments are in fact the result of social norms and conventions and thus institutional pressure. Business case arguments are therefore not only the outcome of real cost-benefit considerations but also just the common language in which work-life arrangements are evaluated within a certain national context. The national differences detected in whether work-life arrangements are viewed as a business case or as a corporate social responsibility is in line with how support for people's work-life balance is viewed in the public debate in the countries under study. In the U.K. and the Netherlands, where public debate emphasizes economic arguments to encourage employers to provide work-life arrangements, top managers also evaluate work-life arrangements in these terms. In Slovenia, where the emphasis is on employers' social responsibility to provide work-life arrangements, employers evaluate work-life arrangements more in these terms. In Finland, top managers evaluate work-life arrangements in terms of both a business case and social responsibility, which appears to reflect Finland's status as a capitalist-oriented country with an extensive social welfare system that emphasizes employers' social responsibility towards their employees. Finally, in Portugal, top managers were less inclined to consider work-life arrangements, reflecting the fact that such arrangements are not really discussed extensively in public debate.

Using a mixed method approach has been a fruitful one for exploring and understanding national differences in top managers' considerations to support the adoption of work-life arrangements. Using the vignette experiment has allowed us to see that top managers in different countries rely their support on different conditions of work-life arrangements. The semi-structured interviews helped to understand and explain why this is the case, introducing the perspective of the top managers themselves. Together, the two approaches contributed to a deeper understanding of the topic.

Various limitations of this study need to be mentioned. First, the top managers in this study do not form a random sample of all top managers in each of the countries. This means that although we captured the range of top managers' considerations in each country, we do not know how these considerations are distributed. Second, we chose to focus specifically on national differences. This may create the unjustified impression that

national differences are more important and larger than structural differences between top managers in different types of organizations. Other studies have shown that this is not true, and that there is more variation between organizations than between countries (e.g. Den Dulk et al., 2010; Warmerdam et al., 2010). We focused on national differences because they were not well understood. This chapter shows that the national context plays a role in more ways than previously considered, indicating that theory and empirical tests could be expanded to embrace how work-life arrangements are considered beyond the Anglo-Saxon context.

Chapter 5

Chapter 6

Changing considerations of Dutch top managers around work-life arrangements in times of economic crisis[1]

ABSTRACT

This chapter investigates the considerations of top managers regarding work-life arrangements and how they change over time during a time of economic crisis. A dynamic and contextual approach is taken, using data from 26 semi-structured interviews with top managers from 13 organizations in 2008, before the economic crisis began, and again in 2011, when the ensuing recessions were well under way. Analysis shows that work-life arrangements are increasingly perceived by top managers as integrated into their organizations. However, they indicate that such arrangements should benefit both the employees and the organization. If the consequences of work-life arrangements are perceived by top managers to be negative for their organization, they establish conditions for their use by employees so as to reduce the effect on the organization, rather than refrain from providing the arrangements altogether. During the economic crisis, top managers grew more cost-aware and expressed more concern about negative consequences for their organization. Government regulations are perceived as 'only normal,' but in the end top managers wish to remain in control of arrangements. If the law leaves room for interpretation, the Dutch top managers in this study used this freedom to bend the arrangements to suit their own ideas.

6.1   INTRODUCTION

Many organizations have introduced work-life arrangements in recent decades to help employees combine responsibilities at home and at work. Examples include flexible work arrangements, part-time work, leave policies and child care (Appelbaum et al., 2005; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Den Dulk & Van Doorne-Huiskes, 2007; Plantenga & Remery, 2005). Explicitly or implicitly, such work-life arrangements are part of the organizational strategy decided by top managers holding positions in the highest ranks of organizations, such as CEOs, CFOs and members of the board of directors (Elbanna, 2006; Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996; Ginsberg, 1988). Nevertheless, relatively few researchers studying organizations' work-life arrangements have focused on top managers. Instead, their focus has mainly been on either Human Resource (HR) managers, who are most knowledgeable regarding formal HR policies (e.g., Den Dulk, 2001; Remery, Schippers & Doorne-Huiskes, 2002; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009), or supervisors, making the allowance decisions about whether employees can use such arrangements (e.g., Casper et al., 2004; Den Dulk & De Ruijter, 2008; Poelmans & Beham, 2008). Although HR managers and supervisors are central to employees' access to work-life arrangements, focusing on them has provided little insight into the considerations underpinning an organization's general approach toward such arrangements. Understanding that approach, which is determined by top management, is important because it establishes boundaries for how HR managers and supervisors implement and handle work-life arrangements. Another reason to study top managers is their power to facilitate or limit employees' access to arrangements; after all, they are the ones who determine whether formal policies are there as window dressing or are actually meant to support employee work-life balance (Lee et al., 2000). Finally, understanding top managers' considerations helps explain why organizations do or do not provide work-life arrangements. Previous research has revealed considerable organizational variation in that respect (Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Den Dulk et al., 2010; 2012; Wood et al., 2003). So far, the scarce research on top managers and work-life arrangements has focused on attitudes rather than underlying considerations (Warmerdam et al., 2010). As a result, we know little about why top managers' decide to provide work-life arrangements or not. This chapter thus adds to the literature by focusing on top managers' underlying considerations concerning work-life arrangements. Furthermore, we focus on considerations regarding both formal and informal work-life arrangements within organizations, often considered important for understanding employee access to them (Lee et al., 2000; Lewis, 2003). Nevertheless, most studies focus on formal arrangements only (Den Dulk et al., 2010).

Previous studies have observed that organizational work-life arrangements are not static but change over time (Kelly, 2003; Lee et al., 2000). This suggests that top managers' considerations change over time as they make decisions regarding such arrangements.

This chapter therefore examines the top managers' considerations regarding work-life arrangements over time. In addition, we adopt a contextual approach to understand their considerations, as previous research has suggested that society, governmental policies, employees and other organizations affect work-life arrangements within organizations (Den Dulk et al., 2010; Lewis & Smithson, 2001; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). As top managers ultimately make the decisions about these arrangements, these findings suggest that such decisions are shaped by the institutional and organizational surroundings. Previous research has shown that the macro level is important for work-life arrangements because it determines whether employers can legitimately involve themselves in employee work-life issues by introducing legislation that includes or excludes employers, and that the meso level is important because employers' (i.e. top managers') awareness determines how involved they are in work-life arrangements (Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). The specific context of this chapter is the Netherlands, a country where both government and organizations are involved in work-life arrangements. Government stimulates organizations to provide work-life arrangements beyond government provisions by establishing a legal framework that leaves organizations room for expansion. For example, the Dutch law on work and care states that statutory parental leave is unpaid. However, organizations may decide to continue some or all of their wages.[2] Organizations can therefore be legitimately involved in work-life arrangements because government explicitly encourages them to do so. Furthermore, the Netherlands offers a good context for focusing on top managers' considerations concerning the entire spectrum of work-life arrangements, i.e. those required by law and workplace arrangements that go beyond government requirements. In addition, top managers in the Netherlands are likely to understand the need for work-life arrangements within organizations because of the prevalence of part-time work (Den Dulk & Spenkelink, 2009; Portegijs & Keuzenkamp, 2008) and the growing popularity of flexible work arrangements there (Bijl, 2007). In this sense, the Netherlands exemplifies a model with relatively limited government regulation and an emphasis on employer involvement (Den Dulk & Spenkelink, 2009). The first question addressed in this chapter is therefore: 1) *What are the considerations of Dutch top managers regarding organizational work-life arrangements, and how can these considerations be understood?*

To understand changes in the considerations of top managers, an observation window is used with two points in time: early 2008 and the second half of 2011. These time points are interesting because they frame a period in which Europe was hit by an economic crisis and then suffered recessions. The economic crisis had not really affected the Netherlands yet in early 2008; in 2011, the recessions following the economic crisis were still ongoing (Josten, 2011). Studying these changes during a period of economic crisis allows us to link considerations about organizational work-life arrangements to the context of economic

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2   Wet Arbeid en Zorg [Work and Care Act] §BWBR0013008 (The Netherlands, 2001).

crisis and to study how economic crisis affects such considerations. The second question is thus: 2) *Did the considerations of Dutch top managers regarding organizational work-life arrangements shift between 2008 and 2011, and, if so, how can such a shift be understood?*

This chapter adds to the previous chapters by studying how considerations of top managers regarding the adoption and implementation of work-life arrangements change over time and why this might be the case. It was sought to answer the research questions by conducting semi-structured interviews with top managers at 13 different organizations in the Netherlands at two points in time (early 2008 and the second half of 2011), for a total of 26 interviews. Top managers are among society's elite, and therefore generally difficult to involve in research (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Goldstein, 2002). In this study, we interviewed members of this elite group not once but twice. Unlike other studies, this study does not focus on a particular sector; the participating top managers came from a wide range of sectors, giving as broad a range of considerations as possible. The organizations were located in different cities in the Netherlands, ranging from small to large (the national capital), also to ensure a broad range of considerations was captured.

6.2   THEORETICAL APPROACH

Initially, research on the adoption of work-life arrangements by organizations was grounded in *institutional theory,* based on the idea that institutional pressures influence organizations to react similarly to the environment and follow social rules and conventions by providing work-life arrangements (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Traditionally, institutional theory treats the organization as a passive actor that responds to institutional pressures in the environment, implying that decision-making actors merely respond to such pressures without having free choice. However, the observation that some organizations did not develop any work-life arrangements while others in the same institutional context did suggested an element of free choice, leading to *neo-institutional theory*. This new approach included the strategic choice perspective in institutional theory (Bardoel, 2003; Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Osterman, 1995) and assumed that decision-making actors within organizations are free to choose their response to institutional pressures. As neo-institutional theory did not explain how these choices are made, more recent studies have integrated the *managerial interpretation approach* (Milliken et al., 1998; Morgan & Milliken, 1992) or *business case argumentation* (Den Dulk, 2001) with *neo-institutional theory* (Den Dulk, 2001). The managerial interpretation approach was added to account for the subjective decision making of managers. According to this approach, managers must first signal the need for work-life arrangements, after which they have to make the active decision to push for

their adoption (Milliken et al., 1998). Applied to top managers, this theory implies that the awareness of top managers about employees' need for work-life arrangements is crucial for their adoption. Furthermore it emphasizes the centrality and importance of managers as the decision makers about work-life arrangements. However, it does not provide insight in how the decisions regarding the adoption of work-life arrangements are taken. To this end, *business case argumentation* (Den Dulk et al., 2010; Dex & Scheibl, 2001; Osterman, 1995) is added, introducing a cost-benefit perspective. There is a business rationale for work-life arrangements within organizations when the benefits outweigh the costs. In an integrated framework of *neo-institutional theory* and *business case argumentation*, institutional pressures affect costs and benefits.

Studies indicate that norms, laws and social expectations affect cost-benefit considerations because organizations need to keep up with other organizations, meet the demands of (potential) employees and respond to government regulations (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Powell & DiMaggio, 1983). Organizations that provide work-life arrangements force other organizations to do the same; being less supportive than its competitors may cause an organization to lose the battle for the best employees. Furthermore, providing better work-life arrangements than competitors gives an organization a good social reputation, which in turn might attract good personnel. In the Netherlands, 'the new way of working'[3] – which has rapidly gained popularity and became central to public debate – has recently given organizations a way of standing out and showing that they are open to new developments (Oeij, De Vroome, Kraan, Van den Bossch & Goudswaard, 2011). In this new approach to work, the physical workspace is an open space with shared desks to encourage interaction and creativity. Work has become less time- and space dependent (Bijl, 2007), allowing more flexibility for employees to shape their own work. The debate concerning 'the new way of working' and its growing popularity may have made top managers more positive about this concept between 2008 and 2011.

When (potential) employees have a 'sense of entitlement' to work-life arrangements, organizations are pressured to align such arrangements with societal norms: if a certain work-life arrangement is seen as normal by society, employees might feel entitled to it (Lewis, 1997; Lewis & Smithson, 2001). Responding to this sense of entitlement may benefit the organization by attracting and retaining a high-quality workforce (Barney, 1991; Den Dulk, 2001; Osterman, 1995) or increased commitment and productivity (Haar & Spell, 2004; Konrad & Mangel, 2000; Lambert, 2000; Muse et al., 2008). This increased commitment and productivity can be explained by reciprocity, meaning that when employees get something (e.g. work-life arrangements) from their employer they are willing to do something back (Lambert, 2000; Osterman, 1995). Organizations may

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3   The 'new world of work' (Gates, 2005) is a closely related management concept.

therefore gain from giving employees benefits because employee commitment and work effort increase as a result. Vice versa, not giving employees work-life arrangements to which they feel entitled may harm the organization, as employees might feel demotivated and leave the organization. Employees in the Netherlands are likely to feel entitled to work part-time because the country has a long history of part-time work (Portegijs et al., 2008). In fact, it has the highest proportion of part-time workers in Europe (Portegijs & Keuzenkamp, 2008), and employees are entitled by law to reduce their work hours.[4] Dutch employees might also feel entitled to flexible work hours and telecommuting because they are common in the Netherlands: a quarter of employees have access to flexible work hours, and approximately one-third of businesses and organizations offer telecommuting (Oeij et al., 2011). Although employees' sense of entitlement may cause top managers to feel pressured to provide part-time or flexible hours options, such pressure might not have increased between 2008 and 2011 and may have even decreased. Given the economic crisis, employees might just be happy to have a job and agitate less for additional benefits.

