Combining a Career and Childcare

The Use and Usefulness of Work-Family Policies in European Organizations

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The Use and Usefulness of Work-Family Policies in European Organizations

Het Combineren van een Carrière en een Gezin

Gebruik en Gevolgen van Werk-Familiebeleid in Europese Organisaties

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

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Introduction

1

Introduction

I was born April 12th 1991. My mother was at home, and had been home for two weeks already, while my dad was at the police station where he worked, and hurried home as soon as he heard. Hours later I was born, and my parents became parents. They were over the moon with such a cute and awesome baby, but my dad could cherish the joys of being a father only rather briefly, because two days later he had to go back to work, as if no major life-event had taken place. Yet my parents were lucky, being both public sector employees they could take some parental leave, and for a while, both my parents took part-time parental leave and combined working with taking care of baby-me. However, combining a career and childcare was hard, and after my brother was also born they decided my mum would stay home to care for us, while my dad worked full-time.

Now, exactly 28 years later, much has changed, but much has also stayed the same. The increase in dual-earner and single-parent families has led to an increasing number of people who need to combine having a paid job with family responsibilities (Eurostat, 2015b; OECD, 2011). As a response, both countries and organizations have made it easier for parents to combine work and family. Many countries have adopted work-family policies, such as family leave policies (maternity, paternity and parental leave) or the option to work part-time (Abendroth & den Dulk, 2011; OECD, 2017b). It has also become increasingly common for organizations to provide their employees with additional work-family policies, meaning that they provide employees with policies that go beyond what they are required to offer by law, such as longer or better paid leave policies, increased access to part-time work, or childcare at work (den Dulk, Groeneveld, Ollier-Malaterre, & Valcour, 2013; den Dulk, Peters, & Poutsma, 2012). Thus, for many employees combining work and family has become easier, meaning that those who want to continue working can do so, and do not have to drop out of employment like my mum.

Simultaneously, much has also stayed the same. Even though men have increased their participation in domestic work and childcare, these developments are not proportional to the increase in female labor participation (Creighton, 1999; J. Lewis, 2001; Lyonette & Crompton, 2015), and the gendered division of labor continues to

exist in practice as well as as an ideal. Women are still expected to be the main caregiver while their male partner is the main earner, meaning that the task of combining work and childcare lies largely with women, and not with men (Kanji & Samuel, 2017). Governmental policies reinforce this gendered division of labor by providing mothers with much more extensive leave policies than fathers (European Parliament, 2015; INLPR, n.d.), which contributes to gender inequality (Ciccia & Verloo, 2012). Simultaneously, work-norms in organizations are still inherently male, making it hard for women—and especially mothers—to excel in the workplace, and hard for men to prioritize childcare over—or even next to—being a worker (Acker, 1990; Munn & Greer, 2015). Thus, also in 2019 it is likely that my dad would have continued to work full-time while my mum cared for us, and not the other way around.

Work-family policies are thus increasingly available to parents, providing them with new possibilities for arranging work and care. Simultaneously, the division of work and care between young parents remains gendered. In this dissertation I will examine the utilization and consequences of work-family policies in the context of European organizations.

Societal relevance

There is great societal relevance in ensuring that parents can successfully combine work and family responsibilities, as well as in ensuring gender equality in work-family decisions. When young parents struggle to combine work and family this can have negative consequences for the parents and their children, as well as for organizations, and for society as a whole. Parents who have difficulty combining work and family are likely to experience high levels of work-life conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Grönlund & Öun, 2010), which has been shown to relate to physical and mental health issues and lower life satisfaction (T. D. Allen & Armstrong, 2006; T. D. Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Carlson et al., 2011; Leineweber, Baltzer, Magnusson Hanson, & Westerlund, 2013; Moen et al., 2015). This can also affect their children, for example through lower quantity and quality of parent-child time and lower relationship quality (Roeters, van der Lippe, & Kluwer, 2009, 2010). Providing parents with opportunities to successfully combine work and family can also affect the organization in which they

work, through higher productivity and organizational commitment, and lower levels of absence and turnover (T. D. Allen et al., 2000; Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, & Semmer, 2011; Carlson et al., 2011; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999). Lastly, when it is difficult for parents to combine work and family this can also have negative consequences for society as a whole: high levels of work-life conflict may relate to high societal healthcare costs (Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2004) and lower fertility rates (Begall & Mills, 2011; Soohyun, 2014). Thus, it is in the interest of working parents, employers and society to ensure that people can successfully combine work and family, and that work-life conflict is low.

The second reason why the choices parents make in their work-family decisions are societally relevant is that it relates to gender equality. Ensuring gender equality is in the interest of both women, men and society at large. Gender norms prescribe that it is mainly up to women to combine work and family and up to men to be unencumbered workers (Acker, 1990; Kanji & Samuel, 2017; Munn & Greer, 2015). Historically, work-family policies were therefore seen as relating to increasing the social and financial emancipation of women, as it enabled women who had previously been out of the workforce to participate in paid labor (Hegewisch & Gornick, 2008, 2011; Portegijs, Cloïn, Keuzenkamp, Merens, & Steenvoorden, 2008). Yet work-family policies have paradoxically also been found to perpetuate gender occupational and economic inequality, by hindering women's career progression into powerful, high-level positions (Evertsson & Duvander, 2011; Mandel & Semyonov, 2005a, 2006). A number of explanations for this have been given, including a) human capital depreciation resulting from women's absences from the job for family reasons, b) a reluctance of employers to present them with career opportunities, as they interpret women's family involvement as a signal of lower organizational commitment and c) discriminating employers who are reluctant to hire or promote women (Acker, 1990; Albrecht, Edin, Sundström, & Vroman, 1999; Evertsson & Duvander, 2011; Mandel & Semyonov, 2005b, 2006). Thus, creating greater gender equality in work-family decisions (i.e. creating male access to work-family policies) could be beneficial for the emancipation of women, as it would entail that the negative consequences of engagement in childcare would not only lie with women (Haas & Hwang, 2007). Simultaneously, increasing gender

equality in work-family decisions is also in the interest of men, as the current gendered task-division also deprives them of the opportunity to be actively involved with their children (Kanji & Samuel, 2017), and makes the consequences for men who defy these norms by sometimes prioritizing family over work even more negative than for women (Vandello, Hettinger, Bosson, & Siddiqi, 2013). On top of that, the gendered division of work and care can also have negative outcomes for society. As Frans Timmermans, First Vice-president of the European Commission, notes: as long as men and women make work-family decisions based on their gender rather than on their talents, society misses out on talented women in the labor market (and talented men in childcare), with all subsequent economic consequences. Therefore he maintains that it is important to give young parents a real choice as to who works and who cares, for example through better opportunities for men to combine work and family (Timmermans, 2017a, 2017b).

This dissertation

There are thus many reasons why it is important to enable young parents, both men and women, with opportunities to successfully combine work and family, and many European countries have adopted work-family policies for this purpose. The scientific study of these work-family policies has, however, left some important hiatus, to which this dissertation aims to contribute. In this dissertation I expand on previous research on two dimensions: I firstly focus on different facets of work-family policies, namely their *use and usefulness*, meaning that I will examine why people use or do not use certain policies, as well as whether these policies relate to intended outcomes. Secondly, I look at these facets by adopting an organizational and a gender perspective, and by examining the interplay between these perspectives.

Previous research has mostly engaged with the availability of work-family policies, but left the use, and—to a lesser extent—the usefulness aside. However, availability does not automatically lead to utilization, but little is known about why people do or do not use work-family policies. Therefore I will study what encourages or discourages employees' work-family policy utilization. The study of the outcomes of policies (their "usefulness") is more common, though the organizational context is rarely included. In this dissertation I will investigate whether work-family policies relate to

two intended outcomes: lower work-life conflict, and higher extra-role performance. The former can be seen as an intended outcome for employees, it indicates that they are better able to combine work and family. The latter can be seen as an intended outcome for organizations, as it is in the interest of organizations when employees engage in more extra-role performance.

In studying the use and usefulness of work-family policies, I adopt an organizational and a gender perspective, and look at their interplay. Organizations are central actors in employees' work-family decisions, as they constitute the social environment in which the work-family policies are used. Therefore, they are likely to influence people's decisions to use work-family policies, as well as the outcomes of using these policies. This makes it pertinent—though infrequently done—to include organizations in work-family research. Likewise, taking a gender perspective is needed because work-family decisions—by individuals, organizations and the government—are not gender-neutral, and it follows that work-family decisions and outcomes might be different for men and women. However, whether this is actually the case remains to be seen, primarily because men remain understudied in work-family research. Looking at the interplay of these two perspectives will lead to a more complete picture of the utilization and outcomes of work-family policies.

Thus, in this dissertation I aim to shed further light on the use and usefulness of work-family policies, by looking at the interplay of an organizational and a gendered perspective. I will address the following overarching research question: *under which organizational conditions are male and female employees more likely to use work-family policies, and do these policies relate to differences in intended outcomes for employees and organizations?*

I will answer this question by using unique, multilevel organization data which my colleagues and I collected specifically for this purpose: the European Sustainable Workforce Survey [ESWS] (van der Lippe et al., 2016). The ESWS is revolutionary in a number of ways. Thanks to its multilevel structure it includes data on organizations as well as their employees, and allows for studying their interplay. Studies based solely on the individual level are at risk of overlooking the significance of the organizational context, whereas studies focusing solely on the organizational level are likely to

underestimate the importance of differences between employees, such as the amount of hours they work or their family situation. Moreover, the ESWS includes organizations in nine European countries: Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. This means that we can see whether the tested mechanisms function differently in different countries, or whether they are universal. Lastly, as part of the ESWS I designed a vignette-experiment in order to contribute to a better causal understanding of the decision-making of utilization decisions.

Thus, this dissertation makes three main contributions to the literature: a) I study the use and usefulness of work-family policies, b) I do so by taking an organizational and a gendered perspective, and by looking at their interplay, and c) I use unique, multilevel organization data complemented with a vignette-experiment to investigate these topics.

The use and usefulness of work-family policies

The use of work-family policies

While work-family policies have become increasingly available, their utilization remains limited—especially among men (Beauregard, 2011; OECD, 2016b; Pasamar, 2015). Research has suggested that this is not just due to a lack of interest—there are also many people who have access to work-family policies and would like to use these, but who still refrain from doing so (Adams et al., 2016; M. F. Hoffman & Cowan, 2010; McDonald, Brown, & Bradley, 2005; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2003). However, as very little research has focused on the utilization of work-family policies, much remains unclear about why parents do or do not use the work-family policies they have access to, and especially about the role of organizations herein; does the organizational context affect employees' decision-making whether or not to use work-family policies? In other words, are employees more likely to use work-family policies in some organizations, but not in others? Also, while we know that men use work-family policies less often than women (Eurostat, 2017; International Network on Leave Policies and Research [INLPR], n.d.), we do not know whether they also focus on different (organizational)

factors in their decision-making. For that reason, I will examine in the first half of this dissertation how organizational aspects relate to the use of work-family policies of men and women.

The usefulness of work-family policies

In this dissertation I look at how work-family policies relate to two intended outcomes: work-life conflict and extra-role performance. The main reasoning behind offering work-family policies is often that they will help employees combine work and family, and thereby reduce work-life conflict (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006; Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2012). However, it remains unclear whether this is actually the case. Empirical studies have sometimes found work-family policies to relate to lower work-life conflict, but at other times found no effect or even found the opposite: that the use of work-family policies relates to *more* work-life conflict (see: Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Beham, Präg, & Drobnič, 2012; Kelly et al., 2008). A possible explanation for this is that the relation between work-family policies and work-life conflict is not as clear-cut as was initially assumed. Maybe work-family policies only relate to lower levels of work-life conflict under certain conditions, but not under others. One such condition, which has often been overlooked by previous research, is the organizational context. For example, whether the organization is supportive about using such policies might affect one's experience when using this, and therefore I will study this in this dissertation. Moreover, organizations often provide access to work-family policies with the intended outcome of it being beneficial for their organizational purposes (Been, 2015; den Dulk, 2001; Kossek & Friede, 2006), for example because having these policies increases extra-role performance—the extra effort of employees that goes beyond their assigned tasks. However, whether this is actually the case remains largely untested. Also the role of gender in the relation between work-family policies and intended outcomes remains unclear. In the second half of this dissertation I will therefore examine the usefulness of work-family policies; how do these policies relate to intended outcomes, work-life conflict and extra-role performance, for men and women.

The interplay of an organizational and a gender perspective

An organizational perspective

It is surprising that so little is known about whether and how the organizational context influences work-family decisions and outcomes, because people use work-family policies in the context of their *work*. Organizations are gatekeepers to the work-family policies adopted by national governments; even though employees are officially entitled to these policies, organizations can in practice provide or withhold access to some degree (Boon, Paauwe, Boselie, & Den Hartog, 2009; Goodstein, 1994; S. Lewis & Smithson, 2001). Additionally, some organizations also provide *additional* work-family policies on top of what they are obliged to offer by law, for example longer or better paid parental leave, more options to work part-time, or childcare support (Abendroth & den Dulk, 2011; den Dulk et al., 2012). Yet, regardless of their central position in work-family issues, organizations are often not included in work-family research (Kelly et al., 2008; Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, & Hammer, 2011) and sociology more broadly (Kalleberg, 2009). Instead, studies often focus on individual employees or compare between countries, but fail to integrate the organizational context.

Looking at the studies that do investigate the role of organizations in work-family decisions, I identify two main ways of looking at them. The first is to think of organizations as actors that make strategic choices and invest in work-family policies when this is in their own interest. Two main theories exist in this context: institutional theory and business-case argumentation. Institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) maintains that there are institutional pressures in society that push organizations to behave in a certain way, and organizations adhere to these pressures because they want to obtain social legitimacy. Organizations with certain characteristics, for example larger organizations, organizations in the public sector, and organizations with a greater proportion of women, face more institutional pressures than others, making them more likely to adopt work-family policies (den Dulk et al., 2013; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995). Business-case argumentation also sees organizations as actors that make strategic choices, but focusses more on a financial cost-benefit analysis. In this line of reasoning, organizations are likely to adopt policies

when they believe this will be in their own financial interest, for example because it will attract or retain desirable employees, or because it increases the performance of current employees (Been, 2015; den Dulk, 2001; Kossek & Friede, 2006).

The second way through which scholars look at organizations in the context of work-family policies is by looking at the family-supportiveness of the organizational culture. Each organization has a distinct organizational culture, through which it expresses or withholds support for the integration of employees' work and family lives (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). Although an organization's culture might relate to the strategic choices described above, it is a separate construct. For example, an organization might offer extended work-family policies because it believes that this will help attract employees (business-case argument), while practically discouraging the utilization of these policies through a culture where employees are expected to work long hours, always be physically present, and show their commitment to the organization by prioritizing work over family (Acker, 1990; Haas & Hwang, 2016; Kirby & Krone, 2002; McDonald, Bradley, & Brown, 2008). As organizational support is an intangible concept, it tends to be studied in a variety of ways, including objective (i.e. behavior in the organization) and subjective measures (i.e. perceived support). Moreover, organizational support is sometimes divided into different "levels" of support, including general support from the organizational culture, managerial support and collegial support (T. D. Allen, 2001; Dikkers, Geurts, den Dulk, Peper, & Kompier, 2004; Kirby & Krone, 2002).

Institutional theory and business-case argumentation have mostly been used for studying the *adoption* of additional organizational work-family policies (e.g. Been, den Dulk, & van der Lippe, 2017; Been, van der Lippe, et al., 2017; den Dulk, 2001; den Dulk & Peper, 2007). Both are almost never applied to the use of work-family policies, and only limitedly to the usefulness of it, yet it is important to do so because the strategic choices of organizations may extend to the utilization of work-family policies (for example through increased access) and outcomes of work-family policies. The family-supportiveness of an organizational culture is frequently included in qualitative research on both the use and usefulness of work-family policies (e.g. Kaufman, 2017; Lewis & den Dulk, 2008; ter Hoeven, Miller, Peper, & den Dulk, 2017), and has also been

included in some small-scale quantitative studies (e.g. Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; den Dulk & Peper, 2007; Haas, Allard, & Hwang, 2002; Pasamar, 2015; Pettigrew, 2014; Smith & Gardner, 2007; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999), yet has been absent from large-scale (multilevel) studies. Organizational support tends to be included in a variety of ways, and the interplay between different "levels" (i.e. organization, manager and/or colleagues) and measures (i.e. subjective and objective) are theoretically and empirically not well established. In this dissertation I will use several different measures for support.

A gender perspective

Work-family decisions—by individuals, organizations and the government—are not gender-neutral. Societal norms regarding the appropriate behavior of men and women in work-family issues are deeply ingrained in European societies (Abendroth & Pausch, 2017; Kanji & Samuel, 2017). Following the breadwinner-homemaker model, women are deemed to shoulder the main responsibility for the home and children, while men are primarily responsible for the household income (Kanji & Samuel, 2017; Munn & Greer, 2015). In line with this, both the access to and the use of work-family policies is higher among women than among men (INLPR, n.d.; OECD, 2016b, 2017a).

The main sociological theory dealing with the gendered choices people make is that of "doing gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987), which treats gender as a social construct (rather than a biological "trait") which people actively perform and thereby reinforce. It maintains that most people act in conformance with their gender because it is less costly to conform to societal expectations than to defy these (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Thus, women—and not men—are likely to prioritize childcare over work (by dropping out of employment, working part-time, or using extended leave periods) because of societal expectations to which they have been exposed their entire lives.

For a long time work-family research focused solely on women, as the responsibility of combining work and family was solely seen as a woman's issue (Haas & Hwang, 2016). However, men are increasingly being studied in work-family policy research, especially in countries where there is much focus on gender equality and increasing male participation in childrearing, such as Sweden (e.g. Bygren & Duvander,

2006; Evertsson & Duvander, 2011; Haas & Hwang, 2016). Still, research on whether work-family decision and outcomes functions *differently* for men and women remains rare.

The interplay of an organizational and a gender perspective

In this dissertation I will simultaneously take an organizational and a gender perspective, and thereby look at the interplay between the two. Considering doing gender theory, as described above, one can wonder whether organizational aspects play a similar role for men and for women in their utilization-decisions and work-family policy outcomes. One perspective that combines organizations and gender is ideal worker theory (Acker, 1990). Ideal worker theory holds that many organizations centralize around the notion of an "ideal worker" which is based on the traditional male breadwinner. This ideal worker exists only for the job, and has no other (family) responsibilities that are interfering (for example because he has a homemaker spouse). He is therefore able to fully focus on the job, almost always be physically present at work, and never prioritize family. Thus, in organizations that adhere strongly to ideal worker-culture the use of work-family policies is frowned upon, as these employees deviate from the norm that family should not interfere with work. It should be noted that the ideal worker is inherently male, which makes that women are often almost by default not ideal workers. While this means that women are often seen as less serious workers as it is expected that they will prioritize family responsibilities, this also entails that using work-family policies is a greater violation of norms for men than for women, who were not really expected to be unencumbered workers in the first place (Acker, 1990; Evertsson & Duvander, 2011; Haas & Hwang, 2016; Munn & Greer, 2015; Reid, 2015), implying that men would be less likely to use work-family policies, pay greater attention to organizational considerations in their decision-making, and, when they do use work-family policies, they face more obstacles in enjoying the benefits of using work-family policies.

Work-family policies in Europe

The term "work-family policies" can be used to refer to a variety of policies aimed at helping employees combine work with family, such as parental leave, part-time work, childcare arrangements and flexibility policies. Some scholars distinguish between work-*family* and work-*life* policies, to indicate that some policies are useful only to employees with children, while others can be helpful to anyone (Chang, McDonald, & Burton, 2010; van der Lippe, van Breeschoten, & van Hek, 2018). In this dissertation I focus only on people with children, and therefore use the term work-family policies, but the distinction between the two is not very clear-cut. For example, part-time work can be used both by employees with and without children and is therefore sometimes seen as a work-life rather than a work-family policy. At the same time, it is historically and in practice strongly intertwined with increasing the labor force participation of young mothers; by working part-time they are (better) able to combine their family with work (Hegewisch & Gornick, 2008, 2011; Portegijs et al., 2008).