The government puts pressure on organizations by implementing laws that are costly for organizations to ignore. The government can also help create a normative climate favorable to work-life arrangements within organizations by highlighting the need to support employees' work-life balance. Rejecting this climate might be costly for an organization because it may harm their reputation (Osterman, 1995). Organizations in the public sector and larger organizations tend to be more sensitive to a normative climate because they are more visible (larger organizations) or have to set a good example (government organizations) (Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Den Dulk et al., 2010; 2012; Wood et al., 2003). Organizations in the Netherlands are required by law to let women go on maternity leave, provide paternity and parental leave, and adjust work hours at an employee's request. *Table 6.1* presents an overview of government regulations. As the laws and regulations regarding work-life arrangements have not changed in the Netherlands between 2008 and 2011, government pressure cannot have caused top managers to reconsider the work-life arrangements within their organizations. What may have changed, however, is the normative pressure created by government's attitude toward such arrangements; government attention was diverted elsewhere during the economic crisis, with its focus shifting to financial issues and cost control. We can therefore argue that the normative pressure on organizations to provide work-life arrangements has eased.

In summary, based on an integrated framework of neo-institutional theory and business case argumentation, top managerial considerations concerning work-life arrangements can be expected to focus on their costs and benefits, which are influenced by (potential) employees, other organizations, government regulations and norms. This means that the

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4   Wet Aanpassing Arbeidsduur [Dutch Working Hours (Adjustment) Act] § BWBR0011173 (The Netherlands, 2005).

interviews with the top managers presented in this chapter looked specifically at why they did or did not provide work-life arrangements. However, specific care was taken not to refer to costs and benefits but to leave the question open, to avoid pressuring top managers into a cost-benefit frame of mind.

Table 6.1: Governmental regulations concerning work-life arrangements in the Netherlands during the time of the interviews

Policy type	Dutch law
Maternity leave	16 weeks fully paid by the government[A].
Paternity leave	Two days fully paid by the employer[A].
Parental leave	Parental leave for the duration of 26 times the weekly work hours can be used to work part-time. Unpaid unless otherwise agreed to in a collective agreement[A].
Part-time work hours	Part-time work and full-time work should be treated equally. People who have been employed by the same employer for at least one year have the right to request reduced or extended work hours. This request can only be refused by the employer if it would severely threaten the work process[B].
Flexible work hours	Not overall defined by law. For the period of one year after parental leave ends, the employee can submit a request to the employer for adjustment of their standard work hours[C].
Telecommuting	Not defined by law.
Child care	Organizations contribute to the child care system by taxes. The state and individuals also contribute[D].

Notes: A: Wet Arbeid en Zorg [Law Labour and Care] §BWBR0013008 (The Netherlands, 2001)
B: Wet Aanpassing Arbeidsduur [Law adjustment of Working Hours] § BWBR0011173 (The Netherlands, 2005)
C: Staatsblad van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 2012 nummer 152 [Bulletin of Acts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands 2012 number 152] (The Netherlands, 2012)
D: Wet Kinderopvang en Kwaliteitseisen Peuterspeelzalen [Law Child Care and Quality Requirements of Playgroups] § 2010BWBR0017017 (The Netherlands, 2010)

6.3   DATA AND METHODOLOGY

6.3.1 Data

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with top managers of organizations in the Netherlands. As they held the highest-ranking positions in their organizations (e.g. CEO, CFO and member of the board of directors), this required 'elite interviewing' (Morris, 2009). One difficulty of elite interviewing is gaining access to the interviewee (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Goldstein, 2002). To find a way around this problem, top managers were approached through personal networks and the networks of top managers who were already participating (snowball sampling). This made it easier to access top managers and convince them to participate. Maximum variation sampling was attempted by including organizations of varying sizes, sectors, types and employee characteristics. This resulted in 24 interviews with top managers from a broad spectrum of organizations conducted in early 2008 (for a detailed description, see Warmerdam et al., 2010).

After the first interview in 2008, it was easier to approach the interviewees for a follow-up interview in 2011. We first sent them a letter explaining the purpose of the follow-up interview and announcing a phone call in which we would invite them to participate. We announced the phone call to give them time to recall the previous interview, but calling rather than asking them to respond themselves increased the response rate. By calling, we could tell them personally why their participation was so important for the study and reduce the risk of their simply forgetting to respond. It was, however, time-consuming to call the top managers and call them back several times. Not all top managers took part in the follow-up study, for reasons ranging from lack of time and interest to organizational shut down (two organizations). We ultimately conducted 13 follow-up interviews in 2011, allowing us to compare 13 interviews from 2008 with 13 interviews from 2011, resulting in a total of 26 interviews that provide the data for our analysis. *Table 6.2* summarizes the characteristics of the participants, showing that they vary with regard to sex and organizational type, size and sector. In addition, the organizations were located in different cities in the Netherlands, ranging from small (around 40,000 inhabitants) to large (around 800,000). All organizations were located in the western part of the Netherlands, the main center of industry.

Table 6.2: Characteristics of the participants and their organizations

	Organization	Sector	Size	Same person in 2008 and 2011?		Sex
1	Law firm	private	10-100	Yes		Male
2	IT company	private	10-100	Yes		Male
3	Investment company	private	10-100	Yes		Male
4	Health care	public	>1000	Yes		Male
5	Law firm	private	10-100	Yes		Female
6	Consultancy	private	10-100	Yes		Female
7	Bank	private	>1000	Yes		Male
8	Research organization	private	101 - 1000	No	2008:	Male
					2011:	Male
9	Telecommunication	private	>1000	No	2008:	Male
					2011:	Male
10	Municipality	public	>1000	Yes		Female
11	Ministry office	public	10-100	No	2008:	Male
					2011:	Female
12	Production company	private	10-100	Yes		Male
13	Insurance company	private	>1000	No	2008:	Male
					2011:	Male

Not all of our interviewees were still in the same job. If the original interviewee had been replaced, we requested an interview with his or her replacement. Of the 13 follow-up interviews in 2011, 9 were with the same person and 4 were with their replacements. When analyzing the data, we looked specifically at whether interviewing the same person made a difference. We found that although different top managers' expressed different considerations, including a replacement did not affect the *shifts* in or the *stability* of considerations found both in interviews with the same manager and in interviews with replacements in a particular direction.

The main goal of the semi-structured interviews was to explore the considerations of top managers regarding work-life arrangements within their organization. A topic list (including probes) based on the theoretical framework served to ensure that all topics were discussed. Topics covered the following in both 2008 and 2011: 1) the extent to which societal changes in the relationship between work and private life are relevant to the organization, 2) top managers' views regarding several types of governmental and workplace work-life arrangements (e.g. leave policies, flexible work hours, part-time work and telecommuting), 3) considerations regarding providing/refraining from work-life arrangements (why?), and 4) the conditions under which work-life arrangements are provided. The interviews were at a location chosen by the top managers, which in all cases meant their own offices. Before the interview began, the managers were told how the results would be communicated. They were assured that everything they said would be anonymized and treated confidentially. The interviews lasted between 30 and 50 minutes. After gaining the interviewee's consent, all interviews were recorded and transcribed.

6.3.2 Method of analysis

The interviews were analyzed using Nvivo 9.2. To start with an 'open coding' phase was entered to allow topics and considerations to emerge from the data. Several researchers then compared the codes to check for inconsistencies and slightly adjusted the coding accordingly. Next, 'axial coding' was applied in which codes were grouped and connections were made among categories. The resulting categories of considerations were: 1) intrinsically important, 2) output based, 3) efficiency, 4) commitment, 5) costs, 6) attracting and retaining good employees, 7) adhering to governmental regulations, 8) being a modern employer, 9) employee expectations, 10) customer expectations and 11) employee productivity. In addition, several strategies emerged for reducing the negative consequences of organizational work-life arrangements: 1) block hours, 2) flexibility for flexibility, 3) being reachable and 4) minimum number of workdays. After categorization, considerations were linked to the different types of work-life arrangements and returned to the original data. This process allowed us to answer the first research question.

To answer the second research question, I concentrated on changes in the managers' considerations concerning work-life arrangements. Two processes were followed. First, it was counted how often considerations were mentioned in 2008 and in 2011, using matrix coding query as a tool. It was indicated when something was mentioned in one year and not mentioned at all in the other, or when something was mentioned many more times in one year than in the other year. The goal of this process was to distinguish changes in the considerations of top managers. The quotes were revisited regarding considerations that appeared to change between 2008 and 2011 to ascertain whether there was indeed a change. Second, a schedule was created of the considerations concerning the different types of work-life arrangements in each organization in 2008 and 2011. These schedules were used to determine whether there were organizational or within-person changes in these considerations. Finally, I went back to the original data to check whether our results still resembled the interviews.

6.4 RESULTS

This section discusses the results of our analysis of the semi-structured interviews. First, the considerations of top managers in 2011 will be discussed. These considerations will be linked to organizational and institutional contexts (research question 1). Next, shifts in the considerations of top managers between the 2008 and 2011 interviews will be discussed (research question 2).

6.4.1 Considerations of top managers

The top managers in this study provided work-life arrangements because 1) they found it intrinsically important, 2) it was a statutory requirement or 3) they perceived it as beneficial for the organization from a cost-benefit perspective.

6.4.1.1 Intrinsically important

Besides giving other more organization oriented arguments, some top managers in this study indicated to find it just intrinsically important to provide work-life arrangements within their organization. They felt it their social responsibility to support employees, especially in difficult times, and for them it was the moral thing to do. They believed employers had a responsibility to take care of employees, for example by providing organizational work-life arrangements.

'This is just how we do it. Why? We call it the human measure: what you do to treat one another normally. Look, the fact that this is a company doesn't change anything; we feel it's simply normal to try to make the best out of every given situation together. Something good for everyone.'[5]
Female, law firm, 2011 interview

6.4.1.2 Statutory requirement

Statutory work-life arrangements within organizations in the Netherlands include maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, part-time work hours and a contribution to child care costs through taxes (see *Table 6.1)*. The law is very specific about maternity and paternity leave: employees are entitled to 16 weeks of maternity leave and 2 days of paternity leave and employees are completely absent from work during this time. Top managers saw these benefits as something they *'just provide.'* They also perceived all statutory work-life arrangements as part of the social fabric and therefore something they took for granted and had to provide. Top managers did not question the statutory arrangements, but most also did not feel they had to offer more than the law required. This was also true of child care: they did not see it as their responsibility to furnish child care, for example by offering on-site crèches. They viewed the organization of a child-care system as a government responsibility, and considered child care arrangements to be the private responsibility of employees.

'We don't have any specific policies or provisions [regarding child care]. We treat this as the responsibility of the employees themselves.'
Male, telecommunication, 2011 interview

Dutch law leaves more room for interpretation regarding parental leave and part-time work: basically, the employer must permit them (unless they conflict with major business interests) but the details, for example which days are involved and how many hours, are left to the employee and employer to decide together. Top managers stated that they do not question the law with regard to these statutory rights and that they *'obey the law.'* Basically, then, they grant employees access to statutory work-life arrangements. However, because the law is less specific about take up and therefore open to interpretation, the analyses show that top managers tend to bend the rules toward their own views, their attitude being that the take up of statutory work-life arrangements should do as little harm and as much good as possible for the organization.

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5   Quotes are translated from Dutch. Original data and quotes available on request.

6.4.1.3 Beneficial for organizations

How top managers perceived the consequences of part-time work and parental leave for their organization differed: some restricted take up by employees in order to minimize what they perceived as a negative impact, while other were lenient because they felt it had a positive outcome for the organization. Top managers expressed the same views concerning non-statutory flextime and telecommuting arrangements. They believed that work-life arrangements that went beyond statutory requirements should benefit the organization. The perceived costs and benefits of work-life arrangements were central to their considerations. Top managers perceived several benefits of work-life arrangements. By offering them, they were able to 1) attract and retain employees, 2) enhance their reputation as a modern employer, 3) reduce costs and 4) increase efficiency.

Attracting and retaining employees. Top managers felt work-life arrangements benefitted their organization because meeting employee expectations, being known as an attractive employer, and showing sensitivity to employee pressure attracted and retained employees. They believed being an attractive employer gave them a larger pool of potential employees and a better chance of attracting, hiring and retaining talented people, which they perceived as beneficial for the organization. They felt that not giving talented employees the leave or flexibility they wanted caused these employees to resign, with the organization losing the battle for the best employees, which the managers perceived as costly.