In this dissertation I look at two work-family policies, namely family leave (maternity, paternity and parental leave) and part-time work. Governments legislate what is the minimum of work-family policies that organizations have to make available, and to which employees. There is a lot of variation between countries in how extensive the work-family policies offered are. Studies reflecting on this often use some classification of welfare-state typology to categorize these countries (Anttonen & Sipilä, 1996; Esping-Andersen, 1999; Korpi, 2000; Korpi, Ferrarini, & Englund, 2013), indicating that especially social-democratic (Finland, Sweden) and former-communist countries (Bulgaria, Hungary) score high on the national provision of work-family policies, while conservative (Germany, the Netherlands), Mediterranean (Portugal, Spain) and market-oriented countries (UK) score more poorly (Abendroth & den Dulk, 2011; den Dulk et al., 2013). However, this distinction is not conclusive, and there is also a lot of country variation per type of policy.

Organizations can engage with work-family policies in two ways: 1) they are gatekeepers that provide or withhold access to national work-family policies ("national" or "statutory" policies), and 2) they can provide additional work-family policies on top of the policies offered by the government ("additional" or "organizational" policies).

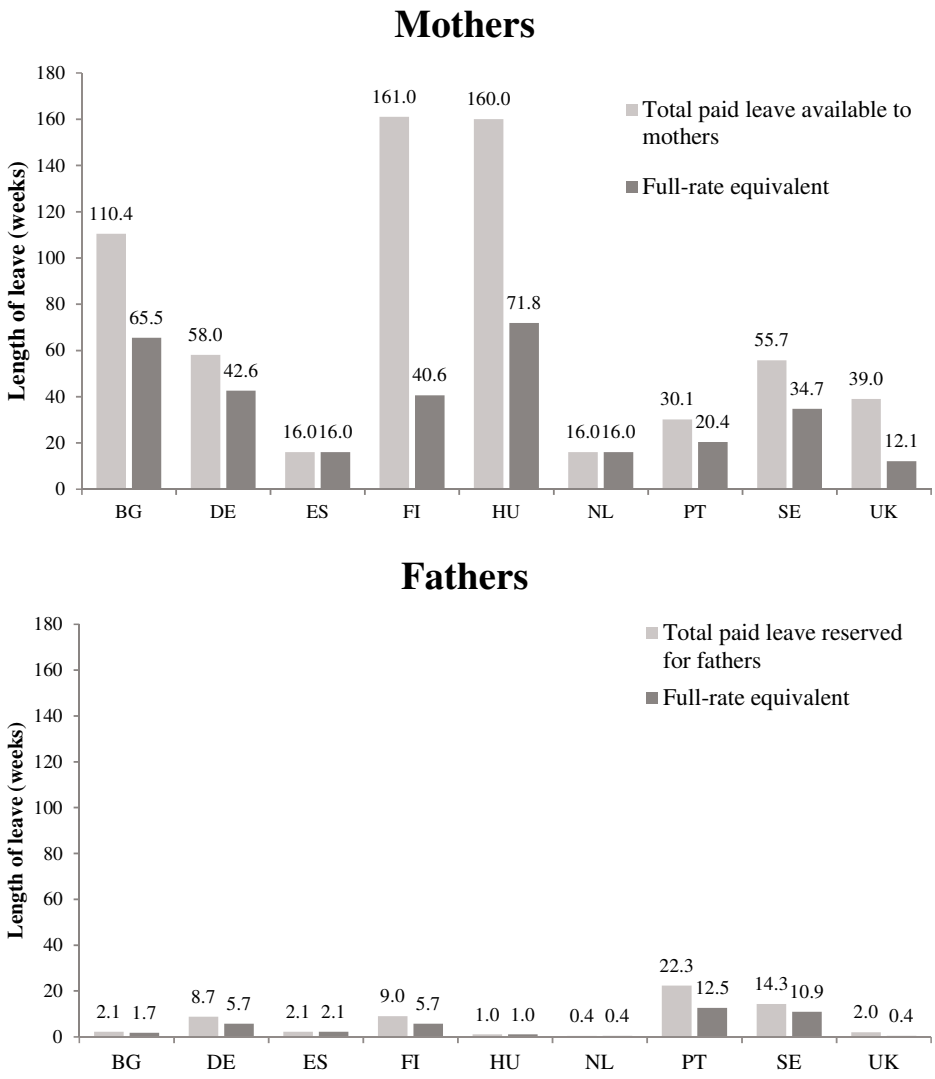
Statutory policies also have consequences for organizations; when employees reduce their working hours or take leave, they will (partially) be absent from the organization, and the organization has to adjust (Been, 2015). As such, organizations vary in their supportiveness for these statutory policies, and where some diligently provide access, others put up barriers to limit access to these policies (Boon et al., 2009; Goodstein, 1994; S. Lewis & Smithson, 2001).

Family leave policies in the different countries

In all European countries employees have the right to some form of paternity, maternity and/or parental leave (INLPR, n.d.; OECD, 2017a). Maternity, paternity and parental leave can be distinguished by their aim and characteristics—though this distinction is not in all countries clear-cut. Maternity leave is generally aimed at protecting the health of mother and child, and limited to the period directly before and after the delivery of the child. Paternity leave is generally short, directly surrounding the delivery, and well-compensated. Parental leave varies in length, can often be taken when the child is a bit older, and is rarely fully compensated. In some countries parental leave can also be taken part-time (INLPR, n.d.; van Belle, 2016). The duration and levels of payment of these leaves does, however, differ tremendously between the countries, and the distinction between the types of leave is not in all countries equally clear. It should also be noted that some countries provide parental leave as an individual right (i.e. mothers and fathers are individually entitled to a period of leave), while other countries award it to a couple jointly as a "family right", so they can decide amongst themselves which partner uses what proportion of the leave. However, in practice such a family-awarded leave period tends to be mostly or entirely taken up by the female partner, and therefore some countries have included a period that is reserved for the male partner, or award a bonus in cash or duration of leave if both partners use a certain period of leave (European Parliament, 2015; INLPR, n.d.; van Belle, 2016).

Figure 1.1 shows for all ESWS countries the number of (partially) paid weeks of leave that mothers and fathers are entitled to (so combined maternity/paternity and parental leave), as well as the "full-rate equivalent". The full-rate equivalent is a function of the duration and the level of pay, and reflects the hypothetical amount of weeks that

Figure 1.1 – Statutory paid leave available for mothers and fathers, total paid leave[a] and full-rate equivalent[b], in weeks.



[a] Total paid leave refers to the total (partially) paid maternity/paternity and parental leave available to parents. For mothers it refers to all leave available to them, that is to say, any leave that can be taken by either of the parents is included as leave for mothers as in practice this leave is mostly used by them and not by fathers. For fathers total paid leave refers only to the leave that can be used only by the father and cannot be transferred to the mother. Weeks of shareable leave that must be taken by the father in order for the family to qualify for 'bonus' weeks are included with the fathers.

[b] The full-rate equivalent was calculated taken by multiplying the duration of leave by the extent to which it is paid. Thus, if parents would be entitled to 10 weeks of leave at a pay-rate of 50 percent of their salary, the full-rate equivalent is five weeks.

Source: OECD (2017a). Data from April 2016.

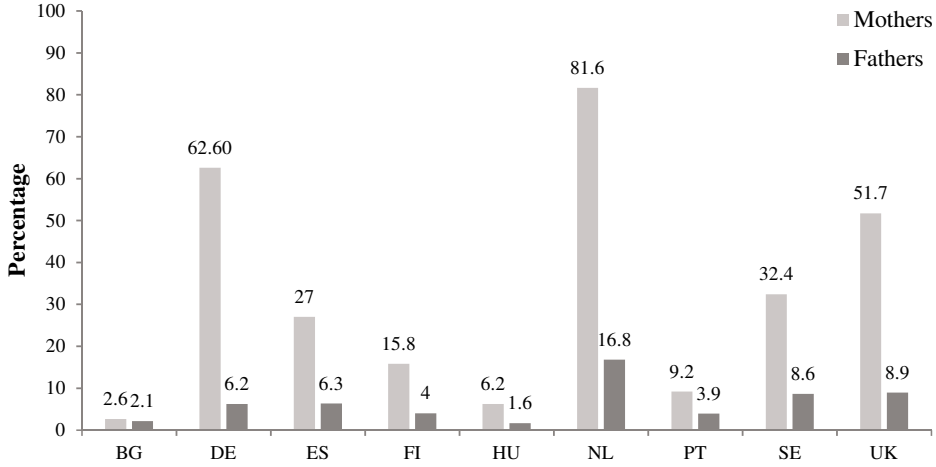
would be fully paid. For example, 10 weeks of leave at a pay-rate of 50 percent of one's salary leads to a full-rate equivalent of five weeks. Figure 1.1 shows that Hungary and Bulgaria provide the longest leave to women, while the Netherlands and the UK provide the least leave. Fathers generally get much less leave in all countries, though it should be kept in mind that in some countries they *could* use a longer period, as the leave is awarded to the couple jointly or transferable from the female to the male partner. However, as this in practice is rarely done, the OECD (from which these numbers originate) has categorized this leave with the mothers.

Providing an informative overview of leave utilization rates in the different countries is unfortunately not possible, as the large differences in leave provisions have resulted in countries measuring leave utilization in widely varying ways. While some countries measure leave utilization as the percentage of employees who were entitled to leave that actually used it, others report it in number of days used, and others in absolute numbers of users (which are hard to interpret because no information on the number of eligible people is available)(INLPR, n.d.; OECD, 2016b). What can be said for certain, however, is that leave utilization is in all countries much higher and longer among mothers than among fathers (OECD, 2016b).

Part-time work in the different countries

Countries sometimes provide employees with the right to request a reduction in working hours. Some countries offer this as a specific right for parents of young children (Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the UK), while others offer it to all employees (Finland, Germany and the Netherlands). In other countries there are no provisions allowing employees to request a reduction in working hours (Hungary, Bulgaria) (Hegewisch, 2009; Hegewisch & Gornick, 2008; INLPR, n.d.). Of the countries that provide the option to request a reduction of working hours, there is a lot of variation in the details of the legislation, i.e. who is eligible for a request in reduction of working hours, and what grounds an employer can have to deny such a request (INLPR, n.d.). There is also a lot of variation in what constitutes as part-time work over countries, some countries define it as either below 35 or 30 hours per week, but many countries also do not have a clear definition and see people as working part-time when they self-identify as such

Figure 1.2 – Percentage of mothers and fathers who work part-time.



Note: People are seen as part-time employees when they self-identified as such, except for those in the Netherlands, who are considered to be working part-time if their usual working hours are <35.
Source: (Eurostat, 2018a), data from 2017.

(Dixon, McCollum, & Fullerton, 2018). Moreover, the quality of part-time work is often lower than that of full-time jobs; they are more precarious and associated with lower salaries and less opportunities for training or promotions (Warren & Lyonette, 2018). The European Union has tried to address this through its 1997 directive on part-time work (97/81/EC), yet this remains a problem, especially for small part-time jobs (Warren & Lyonette, 2018).

The use of part-time work among parents in the ESWS countries is presented in Figure 1.2. It can be seen from this figure that mothers in the Netherlands work part-time most frequently. In the Netherlands this is not only the case amongst parents, also women without children or who have children that are grown up frequently work part-time: 76 percent of the total female workforce works part-time (Eurostat, 2017). The Netherlands is therefore often described as having a "one-and-a-half earners model" (Visser, 2002). Also mothers in Germany and the United Kingdom work part-time very frequently, in both countries this is over 50 percent. It stands out that the use of part-time work is deeply gendered, mothers work part-time (much) more frequently than fathers in all included countries. Dutch men work part-time more frequently than men in any other country, though still much less often than women. Part-time work among

men has, however, been increasing in recent years (Eurostat, 2017; Hegewisch & Gornick, 2008), though it should be kept in mind that men often also work part-time for other purposes than childcare, such as not being able to find a full-time job or being in education (Eurostat, 2018b).

Data: The European Sustainable Workforce Survey

With this dissertation I aim to contribute to the integration of the organization in work-family research, which has this far largely been absent (Kalleberg, 2009; Kelly et al., 2008). In order to do so, my colleagues and I collected the European Sustainable Workforce Survey [ESWS] in 2015 and 2016 (van der Lippe et al., 2016), among organizations in nine European countries: Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The ESWS is a multilevel survey that combines reports from individual employees with reports from managers and the organization (as reported by the HR-manager). Thereby we improve upon previous studies, which often look solely at organizational characteristics without incorporating employee characteristics, or rely on case studies of one organization (as set out by Bygren & Duvander, 2006; den Dulk & Groeneveld, 2012). Studies based only on the individual are at risk of overlooking the significance of the organizational context, whereas studies focusing solely on the organization are likely to underestimate the importance of differences between employees, such as their level of education, or their family situation. This design also helps us control for unobserved organizational characteristics that might affect employee outcomes. Moreover, this multilevel design limits common-method bias—the bias that occurs if the same respondent reports on multiple variables (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

Data collection

We employed stratified purposeful sampling to include organizations varying on two preselected parameters, sector and size, in order to ensure that our sample is "informationally representative." Hereby we build on the plausible assumption that employee characteristics, resource investments, and organizational challenges will

meaningfully vary across industry and size (Sandelowski, 2000). In practice this meant that organizations were sampled based on their representation of six different sectors (financial services, health care, higher education, manufacturing, telecommunication, and transportation) and three different sizes (1-99 employees; 100-249; 250 or bigger). Sampling was done using a random sample of business lists of organizations, which was complemented by a convenience sample from alternative sources (e.g. personal connections and web searches).

After organizations agreed to participate in our study we contacted department-managers and employees at work and asked them to fill in an online survey or paper-and-pencil questionnaire. The organization-level questionnaire was filled in by the human resource manager, who are deemed well-informed about the entire organization (Haas & Hwang, 2016). The employee, manager and organization questionnaires all included information on the availability and use of part-time work and family leave policies (maternity, paternity and parental leave). This dataset includes information on 259 organizations, 869 teams or departments, and 11,011 employees in the nine European countries. The participation rate at the organization level varied from 5 percent to 20 percent across countries. Once an organization agreed to participate, the response rate was high: 98 percent among the HR-managers, 80.9 percent among managers, and 61.4 percent among employees.

Vignette-experiment

In addition to the main survey, I developed a vignette-experiment (also known as a factorial survey design) regarding the desired working hours of employees following the birth of a child. Complementing survey research with a vignette-experiment is very valuable, for three reasons. First, contrary to surveys, vignettes can disentangle motivations when people themselves are not conscious of *why* they make certain choices. Second, the risk of people providing socially desirable answers is deemed smaller in vignette-experiments than in surveys, as the relevant factors are “hidden” in the vignettes. Third, contrary to surveys, vignette-experiments are well-suited for investigating causality, as variables can be exogenously determined and systematically varied; i.e. the experimenter assigns the factors to the experimental situations, which

limits multicollinearity, endogeneity, and reversed causality (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Alexander & Becker, 1978; Jasso, 2006; Rossi & Nock, 1982; Wallander, 2009). This makes vignette-experiments particularly useful when testing complex decision-making situations, such as those concerning work-family decisions.

This vignette-experiment was conducted among employees under forty in the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom as these are three countries where part-time work is relatively common and well-regulated. In this experiment we presented people with a number of aspects about the organization and their private life, and asked what their intended working hours would be in that case.

Countries

In this dissertation I combine a cross-national perspective with a more in-depth analysis. In two chapters I look at nine different European countries: Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. In two other chapters I zoom in on three countries: the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Thanks to the cross-national perspective I can investigate whether the tested mechanisms function differently in different countries, or whether these are universal. Most previous research on organizations as well as most vignette-experiments only look at one country, or at best at organizations in different countries, without including information on employees. However, when studying nine countries there is limited room for an in-depth analysis of differences between countries, and therefore I decided to focus on only three countries in two chapters. These three countries exemplify varying working-cultures, levels of gender equality, and welfare regime contexts (Korpi, 2000; Korpi, Ferrarini, & Englund, 2013).

Outline of this dissertation

In this dissertation I devote two chapters, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, to studying the use of work-family policies, and two chapters, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, to the usefulness of work-family policies, before I present a general conclusion in Chapter 6.

In Chapter 2 I start by investigating the use of work-family policies. Work-family policies are increasingly available to help working parents combine work and family. Nonetheless, many people who could benefit from using these policies do not use them, and little is known about why people do or do not use work-family policies. In this chapter I study which organizational aspects relate to the use of one type of work-family policy: parental leave, and whether this is different for male and female employees. In doing so, I test two strains of research: theory on organizational support (T. D. Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999) and institutional theory combined with business-case argumentation, which treat organizations as actors that make strategic choices (den Dulk, 2001; den Dulk et al., 2013; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Goodstein, 1994; Kossek & Friede, 2006). Moreover, I examine whether these organizational aspects play a different role in the parental leave use of men and of women in the nine European countries. This chapter thereby contributes to the understanding of work-family policy utilization by studying the following question: *in how far do organizational support and/or organizational characteristics explain the utilization of parental leave, and does this differ for men and women?*

Following, Chapter 3 also examines the use of work-family policies, and focusses on the individual decision-making of new parents to use part-time work. Using the vignette-experiment I examine which considerations are most important in men and women's decision-making whether or not to scale back their working hours following childbirth. In this chapter I only focus on the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. I include two organizational support factors: expectations of career consequences (McDonald et al., 2008; Perlow, 1995) and collegial support (Kirby & Krone, 2002; McDonald et al., 2005). I further included whether the job would become less enjoyable (Campbell, Charlesworth, & Malone, 2012) and financial considerations (G. S. Becker, 1965; Heckman, 1974). Previous research has shown that all these considerations play a role in the decision-making of employees, however, little is known about which considerations men and women pay most attention to when making their decision; scaling back might be attractive in one way, but costly in another. Therefore, in this chapter I will answer the following research question: *which considerations are most important in men and women's decision-making whether to scale back?*

In Chapter 4 I turn to the usefulness of work-family policies by examining the relation between working part-time and one specific intended outcome: work-life conflict of employees. Previous studies have found mixed results as to whether this relation exists, and even to whether it is positive or negative (see: Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Beham et al., 2012; Kelly et al., 2008). This suggests that the relation between working hours and work-life conflict is not as clear-cut as was initially assumed, but may function differently under different conditions. In this chapter I examine whether this relation between working hours and work-life conflict is contingent on organizational support. As employees use work-family policies in the context of an organization, it is likely that organizational conditions influence the extent to which they are able to enjoy the potential positive outcomes of such policies. This is investigated in this chapter, by answering the research question *is the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict moderated by organizational support and gender?* Again, I focus only on the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom in this chapter.

In Chapter 5 I go back to the organization, and examine whether work-family policies relates to an intended outcome for organizations: higher extra-role performance among employees. According to business-case argumentation organizations do not just offer additional work-family policies as a favor to employees, but (also) out of self-interest, for example to increase extra-role performance of employees (Been, 2015; den Dulk, 2001; Kossek & Friede, 2006). However, it remains largely untested whether organizational family leave policies actually relate to extra-role performance. Moreover, the mechanism trough which organizational family leave policies would relate to extra-role performance remains unclear: do employees have higher extra-role performance when they know a policy is available, or do they perform better when they have *used* organizational family leave policies? In this chapter I again look at all nine countries, and answer the research question *does the availability, use, or both of organizational family leave policies increase the extra-role performance of male and female employees?*

The use of parental leave:

The relation between organizations and the utilization of parental leave policies

2

Abstract*

Organizations and national governments are increasingly making work-family policies available to help working parents combine work and family life. Nonetheless, many people who could benefit from using these policies do not use them, and little is known about why people do or do not use work-family policies. Some studies have suggested that organizations restrain or encourage people's use of these policies, yet no large-scale quantitative studies exist. This chapter examines how organizations relate to the utilization of one specific work-family policy: parental leave. Particularly, we will combine two ways of looking at organizations, by looking at the family-supportiveness of their organizational culture, and by treating them as actors that make strategic choices to invest in policies, which are influenced by organizational characteristics such as size, public ownership, or proportion of women. Results indicate that organizations play a smaller role than was expected, only larger organizations were found to have more parental leave use than smaller organizations. Instead, national variations explain most variation in parental leave use. Organizations do, however, play a role for the utilization-decisions of men, but not for women, suggesting that while women are expected to use parental leave, men base the extent of their involvement at home partially on pressures from the organizational context.