> *'If you force yourself out of the market by being inflexible […] If you want to attract young employees, you need to meet their expectations. Especially when you want enthusiastic new people who are good, you have no choice.'*
> **Male, research organization, 2011 interview**

Top managers who wanted to attract young people and female employees specifically showed the most sensitivity to employee needs and wishes concerning flexibility or reduced work hours. They had '*no choice*' but to provide such arrangements, especially because younger generations expected flexibility and particularly because female employees expected to be able to work part-time. It was therefore top managers at organizations seeking to attract highly skilled women or fill highly feminized jobs (e.g. secretary) who said they needed to allow part-time work to attract and retain employees. Top managers believed that their only option was to be flexible regarding part-time work or they would not be able to attract good (female) employees.

Chapter 6

> *'We need to make sure that it is easy for women to work here; otherwise, we won't have employees. At our institute, 70 percent of the employees are female. […]. This indicates that we should make this an attractive place to work, including for people with young children. […] We do that by making it easy to work part-time as this is how you combine work and family life.'*
> **Male, research organization, 2011 interview**

Enhancing the organization's reputation as a modern employer. Top managers mentioned integrating telecommuting, flextime and flexible work arrangements into 'the new way of working' because they wanted to follow the latest trends in the labor market. This helped them ensure their organization's reputation as a modern employer that responded sensitively to pressure from public debate and other organizations. Top managers of larger and public-sector organizations were particularly keen to follow the latest trends and to have their organizations perceived as modern.

> *'We have a pilot project testing the new world of work. […]. Increasingly, the generations who come after us will want to work in a different way than we are used to. […] A 40-hour work week at the office will become less common. It will also be less common to have your own desk at the office. This is down to technological advances, but employees also want to design their lives differently […]. Well, you see these trends and at a certain point you want to put them to the test in your own organization.'*
> **Male, bank, 2011 interview**

Cost reduction. Another consideration of top managers concerning flexibility and the 'new way of working' was that they allowed the organization to reduce the amount of office space because employees made less use of the office, shared office space and worked flexible hours, meaning that different employees could use the same desk at different times. Consistent with public debate in the Netherlands, flexibility in relation to the new way of working was framed by the top managers as a cost-saving option and hence a benefit for the organization.

> *'We are convinced that the new world of work reduces costs; you need less office space and fewer desks and studies show a productivity gain in employees.'*
> **Male, insurance company, 2011 interview**

Greater efficiency. Another argument mentioned by top managers was that time and spatial flexibility contributed to efficiency by increasing employee productivity and allowing a more efficient use of machinery and space. Central to such efficiency-related considerations was an approach based on performance rather than work hours. Employees were seen as responsible for their own work-life balance and their performance at work.

> *'Whether you prefer to do something at the office or from home, early in the morning or at night, I don't care. As long as you meet the targets we agreed on.'*
> **Female, consultancy company, 2011 interview**

Top managers also found it beneficial that flextime allowed businesses to stay open longer. Having some employees start and finish early and others start and finish late made flextime beneficial for both the organization and the employee. They saw this as more efficient because it extended customer service hours. According to the top managers, this was what customers expected nowadays; they wanted to be served immediately at all times of the day. Hence, organizations had to be sensitive to customers alongside other sources of pressure (employees, other organizations and the government).

6.4.1.5 Considerations concerning costs of work-life arrangements

Top managers mentioned that they associated several costs with work-life arrangements, in particular 1) increased expense and 2) reduced efficiency.

Increased expense. Some top managers were unenthusiastic about part-time work and parental leave because they perceived reduced hours as financially costly and preferred employees to work full time. Nevertheless, these managers allowed part-time work and parental leave because they wanted to obey the law; however, they discouraged employees from cutting their hours too much.

> *'It is relatively expensive to have a case manager work 20 hours. He needs to have a certain level of knowledge, which means spending 5 to 6 hours in meetings, training, etc. So he is only productive for 13 hours. That is not beneficial in my view. I would rather invest 6 hours and get 20 hours of productivity, and preferably 30.'*
> **Female, municipality, 2011 interview**

6.4.1.6 Reduced efficiency.

Some top managers felt flexibility had a negative effect on efficiency. According to them, it had negative consequences for the productivity of employees and the organization at large. Top managers who held this view argued that due to flexibility, customary service hours were not necessarily covered and that customers were unable to reach employees

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when needed. They felt that customers wanted service to be readily available, preferably offered by the same employees, and that this was not possible when employees worked part-time, took parental leave, worked flextime or telecommuted. They also expressed concerns about employees being less productive at home, the limited means of measuring the productivity of employees working outside the office, and a perceived loss of productivity owing to less interaction between co-workers.

> *'People tend to underestimate how important meeting your co-workers is to doing your work well. [...]. People tend to think that they can do their work in isolation, but I disagree. I think isolation comes at the expense of productivity. [...] The work you do here tends to be linked to the work of at least 17 co-workers. [...] So you need to be in constant touch with others [...]. You can communicate on the Internet, but it's better to just walk over to someone's office.'*
> **Female, municipality, 2011 interview**

6.4.1.7 Reducing negative consequences of work-life arrangements

To reduce perceived negative consequences for their organization, top managers introduced conditions for utilizing organizational work-life arrangements: 'a minimum number of work days,' 'regulating days employees are absent,' 'block hours,' 'reachability' and 'flexibility for flexibility' were mentioned. To moderate the perceived negative consequences of reduced hours, they set a minimum number of hours or days to ensure employee productivity. This minimum varied by position, with generally a higher number of work hours for higher positions. In addition, they regulated the days employees could take off to soften the perceived impact on customer services and to hide the work time reduction as much as possible from customers.

> *'People always take Monday or Friday off. However, this is more difficult for clients as they want to be able to contact employees seven days a week. Taking a day off work in the middle of the week is less obvious to clients.'*
> **Male, law firm, 2011 interview**

To reduce the negative consequences top managers associated with flexibility, they set block hours, i.e. fixed hours of the day that employees must be present in the workplace. This ensured that customers could reach employees at least during certain hours; outside these hours, employees could decide for themselves when to work. The same assurance was achieved by requiring absent employees to be reachable by phone and e-mail. Another common requirement was for employees to show flexibility toward the employer in return for flexibility, indicating that the employees were expected to be present when customers needed them or for meetings.

'I think flexible work hours are fine, as long as they are really flexible and employees are also here when needed. You know, I really support flexible work hours: flexibility for the employee so he or she can make things work for him or her, but also in a way that works for the organization.'
Female, municipality, 2011 interview

6.4.2 Shifting considerations of top managers 2008-2011

Comparing the 2008 and 2011 interviews revealed shifts in top managers' considerations concerning work-life arrangements. These shifts seem to have kept pace with changes in society at large. Societal changes to which top managers appeared to be sensitive were: 1) the economic crisis and recessions; related to this, 2) societal norms regarding work-life arrangements, and 3) changes in the service economy. Each change will be discussed separately.

6.4.2.1 The economic crisis and recessions

An important change in society between 2008 and 2011 was the start of the economic crisis followed by recessions. This change was reflected in the considerations of top managers concerning work-life arrangements. The biggest consequences of the economic crisis and recessions appear to have been an increased awareness of costs and an increase in an employer-led focus. It was already shown that one of top managers' main considerations was the increased expense associated with employee use of such arrangements, making them reluctant to provide them. Top managers mentioned the increased expense regularly in 2011, while that was not the case in 2008. In 2011, for example, top managers emphasized perceiving part-time work as relatively expensive because it decreased employee productivity and raised overheads. In 2008, they did not mention financial and productivity drawbacks of part-time work. More cost-awareness did not cause them to deny employees part-time hours because they perceived part-time work as a statutory employee right. In 2011, however, considerations aimed at reducing perceived negative consequences of part-time work hours appeared to be more critical. Overall, the considerations seemed to be more employer-led in 2011. In 2008, top managers framed work-life arrangements more as something they did to support employees, whereas in 2011 they focused more on what it would bring to the organization and how negative consequences for the organization could be reduced. Work-life arrangements were weighed against what it would do for the organization's goals. Hence, during the economic crisis the considerations of top managers around work-life arrangements became increasingly employer-led.

A specific example is 'the new way of working'. Between 2008 and 2011, this concept grew popular as a new way to reduce costs while providing employee work-

life arrangements and increasing ones image of a modern employer. 'The new way of working' was not as evident in the 2008 interviews but by 2011 had become pivotal (three companies were introducing it). The rush to adopt it can be understood both in the light of the economic recession and public debate in the Netherlands. Top managers saw it as a way to save money because shared desks require less office space; it therefore gave them a budget-friendly way to improve both the flexibility and work-life balance of their employees and their organization's financial situation. This coincided with a debate in the Netherlands in which the government framed the new world of work as a way of reducing overheads and optimizing employee productivity. Some top managers, especially in larger organizations, followed this debate closely and expressed the desire to keep up with these trends, showing themselves sensitive to pressures emanating from public debate. They saw it as a way to show the world that they were modern employers following labor market trends while at the same time reducing costs.

> *'You see trends [in society] that, at a certain moment, you also want to implement in your own organization.'*
> **Male, bank, 2011 interview**

Although costs seemed to be more critical to top managers in 2011 than in 2008, the crisis and recession did not appear to affect the actual work-life arrangements offered to employees: both formal and informal work-life arrangements had not (yet) been reduced. When asked at the end of the 2011 interview whether the economic crisis had affected work-life arrangements in their organization, top managers indicated that this was not the case, because 1) the economic crisis had not affected their company (yet), 2) they did not perceive work-life arrangements as something that involved major costs but mainly as relatively inexpensive changes in their organizational culture, or 3) they did not want to change their approach to work-life arrangements because they saw that as a short-term reaction to circumstances, whereas they believed an organization should be consistent about work-life arrangements as part of its approach to work.

6.4.2.2 Societal norms regarding work-life arrangements

Top managers themselves perceived a growing acceptance of work-life arrangements within organizations. They linked this to societal developments at large, indicating that society had rising expectations of work-life arrangements and showing their sensitivity to societal pressure. These two quotes from the same manager show a shift from a general acceptance of work-life arrangements to taking work-life arrangements for granted.

2008: *'I think people nowadays are much more aware [of the work-life balance]. As an organization, we have always contributed to a healthy combination of work and private life. [...] You see some regulations are just very normal nowadays.'*

2011: *'[Work-life arrangements] are just standard procedure. It's already so normal that in three years' time, nobody will discuss it anymore. [...] It will just be part of regular business. I think this issue is passé.'*
Male, hospital

The previous section showed that top managers viewed financial expense and reduced efficiency as negative consequences of work-life arrangements. In connection with organizational work-life arrangements being perceived as increasingly normal, top managers were less inclined to see efficiency losses as resulting from work-life arrangements. This is most apparent concerning time and spatial flexibility (flextime and telecommuting). For example, in 2008 top managers saw the loss of face-to-face contact owing to telecommuting and flexible work hours as negative and something that should be limited, but that was less so in 2011. Furthermore, in 2008 they regularly mentioned telecommuting as less productive because employees did not work as productively from home as they did at the office. In 2011, this perception was less critical. Findings suggest that as flexibility became more normal, so did the consequences for the organization of work. Top managers increasingly mentioned trusting employees to work as efficiently from elsewhere as they did at the office and to keep track of their own work hours. Nevertheless, they still found face-to-face contact essential for employee productivity. However, instead of perceiving flexibility as generally negative, they set conditions for employee flexibility while simultaneously minimizing its negative consequences for the organization. To avoid negative consequences, they set conditions to ensure team spirit, teamwork and productivity. For example, in exchange for flexibility, they required employees to also be flexible when the organization needed them, and obliged them to be present in the workplace at set times (block hours) in order to promote teamwork. This shows that top managers increasingly chose to micro-manage work-life arrangements: whereas at first they simply provided flexibility or did not, they later increasingly set conditions for using flexibility in order to reduce the negative consequences for their organization. This allowed top managers to follow the trend of increasingly flexible work while at the same time controlling how that flexibility was used within their organization; the productivity of the organization remained their number one priority especially during this time of economic crisis and recessions.

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6.4.2.3 Changes in the service economy

One key consideration in both 2008 and 2011 was customer expectations. However, the top managers believed that the nature of those expectations had changed, reflecting changes in the service economy. In 2008, some top managers mentioned that customers expected them to be available during regular work hours. This perceived expectation caused the top managers to be more critical of policies that reduced the availability of employees during these hours, such as part-time work, parental leave or flexible work hours.

> *'We aim to have people work 40 hours. Here, people generally work on a project basis for customers. It's really uncomfortable if a customer calls and you have to tell him, no, Dave works only on Wednesday afternoon, Thursday and Monday afternoon, because the customers himself works 40 hours.'*
> **Male, IT company, 2008 interview**

In 2011, top managers no longer indicated that customers expected them to be available during regular work hours. Instead, they felt that customers expected them to be available 24/7. This perception led to considerations regarding the conditions for employees using work-life arrangements while simultaneously meeting customer demands, for example reachability by phone. In conclusion, we can say that top managers appear to be responsive to societal changes in their considerations concerning work-life arrangements. Their considerations changed in line with changes in the economy, societal norms and customer and employee expectations.

6.5   CONCLUSION

Top managers are the actors within organizations who make the decisions about implementing work-life arrangements and how they should be handled throughout the organization. This chapter contributes to the work-life literature by exploring the top managers' considerations concerning the provision of work-life arrangements and by studying how their considerations changed between 2008 and 2011, a period that saw the start of an economic crisis and subsequent recessions. Between 2008 and 2011, when the economic crisis hit followed by a period of recession, top managers became more cost-aware in their considerations concerning work-life arrangements. This awareness seems to have had limited consequences – they did not stop providing work-life arrangements – but they did impose more conditions on employee use of such arrangements in order to reduce perceived costs. Top managers claimed that they did not wish to respond too sharply to the economic crisis because work-life arrangements were part of their

organizational strategy. They needed to take the long view of organizational strategy and would therefore not respond to short-term circumstances, which is how they perceived the economic crisis and recessions at the time of their interview. This is consistent with other studies of Dutch organizations during the economic crisis showing that managers did not want to respond too sharply (Josten, 2011). Nevertheless, this chapter also shows that although the economic crisis and recession had little consequences for the prevalence of work-life arrangements within organizations, the considerations of top managers about these arrangements became more employer-led. Top managers were more considerate about how work-life arrangements would affect their organization and through micro-managing the work-life arrangements available in their organization they tried to avoid negative consequences. This meant that they increasingly set conditions to the use of work-life arrangements by employees to control possible negative outcomes for the organization.

Related to setting conditions to the use of work-life arrangements to control negative organizational consequences, what the results of this chapter show on a practical level is that top managers put the organization's interests first and have a tendency to want to maintain control of policies. Also when legislation was less specific, top managers used that freedom to set conditions for the use of work-life arrangements so as to limit possible perceived negative consequences for the organization. Top managers still allowed employees to use work-life arrangements, but set limits on such use. This implies that work-life arrangements find their way into organizations when top managers believe the organization can benefit or when the law is very specific. The results of this chapter furthermore show that between 2008 and 2011, work-life arrangements became more accepted among top managers, but only very slowly. Hence, when a government wants to accelerate work-life arrangements within organizations, it should either show top managers how their organizations can benefit or make it a statutory requirement. However, if a government wants to ensure access to a certain kind of work-life arrangement for all employees, the relevant legislation must be very specific, because otherwise top managers will use the existing leeway to bend the rules to suit their views.

Common theories in the work-life literature were utilized combining institutional pressures with business case argumentation and the managerial interpretation approach and applying this to top managerial considerations concerning work-life arrangements. From the combined theories it was deduced that top managers' considerations will center on the costs, benefits and institutional pressures that make work-life arrangements more beneficial. Recently, scholars have called for studies investigating whether institutional pressures or economic arguments cause employers to provide organizational work-life arrangements (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). In line with previous chapters, the results of this chapter suggest that this is not an 'either/or' question but that employers (top

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managers) provide work-life arrangements based both on economic arguments and in reaction to institutional pressures: institutional pressures give top managers reasons for regarding work-life arrangements as beneficial for their organization. In line with chapter 5, the results of this chapter also suggest that there may even be an additional motivation beyond the economic arguments and institutional pressures: top managers provide work-life arrangements because they believe it to be their social responsibility (also in line with findings among middle managers (Den Dulk et al., 2011)). However, top managers in the Netherlands much less frequently mentioned this consideration than was the case in the previous chapter among top managers of other countries. Furthermore, in the Netherlands, top managers combined this argument with other, more organization oriented, arguments.

Consistent with previous large-scale quantitative studies on the provision of workplace work-life policies, organizational context and sensitivity to institutional pressures appear to be related to differences between top managers' considerations. Top managers from organizations wanting to attract young, talented or female employees were especially responsive to the expectations of (potential) employees (in line with: Den Dulk, 2001; Osterman, 1995). In addition, top managers in the public sector and larger organizations appeared to be responsive to societal trends. Only top managers at large organizations expressed the wish to pioneer new trends such as the new way of working, consistent with the common explanation that those organizations must uphold a public image (e.g., Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Den Dulk et al., 2010). However, the results of this chapter show that the considerations of top managers vary much more than can be explained by the organizational characteristics familiar in the work-life literature, for example between seeing work-life arrangements as cheaper and easier versus seeing work-life arrangements as too expensive and disruptive. This suggests that future large-scale research should consider the decision-makers in addition to the organizational context, as it seems to matter who is leading the organization. The results of this chapter further reveal an additional source of pressure affecting decision-making about work-life arrangements: customer expectations. Previous large-scale quantitative studies on work-life policies overlooked this source of pressure. As the present research is a small-scale qualitative study, future large-scale studies should reveal whether customer expectations are indeed a source of pressure that explains variations in work-life arrangements.

This chapter has some limitations. First, as it involves only thirteen organizations, future research must show whether the top managers' considerations and the shifts in these considerations can be generalized. Future studies must also include more time points to detect whether any changes are indeed ongoing. Additionally, this chapter focused on the Netherlands, a country where top managers are likely to be aware of the need for work-life arrangements because flextime, telecommuting and part-time work are common,

and where organizations can legitimately support employees in their work-life balance because government actively promotes their involvement. Research in other countries or cross-country comparative studies are required to better understand how top managers' considerations vary between national contexts where these contextual circumstances differ. Nevertheless, this chapter does indicate that work-life arrangements within organizations are increasingly perceived by top managers in the Netherlands as being integrated into both organizations and society. Top managers perceive the consequences of such arrangements as less negative, which in turn allows further integration. However, we should bear in mind that top managers place their organization's interests first, a potentially problematic attitude if individual and organizational interests do not align. This issue thus emphasizes the need for government regulation to protect employee interests.

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Conclusion and discussion

7.1 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Starting with the earliest studies on the adoption by organizations of work-life arrangements, the literature has consistently shown that adoption varies considerably both between organizations and between countries (Den Dulk et al., 2012; Goodstein, 1994; Milliken et al., 1998; Oliver, 1991; Wood et al., 2003). This dissertation adds to this literature by focusing on top managers as the main decision-makers within organizations regarding the adoption of work-life arrangements. Even though top managers do make the decisions in this area, researchers examining the provision of these arrangements have seldom studied them directly. We therefore know little about why they decide to provide them or to refrain from the provision of such arrangements. Knowing their motivation is important because it helps us understand the reasons and conditions under which work-life arrangements are or are not provided in organizations. Furthermore, organizational and national variations in such provision arise through top managers' decision-making. This dissertation focused on why top managers consider to provide work-life arrangements in their organization or to refrain from doing so.

7.1.1 HR managers' attitudes

Top managers' awareness of the need for work-life arrangements within their own organization is an important factor for their actual provision because they are the ones making the decisions to provide them. HR managers are the actors most likely to raise this awareness among top managers because work-life arrangements belong to the HR practices for which they are responsible. *Chapter 3* looked into the importance of HR managers' attitudes, based on the argument that when they are positive about supporting employees to combine work and private life, they will be more likely to try and convince top managers to adopt work-life arrangements (in line with: Milliken et al., 1990; 1998; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). Extending previous research, this chapter argued that it is easier for HR managers to convince top managers of the need for these arrangements in an organizational or national context whose characteristics favor work-life arrangements. That is because such a context will most likely have sensitized top managers to the need to adopt work-life arrangements. Contextual characteristics that previous research has already shown to be favorable for work-life arrangements are the sector the organization belongs to, size, the attention for gender equality in society, and the range of statutory work-life policies (Den Dulk et al., 2010; Goodstein, 1994; Wood et al., 2003).

Data from the Establishment Survey of Working Time and Work-Life Balance, which covered almost 19,000 establishments located in 21 European countries, was used to estimate several hierarchical models, including cross-level interactions. The attitude of HR managers was found to be indeed positively related to the provision of work-life arrangements in organizations. A positive attitude on the part of HR managers made an

even greater difference in public-sector organizations, suggesting that it is easier for them to convince top managers of the need for work-life arrangements in this organizational context. There was no evidence that organizational size reinforces the relationship between HR managers' attitudes and the provision of work-life arrangements; this means that HR managers in larger organizations cannot make a bigger difference for the provision of work-life arrangements than HR managers in smaller ones. A high national level of gender equality reinforces the positive relationship between HR managers' attitudes and the provision of work-life arrangements. The reverse relationship was found for a national context with many state work-life policies; in such a context it seems more difficult for HR managers with a positive attitude to convince top managers to implement such arrangements within the organization. This suggests that HR managers with a positive attitude are an important factor in a context with few state work-life policies, but that they have difficulty persuading top managers of the need for work-life arrangements when the state already maintains many programs of this kind. That in itself may already be enough to sensitize top managers to the need for work-life arrangements, as previous research has shown a positive association between state work-life policies and work-life arrangements in organizations (Den Dulk et al., 2010; 2013).

7.1.2 Conditions under which top managers support work-life arrangements

From *Chapter 4* onwards, the focus lay on top managers as respondents, making it possible to study directly those who decide on the provision of work-life arrangements. This fourth chapter concentrated specifically on the conditions decisive for top managers' support for work-life arrangements, putting theories about why work-life arrangements are provided directly to the test and tapping more deeply into the actual arguments of top managers. Neo-institutional theory, the managerial interpretation approach, and business case argumentation were used as a starting point. In line with these theoretical approaches, I argued that top managers are likely to support work-life arrangements when they regard them as making a positive contribution to their organization's goals, when doing so is in line with social norms and conventions, or when the top manager feels more positive about work-life arrangements personally (Den Dulk, 2001; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Lambert, 2000; Osterman, 1995).

A vignette experiment (Rossi & Anderson, 1982) was conducted among top managers in a wide range of organizations in five European countries (Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and the U.K.). The results show that, in line with business case argumentation, top managers support work-life arrangements when these require few financial investments and contribute to employee commitment. Furthermore, top managers are more supportive of flextime and telecommuting than they are of leave

policies or part-time work hours, suggesting that they prefer work-life arrangements that have few consequences for the number of hours employees are putting in. Top managers have a preference for work-life arrangements that target all employees rather than arrangements intended specifically for well-performing employees in the organization. Top managers' general preference for making work-life arrangements available to all employees may indicate that, at the strategic level on which such managers operate, work-life arrangements are currently regarded as general working conditions rather than as special favors. The even stronger preference among top managers in public-sector organizations for making work-life arrangements available to all employees appears to reflect their greater dependence on social legitimacy, which is in line with institutional theory. No support was found for the claim - based upon neo-institutional theory – that top managers are more likely to support work-life arrangements if other organizations are also providing them. Also no support for the managerial interpretation approach was found. Personal characteristics and experiences of top managers did not seem to matter for their support for work-life arrangements. In addition, there appeared to be national differences in top managers' support for work-life arrangements, with top managers in Slovenia being the most supportive and those in the Netherlands the least. When comparing flextime with part-time work hours, top managers in Finland and Slovenia preferred flextime to a greater extent over part-time work hours than did top managers in the Netherlands, Portugal and the U.K.. Support among top managers for these types of work-life arrangements varied less in these three countries.

7.1.3   Understanding national differences in top managers' considerations

Chapter 5 focused on understanding national differences in top managers' support for work-life arrangements. The aim was to explore whether considerations of top managers to adopt work-life arrangements vary between countries and how these considerations are shaped by the national context, based on a theoretical framework combining the managerial interpretation approach, business case argumentation and neo-institutional theory. A mixed method approach was adopted (Creswell & Clark, 2011) in which a vignette experiment (Rossi & Anderson, 1982) was combined with semi-structured interviews (Galletta, 2013). As in the previous chapter, the countries involved were Finland, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Portugal and the U.K.. Running a separate model based on data taken from the vignette experiment for each of these countries made it possible to detect whether certain conditions affect top managers' support in some countries but not in others. The semi-structured interviews served to explain the national differences detected in the vignette experiment and to capture national differences that the vignette experiment may have missed.

Results showed that top managers share many considerations across countries. Nevertheless, systematic national differences also became clear. The national context seems to shape how top managers frame work-life arrangements, i.e. mainly as a business case or mainly as a social responsibility. These cross-country differences in how top managers frame work-life arrangements show that business case argumentation might not explain the adoption of work-life arrangements by organizations to the same extent across countries. Top managers also take into account the extent to which work-life arrangements are integrated into society at large. For example, when full-time work hours are the norm, top managers tend to be less supportive of part-time work hours. In addition, top managers take state work-life policies into account; when the state provides an extensive system of leave arrangements and public child care, top managers feel less obliged to offer work-life arrangements in these domains. They feel it is the government's responsibility, not theirs (in line with: Den Dulk et al., 2010).