* A slightly different version of this chapter will be published as: van Breeschoten, L., Begall, K., Poortman, A. R. & den Dulk, L. (2019). Investments in working parents: The use of parental leave. In van der Lippe, T. & Lippényi, Z. (Eds.), *Investments in a sustainable workforce in Europe*. Abingdon: Routledge. Van Breeschoten wrote the main parts of this chapter and conducted the analyses. Begall, Poortman and den Dulk provided feedback on earlier versions of this chapter, and Begall also provided assistance with the analyses.

Introduction

Both national governments and organizations increasingly invest in working parents by offering them work-family policies such as part-time work, childcare support, or family leave policies (maternity, paternity and parental leave) (Abendroth & den Dulk, 2011; den Dulk et al., 2012; OECD, 2017b). These policies are designed to help employees with young children to better combine work and family life, and can potentially increase employees' work-family balance as well as their work performance (Been, 2015; den Dulk, 2001; Kossek & Friede, 2006). However, despite these potential positive outcomes, there is a huge discrepancy between work-family policy availability and work-family policy use, especially for men (Beauregard, 2011; OECD, 2016b). Research has suggested that this is not just due to a lack of interest—there are also many people who have access to work-family policies and would like to use these, but who still refrain from doing so (Adams et al., 2016; McDonald et al., 2005). This suggests that there are structural constraints that restrict the utilization of work-family policies that are officially available. We will focus on one central player: the organization.

Research on the relation between organizations and work-family policy utilization is relatively scarce and scattered, with the majority of studies focusing on work-family policy *availability* (den Dulk, 2001; den Dulk & Peper, 2007). These studies mostly look at whether organizations provide additional work-family policies on top of the statutory policies they are obliged to provide by law. However, organizations are also gatekeepers to the statutory work-family policies; even though employees are officially entitled to these policies, organizations can in practice through informal means strongly discourage employees from utilizing work-family policies (Boon et al., 2009; Goodstein, 1994; S. Lewis & Smithson, 2001). Most of what we know about the relation between organizations and work-family policy utilization comes from qualitative studies, which have provided valuable insights in people's perceptions of organizational restraints and organizational support for utilization (e.g. Kaufman, 2017; Lewis & den Dulk, 2008; ter Hoeven, Miller, Peper, & den Dulk, 2017). Few quantitative studies focus on organizations and policy utilization, and those that do rarely study the individual and the organization at the same time, either relying on samples of individuals, who provide limited information on their organizational context (e.g.

Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999), or on case studies conducted among the employees or managers of one or a few organizations (e.g. Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; den Dulk & Peper, 2007; Haas, Allard, & Hwang, 2002; Pasamar, 2015; Pettigrew, 2014; Smith & Gardner, 2007).[1] The ESWS allows us to be among the first to make a large-scale, systematic study of the relation between organizations and work-family policy utilization in multiple European countries. Its multilevel nature allows us to combine reports from individual employees with reports from managers and the organization (as represented by the HR-manager), which limits common-method bias (the bias that occurs when the same respondent reports on multiple variables) and controls for unobserved organizational characteristics that might affect employee outcomes (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

In this chapter we will focus on how organizations relate to the use of one type of work-family policy: parental leave.[2] In doing so, we will combine two ways of looking at organizations: at the family-supportiveness of their organizational culture, and by treating them as actors that make strategic choices to invest in policies. Although few studies have looked at organizations and work-family policy use, those that do almost exclusively focus on the role of organizational support, reasoning that employees are more likely to use work-family policies when they experience support from the organizational culture and their manager (T. D. Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999). We combine these ideas on organizational support with institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and business-case argumentation (den Dulk, 2001; Kossek & Friede, 2006), which both maintain that organizations make the strategic choice to adopt work-family policies when this is in their own interest. In this chapter we will explore whether this argument can also be extended to policy use, because it is likely that strategic

[1] For a notable exception see Bygren and Duvander (2006), who rely on Swedish register data regarding individuals and workplaces to predict fathers' parental leave use.

[2] In this study we look specifically at parental leave, although we extrapolate from research on other work-family policies, such as paternity or maternity leave, part-time work, childcare support and flexibility. Studies that look specifically into parental leave policies are scarce (Mulvaney, 2014), yet they provide a great case because parental leave policies are 'employee serving' rather than 'organization serving'; they are instigated at the request of the employee and do not directly serve the organization—in contrast to, for example, flexible working hours, which can also be used to make employees work flexibly on hours that suit the company. This makes it not clear-cut that organizations want to increase utilization (Leslie et al., 2012; Wheatley, 2017).

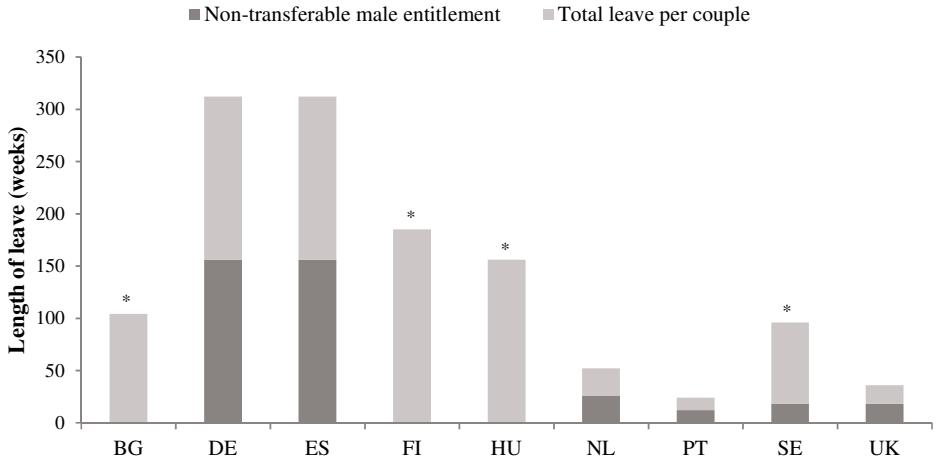
choices of organizations extend to utilization, for example through increased access. Lastly, in this chapter we will pay special attention to gender. Gender norms impose different expectations regarding participation in work and family on men and women (Kanji & Samuel, 2017; Munn & Greer, 2015), and it is known that work-family policy utilization is more frequent among women than among men in all European countries (European Parliament, 2015; INLPR, n.d.; OECD, 2016b). However, it remains unclear whether organizational aspects also affect men and women differently. All in all, this chapter contributes to the understanding of work-family policy utilization by studying the following question: *In how far do organizational support and/or organizational characteristics explain the utilization of parental leave, and does this differ for men and women?*

Parental leave in Europe

Parental leave can be distinguished from maternity and paternity leave by its aim and characteristics—though this distinction is not in all countries clear-cut. Maternity leave is generally aimed at protecting the health of mother and child, and limited to the period directly before and after the delivery of the child. Paternity leave is generally short (2-15 days), directly surrounding the delivery, and well-compensated. Parental leave varies in length, can often be taken when the child is a bit older, and is rarely fully compensated (INLPR, n.d.; van Belle, 2016).

Following the 2010 Parental Leave Directive of the European Union (Directive 2010/18/EU), all EU member states are to provide employees with at least four months parental leave. The Directive leaves it to the countries to decide on the specifics of the parental leave, including eligibility, possibilities for part-time take-up, and whether the leave is a "family right" (meaning that the couple is jointly entitled to a period of leave and can decide which partner takes it) or an individual right (both partners are individually entitled to leave). According to the EU Directive, at least one of the four months is to be non-transferable between partners, in order to stimulate men to partake in childrearing. This, however, is not in all countries implemented (European Parliament, 2015; INLPR, n.d.). In countries with a family right where no period of

Figure 2.1 - Length of parental leave in the ESWS countries, total leave per couple[a] and non-transferable male entitlements[b].



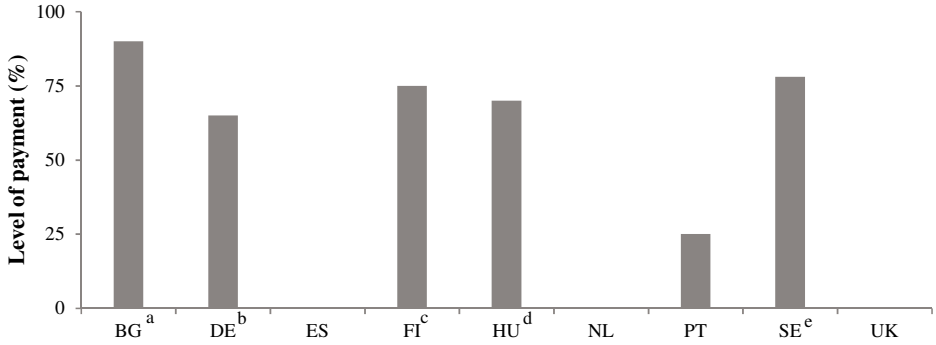
* indicate that the parental leave is awarded as a family right (i.e. the couple can divide it amongst themselves), not an individual right.

[a] The *total leave per couple* is in "family right" countries the period that is awarded to the couple jointly, and in countries with individual entitlements it includes the individual right twice.

[b] The *non-transferable male entitlement* refers to the period that is exclusively reserved for the male partner. Although in the "family right" countries men *could* take more leave—as the partners can divide it between them—in practice this is mostly used by the female partner (van Belle, 2016).

Source: based on information from the International Network on Leave Policies and Research (n.d.), complemented with data from the European Parliament (2015).

Figure 2.2 - Level of payment of parental leave in the ESWS countries.



[a] For 26 weeks, then flat-rate.

[b] For 52 weeks (up to a ceiling), with an extra 8 weeks if both partners take up at least 8 weeks, then unpaid.

[c] For 4 weeks, then 70 percent (both up to a ceiling).

[d] For 108 weeks (up to a ceiling), then flat-rate; non-insured parents only get the flat-rate.

[e] For 56 weeks, then 13 weeks at flat-rate.

Source: based on information from the International Network on Leave Policies and Research (n.d.), complemented with data from the European Parliament (2015).

leave is specifically reserved for male use, all leave is frequently taken by the female partner (van Belle, 2016). Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show the length of parental leave (as a family entitlement and as a male entitlement), and the level of payment in the nine ESWS countries. It can be seen that countries differ strongly on all dimensions.

Theory and hypotheses

The family-supportiveness of the organizational culture

Though few studies have taken a systematic, multilevel approach to studying the utilization of parental leave (or work-family policies broadly), theoretical (e.g. McDonald et al., 2005), qualitative (e.g. Kaufman, 2017; Lewis & den Dulk, n.d.; ter Hoeven et al., 2017) and small-scale quantitative studies (e.g. Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; den Dulk & Peper, 2007; Haas et al., 2002; Pettigrew, 2014; Smith & Gardner, 2007; Thompson et al., 1999) have stressed the importance of a family-supportive organizational culture for employees' use of work-family policies. Organizations have a distinct organizational culture which supports or discourages the integration of employees' work and family lives (Thompson et al., 1999). This, in turn relates to the sense of entitlement that employees feel regarding the use of available policies (S. Lewis & Smithson, 2001). Many organizations that are unsupportive towards employees' family responsibilities adhere to "ideal worker" culture (Acker, 1990). The notion of an ideal worker is based on the traditional male breadwinner: an employee who exists only for the job, and has no other (family) responsibilities that are interfering (for example because he has a homemaker spouse). Organizations with a strong ideal worker culture expect their employees to never prioritize family, and when employees do (for example by using leave) they are seen as less committed to their job, which often has consequences for their career progression (Acker, 1990; Haas & Hwang, 2016; Lyonette, 2015; Munn & Greer, 2015). Other organizations, however, adhere less to ideal worker culture, and actively support employees who want to use work-family policies, either because they believe that it will result in better employee productivity, or because they feel a social or moral responsibility to do so (Been, den Dulk, et al.,

2017), meaning that employees do not need to fear repercussions and feel more free to use work-family policies.

In addition to the general organizational culture, employees' closest managers are important agents that influence their work-life decisions, and managers can independently withhold or provide support. Managers may adhere to the (ideal worker) norms of the organizational culture, but they are independent actors who can also convey a different message, namely that choosing family over work is or is not acceptable in their team (T. D. Allen, 2001; den Dulk & de Ruijter, 2005, 2008). Because managers hold a key position in shaping the future career of an employee, employees are likely to want to live up to their manager's expectations (T. D. Allen, 2001; Perlow, 1995), making employees more likely to use work-family policies if their manager is supportive than when (s)he is not. Therefore we expect that employees in an organization with a more family-supportive organizational culture (H1a) and a manager who is more family-supportive (H1b) are more likely to use parental leave.

Institutional theory and business-case argumentation

There are two main theories that treat organizations as actors that make strategic choices to invest in work-family policies: institutional theory and business-case argumentation. Institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) maintains that organizations *adopt* work-family policies—and human resource practices more broadly—in response to institutional pressures. Organizations with certain characteristics face more institutional pressures and thus feel a stronger need for obtaining legitimacy than other organizations (Goodstein, 1994). We rely on three organizational characteristics which are commonly perceived as indicative of high institutional pressures for adopting work-family policies, and which have frequently been found to be of importance in predicting work-family policy adoption, namely: organization size, ownership (i.e. public or private), and proportion of women within an organization (den Dulk et al., 2013; Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995). Larger organizations and organizations in the public sector are deemed to be more susceptible to external, societal pressures, while organizations with a higher proportion of women face greater pressures from within, as women would be more likely to call for the adoption of work-family policies than men (Goodstein,

1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995). Institutional theory has repeatedly been applied to the adoption of additional work family-policies (den Dulk et al., 2013; Goodstein, 1994; Haas & Hwang, 2009; Ingram & Simons, 1995), but whether it can also be extended to the *utilization* of work-family policies is unclear. For a long time scholars maintained that greater institutional pressures would only lead to policy adoption, but not to utilization, because the policies would be adopted for symbolic rather than substantive reasons (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002). However, we argue that institutional theory could also extend to policy use, because when organizations face institutional pressures and adopt work-family policies this may increase practical accessibility, as well as increase awareness and feelings of entitlement among employees.[3] For example, when policies are adopted an organization's human resource department formalizes how employees can request utilization and how this will be managed in terms of finances and personnel replacement. This will substantially ease applying for utilization. Similarly, organizations with more institutional pressures are more likely to take their statutory obligation seriously and increase access to work-family policies. Formalized infrastructure will further create higher awareness of the available policy as well as a higher sense of entitlement among employees (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; S. Lewis & Smithson, 2001), both of which will lead to higher utilization.

Business-case argumentation also sees organizations as actors that make strategic choices, but focusses more on a financial cost-benefit analysis. It maintains that organizations are likely to adopt policies when they believe this will be in their own financial interest, for example because it will attract or retain desirable employees, or because it increases the performance of current employees, but set this off against the expected costs of the policy (Been, 2015; den Dulk, 2001; Kossek & Friede, 2006). Following this line of reasoning, larger organizations would be more likely to provide work-family policies, because it is easier to redistribute work over other employees, or to hire temporary replacements, i.e. the costs of having these policies is lower (Bygren & Duvander, 2006; Haas & Hwang, 2009). Moreover, because public organizations are

[3] Note that Pasamar and Alegre (2015) also applied institutional theory to policy utilization, but they focus more on disentangling different types of external pressures and do not explicitly set out how these pressures would not only lead to adoption but also utilization.

less profit-oriented, they would be less opposed to employee absences that might cause production loss (Bygren & Duvander, 2006), making it easier for employees to use such policies. Lastly, employees in public sector organizations might feel more entitled to using work-family policies as these are seen as "compensating differentials" to the lower salaries in the public sector; people have *chosen* to work in the public sector, knowing that it will pay less but provide better access to secondary employment conditions, such as work-family policies (Groeneveld, Steijn, & van der Parre, 2009; Rosen, 1986). Thus, they feel more entitled to using these policies. Therefore we expect that employees who work in organizations that are large (H2a), in the public sector (H2b), and with a higher proportion of female employees (H2c) are more likely to use parental leave.

Gender

Parental leave policies are frequently aimed at women, and women tend to have better access to them, or are entitled to longer periods of leave. Thus, it is not surprising that women use parental leave more frequently and for longer periods than their male counterparts (European Parliament, 2015; INLPR, n.d.). This is in line with prevailing normative prescriptions, which continue to hold that women shoulder the main responsibility for home and childcare, and men for paid labor (Kanji & Samuel, 2017; Munn & Greer, 2015). Using work-family policies violates ideal worker norms (Acker, 1990), but for women it is in line with gender norms that still oppose full-time maternal employment (Booth & van Ours, 2009; Roeters & Craig, 2014). This means that it is not only more acceptable for women to use work-family policies, but that they are also more expected to do so, and therefore are taken less seriously at work (Evertsson & Duvander, 2011). For men, on the other hand, using work-family policies clearly violates expectations regarding masculinity and being an ideal worker (Acker, 1990; Kanji & Samuel, 2017), making men less inclined to use work-family policies. We thus expect that the utilization of parental leave is higher among women than among men (H3a).

The paragraph above outlines how using work-family policies is a stronger violation of gender norms for men than for women. As such, we can expect that organizational support factors play a larger role in the utilization-decisions of men than

in those of women. After all, women feel they have access to using work-family policies, also when they are not actively supported in this. Men, however, need to violate "normal" behavior, which is costly, but becomes less costly when they experience organizational support. Similarly, we can expect that organizational characteristics will play a larger role for men than for women, considering that these can lead to easier and more institutionalized access to policies. In other words, the relation between organizational support factors (H3b) and organizational characteristics (H3c) and the utilization of parental leave is stronger for men than for women.

Method

Sample

For the purpose of this chapter we rely on a sub-sample of only parents with a child under four, because we wanted to make sure their opportunity to use parental leave was recent in order to minimize the risk that organizational factors had changed over time (e.g. if people were assigned to a different manager between their parental leave use and the time they filled in the survey). We also excluded people who did not work for their current employer at the time they became parents, as the characteristics of their current workplace would not be related to their past use of leave policies. This led to a sample of 1,211 people. We then excluded employees with missing values on gender (n=4), but used multiple imputations with regression switching (van Buuren & Oudshoorn, 1999) for missing cases on all other variables. Our total sample consists out of 1207 employees in 521 teams and 232 organizations.

Measures

Use of parental leave

Our dependent variable *use of parental leave* (0=*no use*, 1=*use*) is measured by asking respondents "Did you use parental leave in connection with the birth of your youngest child?" Note that this refers to whether respondents took *any* leave at all, but says nothing about the duration of this leave. We chose to measure this variable this way for country comparability; using—for example—a month of parental leave is a long period

in some countries, but is very short in others. By looking at use dichotomously we use a more crude, yet more comparable measure.

Organizational support

In this chapter we use both a subjective and an objective measure for organizational support and managerial support. Subjective measures capture whether employees *perceive* their organization and manager to be supportive, reasoning that the *perception* of employees influences their behavior. However, using two self-reported measures (perceived organizational support and the leave used) introduces common-method bias, which can be limited using objective measures, especially when these are reported by different actors, such as managers or HR-managers (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, we also include two objective indicators as proxies for cultural and managerial support, namely collegial use of parental leave, and managerial use of parental leave. Collegial use of work-family policies is a proxy for the supportiveness of the organizational culture, because in a more supportive culture employees are more likely to use leave. Moreover, managerial use of work-family policies can be seen as a proxy for managerial support for two reasons: 1) managers who value work-family integration are more likely to have used parental leave themselves, and 2) because of their personal experiences they are likely to be more supportive of employees wanting to use leave, and can serve as role models.