7.1.4 Changing considerations over time

Because previous research suggests work-life arrangements change over time (Kelly, 2003; Lee et al., 2000), *Chapter 6* switched from a cross-sectional view to a longitudinal one studying how top managers' considerations regarding work-life arrangements might also change over time. After all, changes in work-life arrangements are likely to result from the changing considerations of top managers as they make their decisions. This part of the study first established what top managers consider when deciding whether to implement work-life arrangements and then charted changes in those considerations between 2008 and 2011. Unlike the other chapters, the focus here was specifically on the Dutch situation, since narrowing the context made it possible to look at changes over time. The relevant period, 2008 to 2011, is especially interesting because it was then that the economic crisis hit the Netherlands (Josten, 2011). The analysis was based on data collected by means of semi-structured interviews with top managers at 13 organizations in 2008 and then again in 2011. Unlike the other chapters, Chapter 6 is purely qualitative. The results show that during the economic crisis, top managers in the Netherlands became more conscious of the cost of work-life arrangements, especially when their own organization had been affected by the crisis. This did not lead directly to a reduction in work-life arrangements; on the contrary, the growing trend towards acceptance and integration of work-life arrangements both within society at large and by top managers appears to have continued during the crisis. Top managers combined their increased cost-awareness with this continued integration by imposing more conditions on the use of work-life arrangements in order to control potential negative consequences for their organization. Top managers thus revealed a tendency to want to remain in control of the arrangements. This is in line with the results of Chapters 4 and 5, which showed that

top managers tend to support work-life arrangements when they see them as beneficial for or at least not harmful to the organization. Another factor was the rise of 'the new way of working' (Gates, 2005) between 2008 and 2011 as a labor market development and new management concept in the Netherlands. In this period, top managers at larger organizations increasingly said they were keen to provide work-life arrangements integrated into 'the new world of work' because they wished to keep up with current labor market trends in order to present themselves as modern employers.

7.2   GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation shows that when top managers are deciding whether to support work-life arrangements, they put the organization's interests first. In line with their responsibility for the prosperity of their organization, top managers support work-life arrangements above and beyond the law when they believe such measures will contribute to the specific organization's goals or at the very least will not be counterproductive. This is understandable, since top managers are responsible for the organization's success, which involves tuning into its environment and working to achieve its goals. Moreover, it is in line with the literature, which claims that decisions about work-life arrangements are based on cost-benefit considerations that align the organization's strategy in this area with organizational goals (Den Dulk, 2001). More specifically, this dissertation shows that in order to achieve their organizational goals, top managers relate work-life arrangements to organizational assets such as the type of employees the organization needs to attract and retain. They furthermore relate it to the context of the organization, with top managers of public-sector organizations paying more attention to the costs involved and finding it more important to offer arrangements equally to all employees. In securing the organization's interests, top managers also show a tendency to want to stay in control of how work-life arrangements are actually implemented. They do this by imposing conditions on employee's use of work-life arrangements, and by utilizing the latitude included in statutory work-life arrangements, shaping them in the way they think is best for the organization. This implies that even though some work-life arrangements are set by law, the related practices and implementation may still vary from one organization to the next.

Top managers do not see work-life arrangements as a package, but review arrangements separately considering for each arrangement how it will impact the organization and whether it is in the organization's interest. They are generally more supportive of flextime and telecommuting, which are more in the organization's interest than for example providing leave arrangements and part-time working hours beyond the statutory required, as they can also be used to create a more flexible workforce. This seems to imply that at the strategic level at which they make their decisions, they prefer work-life arrangements

that do not alter the number of hours employees work and as such do not challenge the 'ideal worker' norm (Hammer et al., 2009). Even though flextime and telecommuting are preferred by top managers across countries over part-time work hours, the extent to which part-time work hours are accepted by top managers, varies between countries and appears to be related to what is common practice in their country. Top managers in countries where full-time work is the norm, namely Finland, Portugal and Slovenia, are much more negative about part-time work than those in the Netherlands and the U.K., where part-time employment is more common, emphasizing that top managers' considerations are shaped by the national context they operate in.

Work-life arrangements seem to enjoy growing acceptance among top managers and are regarded as belonging to general terms of employment. The top managers surveyed in the Netherlands increasingly saw work-life arrangements as part of the organization of work. Furthermore, top managers in Finland, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the U.K. preferred to make work-life arrangements available to all employees as common practice. This implies that, at the strategic level of top managers, work-life arrangements are seen as general terms of employment rather than a special favor to employees. Nonetheless, research shows that in everyday work practices at the workplace, where direct supervisors decide on actual employee access to the arrangements available in the organization, work-life arrangements are often treated as a special favor to employees (Den Dulk & De Ruijter, 2008; Klein et al., 2000). This indicates a gap between the long-term strategic considerations of top managers and considerations of middle managers in everyday work practices, which tend to be more short term oriented (Den Dulk & De Ruijter, 2008).

Whether top managers consider work-life arrangements as something their organization should provide is related to their government's approach to work-life policies and the framing of work-life arrangements in the country at large. In countries where government provides extensive leave arrangements and public child care, top managers see leave arrangements and child care options as a government responsibility, and other types of work-life arrangements, such as flextime and telecommuting, as something they can do to support the work-life balance of employees (in line with: Den Dulk et al., 2012). The presence of state work-life policies seems to raise top managers' awareness of the need to support the work-life balance of employees, causing them to provide work-life arrangements using arguments of social responsibility rather than the organization's interest. However, government support for work-life arrangements is not the only circumstance bringing work-life arrangements to the attention of top managers. This dissertation suggests that in countries where the state provides few work-life policies, HR managers who advocate work-life arrangements and bring them to the attention of top managers can make a difference.

7.3   THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Recently researchers have called for studies investigating whether employers are driven to provide work-life arrangements by institutional pressures or business case arguments (Den Dulk et al., 2013). This dissertation shows that both factors play a role: top managers place the interests of the organization first using business case arguments and also take institutional pressures into account. One new insight that has emerged from this dissertation is that the interplay between institutional pressures and business case arguments goes even further: the institutional context seems to contribute to whether top managers frame their support for work-life arrangements mainly in business case terms, or whether the argument of it being a social responsibility also plays a substantial role. In countries where it is common to frame work-life arrangements as a business case, top managers used business case arguments; in countries where work-life arrangements are customarily regarded as a social responsibility, top managers refer to their organization's social responsibility. This means that even when top managers rely on business case arguments, it may be partly owing to the institutional context.

In this dissertation I combined the three most common theoretical approaches in the literature: neo-institutional theory, business case argumentation (Den Dulk, 2001; 2005; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Osterman, 1995; Plantenga & Remery, 2005) and the managerial interpretation approach (Bardoel, 2003; Goodstein, 1994; Kossek et al., 1994; Milliken et al., 1998; Osterman, 1995). This dissertation shows that mainly business case argumentation and the aspects of coercive and normative pressure of neo-institutional theory contribute to understanding top managers' support for work-life arrangements. Including neo-institutional theory and business case argumentation allowed capturing an important part of the decision-making of top managers, as they tend to phrase their decisions in terms of costs and benefits and follow social norms and conventions concerning work-life arrangements. Top managers' age, sex or own use of work-life arrangements was not found to contribute to explaining their support for work-life arrangements, as is suggested by the managerial interpretation approach. Nevertheless, it was also found that regardless the context, top managers varied in whether they saw work-life arrangements as beneficial for the organization. This indicates that their personal beliefs do matter with regard to work-life arrangements. However, these seem not to be caused by the personal characteristics mentioned.

The results of this dissertation support the claim that contextualization is needed to understand work-life arrangements in organizations. By showing this, this dissertation contributes to the recent discussion in the literature about the relevance of the national context for understanding work-life arrangements (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013). In line with Ollier-Malaterre (2009), it is shown that the national context affects how employers evaluate the provision of work-life arrangements. To understand cross-country differences

Chapter 7

in how top managers frame work-life arrangements, it is necessary to understand differences in national work hours cultures, in the way work-life arrangements are framed by society and in public debate, and in state-supported work-life policies. This dissertation also showed the importance of the organizational context, since top managers related their support for work-life arrangements to the context of the organization and since the impact of HR managers on the provision of work-life arrangements depended on both the organizational and national context. Framing work-life arrangements as decisions taken in multiple contextual layers (Den Dulk et al., 2011) is therefore a promising approach.

This dissertation was innovative in the methodology used to tackle the topic of work-life arrangements. A vignette experiment was used to understand the conditions under which top managers support work-life arrangements. Although vignette experiments have been used before to analyze supervisors' allowance decisions concerning employee take-up of work-life arrangements (Den Dulk & De Ruijter, 2008; Klein et al., 2000; Poelmans & Beham, 2008), until now no study has used them to explain the adoption and implementation of work-life arrangements in the overall organization. By taking this step, this dissertation was able to put top managers' decision-making directly to the test. This approach has taught us that top managers do not put one decisive argument forward in support of work-life arrangements, but that they take multiple considerations into account simultaneously. This gave more insight in how the decisions regarding work-life arrangements are made. Testing the conditions on which managers base their decisions in such a direct way would have been hard using other types of data. The vignette experiment has furthermore taught us that top managers in Europe tend to see work-life arrangements as general working conditions rather than personal rewards, and that they do not consider them as a package but evaluate different types of arrangements separately. These results also emerged from the analyses of the semi-structured interviews in this dissertation, cross-validating the outcomes.

This brings me to the second innovative methodological approach in this dissertation: by using multiple methods of both qualitative and quantitative origin, I have been able to study the complex topic of top managers' support for the adoption and implementation of work-life arrangements from different angles. Deriving results from different approaches gave a firmer basis for the conclusions. Furthermore, because the topic of work-life arrangements itself was not new but studying it from the perspective of top managers was, the mixed method design proved helpful. Studying a topic from a new angle raises the problem of having limited knowledge to build on. The mixed method approach adopted has allowed me to address the topic more openly than would have been possible using a survey design, for example. The advantage was that I was able to test existing ideas while simultaneously deriving new ideas from the data. The result has been broad insight into top managers' support for work-life arrangements.

7.4   UNANSWERED QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The qualitative components of this dissertation show that whether top managers saw work-life arrangements as something beneficial for the organization still varies after accounting for the context. This seems to indicate that personal beliefs and preferences do matter when it comes to top managers' support for work-life arrangements. What we do not know, however, is the source of their personal preferences and beliefs. How can be explained that some top managers see work-life arrangements as a chance for the organization while other mainly see it as disturbing? One direction for future research would be to look into explaining these preferences.

This dissertation also did not shed light on the whole process within organizations leading up to the provision of work-life arrangements. In line with other studies, I showed that the attitude of HR managers is positively related to work-life arrangements (Bardoel, 2003; Kossek et al., 1994), suggesting that they indeed bring the need for work-life arrangements to the attention of the top managers who make the implementation decision (Milliken et al., 1998). I have furthermore studied the decision-makers, i.e. top managers, directly, using a vignette experiment to approximate the decision-making process. Nonetheless, I have not studied the different actors together in the whole process leading to the provision of work-life arrangements by the organization, including HR managers (Milliken et al., 1998; Morgan & Milliken, 2002), top managers, unions (Berg, Kossek, Baird & Block, 2013; Gerstel & Clawson, 2001) and direct supervisors (Den Dulk & De Ruijter, 2008; Powell & Mainiero, 1999; Poelmans & Beham, 2008). Future studies could zoom into the whole process within organizations that leads to actual employee access to work-life arrangements. Nevertheless, by studying top managers directly in relation to work-life arrangements some part of this black box has been opened, as an important decision maker has been uncovered.

The results of this dissertation cannot be generalized to all top managers in the countries under study. No attempt was made to include a random sample of top managers because the aim of this study was not to generalize but to understand the various conditions and reasons behind their support for work-life arrangements. Nonetheless, not having a random sample means, for example, that the data reveals the scope of top managers' reasons but not which percentages give them as arguments. Regarding the vignettes used in Chapters 4 and 5, it shows us that top managers are more supportive of work-life arrangements when costs are low, but not which percentage of top managers in a country would support work-life arrangements in that case. A random survey among top managers would help answer such questions.

Because of the limited time frame in which the study took place, there are causality issues. For example, it could very well be the case that the decisions about work-life arrangements discussed in this dissertation were not taken by the actual top manager included in this study but by his or her predecessor. The association between HR managers' attitudes and work-life arrangements could be the result of self-selection rather than actual influence. This also means that it is difficult to say whether the considerations of the top managers in this study actually led to the implementation of work-life arrangements or are merely a justification for the present situation. That said, the vignettes in Chapters 4 and 5 allow me to sidestep the causality issue by using descriptions of fictional situations. Furthermore, in Chapter 6 I show that work-life arrangements are an evolving process, indicating that the present top managers would have also had a hand in determining the organization's current take on work-life arrangements, even if some of the arrangements were implemented under another's leadership. Nonetheless, it would be good in future studies to look into how work-life arrangements actually find their way into organizations, especially in countries where they are remain relatively uncommon, for example in Portugal. Furthermore, it would be interesting to set up a longitudinal study on how the implementation of work-life arrangements evolves over time. Such a study would take the conclusion of this dissertation forward, i.e. that work-life arrangements are increasingly finding their way into the general working conditions of organizations.