Our subjective measure for cultural support and managerial support is based on a reduced scale based on Thompson et al.'s (1999) measure of organizational work-family culture. The scale consists out of nine items to which respondents could respond on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. We conducted a factor analysis which showed two clear factors both consisting out of three items. Based on this, we constructed two variables: *perceived cultural support,* and *perceived managerial support.* Perceived cultural support is based on three items: "Employees are often expected to take work home at night or during the weekend," "To turn down a promotion or transfer for family-related reasons will seriously hurt one's career progress in this organization," and "To get ahead in this organization, employees are expected to work overtime." It has an alpha of .67. Perceived managerial support is

also based on three items: "My manager is understanding when I have to put my family first," "Higher management encourages supervisors to be sensitive to employees' family concerns," and "My manager is very accommodating of family-friendly needs." It has an alpha of .79.

Our objective measure for cultural support is measured as the *use of parental leave by colleagues*, as reported by the HR-manager. HR-managers reported on a seven-point scale what proportion of male and female employees who became parents used parental leave. They thus reported this separately for male and female employees, but we took the mean of these two. Additional analyses were conducted where we in turns included use by male and use by female colleagues, but this did not change the results.

Objective managerial support is measured as *use of parental leave by manager* (no=0, yes=1), as reported by the manager. If the manager is childless this was also coded as not having taken leave, as they would not have experienced the benefits of using leave, nor would they have set an example for their subordinates.

Organizational characteristics

Studies vary in their measurement of organizational size, with the majority using either two or three categories or including the log of the number of employees (e.g. Been, van der Lippe, et al., 2017; Been, den Dulk, et al., 2017; den Dulk et al., 2013; Goodstein, 1994; Haas & Hwang, 2009; Ingram & Simons, 1995). In this study we include size of the organization (reported by the HR-manager) dichotomously because we expected that only large organizations (>1000 employees) would feel susceptive to institutional pressures, rather than a linear increase by organization size. Additional analyses were conducted where we included the log, linearly and quadratically, and used different cut-off points, which can be found in the sensitivity analyses.

Whether an organization is *private* (0) or *public* (1) was also reported by the HR-manager. Mixed organizations are coded as private, as they would also have a commercial goal, while charities are coded as public. Additional analyses were conducted where this was reversed, which did not change the results.

Lastly, we include the proportion of women in an organization, as reported by the HR-manager on a nine-point scale, ranging from "none," "1% to less than 10%,"

"10% to less than 20%," "20% to less than 40%," "40% to less than 60%," "60% to less than 80%," "80% to less than 90%," "90% to less than 100%," and "all." Values are recoded by taking the mid-value for each percentage interval.

Gender and control variables

We include gender as 0=*female* and 1=*male*. Moreover, we control for age of the youngest child, because this can be seen as a proxy for how long ago the leave was taken, as it is often taken relatively close to childbirth.

Moreover, we include the sex of the manager as a control variable, as male and female managers might differ in their support for work-family issues due to their different experiences. We also include whether the manager has children (0=*no*, 1=*yes*), as not having used parental leave is different for managers with and without children.

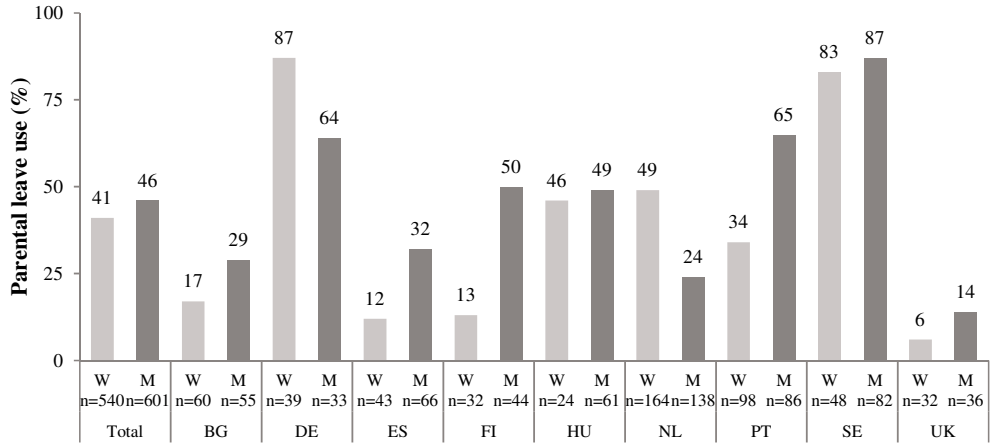
Sector and country fixed-effects

We include sector and country dummies as controls, because both the sector and the country in which an organization is situated are likely to influence the organizational context, as well as how common it is for employees to use parental leave.

Descriptive statistics

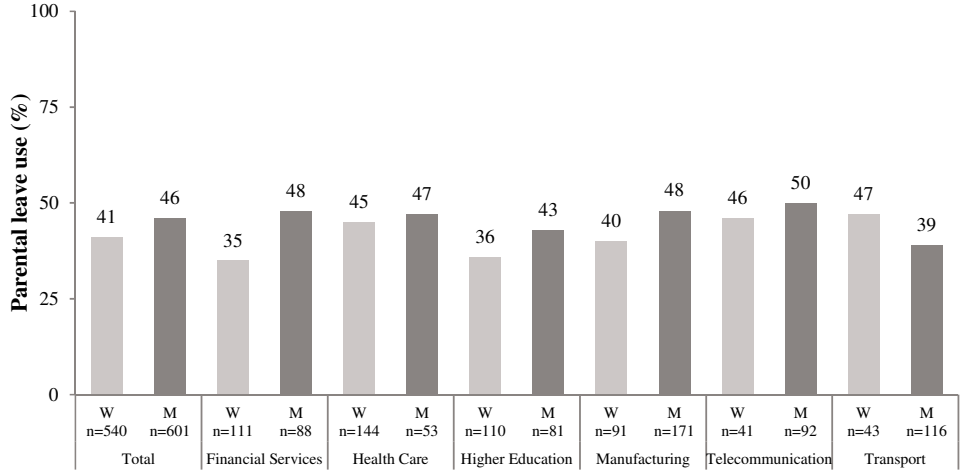
Figures 2.3 and 2.4 below show the parental leave use by gender, per country and sector in our sample. Further descriptive statistics are presented in Appendix A1. We see that there is much variation between countries in how much leave men and women use, while the variation between sectors is more limited. Moreover, we see that in our sample, men use parental leave more often than women (46 percent vs 41 percent), which might appear odd considering that register data and representative samples show that women use parental leave more often than men (European Parliament, 2015; INLPR, n.d.; OECD, 2016b). It should be noted, however, that we do not have a representative sample, and that it is likely that there is a selection effect, which entails that many young mothers will be absent from our organization sample. Moreover, our measure captures whether people used parental leave *at all,* but does not distinguishing between the length of the leave. Further reflection on this is included in the discussion.

Figure 2.3 – Use of parental leave in our data, by gender and by country.



Note: Figure calculated based on the non-imputed dataset.

Figure 2.4 – Use of parental leave in our data, by gender and by sector.



Note: Figure calculated based on the non-imputed dataset.

The correlations between the independent variables are surprisingly low (see Appendix A2). Support is an intangible concept, which we have measured in a variety of ways. Therefore we expected these measures to have some overlap, but this was not found. Moreover, it is likely that more supportive managers are located in more supportive organizations (due to selection and influence), but also here correlations were surprisingly low, suggesting that these concepts might be more distinct than expected.

Analytical strategy

All measures are recoded to range from 0-1 to ease interpretation. We use linear probability models with clustered standard errors to predict the probability of using parental leave. Linear probability models constitute the use of a regular OLS regression for predicting a dichotomous variable. As set out by Hellevik (2009) this is an acceptable alternative to using a logistic regression as long as the dependent variable is not too skewed. Linear probability models have the additional advantage of easier interpretation (Hellevik, 2009). Results from a linear probability model can be interpreted as the increase in probability of the dependent variable being 1 (i.e. one uses leave) as the independent variable changes from 0 to 1. In other words, if, for example, the use by a manager has a coefficient of .20, this means that people with a manager who used parental leave are 20 percent more likely to use parental leave than people with a manger who did not use parental leave. As a robustness check we also ran logistic regression models, which led to the same results.

In addition, we use clustered standard errors on the organization-level to account for the fact that our observations are not independent, as employees are nested within organizations. Additional analyses were run where we included a multilevel model, which led to similar results. It was not possible to use clustered standard errors on the department-level—or a multilevel model which includes both the department and the organization-level—as too few people per department are included in our selected sample (i.e. too few people got a child within the past four years).

Results

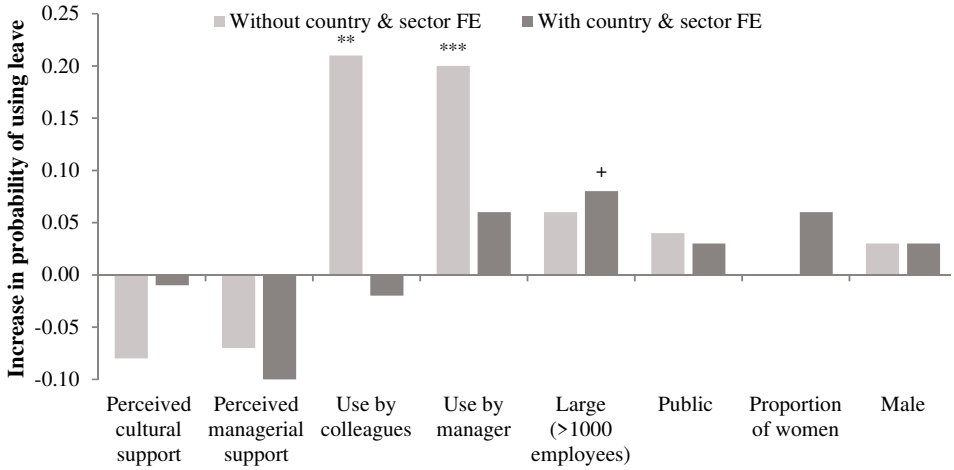
Figure 2.5 shows the increase in one's probability of using leave, both without and with country and sector fixed-effects. The full corresponding table can be found in Appendix A3. Starting at the results without country and sector controls, we see a positive significant effect of the two objective measurements of organizational support, namely the use of parental leave by colleagues and the use of parental leave by one's manager. This indicates that when an employee's colleagues have used leave, (s)he is 21 percent more likely to have used parental leave as well. Similarly, when an employee's manager

has used leave, the probability that the employee uses leave increases with 20 percent. No significant effect of the subjective support variables (perceived cultural and managerial support), the organizational characteristics (size, public sector and proportion of women) or gender was found.

Sector and country fixed-effects

As can be seen in Figure 2.5, the effect of both collegial use and managerial use is fully explained by the inclusion of country and sector dummies. This probably stems from the fact that there are vast policy and cultural variations between countries, which predict respondent's own use of parental leave, collegial use and managerial use—after all, in some countries it is very common or very uncommon to use leave. When we include country and sector dummies we do find an effect of the size of the organization, indicating that employees in a larger organization have an 8 percent higher probability of using leave than employees in a smaller organization, which supports H2a. No support was found for H1a and H1b regarding the supportive organizational culture and

Figure 2.5 - Probabilities of using leave without and with sector and country fixed-effects (*N*=1207).



$^{+}p < .10$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$
Controlled for: age youngest child, gender manager, whether manager has children.
Linear probability model with clustered standard errors on the organization.
Note: Full corresponding table can be found in Appendix A3.

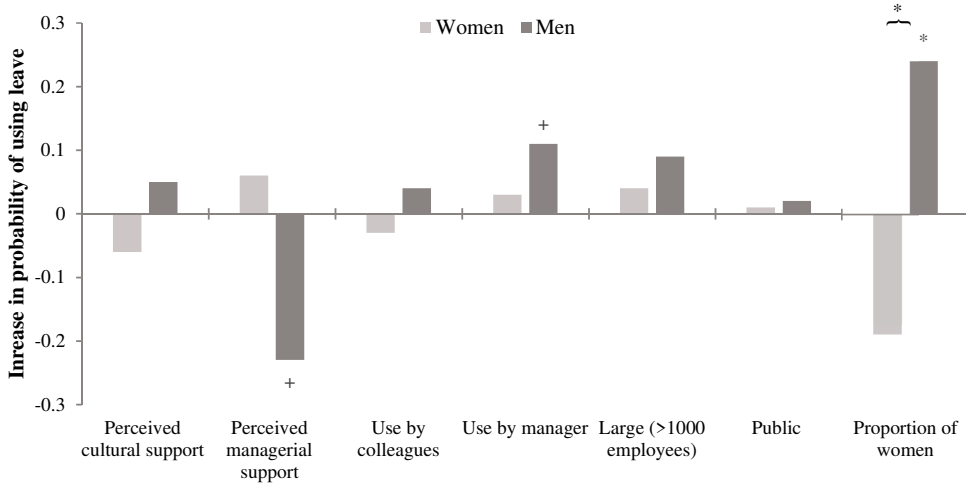
managerial support, nor for H2b and H2c regarding organizations in the public sector or with a higher proportion of women.

When we include country and sector fixed-effects separately, we see that the change in the effects of the independent variables results from the inclusion of country dummies, but that no such change occurs when only sector dummies are included. Moreover, as can be seen in Appendix A3 country differences contribute significantly to the probability of using parental leave, while sector does not. For that reason, we will explore country differences further in the sensitivity analyses.

Gender differences

Based on Figure 2.5 above we rejected the hypothesis that the use of parental leave would be higher among women than among men (H3a). We further want to test whether the importance of the independent variables is different for men and women, as hypothesized in H3b and H3c. Figure 2.6 shows the same model as presented before, with sector and country fixed-effects, but this time conducted separately for men and women. Full models can be found in Appendix A4. Starting at women, we see that none of the included variables affect women's parental leave use. For men we see that three variables relate to their parental leave use, namely perceived managerial support, use of leave by the manager, and the proportion of women in the organization. It should be noted, however, that perceived managerial support relates *negatively* to male parental leave use (-23 percent), while we expected this to have a positive effect. The other two effects are in the expected direction, i.e. men are 11 percent more likely to use parental leave if their manager did this as well, and 24 percent more likely to use parental leave if they work in an organization with a higher proportion of women. However, when we test the difference between the effects for men and women, we see that only the effect of proportion of women in the organization is significantly different for men and women. This is not the case for perceived managerial support and use by manager. Therefore we reject H3b, as we find for none of the organizational support variables evidence that they have a larger effect on the utilization of parental leave for men than for women. We partially reject H3c, as we find only for one organizational

Figure 2.6 – Probabilities of using leave, separately for women (*n*=624) and men (*n*=583).



$^{+}p < .10$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$
⌣ indicates that the values differ significantly between women and men.
Controlled for: age youngest child, gender manager, whether manager has a child, sector, country.
Linear probability model with clustered standard errors on the organization.
Note: full corresponding table can be found in Appendix A4.

characteristic—the proportion of women—a stronger effect for men than for women, but no difference for organization size and public sector.

Sensitivity analyses

In order to better understand the effect of size of the organization that was found, organizational size was included in a number of ways to see if the effect was linear, quadratic (i.e. first increased and then decreases or vice versa), or occurred at different cut-off points than the one currently included (1000 employees or more). No linear or quadratic effect was found. When including different categories we see that the effect really occurs among the largest category compared to smaller categories, indicating that (as is theoretically expected) use is higher in really large organizations than in smaller organizations, rather than that it linearly increases as organizations become larger. Furthermore, we included the controls age of the respondent (21-60), whether the respondent had a partner, education in years (2-20) and occupational status (ISEI) in turn to see whether the mechanism would function differently for different respondents. Results were substantially the same.

Additional country analyses

Previously we saw that including country fixed-effects substantially changed our results, and that there were large significant effects of the country dummies. This suggests that the prevalence of using parental leave differs strongly between countries, and that these country differences are of greater importance than most organizational factors or sector differences. Although we were not able to conduct analyses separately per country, we did perform a jackknife procedure (i.e. exclude each country in turns), as well as conduct clustered analyses for countries that were similar in the length or level of pay offered for parental leave. Results of the jackknife procedure are presented in Appendix A5. It shows quite similar results: we find an effect of size of the organization. Although this effect sometimes falls short of conventional statistical significance, it is always in the same direction and point estimates are comparable in size. When we cluster countries based on the duration of the leave (Appendix A6), we have two groups: countries with relatively long leave (Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Spain, and Sweden), and countries with relatively short leave periods (the Netherlands, Portugal, and the United Kingdom). We find no effects in either group. When we cluster countries based on level of pay for parental leave (Appendix A7), we have on the one hand the countries where leave is substantially paid (Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, and Sweden), and on the other hand the countries where parental leave is (largely) unpaid (the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the UK). It stands out that we find two effects in the countries where leave is largely paid: a negative effect of perceived managerial support (25 percent) and a positive effect of organization size (15 percent), while no effects are found in the lesser-paying countries (though one should note that the difference between the two clusters is only statistically significant for size organization). Based on this we would cautiously suggest that organizational factors are of greater importance for parental leave use in countries where parental leave is relatively well paid than in countries where this is not.

Discussion

In this chapter we examined in what way organizations relate to the utilization of parental leave, and whether this differed for men and women. The ESWS, with its multi-country and multi-organization design, allowed us to be the first to make a large-scale, systematic study of the relation between organizations and work-family policy use. In doing so we combined two ways of looking at organizations: looking at the family-supportiveness of their organizational culture, and by treating them as actors that make strategic choices to invest in policies. We found few systematic effects of organizations on employees' parental leave use over and above the variation in institutional settings. Only one, out of a total of seven organizational aspects that were included, showed to be related to leave utilization: namely the size of the organization. No gender differences were found in parental leave use, but we did find some variation in how organizational aspects affect the use of parental leave between men and women.

Our most important finding is that organizational aspects played a smaller role than we expected, and that much of the variation is explained by country variations. On the one hand this may perhaps seem unsurprising: considering the wide array of variations in country-level parental leave provisions and cultural norms surrounding leave utilization it is to be expected that leave utilization varies strongly between countries. On the other hand, numerous qualitative and small-scale quantitative studies have found that parents use of work-family policies is affected by organizational factors, especially organizational support (e.g. T. D. Allen, 2001; Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; den Dulk & Peper, 2007; Haas et al., 2002; McDonald et al., 2005; Smith & Gardner, 2007; Thompson et al., 1999). This had led us to expect that even in varying contextual settings the effect of certain organizational factors would function similarly; i.e. while in some countries it might be more or less common to use work-family policies, there will always be some people for whom this decision is not clear-cut, and whose decision is influenced by the organizational context. This, in our study, did not prove to be the case. Although sample-size restrictions prevented us from conducting in-depth country comparative analyses, our results suggest that organizational aspects might only be relevant in countries where parental leave use is relatively well paid. We maintain that this would theoretically make sense: only once employees have the (financial) freedom

to choose between using and not using parental leave, do organizational aspects become important. Previous research has also shown that when income replacement of parental leave is low, employees are less likely to use leave, but instead find other alternatives, such as dropping out of employment or switching to part-time work (Brinton & Mun, 2016; Pettigrew, 2014).

While country-variations proved most important, we still found evidence that one organizational characteristic relates to parental leave use: organization size. Employees in larger organizations were more likely to use parental leave than employees in smaller organizations. This can be explained through the strategic choices made by larger organizations in comparison to smaller organizations. According to institutional theory larger organizations face more societal pressures than smaller organizations, and wish to obtain social legitimacy through the adoption of additional or implementation of statutory work-family policies (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Goodstein, 1994). Additionally, business-case argumentation maintains that larger organizations would be more likely to adopt and implement work-family policies because it is cheaper for them to do so than for smaller organizations, for example because it is easier to redistribute work over other employees, or to hire temporary replacements (Bygren & Duvander, 2006; Haas & Hwang, 2009). Simultaneously, organizations would deem these policies to have benefits such as the attraction and retainment of employees, and higher productivity (Been, 2015; den Dulk, 2001; Kossek & Friede, 2006). It stands out, however, that we do not find a similar effect for public organizations and organizations with a greater proportion of women, although these are theoretically expected to experience similar institutional pressures as large organizations. This might suggest that the observed effect for large organizations can be explained by business-case considerations rather than institutional pressures: the costs of making work-family policies available are lower for large organizations, but not necessarily lower for public organizations or organizations with a large proportion of women. Additionally, large organizations might be particularly focused on attracting desirable employees, which is not necessarily the case for public organizations or organizations with a large proportion of women. Thus, large organizations would attach greater value to the benefits of having work-family policies, which extends to higher levels of policy utilization.

Turning to gender differences, we found no significant difference in men and women's likelihood of using parental leave, while we know that this is the case in reality (European Parliament, 2015; INLPR, n.d.; OECD, 2016b). This probably stems from our measure, which captures whether people used parental leave *at all,* but does not distinguishing between the length of the leave. Moreover, as we sampled people in their workplace there might be a selection effect where many young mothers who used parental leave are absent from our sample, because they were not present at work during the time of the survey. This is likely less a problem for men, who tend to take shorter leaves (OECD, 2016b).

We do find that organizations affect the utilization-decisions of men, but not of women. This suggests that the organizational context is not only more influential for men's utilization-decisions than for women's, but hardly plays a role for women at all. Possibly this stems from the fact that gender norms prescribe that men are primarily responsible for work and women for family (Acker, 1990; Kanji & Samuel, 2017; Munn & Greer, 2015). This makes that it is often expected of women to be active caregivers, by using work-family policies or perhaps even dropping out of employment. Men, on the other hand, are workers first, and base the extent of their involvement at home partially on pressures from the organizational context.

For men we found an effect of perceived managerial support, use of leave by manager, and proportion of women in the organization. It should particularly be noted that, contrary to what we expected, having a manager who is supportive related to men using *less* parental leave rather than more parental leave. This might stem from the fact that we measure *general* support for work-family issues, rather than specific support for parental leave use (Den Dulk, Peper, Kanjuo Mrčela, & Ignjatović, 2016). This might entail that male employees with supportive managers are more able to accommodate work and family without needing to use formal arrangements, such as using parental leave. For women this might function differently, because managers are more likely to accommodate men informally, while encouraging women to use formal arrangements that help them with childcare (Booth & van Ours, 2009; Roeters & Craig, 2014).

Limitations and implications

Although this study makes some important contributions to the literature, there are at least three important limitations from which future research could learn. First, our results show the importance of studying in-depth country variations, but unfortunately we were not able to do this because of sample-size restrictions. These issues warrant further investigation, but the complexities in obtaining a multi-country dataset that includes large samples per country suggest that perhaps smaller studies that focus on one or a few countries are a more realistic way to go. Our findings suggest that utilization decisions function differently over European countries, and therefore we caution researchers about extrapolating results regarding work-family policy use from one country to another.

Second, in this study we used a rather crude measure of parental leave. This means that we could only dichotomously distinguish whether employees used any parental leave, and could not include any information on the duration of the leave. This was done in order to ease comparing parental leave over countries, as the differences in national leave provisions substantially complicate comparing whether a certain period of leave constitutes long or short parental leave. However, the crudeness of our measure obviously prevented us from capturing the depth of variations in parental leave. Similarly, as mentioned above, the measure used for perceived support was not specific for support for parental leave. Using such a specific measure might lead to very different results (Den Dulk et al., 2016).

Third, we use cross-sectional multilevel organization data, which has the huge advantage of including information on employees, their managers *and* the organization, but has the disadvantage of excluding people who were not present in the organization at the time of sampling, particularly women who are currently using parental leave.

Conclusion

All in all, this chapter shows that the influence of organizations on employees' parental leave use is limited—we only find this for organization size—and that instead country variations play a very large role. We therefore underline the importance of conducting country-specific research, and stress the importance of taking caution when extrapolating findings from one country to another in the field of work-family policy research—this might not function as universally as is sometimes assumed. Moreover, our findings do indicate that organizations play a role in utilization-decisions of men but not in that of women, suggesting that while women are expected to use parental leave, men base the extent of their involvement at home partially on pressures from the organizational context. Although we were unable to conduct country-specific analyses, our findings suggest that organizational aspects are of greater importance for utilization-decisions in countries where parental leave is (partially) paid than in countries where it is not, suggesting that organizational aspects come into play when the national conditions create a situation where people have the (financial) freedom to choose between using and not using parental leave.

The use of part-time work:

A vignette-experiment examining considerations to scale back following childbirth

Abstract*

The reduction of working hours can help avoid work-family conflict, yet many people who would like to scale back do not actually do so. This vignette-experiment examines which considerations are most important in men and women's decision-making whether to scale back following childbirth. Five considerations were included in the vignette-experiment: whether scaling back would have career consequences, whether it would have consequences for the enjoyability of the job, whether there was collegial support, the costs of childcare, and one's own income relative to one's partner's. Special attention was paid to see whether men and women valued different considerations. About 2,464 vignettes were conducted in the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Results indicate that men find the income of their partner and career consequences most important, while women focus mainly on partner income and collegial support. While the income of the partner is important for both men and women, results show that women are overall more likely to want to reduce their hours; the default—according to them—is that they reduce their hours, not their partner, unless it is very financially appealing to deviate from this. Swedes, however, differ from their Dutch and British counterparts, and express more counter-gender-normative behavior.

* A slightly different version of this chapter is published as: van Breeschoten, L., Roeters, A., & van der Lippe, T. (2018). Reasons to reduce: A vignette-experiment examining men and women's considerations to scale back following childbirth. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society, 25*(2), 169-200. Van Breeschoten, Roeters and van der Lippe jointly developed the idea and designed the vignette-experiment. Van Breeschoten wrote the main parts of the manuscript, and conducted the analyses. Roeters and van der Lippe contributed substantially to this chapter by providing feedback on several earlier versions. Special thanks go to Vincent Buskens and Zoltán Lippényi for their assistance in designing the vignette-experiment.

Introduction

Many young parents struggle to meet the competing demands of work and family. On the one hand, their employer expects commitment from its employees, but at the same time they are also expected to be involved parents (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Blair-Loy, 2003). One way to combine these responsibilities is by reducing one's working hours following the birth of a child (P. E. Becker & Moen, 1999). Reducing one's hours—as well as using other work-family policies—enables parents to remain in the labor market while freeing time to care for their child. Research suggests that employees who reduce their working hours experience less work-family conflict (Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000; van Rijswijk, Bekker, Rutte, & Croon, 2004). Experiencing less work-family conflict is associated with higher physical and mental wellbeing (T. D. Allen & Armstrong, 2006; Leineweber et al., 2013); higher organizational productivity, lower absence, and lower turnover (Carlson et al., 2011; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999); and lower societal healthcare costs and higher fertility rates (Castles, 2003; Higgins et al., 2004). Thus, reducing one's hours can be beneficial for both employees, organizations, and the state. However, it is known that a significant number of people who have the right to and would like to reduce their hours do not actually do so (McDonald et al., 2005; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2003). Why these people refrain from doing so remains unclear. Understanding what underlies this "provision-utilization gap" (McDonald et al., 2005; Pasamar, 2015) is important for organizations and countries wishing to promote the option to reduce one's hours; which is often done to help people reduce their work-family conflict (Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2012), and to promote gender equality (Haas & Hwang, 2016; Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2012; Müller, Neumann, & Wrohlich, 2016). In this chapter, we use a vignette-experiment (also known as a factorial survey design) in order to disentangle people's reasons for using—or abstaining from using—the option to reduce their working hours, and investigate *which considerations are most important in men and women's decision-making whether to scale back?*

Both economists and sociologists have been interested in explaining people's reduction of working hours. They have shown that reducing one's working hours can be costly in a number of ways, and that people often refrain from reducing their hours in order to avoid these costs—or reduce their hours when these costs are absent. Economic

studies look mainly at the role of financial-economic factors on labor market decisions (such as the costs of formal childcare; when formal childcare is very expensive reducing working hours becomes more attractive) or at a comparative advantage between partners (Akgunduz & Plantenga, 2015; G. S. Becker, 1965; Heckman, 1974). Sociological theories on the utilization of work-family policies, on the other hand, often include other types of costs, such as how utilization might be costly for one's career (McDonald et al., 2008; Perlow, 1995), can have personal costs (Campbell et al., 2012), or social costs (Kirby & Krone, 2002; McDonald et al., 2005). Although it is thus known that a number of economic and social considerations can be of importance to people who are deciding whether to reduce their working hours, little is known about which considerations people pay most attention to when making their decision; scaling back might be attractive in one way but costly in another. In order to gain more insight in what underlies the provision-utilization gap, research is needed that pays attention to the relative importance of these considerations. In this chapter, we therefore not only include economic and social considerations but also make an important contribution to the existing literature by examining the relative importance of these considerations through the use of a vignette-experiment.

In a vignette-experiment, respondents are presented with a number of short descriptions of hypothetical situations which explicitly contain factors that are—based on the literature—thought to be the most important aspects in the decision-making process of people. In our experiment, these factors are the economic and social considerations introduced above. These factors are systematically varied over the vignettes (e.g., in one vignette it is stated that the costs of childcare are high, and in the other that they are low), and after each vignette respondents are asked for their desired action: if they would be in this hypothetical situation, would they scale back or not? As each respondent is shown multiple vignettes in which the factors are systemically varied, it is possible to analyze the isolated effect of the individual factors, as well as their relative importance (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Alexander & Becker, 1978; Rossi & Nock, 1982). Note that vignette-experiments thus measure hypothetical behavior rather than actual behavior, though research suggests that people's responses to vignette-experiments match their actual behavior remarkably well (Hainmueller, Hangartner, &

Yamamoto, 2015). By employing a vignette, we provide an important additional perspective to existing research. Previous research mainly relied on questionnaires to investigate people's working hours or utilization of work-family policies. This type of research is particularly well-suited for the collection of large amounts of data on easily quantifiable issues, such as weekly working hours or the utilization of policies. Questionnaires are, however, less appropriate for the investigation of complex decision-making situations, while this is precisely the strength of vignettes. Therefore, research based on questionnaires and research based on vignette-experiments complement each other.

There are three main reasons why vignette-experiments are well suited for testing complex decision-making situations. First, people are often not aware which factors enter into their own decision-making process, making it difficult (if not impossible) for them to provide an accurate answer when asked directly about their motivations in a questionnaire (Alexander & Becker, 1978). By using a vignette-experiment, we ensure that respondents do not need to be conscious of the considerations underlying their decision-making; instead the quasi-experimental setting enables the researchers to disentangle the considerations presented. Second, complex decision-making situations can be sensitive topics, and thus there is a risk that people may express biased, socially desirable answers. In our case, this might, for example, mean that women who do not want to scale back to care for their child will still say that they will do so, because they feel that this is expected of them. However, while the risk of social desirability is not absent from vignette-experiments, it is maintained to be smaller than in questionnaires because the theoretically relevant factors are "hidden" in the vignettes (Alexander & Becker, 1978; Wallander, 2009). This ensures that respondents are not fully attentive to the factors, and thus not as likely to consciously bias their reports with socially desirable answers as they would have been had they been asked directly about their judgment. Last, research based on questionnaires is often cross-sectional, and thus cannot shed light on the causal direction. In the context of people's decision-making to scale back it is, for example, unclear whether people do not get promoted because they work part-time, or start working part-time because they do not get promoted. Vignette-experiments are well suited for investigating causal relations as variations in working hours and other

variables of theoretical interest can be exogenously determined and systematically varied (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Wallander, 2009). According to Kelly et al. (2008), the absence of studies allowing for causal inferences is one of the main lacuna in work-family research, which led them to call for more (quasi-) experimental research. In the context of work-family policies, vignette-experiments have already been employed to examine managers' decision-making, either regarding the provision of work-family policies (Been, van der Lippe, et al., 2017) or regarding their acceptance of utilization requests (den Dulk & de Ruijter, 2008; Klein, Berman, & Dickson, 2000).

Most work-family research focuses exclusively on the decision-making of women (Haas & Hwang, 2016), which is unfortunate as work-family policies are increasingly offered to and used by men, and promoting male utilization is employed as a tool for increasing gender equality (Haas & Hwang, 2016; Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2012; Müller et al., 2016). However, as gender expectations for men and women continue to differ, and male utilization of work-family policies continues to lack behind that of women (even in countries with a high level of gender equality, such as Sweden; Haas & Hwang, 2009, 2016), it is to be expected that men and women pay attention to different considerations when making their decision whether or not to reduce their hours. Therefore, we will separately investigate the relative importance of considerations for men and for women. Similarly, a lot of research focuses on the individual without considering how the cultural context might impact individual decision-making (Ollier-Malaterre, Sarkisian, Stawiski, & Hannum, 2013). We aim to provide insight into how the decision to scale back is made differently in different contexts, by focusing on the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, three countries with varying working-cultures and levels of gender equality. The Netherlands is characterized by the fact that it has many policies that facilitate a more traditional division of labor between parents, with the man being the main breadwinner. Sweden, on the other hand, has many formal policies designed to support dual-earner families and gender equality. Lastly, the United Kingdom can be seen as a market-oriented country, where the government neither supports gender equality nor traditional gender roles, but leaves it up to market forces to shape gender relations (Korpi, 2000; Korpi et al., 2013). In each of the selected countries, part-time work is relatively common, and

most employees are entitled to scale back if they would want to do so (Roeters & Craig, 2014), which ensures it would be relatively easy for respondents to identify with the hypothetical situations presented.

Theory and hypotheses

Individual considerations

Financial costs

According to the micro-economic theory of labor supply, people decide rationally how much time (if any) they want to spend on the labor market, depending on the potential financial gains from working (Killingsworth, 1983; Mincer, 1962). Many parents of young children who wish to work have to arrange for their children to be cared for by others during these hours, and formal childcare can be expensive. It should be noted that this does not equally apply to all parents, though, as some work alternate shifts, rely on free informal childcare by friends or relatives, or live in countries where childcare is heavily subsidized. The net-gains of working for parents are thus not only affected by their salary but also by the costs of childcare (Cloïn, 2010; Heckman, 1974). If one has a high earning potential, an extra hour of work becomes more profitable, and the opportunity costs of not working are higher. This makes it logical to want to participate more in the labor market. It follows that when the costs for childcare are low, an hour of work is more profitable, and people want to work more hours. Conversely, when the costs are high, parents are more likely to want to scale back. Empirical studies have also shown this by modeling the increase in (female) labor participation as a result of a decrease in (net) childcare costs (for an overview, see: Akgunduz & Plantenga, 2015). Therefore, we expect that employees are more likely to reduce their working hours if the financial benefits of working are lower due to high costs of childcare (H1).

Career costs

Many people do not only work to earn money but also aspire to have a successful career (Eurofound, 2012; van der Horst, 2014). Reducing one's working hours can be costly because it harms one's promotion prospects (McDonald et al., 2008). In many

organizations a notion of an ideal worker persists which is based on the traditional male breadwinner: a highly committed, full-time worker, with limited care-giving responsibilities (Acker, 1990; Haas & Hwang, 2016; Reid, 2015). In these organizations, the amount of hours one puts into one's job are often seen as indicative of one's commitment to the organization and, relatedly, to one's ambition to advance in the organization. Consequently, employees who scale back can be perceived as not fully committed and thus less ambitious, which affects their chances of being promoted (McDonald et al., 2008; Perlow, 1995). Empirical studies have also found that perceived negative career consequences limit the uptake of work-family policies (Darcy, McCarthy, Hill, & Grady, 2012; McDonald et al., 2008; Smith & Gardner, 2007). Therefore, we expect employees to be more likely to reduce their working hours if they do not perceive this to have negative career consequences (H2).

Personal costs

People also engage in paid work because they find their job intrinsically rewarding: work can be interesting, challenging, meaningful, or simply enjoyable (Eurofound, 2012; Wilson, 2006). When one changes one's working hours the enjoyability of a job might decrease for two reasons. First, people who work fewer hours tend to be assigned less challenging, lower status tasks—even when holding the same position as their full-time counterparts—because their superiors tend to assign them projects without tight deadlines, or without high-profile clients (Campbell et al., 2012; McDonald, Bradley, & Brown, 2009). Second, the enjoyability of the job might also decrease because only more enjoyable tasks can be cut in order to allow for a decrease in working hours, as other—less enjoyable—tasks will always continue to be required. For example, after a reduction in hours someone might still be required to attend meetings and do administration, which will cost the same amount of time as before, and thus these tasks will from then on take up a larger proportion of the job than before. We are not aware of any empirical studies examining the effect of anticipated changes in job enjoyment on the utilization of work-family policies. However, studies do show that people value their job enjoyment (Graves, Ruderman, Ohlott, & Weber, 2012; Sturges, 2013; Wilson, 2006), which would suggest that they are reluctant to give this up. Therefore, we

hypothesize that employees are more likely to reduce their working hours if they do not think that this will affect the enjoyability of their job (H3).

Social costs

Most people spend a lot of time with their colleagues, and wish to maintain a positive—or at least not negative—relationship with them (Eurofound, 2012). The extent to which co-workers support their colleagues who want to use work-family policies varies. Some employees are very supportive toward their colleagues' (anticipated) use of work-family programs, either because they believe this to be important, or because they experience similar choices or work-life struggles themselves. This can consequently encourage employees to apply to use such policies (Kirby & Krone, 2002). Conversely, however, employees can also be resentful toward their co-workers who use work-family policies as they themselves feel excluded from enjoying these "privileges," for example because they do not have children, or have a stay-at-home spouse (Kirby & Krone, 2002). Colleagues might also be unsupportive as they have to (or fear they might have to) take on additional workload, or perform a greater share of unpleasant tasks, such as working on holidays. Their negative attitude can discourage employees from applying to reduce their working hours (Boren & Johnson, 2013; Kirby & Krone, 2002; McDonald et al., 2009). Empirical studies have shown that employees with supportive colleagues (Waters & Bardoel, 2006), or with colleagues who used work-family policies themselves (Bygren & Duvander, 2006; Dahl, Løken, & Mogstad, 2012) are more likely to use these policies. This leads us to H4: employees are more likely to reduce their working hours if they experience collegial support for this.

Household considerations

So far, we considered the decision to scale back as an individual decision, but work-family decisions of partners are often coordinated. Couples can opt for one, both, or neither partner to reduce their hours (P. E. Becker & Moen, 1999). According to Becker's New Home Economics theory (1965), specialization yields the highest household utility because both partners can capitalize on and develop their comparative advantages. The partner with the highest earnings has a comparative advantage in paid

work, and thus it would be rational that he or she specializes in employment and does not scale back, whereas the partner with the lowest hourly wage will specialize in unpaid work, including childcare, and may have a smaller, part-time job on the side. Empirical evidence suggest that couples with young children indeed often specialize, and that the relative earnings of the partners influences who scales back—although gender also plays a role here (P. E. Becker & Moen, 1999; Kanji, 2013; Kühhirt, 2012). For now, we still leave gender out of the equation, and hypothesize that employees are less likely to reduce their working hours if they earn more than their partner (H5), and that they are more likely to reduce their working hours if they earn less than their partner (H6).

Gender

Gender differences in the likelihood to reduce

It is known that women scale back more often than men (P. E. Becker & Moen, 1999; van Gils, Kraaykamp, & van der Lippe, 2009). Partially, this might be explained by the process discussed earlier: women tend to earn less than their male partners (due to differential wages and a tendency for homogamy), and therefore it is more often rational for the female partner to scale back and the male partner to specialize in paid work. Simultaneously, a gender perspective suggests that another reason why women scale back more often than men is that societal expectations on the role of men and women differ, and that people tend to conform to these expectations as it is costly to violate social norms of appropriate behavior (Akerlof & Kranton, 2000; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Although the traditional breadwinner-homemaker model is no longer dominant in Europe, it still "profoundly impacts how gender organizes societies," by continuing to persist as an ideal, where the work role still firstly lies with the husband, and the responsibility for the home and children with the wife (Kanji & Samuel, 2017). Because scaling back is in line with gender expectations for women but not for men, we expect that women will more often choose to reduce their working hours and take up childcare responsibilities than men, even in similar circumstances (as is the case in our vignette-experiment). Therefore, we expect that women are more likely to reduce their working hours than men (H7).

Gender differences in the relative importance of considerations

Taking this reasoning one step further, we will not only test how gender expectations influence men and women's overall willingness to scale back but also explore whether gender expectations influence which consequences associated with scaling back men and women perceive as most important. In other words, men and women might differ in which considerations they focus on most when considering whether to scale back. Building upon the reasoning set out above it can be argued that in industrialized societies career orientation is central to the male identity (Gilmore, 1990). Because men have learned that it is important for them to have a successful career, in line with "doing gender," avoiding career costs would be important in their decision-making (West & Zimmerman, 1987), and thus they would be reluctant to scale back when they think that this will have negative career consequences (van der Horst, 2014).