7.5 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The interplay between government and employers in supporting the work-life balance of employees is complex. Top managers accept statutory policies for what they are and comply with them. This dissertation shows that they accepted statutory leave policies as something they just dealt with irrespective of their duration. This seems to indicate that top managers do grow accustomed to legislation after a while and adapt accordingly. Nevertheless, within the boundaries of the law, top managers also applied the legislation in such a way that it was in line with how they felt was most beneficial for their organization. Also, when statutory policies were extensive, for example leave policies of public child care, top managers did not see it as their responsibility to offer employees complementary arrangements in the same domain. When they were less extensive this was more common, but still not generally done. Extensive government policies and a vivid public debate around work-life policies did sensitize top managers to the need to support the work-life balance of employees, which in practice meant that top managers were more supportive of work-life arrangements such as flextime and telecommuting. Together these results indicate that the total of possibilities available to employees to combine work with responsibilities in their private lives results from a complex interplay between

the government and employers. On a practical level this indicates that in setting the legislation, governments should be aware on how it affects employer behavior regarding different types of work-life arrangements. When governments provide moderate leave arrangements, some employers will supplement it and others not resulting in inequalities between employees depending on their employer. When leave policies are more extensive, employers will not supplement them but as a side effect they will be more sensitive to providing work-life arrangements in other fields such as flextime and telecommuting. Also, when legislation is formulated, governments should be aware that within the boundaries of the law employers will apply the legislation in such a way that they see it as most beneficial for the organization. When governments anticipate this, the legislation can be formulated in a way that the governments' intentions are still reached even when employers apply the legislation in the way least favorable to employees.

This dissertation shows that work-life arrangements are increasingly part of the organization of work and appear to be seen by top managers as part of the general terms of employment. Even though flextime and telecommuting are fairly recent phenomena, this dissertation shows that they generally have the most support by top managers across countries. This is best understood in the context of the increasing flexibility of the labor market. Top managers saw flextime and telecommuting as something they were willing to give employees in return for the increased flexibility they expected from them. In addition, they also saw benefits for the organization, especially because it allowed organizing the work also more flexible. For top managers this means they need to keep an eye on these arrangements if they want to keep up with labor market trends.

Nederlandse samenvatting

INLEIDING: TOPMANAGERS EN WERK-PRIVÉBELEID

De afgelopen decennia is werk-privébeleid steeds gangbaarder geworden. Overheden en bedrijven hebben een breed scala aan mogelijkheden ingevoerd, zoals flexibele werktijden, telewerken, deeltijdbanen, kinderopvang en een verscheidenheid aan verlofregelingen (Ollier-Malaterre e.a., 2013). De toename in het aanbod van werk-privébeleid is niet geruisloos gegaan. De pro's en contra's zijn uitgebreid besproken in het maatschappelijk debat. Eén van de centrale onderwerpen in dit debat waren de gevolgen van werk-privébeleid voor bedrijven. Volgens voorstanders maakt dergelijk beleid bedrijven en werknemers effectiever en productiever, terwijl tegenstanders beweren dat de efficiëntie van het bedrijf er onder lijdt (Allen, 2001; De Ruijter & van der Lippe, 2009; Thompson e.a., 1999). Deze diversiteit aan meningen is terug te vinden in de grote verschillen die er bestaan tussen organisaties in het aanbod van werk-privé beleid (Den Dulk, 2001; Den Dulk e.a., 2012; Goodstein, 1994; Milliken e.a., 1998; Oliver 1991; Wood e.a., 2003). De casussen van Microsoft en Yahoo! illustreren dit. Flexibele werktijden en telewerken zijn inherent aan de manier waarop werk wordt georganiseerd binnen Microsoft (Gates, 2005), terwijl Marissa Mayer van Yahoo! juist de mogelijkheden die medewerkers hadden om thuis te werken weer heeft beperkt omdat ze vond dat dit nadelig uitwerkte (Kolhatkar, 2013). Deze voorbeelden laten zien dat topmanagers, zoals CEO's, CFO's en leden van raden van bestuur, grote invloed hebben op het werk-privébeleid dat binnen organisaties beschikbaar is. Zij zijn immers de mensen binnen de organisatie die besluiten of dit beleid al dan niet wordt aangeboden (Bardoel, 2003; Duxbury & Haines, 1991; Kossek e.a., 1994; Lee e.a., 2000; Milliken e.a., 1998; Peters & Heusinkveld, 2010; Van der Lippe, 2004). De invloed van topmanagers blijft hier echter niet toe beperkt. Uit de literatuur weten we dat de organisatiecultuur bepaalt of werknemers ook daadwerkelijk gebruik kunnen maken van het beleid dat formeel beschikbaar is (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; Eaton, 2003; Hammer e.a., 2009; Kossek e.a., 2010; Mescher e.a., 2010; Thompson e.a., 1999). Vanuit hun positie zijn topmanagers in staat om deze organisatiecultuur te beïnvloeden. Ze kunnen bijvoorbeeld managers en leidinggevenden in de organisatie stimuleren en instrueren om werknemers toe te staan gebruik te maken van werk-privébeleid. Ook kunnen ze zelf gebruik maken van het beleid, waarmee de acceptatie van het gebruik van werk-privébeleid gestimuleerd wordt. Ondanks deze centrale rol, zijn topmanagers toch zelden de focus geweest van onderzoek naar het aanbod van werk-privébeleid binnen organisaties. We weten daarom weinig over hun overwegingen om het al dan niet aan te bieden en/of te stimuleren binnen de organisatie. Deze informatie is waardevol omdat het rechtstreeks inzicht geeft in de redenen waarom werk-privébeleid wel of niet wordt aangeboden binnen organisaties. In bestaande onderzoeken wordt dit doorgaans impliciet verondersteld. Het doel van dit proefschrift is derhalve inzicht krijgen in waarom topmanagers werk-privébeleid binnen hun organisatie al dan niet wensen aan te bieden.

Voorgaand onderzoek heeft consistente verschillen laten zien in het aanbod van werk-privébeleid tussen zowel organisaties met verschillende kenmerken als tussen organisaties in verschillende landen (Den Dulk e.a., 2012; Goodstein, 1994; Milliken e.a., 1998; Oliver, 1991; Wood e.a., 2003). Topmanagers lijken daarmee hun steun voor werk-privébeleid te relateren aan de context van de organisatie en het land waarin de organisatie zich bevindt. Dit impliceert dat topmanagers in verschillende contexten andere beslissingen nemen. Om te kunnen onderzoeken hoe de overwegingen van topmanagers gerelateerd zijn aan de context van de organisatie en het land, wordt dit onderzoek uitgevoerd onder een breed scala aan organisaties in verschillende Europese landen. De overkoepelende onderzoeksvraag is: *Waarom wordt werk-privébeleid al dan niet gesteund door topmanagers in Europa en hoe is dit gerelateerd aan de context van de organisatie en het land?*

Om deze vraag te kunnen beantwoorden is er voor dit proefschrift zowel gebruik gemaakt van bestaande data onder een groot aantal organisaties in 21 verschillende landen, als van data specifiek verzameld voor dit proefschrift. Deze data zijn verzameld onder ruim tweehonderd topmanagers van organisaties in vijf verschillende Europese landen: Finland, Nederland, Portugal, Slovenia en het Verenigd Koninkrijk in 2011 en 2012. Deze landen uit diverse regio's in Europa zijn gekozen omdat ze verschillende typen welvaartstaten vertegenwoordigen (Esping Andersen, 1999). Zo is er voldoende variatie tussen de landen wat betreft cultuur, arbeidsmarkt en overheidsbeleid om de topmanagers uit de verschillende landen te kunnen vergelijken. In elk land zijn topmanagers geselecteerd om deel te nemen aan het vignetexperiment en de semigestructureerde interviews. De criteria voor deelname waren het vervullen van de functie van topmanager (CEO, CFO, lid van de raad van bestuur) van een organisatie met tenminste tien werknemers. De diversiteit aan zowel kwalitatieve als kwantitatieve methodes gebruikt in dit proefschrift zorgen ervoor dat er sprake is van een 'mixed method' onderzoek.

Topmanagers zijn niet de enige managers die van belang zijn bij de introductie van werk-privébeleid, ook Human Resource (HR) managers hebben een belangrijke rol (Kossek e.a., 1994; Milliken e.a., 1990; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). HR managers zijn onder meer verantwoordelijk voor het aandragen van suggesties voor strategisch personeelsbeleid -waar werk-privébeleid onderdeel van uitmaakt- aan topmanagers, die vervolgens de beslissingen nemen over dit strategisch beleid (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Kossek e.a., 1994; Milliken e.a., 1998; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). Om topmanagers te kunnen attenderen op het belang van werk-privébeleid en met voorstellen te kunnen komen om dit beschikbaar te stellen binnen de organisatie, moeten HR managers eerst zelf het belang van werk-privébeleid voor zowel de werknemer als de organisatie inzien. In verband met deze centrale positie focust het eerste empirische hoofdstuk van deze dissertatie op HR managers. In de overige hoofdstukken staat de topmanager centraal.

THEORETISCH KADER

Het uitgangspunt van de empirische hoofdstukken in dit proefschrift vormt een gecombineerd theoretisch kader bestaande uit de drie meest gangbare theorieën in de literatuur over de invoer van werk-privébeleid door organisaties: de 'neo-institutionele theorie', 'business case argumentatie', en de 'managerial interpretation approach'.

Neo-institutionele theorie bouwt voort op de institutionele theorie (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Volgens deze theorie volgen organisaties sociale regels en conventies en bestaat er druk vanuit de maatschappij om dit te doen: 'institutionele druk' (Ingram & Simons, 1995). Voor werk-privébeleid betekent dit bijvoorbeeld dat wetgeving of cao-afspraken organisaties verplicht stellen bepaalde vormen van werk-privébeleid aan te bieden. De wetgeving kan er tevens voor zorgen dat een maatschappelijk klimaat ontstaat waarin het als vanzelfsprekend wordt gezien dat organisaties hun werknemers ondersteunen in het vinden van een goede balans tussen werk en privé (Den Dulk, 2001). Een dergelijk maatschappelijk klimaat zorgt ervoor dat er druk ligt op organisaties om werk-privébeleid aan te bieden dat verder gaat dan bestaande wettelijke regelingen. Daarnaast kan het klimaat ertoe leiden dat werknemers werk-privébeleid verwachten of vinden dat ze er recht op hebben (Cook, 2004; Lewis & Haas, 2005). Tot slot kopiëren organisaties het beleid van andere (vergelijkbare) organisaties, omdat het moeilijk is om in te schatten wat de juiste tactiek is rond werk-privébeleid. Doen wat succesvolle concurrenten doen is dan een veilige optie waarbij conventies ontstaan en worden gevolgd.

De belangrijkste kritiek op de institutionele theorie is dat het voorbij gaat aan strategische besluiten die door managers binnen organisaties worden genomen en daarmee organisaties afschildert als passief en zonder enig initiatief (Oliver, 1991). In reactie hierop stelden verschillende onderzoekers dat het aanbod van werk-privébeleid binnen organisaties het resultaat is van strategische besluitvorming door managers en dat deze managers actief besluiten hoe ze willen omgaan met institutionele druk (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Oliver, 1991; Osterman, 1995). Deze nieuwe invulling van institutionele theorie wordt de 'neo-institutionele theorie' genoemd.

Onderzoek dat gebaseerd is op neo-institutionele theorie, heeft gekeken naar organisatiekenmerken die het waarschijnlijker maken dat de organisatie toegeeft aan institutionele druk en sociale regels en conventies volgt, zoals grootte van de organisatie, sector en aandeel vrouwelijke werknemers (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995). Hoewel er in deze onderzoeken vanuit gegaan wordt dat managers actief kunnen besluiten of en hoe ze willen reageren op institutionele druk, wordt er niet gespecificeerd *hoe* deze beslissingen worden genomen door managers. Om hier meer inzicht in te krijgen hebben meer recente onderzoeken 'business case argumentatie' gecombineerd met neo-institutionele theorie (Den Dulk, 2001; 2005; Den Dulk e.a., 2010; Osterman,

1995; Plantenga & Remery, 2005) en andere onderzoeken de 'managerial interpretation approach' toegevoegd (Bardoel, 2003; Goodstein, 1994; Kossek e.a., 1994; Milliken e.a., 1998; Osterman, 1995).