Furthermore, because men tend to be more career oriented, they might be more reluctant to specialize in unpaid work, even when their partner earns more than they do (Gilmore, 1990; Greenstein, 2000). Women, on the other hand, continue to shoulder the main responsibility for the home, and more often have a "job" rather than a "career" (P. E. Becker & Moen, 1999). This means that in general work tends to be less central to their identity than it is for men. Therefore, it is likely that women display their feminine identity by attaching greater importance to non-career considerations: financial costs (both the costs of childcare and the relative income of their partner), personal costs (whether it will continue to be enjoyable for them to work), and social costs (the attitudes of colleagues). Previous studies have indeed found that non-career aspirations are valued more by women, and career aspirations more by men (Konrad, Ritchie, Lieb, & Corrigall, 2000; van der Horst, 2014).

The country context

Our research is conducted in the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. We selected these countries because in each of them part-time work is relatively common and many employees have the right to request changing their working hours, which makes it realistic for respondents to envision themselves in a situation where they might reduce their working hours. These three countries are similar in many respects, such as

levels of fertility, marriage, and cohabitation (OECD, 2017b); however, they are also very different in their working-cultures and levels of gender equality, and consequently different levels of part-time work (see Table 3.1 for an overview of the male, female, and total prevalence of part-time work in these countries). As it can be expected that these different country contexts affect individual employees' decision-making regarding working hours, we will take an explorative approach to see whether reasons to reduce differ in these countries.

According to Korpi's (2000; Korpi et al., 2013) typology of gendered policy models in modern welfare states, the three countries belong to different clusters, and carry out different policies regarding gender equality and female labor participation, with Sweden belonging to the earner-carer group, the Netherlands to the traditional-family group, and the United Kingdom to the market-oriented group.

Sweden has many formal policies designed to support equality between the sexes, and actively supports dual-earner families, for example through high-quality, heavily subsidized public childcare. This has contributed to a high level of female labor participation, which is to a large extent full-time or long part-time. In Sweden, all parents with children under the age of eight have the right to reduce their working hours to 75 percent of full-time. However, although gender equality is high on the agenda in Sweden, part-time work is much more prevalent among women than men, and this gender distinction is even more apparent among parents with young children. In couples with two children where the youngest child is between three and five years old, 43 percent of women and eight percent of men work part-time (Evertsson et al., 2009; Swedish Labor Force Survey, 2016).

The Netherlands, on the other hand, belongs to the traditional-family countries, meaning that its policies facilitate the traditional male breadwinning family rather than gender equality (Korpi, 2000; Korpi et al., 2013). Paternity leave, for example, is very limited, and there is no heavily subsidized public childcare. In the Netherlands, a "one-and-a-half earners model" has become dominant (Visser, 2002), and it is almost natural for women to work part-time. The gap between male and female working hours is largest among men and women with live-in children and a partner: in 2015 women in this category worked an average of 24 to 26 hours a week, while their male counterparts

Table 3.1 - People working part-time as a percentage of the employed, in the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK (age 15-64).

	Total	Men	Women
The Netherlands	49.7%	26.2%	76.4%
Sweden	23.9%	13.0%	35.6%
The United Kingdom	25.2%	11.3%	40.8%

Note: Dutch respondents are considered to be working part-time if their usual working hours are <35. Respondents from Sweden and the United Kingdom are seen as part-time employees when they self-identified as doing so.
Source: Eurostat (2017). Data from 2016.

worked approximately 40 hours a week (Portegijs & van den Brakel, 2016). Part-time work in the Netherlands is well regulated and protected, due to "what is probably the most comprehensive state effort to increase high quality part-time work" (Gornick & Meyers, 2003), which includes the right of most Dutch employees—not only parents—to request a decrease (or increase) in their working hours (although there are a few exceptions) (den Dulk, 2016). Part-time work among Dutch men is compared to other EU member states also relatively high, though much lower than among Dutch women (Eurostat, 2017).

The United Kingdom, on the other hand, belongs to the group of market-oriented countries, meaning that the government neither actively supports gender equality, nor supports traditional gender roles, but instead leaves it up to market forces to shape gender relations (Korpi, 2000; Korpi et al., 2013). This orientation on the free market means, for example, that the level of protection for (intended) part-time employees is much lower than in the Netherlands and Sweden, and the quality of part-time jobs is generally lower than that of full-time jobs. This should be understood as an institutional impediment to scaling back: switching to working part-time means for many people in the United Kingdom that they have to sacrifice job quality, and thus scaling back will not be an attractive option for many ambitious employees. Another important factor is that childcare in the United Kingdom is very expensive, which means that "for too many families it simply does not pay to work" (Rutter, 2015). In addition, in the United Kingdom, part-time work is mainly a women's issue, and mothers in particular often

work part-time: 58 percent of mothers with a child of preschool age do so (Cory & Stirling, 2016). All employees who have been with their employer for over twenty-six weeks can request a reduction of working hours, however, there are more "opt out" possibilities for employers in the United Kingdom than in Sweden or the Netherlands, including, for example, the burden of additional costs, inability to recruit additional staff, or a detrimental impact on the quality of service (EurWORK, 2014).

Method

Sample

For the purpose of this chapter we rely on the vignette-experiment as well as data from the main ESWS questionnaires, from respondents from the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Linking the vignettes to an organizational survey was done so we could link the data obtained through the vignettes to respondent- and organization-level data obtained from the questionnaire. After employees completed the questionnaire they were asked if they wanted to participate in the vignette study ("an interesting thought-experiment"), which followed immediately after. Only respondents who were younger than forty were invited to participate in the vignette, as we wanted it to be a realistic option for respondents that they might be expecting a child.

One of the main advantages of vignette-experiments is that they permit general conclusions about causal mechanisms using nonrandom samples, as long as certain criteria for internal and external validity are met (Auspurg & Hinz, 2015). Internal validity is ensured by administering the vignettes at random and having each vignette rated by numerous respondents. External validity is less straightforward, but relies on the theoretical question whether the causal mechanism holds for all people, or only for a selective subgroup. For testing causal mechanisms that are considered universal a homogeneous convenience sample is deemed sufficient to generalize to the entire population (which is why student samples are often used in (vignette-) experiments). However, if one assumes that such a causal mechanism functions differently for separate sub-groups, one cannot automatically generalize results from a non-representative subsample to the entire population. As we assumed that the mechanism we were trying

to test would only apply to a certain sub-group—namely employed individuals of childbearing age—we only administered the experiment to respondents belonging to this group. This is also the reason why we used separate samples of men and women; we worked from the assumption (based in theory) that the mechanism would function differently for men and women.

The response rate was 61.4 percent for the questionnaire, and 57.2 percent for the vignettes, leading to a total of 743 respondents. From the initial sample of 743, we excluded subjects who had not completed all the vignettes, as this would prevent us from analyzing the within-subject variation resulting from the vignette-factors ($n = 102$, 14 percent). We also excluded respondents who were over forty but filled in the paper vignettes anyway ($n = 22$, 3 percent), or who had missing values on any of the independent or control variables, which was only the case for their working hours ($n = 3$, <1 percent). The final sample consisted of 616 respondents, and as each respondent filled in four vignettes we had a total of 2,464 vignettes. As the vignette, not the respondent, is the unit of analysis, $N = 2{,}464$ (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010; Wallander, 2009). Considering the simplicity of our vignette-experiment, with a relatively small number of variables of interest, this is a rather large sample (Ganong & Coleman, 2006).

The Vignette

Before respondents were presented with the actual vignettes, they were shown a short introduction. It was explained to them that they would be shown four "hypothetical scenarios" relating to a situation in which they and a partner were "expecting a(nother) child" (whether the respondent had children was added as a control variable). Respondents were asked to imagine the following to happen to them in their current job, and to express if and how much they would like to reduce their working hours in that situation. It was also specified that the situations referred to "you and your partner," and respondents without a partner were asked to answer the questions according to how they would respond if they would have a partner.

In relation to the hypotheses set out above, our vignette included the independent variables childcare costs, career consequences, enjoyment, collegial support, and partner income, which each had two or three manipulations that varied systematically between

Figure 3.1 - Example of a vignette.

You and your partner are expecting a child and you are considering whether one or both of you should reduce your working hours. Assume that you could afford to lose some income. Furthermore, assume that there are no family members or friends available to help you with childcare.

- Your partner earns less than you do.
- The hourly rate charged for childcare is much lower than your hourly wage.

If you reduce your working hours:

- Most of your colleagues would disapprove.
- You will be less likely to get a promotion.
- You will have to give up some tasks you really enjoy.

the vignettes. Childcare costs reflects the costs of childcare in relation to one's income (0=*much lower*, 1=*about the same*). Career consequences indicates whether working fewer hours would affect their promotion prospects (0=*less likely to be promoted*, 1=*chances will not be affected*). The variable enjoyment tells people whether working fewer hours would affect the enjoyability of their job (0=*you will have to give up some tasks you really enjoy*, 1=*you will continue to do the same type of tasks*, *and your work will remain as enjoyable as it is now*). Furthermore, collegial support indicates whether colleagues would *disapprove* (=0), or *approve* (=1) when they would reduce their working hours. Lastly, partner income tells people how much their partner earned in relation to themselves (1=*less*, 2=*about the same*, 3=*more*), which was recoded into two dummies. After each vignette respondents were asked: "In this situation, would you reduce your contract to work fewer hours per week?" (0=*no*, 1=*yes*), this is used as our dependent variable. Figure 3.1 shows an example of a vignette.

Respondent characteristics

In addition to the manipulated vignette-factors, we include a number of respondent-level characteristics. In line with our different expectations based on gender and country, we include the gender of the respondent (0=*female*, 1=*male*), and the country of residence

(1=*the Netherlands*, 2=*Sweden*, 3=*the United Kingdom*). Moreover, we include a number of control variables, namely age (16-39 years), whether the respondent lives with a partner (0=*no*, 1=*yes*), and whether the respondent has minor children (0=*no*, 1=*yes*). We also included the respondent's current working hours (5-70), as we assumed that respondents who already worked fewer hours would be less likely to want to reduce even more.

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3.2. Our sample contains about the same number of men and women, and over half (56 percent) of the respondents are Dutch, while 22 percent are Swedish and 22 percent British. The average age of our respondents is 31, 70 percent lives with a partner and 40 percent has minor children. Moreover, on average people work 39 hours per week, though Dutch women in particular have a much lower average (34 hours) than the other groups (39-41). When responding to the vignettes, respondents indicated 59 percent of the time that they would want to reduce their working hours in the situation presented in the vignette. Women did so more often than men: 64 percent of the time as opposed to 53 percent.

Table 3.2 - Descriptive statistics (SD).

		Total	**Men**				**Women**			
	Range	(*N*=616)	**Total** (*n*=303)	**NL** (*n*=167)	**SW** (*n*=69)	**UK** (*n*=67)	**Total** (*n*=313)	**NL** (*n*=177)	**SW** (*n*=65)	**UK** (*n*=71)
Respondent characteristics										
Male	0-1	.49								
Age	16-39	31 (5)	31 (5)	31(5)	33(5)	29(5)	31(5)	31(5)	32(5)	29(5)
Partner	0-1	.70	.72	.68	.86	.67	.68	.71	.71	.58
Child(ren)	0-1	.40	.39	.35	.55	.33	.42	.46	.51	.24
Working hours	5-70	39 (9)	41 (8)	41 (9)	41 (7)	40 (9)	37 (8)	34 (9)	40 (5)	39 (7)
Country (NL)		.56	.55				.57			
Sweden		.22	.23				.21			
UK		.22	.22				.23			
Dependent variable										
Would reduce hours	0-1	.59	.53	.53	.62	.46	.64	.64	.62	.67

Analytic strategy

Unlike regular regression models, in a vignette-experiment the vignette is seen as the level of analysis, not the respondent. As four vignettes are shown to each respondent the vignettes are nested within the respondents, which makes a multilevel analysis appropriate (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). We use a multilevel logistic regression model. We first run an empty model in order to calculate the intraclass correlation coefficient to determine how much variance is explained by each level (the vignette and the respondent level), before testing our hypotheses. Analyses are conducted for all respondents together, as well as separately for men and women, and for men and women per country, in order to see whether the different subgroups focus on different considerations. Results are presented as average marginal effects rather than the estimated coefficients, because these are easier to interpret, especially for logistic regression (Jann, 2013; Mood, 2010). The average marginal effects express how the probability of the dependent variable being 1 (i.e., people want to reduce) changes as the independent variables change from 0 to 1 for binary variables, or for a one unit increase for continuous variables, holding the other variables constant. In other words, if, for example, collegial support has an average marginal effect of .1, this means that when people were shown the vignette that indicated that their colleagues would approve of them scaling back, they were 10 percentage points more likely to want to reduce their hours than if they saw vignettes which stated that their colleagues would disapprove, keeping everything else constant. In addition, the average marginal effects will also be presented in a plot to visualize the relative sizes of the effects, and thereby aid the interpretation of the relative importance of the factors.

Results

Table 3.3 shows the average marginal effects predicting the desired reduction of working hours for all respondents and by gender. Based on the empty model (not shown here), we calculated the intraclass correlation coefficient, which is .21 for the vignette level and .79 for the respondent level. Thus, the factors specified on the vignette account

Table 3.3 - Average marginal effects predicting the desired reduction of working hours, for all respondents and by gender (SE).

	Total (*N*=2464)	**Men** (*n*=1212)	**Women** (*n*=1252)
Vignette characteristics			
Childcare costs close to hourly wage	.07***	.05	.09***
(vs. lower)	(.02)	(.03)	(.02)
No career consequences	.09***	.17***	.03
(vs. likely consequences)	(.02)	(.03)	(.02)
No change in enjoyment	.05*	.10**	.02
(vs. loss of enjoyable tasks)	(.02)	(.04)	(.03)
High collegial support	.11***	.08*	.14***
(vs. no support)	(.02)	(.04)	(.03)
Partner earns (ref. same)			
Less	-.23***	-.21***	-.22***
	(.03)	(.05)	(.04)
More	.12***	.21***	.06*
	(.03)	(.05)	(.03)
Respondent characteristics			
Male	-.26***		
	(.05)		
Age	.01	.01	.01
	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Partner	.09	-.13	.17**
	(.05)	(.10)	(.06)
Child(ren)	-.30***	-.08	-.39***
	(.06)	(.10)	(.08)
Current working hours	.02***	.01**	.02***
	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)
Country (ref. NL)			
Sweden	.04	.24**	-.13
	(.06)	(.09)	(.07)
UK	-.11	-.16	-.12
	(.06)	(.11)	(.07)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note: Average marginal effects (dy/dx) were calculated as the discrete change from the base level.

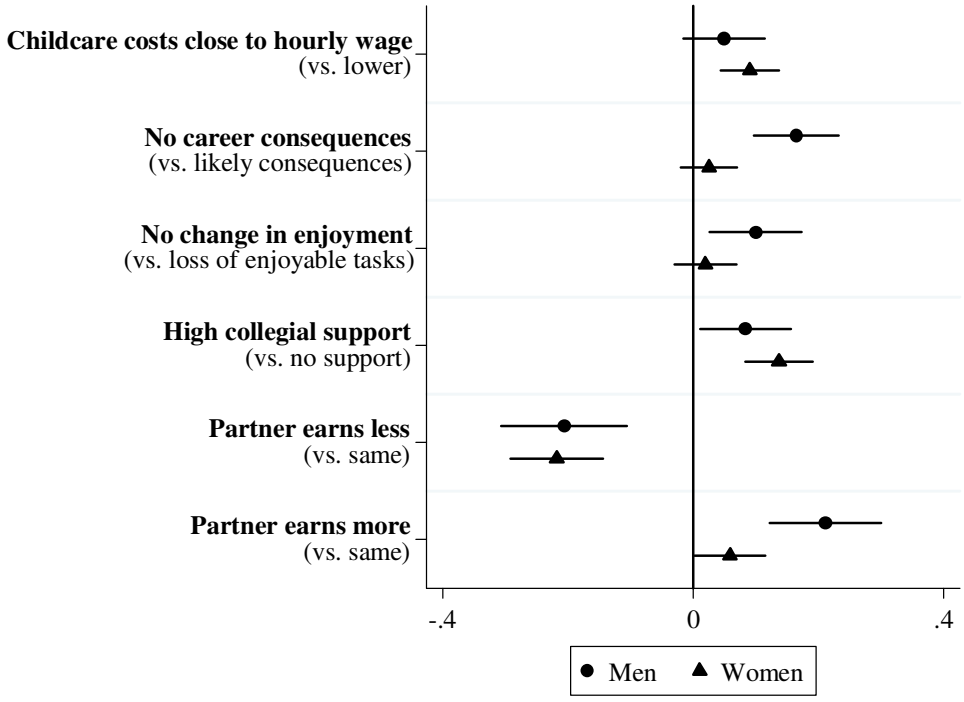
for 21 percent of people's decision-making, while differences between people account for the remaining 79 percent of the variance. Looking at the total sample, we find support for all hypotheses: employees are more likely to want to reduce their working hours if the costs of childcare are high compared to their wage (H1), they do not expect this to have negative career consequences (H2), they do not think that this will affect the enjoyability of their job (H3), they experience collegial support for this (H4), and when they earn less than their partner (H6). Employees are less likely to reduce their hours when they earn more than their partner (H5). Moreover, women are more likely to

reduce their hours than men (H7). The predictive probability of wanting to reduce is 54 percent for men and 80 percent for women (the predictive probabilities of all factors can be found in Appendix B1).

Relative importance for men and women

To see which considerations are most important in men and women's decision-making, we turn to the size of the average marginal effects. Figure 3.2 shows a plot of the average marginal effects presented in Table 3.3 to visualize the differences in effect-sizes. For men, we find a significant effect of all factors except childcare costs. The most important factors in the decision-making of men is the relative income of their partner and career consequences. When a man's partner earns less than he does, he is 21 percentage points less likely to want to reduce his working hours than when they earn about the same, and when his partner earns more compared to the same his likelihood to reduce increases

Figure 3.2 - Plotted average marginal effects predicting the desired reduction of working hours, for all respondents and by gender.



with 21 percentage points. Similarly, expecting no career consequences makes men 17 percentage points more likely to want to reduce than when they do expect career consequences. Turning to women, we find no significant effect of career consequences and enjoyment. In addition, for women, their partner's income is the most important factor: the likelihood that a woman will reduce her hours decreases by 22 percentage points when her partner earns less compared to when he earns the same. However, when her partner earns more than she does, the likelihood that she will reduce her hours is only 6 percentage points higher than when he earns the same (discussed below). The second most important factor in women's decision-making is collegial support. When women experience collegial support their probability of reducing becomes 14 percentage points larger. Lastly, when the costs of childcare are close to one's hourly wage, women become 9 percentage points more likely to reduce than when the costs of childcare are lower.

It stands out that when their partner earns more, women only become 6 percentage points more likely to reduce their hours, while for men this increases by 21 percentage points. When we look at the absolute predictive probabilities (Appendix B1) we see that this is because women are already more likely to want to reduce their hours than men. When a woman earns the same as her partner her probability of wanting to reduce is 77 percent, while for men in this situation this is 60 percent. When a woman earns less than her partner her likelihood of reducing increases by "only" 6 percentage points to 83 percent, but this is still higher than it is for men, who increase by 21 percentage points to a predictive probability of 81 percent.

Country differences

In addition, we conducted further analyses to explore the differences between men and women in the different countries, the results of which can be found in Table 3.4 and plotted in Figure 3.3. We see that for almost all groups the income of the partner is the most important factor, but we see some important differences between the groups. For Dutch and British men, the probability of reducing increases strongly when their partner earns more (in both cases by 20 percentage points), and decreases strongly when their partner earns less (NL: 20; UK: 30 percentage points). However, while Swedish men

Table 3.4 - Average marginal effects predicting the desired reduction of working hours, by gender and country (SE).