Business case argumentatie en neo-institutionele theorie

Business case argumentatie is door onderzoekers gecombineerd met neo-institutionele theorie om te specificeren hoe strategische besluiten over werk-privébeleid worden genomen (Den Dulk, 2001; Den Dulk e.a., 2010; Dex & Scheibl, 2001; Osterman, 1995). Volgens business case argumentatie voeren organisaties beleid in als er meer baten zijn dan kosten en het beleid daarmee bijdraagt aan het bereiken van de organisatiedoelen (Den Dulk, 2001). Deze doelstellingen beperken zich niet noodzakelijkerwijs tot het maximaliseren van de winst, zoals wordt gesuggereerd door de klassieke economische theorie (Glass & Fujimoto, 1995). Hedendaagse organisaties hebben doorgaans ook bredere doelstellingen, zoals een goede reputatie, maatschappelijke status en een goede relatie met het personeel (Den Dulk, 2001; Den Dulk e.a., 2010). De combinatie van neo-institutionele theorie en business case argumentatie suggereert dat topmanagers bij de besluitvorming rond werk-privébeleid de kosten, baten en de sociale regels en conventies in ogenschouw zullen nemen. Daarbij zullen ze ook analyseren hoe deze sociale regels en conventies de kosten en baten beïnvloeden.

Hoewel de combinatie van neo-institutionele theorie en business case argumentatie inzicht geeft in hoe beslissingen over werk-privébeleid worden genomen, besteden de meeste van de onderzoeken die deze combinatie van theorieën toepassen geen expliciete aandacht aan het feit dat deze besluiten worden genomen door mensen, c.q. (top)managers (Warmerdam e.a., 2010). De focus in deze onderzoeken ligt met name op de relatie tussen kenmerken van de organisatie/ het land en het aanbod van werk-privébeleid door organisaties (Den Dulk e.a., 2010). Daarbij wordt de organisatie doorgaans neergezet alsof het de besluiten op de één of andere manier zelf maakt. Dat managers deze beslissingen nemen wordt dan ook meestal impliciet verondersteld, maar niet direct geobserveerd. Dit proefschrift draagt aan deze literatuur bij door de implicaties van deze combinatie van theorieën te toetsen op het niveau van de topmanagers.

Managerial interpretation approach en neo-institutionele theorie

De 'managerial interpretation approach' is door onderzoekers gecombineerd met neo-institutionele theorie om expliciet in het onderzoek in te brengen dat organisaties niet passief reageren op institutionele druk, maar het directe resultaat zijn van actieve besluitvorming door managers. Deze combinatie van theorieën benadrukt het belang van de subjectieve interpretatie van institutionele druk door deze managers. Volgens de managerial interpretation approach moeten managers zich eerst bewust worden van

ontwikkelingen in de omgeving die een behoefte aan werk-privébeleid creëren, waarna ze moeten herkennen dat deze ontwikkelingen relevant zijn voor de organisatie en moeten besluiten om actie te ondernemen. Pas hierna wordt het nieuwe beleid ook daadwerkelijk onderdeel van het organisatiebeleid (Milliken e.a., 1998). Deze theorie benadrukt het belang van individuele managers voor werk-privébeleid: verschillen in hoe managers de omgeving interpreteren liggen ten grondslag aan verschillen in het aanbod van werk-privé beleid (Bardoel, 2003; Goodstein, 1994; Kossek e.a., 1994; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). Daarbij wordt verondersteld dat bepaalde persoonskenmerken en ervaringen van managers ervoor zorgen dat ze het belang van werk-privébeleid eerder zullen herkennen en daarmee zullen invoeren.

Tot nu toe is deze combinatie van theorieën slechts toegepast op de rol van HR managers bij de totstandkoming van werk-privébeleid. Deze onderzoeken hebben laten zien dat organisaties doorgaans meer werk-privébeleid aanbieden wanneer 1) HR managers zich bewust zijn van de behoefte aan werk-privébeleid (Goodstein, 1994; Milliken e.a., 1998) en 2) wanneer HR managers dergelijk beleid zien als goed voor de organisatie (Bardoel, 2003; Goodstein, 1994; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). Deze lijn van onderzoek laat daarnaast zien dat wanneer HR managers stellen dat het topmanagement positief staat tegenover werk-privébeleid, de organisatie dan ook meer van dit beleid aanbiedt (Bardoel, 2003; Kossek e.a., 1994). Hiermee wordt duidelijk dat zowel de subjectieve interpretatie van HR managers als die van topmanagers van belang is voor werk-privébeleid. Dit proefschrift draagt aan deze literatuur bij door de mangarial interpretation approach niet alleen toe te passen op HR managers maar ook rechtstreeks op topmanagers.

BEVINDINGEN

De vier empirische hoofdstukken in dit proefschrift kennen elk een eigen invalshoek en onderwerp. De belangrijkste bevindingen worden hier samengevat.

De houding van de HR manager

Dat topmanagers zich bewust zijn van de behoefte aan werk-privébeleid is essentieel voor de implementatie van dergelijk beleid. Immers, het zijn de topmanagers die moeten besluiten dit beleid beschikbaar te stellen. Omdat werk-privébeleid tot het domein van HR managers behoort, zijn zij de meest waarschijnlijke actoren in organisaties om dit bewustzijn onder topmanagers te bewerkstelligen. In hoofdstuk 3 is gekeken naar het belang van een positieve houding van de HR manager tegenover werk-privébeleid voor het aanbod van dit beleid binnen de organisatie. Hierbij wordt verondersteld dat als HR managers een positieve houding hebben, ze werk-privébeleid actief zullen promoten onder de topmanager(s) (Milliken e.a., 1990; 1998; Morgan & Milliken, 1992).

Deze redenering wordt gesteund door de bevindingen in dit proefschrift, aangezien in dit hoofdstuk inderdaad een positieve relatie wordt gevonden tussen de houding van de HR manager en het aanbod van werk-privébeleid. Daarnaast bouwt dit hoofdstuk voort op voorgaand onderzoek door na te gaan of de houding van de HR manager in de ene context meer van belang is voor werk-privébeleid dan in de andere. Hierbij wordt de veronderstelling getoetst dat in een context die al aspecten bevat die doorgaans de aanwezigheid van werk-privébeleid bevorderen, het makkelijker zal zijn voor de HR manager om de topmanager te overtuigen van het belang van het aanbieden van meer van dergelijk beleid. Bijvoorbeeld in de publieke sector, grote organisaties, organisaties in landen met een hoge mate van gender gelijkheid en organisaties in landen met veel overheidsbeleid op dit terrein (Den Dulk e.a., 2010; Goodstein, 1994; Wood e.a., 2003). De resultaten laten zien dat het inderdaad contextafhankelijk is in hoeverre een HR manager met een positieve houding ten opzichte van werk-privébeleid verschil kan maken voor het aanbod van dergelijk beleid in de organisatie. Het verschil dat ze kunnen maken is groter in organisaties in de publieke sector. Ook de landscontext beïnvloedt in hoeverre een HR manager met een positieve houding ten opzichte van werk-privébeleid samenhangt met het aanbod ervan binnen de organisatie. Een hoge mate van gendergelijkheid in de samenleving versterkt de positieve relatie, terwijl veel overheidsbeleid op het gebied van werk en privé de positieve relatie juist afzwakt. Dit lijkt erop te duiden dat HR managers met een positieve houding een belangrijk verschil kunnen maken in een land waar weinig overheidsbeleid is op dit gebied, maar dat dit minder van belang is als de overheid een actieve rol heeft. Veel overheidsbeleid op dit terrein kan op zichzelf al genoeg zijn om topmanager te doordringen van het belang van werk-privébeleid, wat ervoor lijkt te zorgen dat een positieve houding van de HR manager minder essentieel is.

Vanaf hoofdstuk 4 ligt de focus op topmanagers in plaats van HR managers. In hoofdstuk 4 staat centraal onder welke condities topmanagers bereid zijn werk-privébeleid te steunen. De aannames uit het theoretisch kader worden hier rechtstreeks getoetst aan de besluitvorming van topmanagers door te kijken welke argumenten voor topmanagers doorslaggevend zijn om werk-privébeleid al dan niet te steunen. In dit hoofdstuk is een vignetexperiment gebruikt om de besluitvorming van topmanagers te onderzoeken (Rossi & Anderson, 1982). Dit vignetexperiment is gehouden onder topmanagers van een breed scala aan organisaties in Finland, Nederland, Portugal, Slovenië en Engeland. De resultaten laten zien dat topmanagers inderdaad kosten-baten afwegingen maken: ze steunen werk-privébeleid wanneer er weinig financiële investeringen nodig zijn en wanneer het bijdraagt aan de betrokkenheid van werknemers bij de organisatie. Daarbij zijn topmanagers enthousiaster over flexibele werktijden en telewerken dan over verlofregelingen en deeltijdwerk, wat suggereert dat topmanagers over het algemeen een voorkeur hebben

voor werk-privébeleid dat weinig consequenties heeft voor de uren dat werknemers aan het werk zijn. Topmanagers lijken ook institutionele druk mee te nemen in hun besluitvorming. Ze zijn positiever over werk-privébeleid dat bedoeld is voor alle werknemers en niet slechts voor de beste werknemers met de bedoeling hen te belonen en voor de organisatie te behouden. Deze voorkeur is nog veel sterker onder topmanagers van organisaties in de publieke sector, wat in lijn is met de verwachting vanuit neo-institutionele theorie dat topmanagers van publieke sector organisaties gevoeliger zijn voor institutionele druk. De bevinding dat ook topmanagers uit de private sector een voorkeur hebben om werk-privébeleid algemeen beschikbaar te stellen in de organisatie laat bovendien zien dat op het strategisch niveau waarop de topmanagers opereren werk-privébeleid vandaag de dag meer wordt gezien als onderdeel van de algemene arbeidsvoorwaarden en niet zozeer als een specifieke gunst die aan werknemers wordt verleend. Vanuit de neo-institutionele theorie wordt ook verondersteld dat beleid van andere organisaties wordt gekopieerd. Dit wordt niet ondersteund met de bevindingen in dit hoofdstuk: topmanagers zijn niet eerder geneigd werk-privébeleid te steunen als andere organisaties in dezelfde sector het ook aanbieden. Ook is er in dit hoofdstuk geen bevestiging gevonden voor de managerial interpretation approach. Persoonlijke kenmerken van de topmanagers lijken niet gerelateerd aan hun steun voor werk-privébeleid. Wel werden er verschillen tussen landen gevonden in de steun voor verschillende soorten werk-privébeleid. In Slovenië en Finland was het verschil in de beoordeling van flexibele werktijden en deeltijdwerk veel groter dan in de andere landen, waar de mate waarin topmanagers verschillenden typen beleid verschillend waarderen minder groot is. Flexibele werktijden werden door topmanagers in deze landen veel meer ondersteund dan deeltijdwerk.

Verschillen tussen landen in de overwegingen van topmanagers

In hoofdstuk 5 is nader ingegaan op verschillen tussen landen in de steun van topmanagers voor werk-privébeleid. Dit hoofdstuk heeft een meer exploratief karakter: nagaan of overwegingen van topmanagers rondom het al dan niet aanbieden van werk-privébeleid in hun organisatie verschillen tussen landen en hoe deze overwegingen worden beïnvloed door de nationale context. Finland, Nederland, Engeland, Portugal en Slovenië worden vergeleken. Dit hoofdstuk maakt gebruik van mixed methods (Creswell & Clark, 2011), door het vignet experiment (Rossi & Anderson, 1982) te combineren met de semigestructureerde interviews (Galletta, 2013). Om landen te kunnen vergelijken binnen het vignetexperiment is een apart model geschat voor elk land. Dit maakte het mogelijk na te gaan of sommige condities belangrijk zijn voor de steun van topmanagers voor werk-privébeleid in het ene land maar niet in het andere land. De semigestructureerde interviews dienden vervolgens om de gevonden verschillen te kunnen duiden. Daarnaast zijn ze gebruikt om nationale verschillen te vinden die niet werden verwacht en daarom kans liepen bij

het vignetexperiment over het hoofd te worden gezien. De resultaten laten zien dat veel overwegingen van topmanagers niet landafhankelijk zijn maar gedeeld worden door topmanagers in alle landen. Desondanks zijn er systematische verschillen tussen landen gevonden. De nationale context lijkt te bepalen welke overwegingen centraal staan voor topmanagers wanneer ze nadenken over werk-privébeleid: met name kosten-baten overwegingen of overwegingen rondom maatschappelijke verantwoordelijkheid. Bevindingen laten zien dat topmanagers uit verschillende landen niet in dezelfde mate werk privé beleid evalueren in business case argumenten. Tevens zijn verschillen tussen landen te duiden doordat topmanagers laten meewegen in hoeverre werk-privébeleid gemeengoed is in hun maatschappelijke context. In landen waar fulltime werken bijvoorbeeld de norm is, steunen topmanagers deeltijdwerken minder. Daarnaast speelt ook het overheidsbeleid rondom werk en privé mee. Wanneer de overheid uitgebreide verlofregelingen en kinderopvangvoorzieningen regelt, voelen topmanagers zich minder aangesproken om ook werk-privébeleid op dit zelfde terrein te bieden, bijvoorbeeld door de verlofregelingen uit te breiden. Ze vinden het de verantwoordelijkheid van de overheid om deze zaken te regelen en niet die van de organisatie.