	Men			Women		
	NL (*n*=668)	**SW** (*n*=276)	**UK** (*n*=268)	**NL** (*n*=708)	**SW** (*n*=260)	**UK** (*n*=284)
Vignette characteristics						
Childcare costs close to hourly wage	.06	.06	.03	.06*	.08	.16**
(vs. lower)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.03)	(.05)	(.05)
No career consequences	.18***	.13*	.13*	.05	.13*	-.10*
(vs. likely consequences)	(.05)	(.06)	(.05)	(.03)	(.06)	(.05)
No change in enjoyment	.12*	.16*	-.02	-.00	.13*	.02
(vs. loss of enjoyable tasks)	(.06)	(.07)	(.06)	(.03)	(.06)	(.05)
High collegial support	.13*	-.03	.08	.09**	.22**	.16**
(vs. no support)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.03)	(.07)	(.06)
Partner earns (ref. same)						
Less	-.20**	-.07	-.30***	-.17***	-.11	-.29***
	(.08)	(.08)	(.09)	(.04)	(.08)	(.08)
More	.19**	.16*	.21*	.10**	-.01	-.03
	(.07)	(.07)	(.10)	(.04)	(.07)	(.06)
Respondent characteristics						
Age	.01	.01	-.01	-.00	.04*	.01
	(.01)	(.02)	(.02)	(.01)	(.02)	(.01)
Partner	-.03	-.17	-.20	.24***	-.13	.11
	.15)	(.11)	(.18)	(.06)	(.13)	(.10)
Child(ren)	-.09	.14	-.38*	-.35***	-.26	-.47***
	(.15)	(.16)	(.18)	(.09)	(.16)	(.14)
Current working hours	.01	.02*	.01	.02***	.02	-.00
	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.00)	(.02)	(.01)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

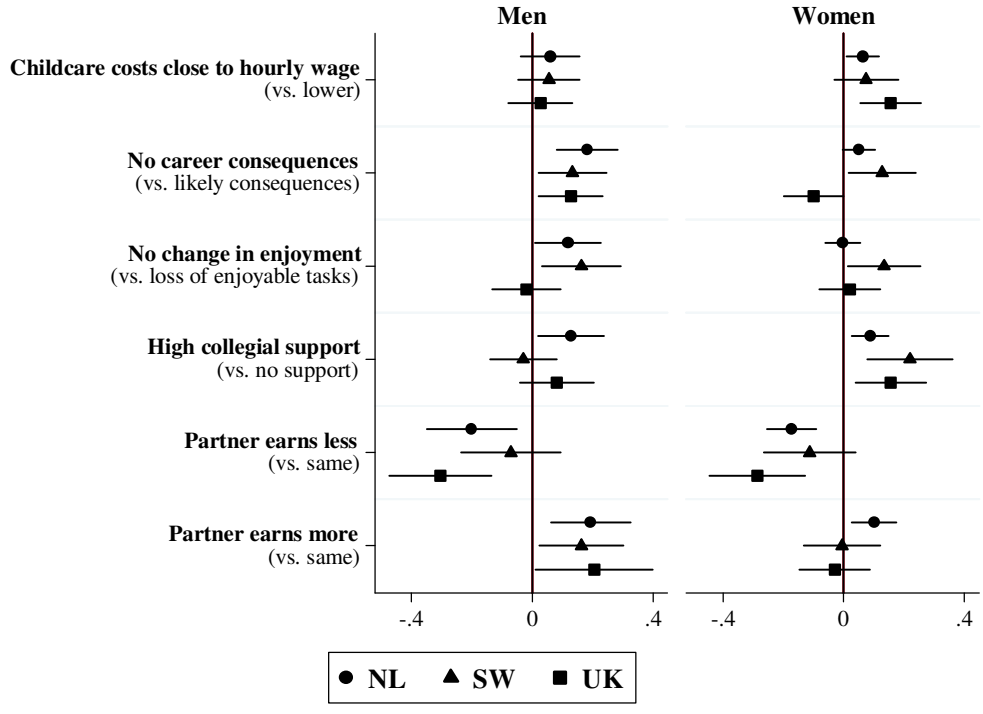
Note: Average marginal effects (dy/dx) were calculated as the discrete change from the base level.

become 16 percentage points more likely to reduce when their partner earns more, no significant decline is found when their partner earns less. Turning to women, we see that partner income has no significant effect for Swedes. For both Dutch and British women, the likelihood of reducing decreases when their partner earns less (NL: 17 percentage points; UK: 29 percentage points), but while Dutch women become more likely to reduce their hours when their partner earns more (10 percentage points), for British women no significant difference is found. Again we turn to the predictive probabilities (Appendix B2) to shed more light on the aspects that stand out. We see that in the situation where the partner earns the same, Dutch and British men are much less likely to reduce their hours (NL: 60 percent; UK: 47 percent) than their female counterparts (NL: 71 percent; UK: 82 percent), and while men's likelihood to reduce is much more

affected by the income of their partner and thus varies more, the absolute likelihood of reducing remains higher for women (men NL: 79 percent; UK: 67 percent; women NL: 81 percent; UK: 79 percent). Swedish men, on the other hand, are compared to other men much more likely to reduce when their partner earns the same (75 percent), and no significant decline is found when their partner earns less. Swedish women have an 80 percent likelihood of reducing when their partner earns the same, but for them no significant change is found resulting from partner income.

Moreover, for men in all three countries the probability of wanting to reduce increases strongly when they expect no career consequences (NL: 18; SW: 13; UK: 13 percentage points), and Swedish men are also much more likely to reduce their hours when they do not expect a change in enjoyment (16 percentage points). Apart from partner income, collegial support was the most important factor for women in all three countries (NL: 9; SW: 22; UK: 16 percentage points). Similar to their male counterparts,

Figure 3.3 - Plotted average marginal effects predicting the desired reduction of working hours, by gender and country.



Swedish women also attach great importance to whether they expect a change in enjoyment and to not expecting career consequences; in both cases they are 13 percentage points more likely to want to reduce. British women, and to a lesser extent also Dutch women, also pay attention to whether the costs of childcare are close to their hourly wage, in which case they are respectively 16 and 6 percentage points more likely to reduce. Unexpectedly, we found for British women also a negative effect of career consequences, meaning that when they expect that reducing their hours will have no career consequences, they are 10 percentage points less likely to scale back.

Sensitivity analyses

A number of sensitivity analyses are performed. As it might be difficult for respondents without a partner to report about how they would behave if they were to have a partner, we ran the analyses excluding single people. Similarly, we ran the analyses including only people who did not have children, as it can be argued that people who are parents have already made the decision whether they want to scale back or not, and thus are unlikely to scale back even more. On the other hand, it might be difficult for people without children to really anticipate what having children will be like, and therefore, we also ran the analyses including only people with children. Furthermore, we include the controls sector (financial services, health care, higher education, manufacturing, telecommunication, and transportation), occupational status (ISEI) and education in years (2-20) in turn to see whether the mechanism would function differently for respondents in different sectors or with different jobs. Also, to see whether the results are mainly driven by one country, we repeated the analyses excluding each of the countries in turn. Lastly, we include a variable representing the order in which respondents had seen the vignettes, as respondents might tire and focus only on one or two considerations rather than the whole vignette, leaving earlier choices to differ from later choices. Results were in all cases very similar, which suggests that our findings are robust.

Discussion

In this chapter we examined how people make the decision whether or not to reduce their working hours following the birth of a child. Reducing one's hours can enable employees to be engaged in childcare, while continuing their involvement in employment. However, little is known about why people who want to and have the right to reduce their hours refrain from doing so. With our study, we aim to shed further light on this in four ways. First, we have combined two prominent approaches toward studying working hour reductions, by combining economic theories regarding determinants of working hours with sociological theories on the utilization of work-family policies. Second, by using a vignette-experiment, we were able to not only examine whether people find these costs important but to also investigate the relative importance of these considerations. Third, contrary to most previous research, we have included both men and women, rather than only women, and thereby contribute to the understudied understanding of male utilization. Fourth, by focusing on the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, we aim to allow insight into how the decision to scale back is made differently in different cultural contexts.

Our findings suggest that both economic and social considerations play a role in people's decision-making to scale back—although there are gender and country differences in which considerations are most important. Financial considerations, specifically the comparative advantage between partners, is an important consideration for both men and women—though in different manners. Additionally, how utilization might be costly for one's career factors strongly into the decision-making of men, and social costs (the support of colleagues) into the decision-making of women. With regards to the different countries, we see that Swedish women in particular, and to a lesser extent also Swedish men, stand out as they express more counter-gender-normative behavior. In addition, women are generally much more likely to indicate that they want to reduce their hours than men.

One of our most striking findings is that for both genders the relative income of their partner is the most important consideration, but when we look closer the picture is more complex. Men are overall more likely to indicate to want to reduce their hours as

their partner's income relative to their own increases. Women, on the other hand, are very likely to want to reduce their hours both when their partner earns more *and* when their partner earns the same. This indicates that the reduction of working hours for childcare purposes continues to be a gendered decision. The default, at least from a female perspective, is that they will be the one to reduce their hours, and women only deviate from this when this is very financially appealing. This is in line with our expectations; because the breadwinner-homemaker model continues to impact gender norms we expected women to be more likely to take up childcare responsibilities than men (Kanji & Samuel, 2017).

Turning to which considerations are most important for the different genders, our finding that men focus strongly on whether reducing their hours will have career consequences aligns with the notion that career orientation is central to the male identity (Gilmore, 1990). As men have learned that having a successful career is important, they wish to avoid behavior that could harm their career, and are thus reluctant to scale back when they think that this could hamper their promotion prospects (West & Zimmerman, 1987). On the other hand, our finding that the relative income of the partner is the strongest predictor of men's reduction of working hours—even stronger than the possibility of career consequences—is a surprising one. Based on the literature, we expected men to wish to continue to work many hours *even when their partner earns more* because it is important to them to be the main provider (Gilmore, 1990; Greenstein, 2000), yet we find the opposite. Our results suggest that financial considerations might be more important to men than gender normativity. This could imply that the reason why men work part-time less often than women (Eurostat, 2017) is not (solely) that men behave gender-normatively and wish to be the main provider, but that this is also due to the wage gap for women, which leaves men to more often have a comparative advantage in paid work (G. S. Becker, 1965; Eurostat, 2015a). Additionally, this could also stem from maternal gatekeeping, i.e., the notion that mothers can inhibit fathers' involvement in childcare (S. M. Allen & Hawkins, 1999). Although men express a willingness to reduce their hours if they earn the same as their partner, we see that women are even more willing to do so, and as work-family decisions

of partners tend to be coordinated this might result in men scaling back less often, even though they would have been willing to do so.

Moreover, we found that women focus mainly on non-career considerations in their decision-making to scale back, primarily social costs and financial costs, which aligns with previous research (Konrad et al., 2000; van der Horst, 2014). As discussed earlier, we found that women's likelihood of reducing was strongly affected by their income relative to their partner's. This is in line with our expectations: women are more likely to reduce when this is financially sensible. Whether there will be social costs (i.e. their colleagues disapprove) is their second most important consideration. This suggests that women are, to a greater extent than men, influenced by their social environment, and find it important to receive the support of others for their actions. Contrary to what we expected we found no significant effect of personal costs (i.e. the enjoyability of the job) on women's desire to reduce their working hours, while we did find this to play a role for men. We expected that the notion that women tend to have a "job" rather than a "career" (P. E. Becker & Moen, 1999) would make that women find it important that their job is something they enjoy—otherwise they might as well drop out of employment completely. However, it might be that it is precisely *because* they have a job instead of a career that they find the enjoyability of the work less important: the time spent on work does not have to be terribly enjoyable or intellectually satisfying as it is not central to their identity, but rather something that is done "on the side," next to other aspects of one's life. This would also explain why we did find enjoyability to play a role for men.

Turning to country differences, we see that Swedish women in particular, and to a lesser extent Swedish men, stand out by expressing more counter-gender-normative behavior. Unlike for Dutch and British women, the income of the partner and the costs of childcare are not important to the decision-making of Swedish women. Simultaneously, they—like men from all countries—find it important that scaling back has no career consequences. Swedish men largely focus on the same considerations as their Dutch and British counterparts, but are overall more willing to reduce their hours than other men. It is not surprising that Swedes in particular stand out in this way. Sweden is a country that actively supports equality between the sexes and favors dual-earner families, and work-family policies in Sweden are focused on increasing the

working hours of women (Evertsson et al., 2009; Korpi et al., 2013). It is also noteworthy that how "realistic" considerations are in the respective countries also seems to influence how important employees deem these considerations. Formal childcare is well regulated and heavily subsidized in Sweden, and neither Swedish men nor women seem to factor the costs thereof into account in their decision-making. In the Netherlands and especially the United Kingdom, however, childcare is expensive, and women in these countries do factor the costs of childcare into their decision-making to scale back. This fits with economic literature on female labor market participation, which shows that female labor market participation increases as a result of a decrease in (net) childcare costs (Akgunduz & Plantenga, 2015).

Lastly, a surprising finding is the negative effect of career consequences that was found for British women: when they expect scaling back to have no career consequences, they are *less* likely to indicate to want to scale back, contrary to the expected positive effect. While it should be interpreted with caution considering it is marginally significant and the size of the effect is small, a possible explanation is that these women are so grateful to their organization for not punishing a reduction of working hours with career consequences, that they want to reciprocate to the organization and end up working more hours (Grover & Crooker, 1995).

Limitations and implications

In our study, we have employed a vignette-experiment, as this method is particularly well-suited for exploring the relative importance of factors in complex decision-making situations (Alexander & Becker, 1978; Wallander, 2009). However, vignette-experiments also have some limitations. An often heard limitation is that it requires variables and levels to be pre-specified, which comes with the risk that important variables are omitted (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). However, the factors presented on a vignette are not random, but based on the literature, and while no new factors can be detected using a vignette-experiment, its strength lies elsewhere: in being able to analyze the isolated effect of these pre-specified factors, as well as exploring causality. For this reason, employing a vignette-experiment is only appropriate for topics where previous studies have provided a good indication which factors are important (Aguinis & Bradley,

2014; Ganong & Coleman, 2006). Even so, as our experiment is a simplification of reality we have intentionally—and very possibly unintentionally—excluded factors that people in real-life do take into account in similar decision-making situations, most notably informal childcare arrangements (which tend to be very common, especially in the United Kingdom; Verhoef, Tammelin, May, Rönkä, & Roeters, 2015). However, whereas this precludes us from drawing conclusions on the role these excluded factors play in people's decision-making about reducing, thanks to our experimental design this does not affect our findings regarding the relative importance of the included considerations vis-à-vis each other.

Another often heard limitation is that vignette-experiments have lower external validity due to their hypothetical nature (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Wallander, 2009). One way in which we have attempted to improve this is through our sample selection: we sampled employees of childbearing age, which corresponds with the population to whom we generalize our results. This made it easier for respondents to identify with the situation presented, and this thus secures more reliable answers (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). That being said, it should be kept in mind that with our vignette-experiment we measure people's intended behavior rather than their actual behavior, which may not always coincide. This may, for example, lead to more socially desirable responses, or people holding unrealistically positive expectations of their own behavior. However, the risk of social desirability bias is often maintained to be smaller in vignette-experiments than in questionnaires, because the theoretically relevant factors are "hidden" in short stories (Alexander & Becker, 1978; Wallander, 2009). In addition, research suggests that people's responses to vignette-experiments match their actual behavior remarkably well (Hainmueller et al., 2015).

Additionally, while vignette-experiments have the advantage of permitting general conclusions about causal mechanisms using nonrandom samples, this hinges on the assumption that the causal mechanism is universal to the group to which it is to be generalized (Auspurg & Hinz, 2015). For certain types of behavior, such as altruism and rational behavior, this is considered universal for humans, and thus homogeneous convenience samples are deemed sufficient (which is why student samples are often used in (vignette-)experiments). As we assumed that the mechanism we were trying to

test would only apply to a certain sub-group—namely employed individuals of childbearing age—we only administered the experiment to this group. This is also the reason why we used separate samples of men and women; we worked from the assumption (based in theory) that the mechanism would function differently for men and women. However, the question remains whether the causal mechanism underlying decisions regarding employees' working-hours following childbirth is universal over job type, or whether this is specific to certain types of jobs. Theoretically, we assumed this to be the same for different types of jobs, and controlling for job characteristics did not lead to different results. However, we cannot exclude the option that it does function differently for different types of jobs and sectors than were included in our study, and therefore it would be good for future research to conduct a vignette-experiment on a nationally representative sample of employees.

Conclusion

All in all, our study indicates that men and women have different reasons to reduce. Women are overall more likely to want to reduce their hours, but become less willing to do so if they have a partner who earns less than they do, or if their colleagues are unsupportive. Men, on the other hand, base their decision largely on their income relative to their partner's (if their partner earns more, they are more likely to reduce, and if their partner earns less, they are less likely to reduce) and on whether they expect to suffer career consequences. Furthermore, we found that Swedish women, and to a lesser extent Swedish men, differ from their Dutch and British counterparts, as they expressed more inclination to exhibit counter-gender-normative behavior. Finally, we maintain that our findings suggest that the mere availability of the option to reduce one's working hours following the birth of a child is not enough for people to actually do so. Before people can reduce their working hours they need to believe that they will not suffer collegial disapproval or career consequences. When the organizational culture is supportive of work-family needs, employees who want or need to use work-family policies do not need to refrain from this for fear of organizational consequences.

The usefulness of part-time work for work-life conflict:

Moderating influences of organizational support and gender

4

Abstract*

Working part-time can potentially be a great means of reducing work-life conflict for parents of young children. However, research has not univocally found this attenuating relation, suggesting it may not be universal, but rather contingent on other factors. This study investigates whether the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict is contingent on organizational support and gender. Results show that short part-time work (<25 hours) relates to lower levels of work-life conflict for both women and men. We find some evidence that organizational support affects this relation: short part-time working women in an organization with a family-supportive organizational culture had lower levels of work-life conflict than short part-time working mothers in organizations with an unsupportive organizational culture. For men working short part-time we find an effect in the same direction, although this falls short of conventional statistical significance. In addition, long part-time work (25-35 hours) is not significantly related to (lower) work-life conflict for either women or men. Notably, the relation between working part-time and work-life conflict does not differ for mothers and fathers, suggesting that this work-family policy could help both men and women reduce work-life conflict.

* A slightly different version of this chapter is published as: van Breeschoten, L., Evertsson, M. (2019). When does part-time work relate to less work-life conflict for parents? Moderating influences of workplace support and gender in the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. *Community, Work and Family*. Van Breeschoten and Evertsson jointly developed the idea. Van Breeschoten wrote the main part of the manuscript and conducted the analyses. Evertsson contributed substantially to the manuscript by providing feedback and assisting with the writing and the analyses. The work of this chapter was supported by the European Consortium for Sociological Research in the form of their internship grant.

Introduction

With the rise of non-traditional families and the erosion of traditional gender norms, fewer people are living in traditional breadwinner-homemaker household, where one spouse (the husband) specializes in work and the other (the wife) in childcare and domestic tasks. Instead, many people are living in dual-earning or single-parent households and need to combine having a paid job with family responsibilities (Eurostat, 2015b; OECD, 2011). Combining the two can be challenging, and may lead to work-life conflict, which is associated with lower wellbeing, as well as lower performance at work (e.g. Amstad et al., 2011). In order to help people to be better able to combine work and family responsibilities, many countries as well as employers offer employees work-family policies, such as the option to work reduced hours (den Dulk et al., 2012; Hegewisch & Gornick, 2008, 2011).

Working part-time has the potential to be a great means of reducing work-life conflict, because it enables employees to continue to be active in the labor market, while freeing up time for family responsibilities (Booth & van Ours, 2009). Therefore, it is sometimes seen as a win-win solution for parents wanting to work (Hill, Märtinson, Ferris, & Baker, 2004). However, research has found mixed evidence regarding the relation between work-family policies (including part-time work) and work-life conflict, with some finding the expected negative relation, some finding no effect, and some even finding that work-family policies increase work-life conflict (as discussed by: Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Beham, Präg, & Drobnič, 2012; Kelly et al., 2008). This indicates that the relation between working hours and work-life conflict is not as clear-cut as was initially assumed, but may function differently under different conditions. One such condition, which has often been overlooked by previous research, is the organizational context. Employees are embedded in organizations, and their use of work-family policies may be welcomed by their employer, but might also be frowned upon. Hence, organizational support (including a family-supportive organizational culture, managerial support and collegial support) can affect people's experiences of using these policies. Organizational support has rarely been included in research on part-time work and work-life conflict, and might potentially account for the mixed findings of previous research. Hence, there has been a call to "bring the organization back in" in

this type of research (Barley & Kunda, 2001; Kalleberg, 2009), to which we hope to contribute.