Veranderingen in overwegingen van topmanagers

Eerder onderzoek heeft laten zien dat het aanbod van werk-privébeleid aan verandering onderhevig is (Kelly, 2003; Lee e.a., 2000). Om dit beter te kunnen begrijpen ligt in het laatste empirische hoofdstuk de focus op hoe overwegingen van topmanagers veranderen door de tijd heen. De veranderingen in het aanbod van werk-privébeleid resulteren immers van de besluiten van topmanagers. Dit hoofdstuk richt zich in tegenstelling tot de andere hoofdstukken alleen op Nederland. Specifiek wordt er gekeken naar veranderingen in overwegingen tussen 2008 en 2011, een periode die met name interessant is omdat tussen deze tijdstippen de economische crisis op gang kwam in Nederland (Joosten, 2011). Dit hoofdstuk is kwalitatief van aard en maakt gebruik van semigestructureerde interviews met topmanagers van 13 organisaties die zijn geïnterviewd in 2008 en daarna nogmaals in 2011. De resultaten laten zien dat gedurende de economische crisis topmanagers zich meer bewust werden van de kosten van werk-privébeleid. Dit was met name het geval als de gevolgen van de economische crisis duidelijk voelbaar waren binnen de eigen organisatie. Dit betekende niet meteen dat men vond dat werk-privébeleid moest worden teruggebracht. In tegendeel, de trend dat werk-privébeleid steeds meer geaccepteerd en gangbaar wordt lijkt zich te hebben doorgezet tijdens de economische crisis. Een manier voor topmanagers om kostenbewustzijn te combineren met deze doorzettende trend, was door meer voorwaarden te stellen aan het gebruik van werk-privébeleid. Op deze manier trachtten ze potentiele negatieve gevolgen van dit beleid voor de organisatie te beperken. Een andere verandering zichtbaar tijdens deze periode was de opkomst van het

nieuwe werken. Met name topmanagers van grote organisaties gaven aan werk-privébeleid te willen bieden binnen de context van het nieuwe werken. De onderliggende motivatie was dat ze arbeidsmarktontwikkelingen wilden bijhouden en zich wilden profileren als moderne werkgevers. Dit longitudinale onderzoek laat daarmee zien dat de overwegingen en houding van topmanagers tegenover werk-privébeleid dynamisch zijn.

ALGEMENE CONCLUSIES

Dit proefschrift laat zien dat topmanagers in hun besluitvorming rondom het al dan niet aanbieden van werk-privébeleid binnen hun organisatie het belang van de organisatie voorop stellen. Topmanagers steunen werk-privébeleid in hun organisatie in aanvulling op wat wettelijk verplicht is wanneer ze denken dat dit bijdraagt aan het behalen van de doelstellingen van de organisatie, of tenminste niet contraproductief is. Dit is goed te begrijpen vanuit het feit dat topmanagers bovenal verantwoordelijk zijn voor een gezonde organisatie en het behalen van de doelstellingen van de organisatie. Deze bevinding komt overeen met eerdere bevindingen binnen ander onderzoek, waarin ook wordt gevonden dat beslissingen rond werk-privébeleid zijn gebaseerd op kosten-baten afwegingen. Het idee is hierbij dat de organisatiestrategie rondom werk-privébeleid kan bijdragen aan het behalen van de doelen van de organisatie (Den Dulk, 2001). Meer specifiek laat dit proefschrift zien dat topmanagers nadenken over hoe dit beleid kan bijdragen aan de werving van geschikte werknemers. Daarnaast trachten topmanagers het belang van de organisatie veilig te stellen door de implementatie van werk-privébeleid bij te sturen. Ze doen dit door voorwaarden te stellen aan het gebruik van werk-privébeleid binnen de ruimte die de wet hen biedt rond wettelijk verplicht werk-privébeleid. Ze gebruiken deze ruimte door het beleid binnen de eigen organisatie zo vorm te geven dat het de organisatie zoveel mogelijk oplevert. Dit impliceert dat er ook verschillen tussen organisaties bestaan hoe werknemers gebruik kunnen maken van wettelijke regelingen. Daarnaast relateren topmanagers hun overwegingen aan de context van de organisatie om het organisatiebelang veilig te stellen. Dit zorgt ervoor dat de afweging van de topmanager afhankelijk is van de specifieke organisatiecontext. De bevinding dat topmanagers van organisaties in de publieke sector de kosten meer meenemen in hun overwegingen, is te begrijpen vanuit de context dat ze met publiek geld worden bekostigd en de besteding hiervan met name ten tijde van de economische crisis nauwlettend in de gaten werd gehouden. Ook hechten deze topmanagers er meer belang aan dat werk-privébeleid als arbeidsvoorwaarde wordt geboden en niet als beloning, omdat gelijke behandeling met name in de Europese context als belangrijk wordt gezien. Voor organisaties in de publieke sector is een goede reputatie op dit gebied belangrijk voor hun bestaansrecht.

Topmanagers zien werk-privébeleid niet als één geheel, maar evalueren verschillende typen beleid los van elkaar. Voor elk type wordt apart bekeken wat het betekent voor de organisatie en in hoeverre het in het belang van de organisatie is om het aan te bieden. Topmanagers zijn over het algemeen het meest positief over flexibele werktijden en telewerken. Deze worden meer in het belang van de organisatie gezien dan verlofregelingen en deeltijdwerk aangezien flexibele werktijden en telewerken kunnen worden ingezet om een meer flexibele werknemerspopulatie te creëren. Daarnaast zetten deze regelingen het idee van een prototype ideale werknemer die altijd beschikbaar is en voltijd werkt niet onder druk (Hammer e.a., 2009). Desondanks verschilt het sterk tussen landen in hoeverre deeltijdwerk wordt ondersteund door topmanagers, hetgeen lijkt samen te hangen met wat er gebruikelijk is in het land.

Werk-privébeleid is steeds meer algemeen geaccepteerd onder topmanagers. Het beleid wordt gezien als onderdeel van algemene arbeidsvoorwaarden en minder als specifieke gunst. Dit sluit niet aan bij wat er bekend is uit de literatuur, maar dergelijke onderzoeken stammen met name uit de Verenigde Staten of het Verenigd Koninkrijk. Topmanagers hebben een voorkeur voor het aanbieden van werk-privébeleid aan alle werknemers en niet alleen aan specifiek goed presterende werknemers. Dit duidt er op dat dergelijke regelingen op strategisch niveau (waarop topmanagers opereren) worden gezien als algemene arbeidsvoorwaarde. Onderzoek laat zien dat dit niet opgaat voor de gehele organisatie. Op de lagere niveaus in de organisatie wordt werk-privébeleid door direct leidinggevenden vaak ingezet en gezien als gunst voor werknemers (Den Dulk & De Ruijter, 2008; Klein e.a., 2000). Er lijkt daarmee een kloof lijkt te bestaan tussen het beleid op organisatieniveau wat wordt bepaald door topmanagers en de praktijk van alledag (Den Dulk & De Ruijter, 2008).

Of topmanagers werk-privébeleid zien als hun verantwoordelijkheid is gerelateerd aan overheidsbeleid. In landen waar de overheid voorziet in uitgebreide verlofregelingen en kinderopvang, zijn topmanagers van mening dat dergelijk beleid de verantwoordelijkheid is van de overheid. Ze zijn dan ook niet geneigd om dit uit te breiden of aan te vullen. Andere typen werk-privébeleid, zoals flexibele werktijden en telewerken zien ze daarentegen wel als iets dat ze kunnen aanbieden om de werk-privébalans van werknemers te steunen (Den Dulk e.a., 2012). De aanwezigheid van veel overheidsregelingen op het gebied van werk en privé doet het besef van topmanagers dat werknemers dergelijke ondersteuning nodig hebben toenemen. Dit resulteert er in dat ze werk-privébeleid vaker aanbieden vanuit het argument dat het hun maatschappelijke verantwoordelijkheid is. In landen waar minder sprake is van overheidsregelingen gebeurt het ontwikkelen van werk-privébeleid meer vanuit het argument dat het goed is voor de organisatie om dit te doen. Overheidsbeleid is echter niet het enige dat het belang van werk-privébeleid onder de aandacht kan brengen van topmanagers. Dit proefschrift laat zien dat in landen waar

de overheid weinig doet op het gebied van werk en privé, HR managers werk-privébeleid onder de aandacht kunnen brengen en daarmee kunnen bevorderen. Besluitvorming van topmanagers ten aanzien van werk-privébeleid dient daarom gezien te worden als gerelateerd aan de context en kan dan ook niet los worden gezien van zowel de context van de organisatie als die van het land.

THEORETISCHE IMPLICATIES

Onderzoekers hebben recent opgeroepen tot onderzoek dat zich richt op de vraag of werkgevers werk-privébeleid aanbieden vanuit kosten-baten afwegingen of vanuit institutionele druk (Den Dulk e.a., 2013). Dit proefschrift laat zien dat beiden een rol spelen: topmanagers plaatsen het belang van de organisatie voorop en maken daarbij kosten-baten afwegingen, maar nemen ook institutionele druk mee in hun overwegingen. Een vernieuwend inzicht dat dit proefschrift heeft opgeleverd, is dat het samenspel tussen kosten-baten afwegingen en institutionele druk nog een stap verder gaat: de institutionele context lijkt eraan bij te dragen in hoeverre topmanagers werk-privébeleid evalueren in termen van kosten en baten of dat argumenten rond maatschappelijke verantwoordelijkheid ook een centrale plaats innemen. In landen waar het gebruikelijk is om beslissingen rond werk-privébeleid te formuleren in termen van kosten en baten, gebruikten topmanagers ook met name deze terminologie. In landen waar werk-privébeleid meer wordt gezien als maatschappelijke verantwoordelijkheid stond dit argument veel centraler in de argumentatie van topmanagers. Dit betekent dat als topmanagers hun beslissingen rond werk-privébeleid formuleren in termen van kosten-baten afwegingen, dit samenhangt met de institutionele context.

Dit proefschrift combineert de drie meest gebruikte theorieën in de literatuur: neo-institutionele theorie, business case argumentatie (Den Dulk, 2001; 2005; Den Dulk e.a., 2010; Osterman, 1995; Plantenga & Remery, 2005) en de managerial interpretation approach (Bardoel, 2003; Goodstein, 1994; Kossek e.a., 1994; Milliken e.a., 1998; Osterman, 1995). Om topmanagers' steun voor werk-privébeleid te kunnen begrijpen lijken met name business case argumentatie en institutionele druk vanuit wetgeving en verwachtingen van (potentiele) werknemers van belang. Topmanagers formuleren namelijk hun beslissingen in termen van kosten en baten en volgen daarnaast sociale normen en conventies rond werk-privébeleid. De leeftijd, sekse en topmanagers' eigen ervaringen met het gebruik van werk-privébeleid vormen echter geen verklaring voor hun steun voor dit beleid. Daarmee lijkt de managerial interpretation approach minder van belang voor het begrijpen van topmanagers' steun voor werk-privébeleid. Desondanks laat dit proefschrift zien dat topmanagers ongeacht de context variëren in hoeverre ze werk-privébeleid als goed zien voor de organisatie of niet. Dit duidt erop dat hun persoonlijke overtuigingen en visie samenhangen met hun besluiten over werk-privébeleid.

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Curriculum Vitae

Wike Been was born in Groningen, the Netherlands, on October 13 1983 and grew up in the small village Feerwerd. After her bachelor degree in Sociology (2007), she obtained her Research Master's degree in Regional Studies with a specialization in Demography (cum laude, 2009) at the University of Groningen. In September 2010, Wike started working as a PhD candidate at the Interuniversity Center for Social Theory and Methodology (ICS) at Utrecht University studying why top managers support work-life arrangements or refrain from support in the context of Europe. During her PhD she collected data among over 200 top managers of organizations in the Netherlands, Finland, Portugal, Slovenia and the U.K.. During this process of collecting data, she was a visiting scholar at universities across Europe, working together on designing the data collection with Dr. Charlotta Niemistö (Hanken University, Finland), Prof. dr. Maria Das Dores- Guerreiro (IUL, Portugal), Prof. dr. Aleksandra Kanjuo-Mrčela (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia) and Prof. dr. Jane Falkingham (University of Southampton, U.K.). During her PhD she furthermore supervised master- and bachelorstudents in Sociology in writing their theses and taught courses on the basic principles of Sociology and Human Resource Management policy research. Since November 2014, Wike has been working as a researcher for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment where she studies collective agreements in the Netherlands.

The ICS series presents dissertations of the Interuniversity Center for Social Science Theory and Methodology. Each of these studies aims at integrating explicit theory formation with state of the art empirical research or at the development of advanced methods for empirical research. The ICS was founded in 1986 as a cooperative effort of the universities of Groningen and Utrecht. Since 1992, the ICS expanded to the University of Nijmegen. Most of the projects are financed by the participating universities or by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). The international composition of the ICS graduate students is mirrored in the increasing international orientation of the projects and thus of the ICS series itself.

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