In this study, we also investigate whether the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict is different for mothers and fathers. Previous research on the relation between work-family policies and work-family outcomes has concentrated on women, and little is known about how these relationships work for men (Clark, Rudolph, Zhdanova, Michel, & Baltes, 2017; Haas & Hwang, 2016). As work-family policies are increasingly made available to and used by men, a better understanding of gender differences in the outcomes of work-family policies is essential (Munn & Greer, 2015). However, given that men work part-time much less often than women, we unfortunately cannot conduct the same in-depth analyses for men as we can for women. Therefore, we will investigate the following research question: *is the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict moderated by organizational support and gender?*

One further contribution will be made. Following some recent studies (Beham et al., 2012; Roeters & Craig, 2014) we will not just compare part-time work to full-time work, but also distinguish between short part-time work and long part-time work. By looking at different categories of part-time work we contribute to a more detailed understanding of the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict.

We focus on three Western European countries: the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom where part-time work is relatively common. We do so using multilevel organization-data from the ESWS (van der Lippe et al., 2016), including 1712 employees with a child under age 14, nested in 303 teams in 102 organizations. A great advantage of this dataset is that it enables us to combine information provided by the employees with information provided by their manager and the organization. This allows us to limit possible common method bias (which occurs when the same respondent reports on numerous variables) and control for unobserved organizational characteristics that might affect employee outcomes (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Policy background

Although part-time work is not a work-family policy per se—people can work part-time for reasons other than childcare (Eurostat, 2018b)—it is in practice strongly intertwined with the labor force participation of mothers; by working part-time they are (better) able to combine their family life with work. In the 1950s organizations in the Netherlands started offering part-time jobs to mothers who otherwise would not have been in the workforce at all (Portegijs et al., 2008). Sweden was in 1978 the first country where access to reduced hours was introduced as a governmental work-family policy aimed specifically at parents (in practice mothers). It was very successful in increasing female labor participation (Hegewisch & Gornick, 2008, 2011). However, although the popularity of part-time jobs increased in many European countries, they tended to be precarious and associated with lower job quality (e.g. lower pay or fewer training and promotion opportunities)(Warren & Lyonette, 2018). The European Union adopted its first directive on part-time work in 1997, with the aim to increase the *quality* of part-time work (part-time work directive 97/81/EC), yet to this day this remains a problem, especially for short part-time jobs. The right for parents to reduce their working hours is currently not included in European Union directives and many European countries do not offer this on their own account (Hegewisch & Gornick, 2008, 2011).

The three countries selected for this study, The Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom all have legislation in place that allows parents (and also non-parents in the Netherlands) to—under certain conditions—request a reduction of working hours (Hegewisch & Gornick, 2008, 2011).[4] These are also three of the countries with the highest levels of part-time work in Europe (Eurostat, 2017). Still, the three countries differ from one another in their policies regarding gender equality and female labor force participation, and can be seen as belonging to three different clusters in Korpi's (2000; Korpi et al., 2013) typology of gendered policy models in modern welfare states: the Netherlands belonging to the traditional-family group, Sweden to the earner-carer regime, and the United Kingdom to the market-oriented, liberal group.

[4] For information on the specific conditions applying to the right to request a reduction of working hours, see for example Hegewisch (2009).

The Netherlands has relatively few policies aimed at supporting gender equality and more policies facilitating for the traditional male breadwinner family (Korpi, 2000; Korpi et al., 2013). In the Netherlands a "one-and-a-half earners model" has become dominant, with the majority of couples consisting out of a full-time working man and a part-time working woman—regardless of whether they have (young) children (Portegijs & van den Brakel, 2016; Visser, 2002). Although in recent years the Dutch government has focussed on increasing the (hourly) labor force participation of women in order to reduce women's financial dependency and increase their professional opportunities, this has mainly led to a shift from short part-time hours to long part-time hours among women. Consequently the gender imbalance in working hours and (financial) rewards remains (Portegijs & van den Brakel, 2016). Although part-time work is much less common among men than among women, men's part-time work is higher in the Netherlands than in any other EU-member state (Eurostat, 2017). In 2017 82 percent of mothers worked part-time, compared to 17 percent of fathers (Eurostat, 2018a).

Sweden is seen as belonging to the earner-carer regime because it actively supports dual-earner families and has many formal policies designed to support equality between the sexes, such as the parental leave insurance (introduced in 1974) and the use-it-or-lose-it (so called "daddy") months, as well as high quality, heavily subsidized public childcare (Korpi, 2000; Korpi et al., 2013). This has contributed to high female labor force participation which to a large extent is full-time or long part-time (Swedish Labour Force Survey, 2016). The availability of work-family policies have made short part-time work less attractive as a solution for combining work and family (Lyonette, 2015). Even though Sweden scores high on (policies supporting) gender equality, there is still considerable occupational sex segregation, as well as gender inequalities in housework and childcare (Evertsson, 2014; Grönlund & Magnusson, 2016). In 2017, 32 percent of the Swedish mothers and 9 percent of fathers worked part-time (Eurostat, 2018a).

Lastly, the United Kingdom can be seen as a market-oriented, liberal country. It neither actively supports gender equality, nor supports traditional gender roles, but leaves it up to market forces to shape gender relations (Korpi, 2000; Korpi et al., 2013). Working part-time is common among mothers in the UK, not least due to the costs of

childcare, which are higher than in any other European country (Lyonette, 2015; Verhoef et al., 2015). If employees have worked for the same employer for over 26 weeks, they can request a reduction of working hours, however, there are more "opt out" possibilities for employers than in the other two countries. Despite the EU directive, the level of protection for part-time employees and quality of part-time work in the UK lags behind other European countries, meaning that many part-time jobs are of low quality and not seldom found in occupations with lower occupational status (Lyonette, 2015; Warren & Lyonette, 2018). It should be noted that during the recession in the UK male part-time work has increased, but that this partially stems from an inability to find full-time employment (Lyonette, 2015). In 2017, 52 percent of mothers and 9 percent of fathers worked part-time (Eurostat, 2018a).

Theory and hypotheses

Conceptual approach

Numerous conceptual approaches are employed when the interplay between work and life is studied. First, a distinction tends to be made between "work-life" and "work-family," with the latter referring more narrowly to engagement with children, while the former is seen as a broader concept that also encompasses other non-work aspects of one's non-work life (Chang et al., 2010). In our study we refer to work-life conflict, because even though some parents might be able to protect engagement in childcare against any spillover (and thus have low work-*family* conflict), they may still experience work-life conflict in that no time for other aspects of one's life, such as leisure, remains. When we refer to work-life conflict we specifically mean "work-to-life conflict" as we are interested in the central role of the organization on employees' experienced conflict, yet we are aware that the directionality might also be reversed (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). Moreover, some studies examine work-life balance while others focus on work-family conflict, and some uncertainty remains regarding their relation *vis-à-vis* one another. Many studies and actors (e.g. the European Union) treat balance and conflict as existing on opposite ends of a continuum, but as shown by Carlson, Grzywacz and Zivnuska (2009) they are theoretically distinct concepts, i.e. "balance" is

more than the absence of conflict. We will rely upon research into work-life conflict, as well as balance.

Work-life conflict

Work-family policies, including part-time work, are often made available to employees with the explicit intention of helping them increase work-life balance or reduce work-life conflict (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006). The construct of work-life conflict has its origins in role theory and the idea that having multiple responsibilities (i.e. work and family) can cause strain by competing for one's time, energy and attention (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Grönlund & Öun, 2010). Thus, reducing the responsibilities in one aspect of one's life would lead to less strain and therefore less work-life conflict. Therefore, when employees work part-time this strain ought to be lower, as their working hours are shortened and fewer responsibilities are competing. Although research into the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict has hypothesized that employees working part-time have lower levels of work-life conflict, the findings so far are inconsistent (see: Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Beham et al., 2012; Kelly et al., 2008). In this chapter, we also hypothesize that employees who work part-time have lower levels of work-life conflict (H1), and study to what extent the relationship is modified by organizational support and gender.

The moderating role of organizational support

Following previous studies (Dikkers et al., 2004; Thompson & Prottas, 2006) we identify three ways in which employees can experience (lack of) organizational support: through the organizational culture, through managerial support, and through collegial support. Organizations have a distinct organizational culture, which entails "the shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the integration of employees' work and family lives" (Thompson et al., 1999). The organizational culture also entails norms determining what constitutes behavior of an "ideal worker" (Acker, 1990), and through their organizational culture organizations convey to their employees whether working part-time is acceptable behavior. Managers may adhere to these organizational (ideal worker) norms, but they

are independent actors who can also convey a different message (Darcy et al., 2012; Hochschild, 1997; Thompson et al., 1999). Similarly, colleagues can be supportive or unsupportive towards employee's family responsibilities (Berdahl & Moon, 2013; Kirby & Krone, 2002). Although all three forms of support influence each other—colleagues and especially managers influence the organizational culture, the culture influences managers and employees, and managers and colleagues influence each other—they can independently withhold or provide support for work-family issues.

Organizational culture

According to Acker's (1990) ideal worker-theory, gendered assumptions prevail in many organizations. Acker claims that organizational structures are not gender neutral, but rather centralize around a notion of an "ideal worker" which is based on a traditional male breadwinner stereotype. This ideal worker exists only for the job, with no other (family) responsibilities. With nothing interfering, this employee can focus fully on work-related duties (Acker, 1990; Haas & Hwang, 2016; Munn & Greer, 2015). Organizations that value the ideal worker norm convey the message that employees should be highly committed to work, and that family responsibilities should not intervene. Workers who deviate from this norm, for example by working fewer hours or in other ways prioritizing one's family, are not ideal workers and are therefore seen as less committed to their job. Commitment is implicitly assumed to be linked to productivity, and consequently, employers' assumptions of employees' work commitment may have consequences for their career progression (Hill, Märtinson, & Ferris, 2004; Lyonette, 2015). It follows that in these organizations part-time employees may feel the need to work harder during working hours or work overtime, in order to prove that they are still committed (Anttila, Nätti, & Väisänen, 2005; Larsson & Björk, 2017; Lyonette, 2015). However, in organizations that adhere less to the ideal worker norm and that have a more family-supportive organizational culture, employees should feel less pressure to prove their commitment, and should therefore be better able to experience the positive effects of work-family policies such as part-time work. Therefore we hypothesize that the alleviating relation between part-time work and work-

life conflict is larger for employees who work in an organization that has a more family-supportive organizational culture (H2).

Managerial support

In addition to the general organizational culture, employees' closest managers are important agents in creating a climate in which using work-family policies is either normalized or frowned upon. Managers hold a key position in shaping the future career of an employee, and employees are likely to want to impress their managers and live up to their expectations. Managers have their own norms which may or may not be in line with the general organizational (ideal worker) culture, and they signal these norms through providing or withholding support for employees' family responsibilities (Darcy et al., 2012; Hochschild, 1997; Thompson et al., 1999). Through these different managerial views towards family responsibilities, employees might be more or less able to enjoy the benefits of working part-time. Therefore, we expect that the alleviating relation between part-time work and work-life conflict is larger for employees who have a more supportive manager (H3).

Collegial support

In many jobs employees spend a lot of time with their colleagues and are likely to value having a positive relationship with them. However, co-workers can vary in their supportiveness for an employee's engagement in family responsibilities. Some co-workers are supportive, either because they believe this to be important, or because they experience similar work-life struggles themselves. However, others can feel resentful, for example if they work full-time and feel that their part-time working peers require them to pick up the slack and take over tasks when the part-timers are absent (Kirby & Krone, 2002). In addition, co-workers may also respond mockingly, especially towards male colleagues who deviate from expectations that men should be providers but not caretakers (Berdahl & Moon, 2013). Thus, we maintain that also the supportiveness of direct colleagues may affect whether employees feel the need to compensate for working part-time, or whether they are able to enjoy the benefits of reductions in work-life

conflict. Therefore we expect that the alleviating relation between part-time work and work-life conflict is larger for employees who have more supportive colleagues (H4).

The moderating role of gender

Does working part-time relate differently to work-life conflict for men and women? Prevailing gender ideologies continue to assign the work role primarily to men, and the main responsibility for children to women (Kanji & Samuel, 2017). When mothers work part-time they conform to gender norms that still oppose full-time maternal employment (Booth & van Ours, 2009; Roeters & Craig, 2014). This might enable women to enjoy the benefits of working part-time without feeling a need to compensate for violating social norms of appropriate behavior (Akerlof & Kranton, 2000; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Men, however, might be less able to enjoy the positive benefits of working part-time, as prevailing gender ideologies and ideal worker norms expect them to be full-time workers. Part-time working fathers are thus more likely than part-time working mothers to feel a need to compensate for working part-time, in an attempt to prove their commitment to work and their manliness (Acker, 1990; Akerlof & Kranton, 2000; Kanji & Samuel, 2017; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Little research has studied the extent to which part-time work affects work-life conflict differently for men and women, and of the studies that did, neither Beham et al. (2012) nor Eurofound (2011) found any gender differences in work-life balance satisfaction. Worth noting, though, is that both focused on men and women generally, not only on parents. Based on the theories described above we do expect that any alleviating relationship between part-time work and work-life conflict is stronger for women than for men (H5). Moreover, given these gendered norms and expectations especially men would suffer from not having organizational support, and benefit from having this support, as working part-time for them is a greater deviation from the ideal worker norm than it is for women (Acker, 1990; Munn & Greer, 2015). Thus, we hypothesize that for men who have organizational (H6a), managerial (H6b) or collegial support (H6c), the alleviating relation between part-time work and work-life conflict is stronger than for women who experience these types of support.

Method

Sample

For the purpose of this chapter we use a sub-sample of only parents with a child under 14 years of age living at home from the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. People with a missing value on gender were dropped from the analyses (*n*=78), other missing variables were imputed using multiple imputations with regression switching (van Buuren & Oudshoorn, 1999), with the Multiple Imputations command from STATA. This led to a total sample of 1391 employees, nested in 291 teams in 101 organizations.

Measures

Work-life conflict

Our dependent variable *work-life conflict* is based on the work-to-home interference scale from SWING (Wagena & Geurts, 2000), and was constructed by taking the mean of three items: "How often does it happen that you do not have the energy to engage in leisure activities with your family or friends because of your job?" "How often does it happen that you have to work so hard that you do not have time for any of your hobbies?" and "How often does it happen that your work obligations make it difficult for you to feel relaxed at home." All statements are measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "always." All items clearly loaded on one item with an Eigenvalue of 2.23. The Cronbach's alpha was .84, indicating good reliability. A higher score on this variable indicates more work-life conflict.

Part-time work

As recent studies on the impact of part-time work on work-life conflict found that this relation was more substantial for people working short part-time than for those working long part-time (Beham et al., 2012; Roeters & Craig, 2014), we differentiate between 1=*short part-time work* (24 hours or less), 2=*long part-time work* (25-35 hours) and 3=*full-time work* (36 hours or more).

Organizational support

Organizational culture. The *variable organizational culture* represents the department or team manager's answer to the statement "Higher management encourages me to be sensitive to employees' family concerns" on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." By asking this question to the manager instead of to the employee, we limit common method bias, the bias that occurs when the same respondent reports on numerous variables (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Managerial support. Managerial support is measured as the experienced managerial support as reported by the employee. The scale used is based on Thompson et al.'s (1999) scale of work-family culture. A factor-analysis clearly identified one factor on which three items loaded strongly (.5 and higher), and these three items had a Cronbach's alpha of .76. The statements are "My manager is understanding when I have to put my family first," "Higher management encourages supervisors to be sensitive to employees' family concerns" and "My manager is very accommodating of family-friendly needs," which are all asked on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The resulting variable *managerial support* is the mean of these three items and thus ranges from 1-5, where a higher value represents more managerial support for work-family issues. This question was asked to employees rather than to the managers themselves, as we deemed it more likely that social desirability bias would occur when the managers reported about themselves.

Collegial support. *Collegial support* is measured by the manager's answer to the statement "Many employees in my department are resentful when colleagues take extended leave to care for their newborns" on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Again, this question was asked to managers rather than employees themselves to limit possible common method bias.

Table 4.1 – Descriptive statistics (SD).

	Range	Total (*N*=1391)	Women (*n*=735)	Men (*n*=656)
Work-life conflict	1-5	2.21 (0.88)	2.12 (0.85)	2.30 (0.89)
Part-time work				
Short part-time (<25)		.18	.31	.03
Long part-time (25-35)		.22	.32	.11
Full-time (35>)		.60	.37	.86
Respondent characteristics				
Male	0-1	.47		
Age	19-68	40.66 (6.99)	39.89 (6.57)	41.52 (7.33)
Education (in years)	2-20	13.51 (2.82)	13.75 (2.66)	13.24 (2.98)
Occupational status (ISEI)	11.74-88.70	55.65 (19.14)	55.49 (19.07)	55.83 (19.22)
Partner	0-1	.92	.90	.95
Age youngest child	0-14	6.36 (4.38)	6.68(4.41)	6.00(4.32)
Department characteristics				
Supervisor is male	0-1	.69	.58	.82
Supervisor has a child	0-1	.56	.52	.62
Size department (log)	0.69-5.88	3.26 (1.17)	3.42 (1.16)	3.09 (1.17)
Organizational characteristics				
Size (log)	2.20-8.36	5.74 (1.42)	5.87 (1.46)	5.59 (1.36)
Private	0-1	.63	.48	.79
Sector – Manufacturing		.32	.22	.44
Health care		.18	.30	.05
Higher education		.16	.19	.12
Transportation		.13	.08	.17
Financial services		.12	.13	.10
Telecommunication		.09	.08	.10
Country – NL		.54	.56	.50
Sweden		.31	.28	.34
United Kingdom		.16	.16	.16
Organizational support				
Organizational culture	1-5	3.36 (0.96)	3.38 (0.94)	3.34 (0.99)
Managerial support	1-5	3.6 (0.74)	3.58 (0.72)	3.66 (0.77)
Collegial support	1-5	4.27 (0.79)	4.29 (0.76)	4.25 (0.83)

Table 4.1 – *continued*

	Women			Men		
	NL (*n*=413)	**SW** (*n*=208)	**UK** (*n*=114)	**NL** (*n*=331)	**SW** (*n*=221)	**UK** (*n*=104)
Work-life conflict	2.01 (0.76)	2.28 (0.91)	2.24 (1.00)	2.35 (0.85)	2.17 (0.88)	2.44 (1.01)
Part-time work						
Short part-time (<25)	.44	.06	.28	.04	.01	.03
Long part-time (25-35)	.43	.17	.16	.17	.05	.04
Full-time (35>)	.12	.77	.56	.79	.93	.93
Respondent characteristics						
Male						
Age	39.42 (6.53)	40.99 (6.11)	39.57 (7.30)	41.54 (7.17)	41.98 (7.31)	40.49 (7.85)
Education (in years)	13.63 (2.50)	14.07 (2.89)	13.57 (2.75)	13.33 (3.02)	13.45 (3.07)	12.50 (2.57)
Occupational status (ISEI)	55.29 (18.00)	54.65 (20.92)	57.70 (19.35)	55.60 (19.71)	55.32 (19.10)	57.79 (17.85)
Partner	.91	.88	.87	.97	.91	.94
Age youngest child	6.29(4.61)	7.34(3.78)	6.90(4.58)	5.84(4.38)	6.38(4.40)	5.68(3.92)
Department characteristics						
Supervisor is male	.58	.60	.51	.85	.85	.66
Supervisor has a child	.53	.52	.44	.65	.63	.48
Size department (log)	3.69 (1.17)	2.86 (0.84)	3.29 (1.25)	3.27 (1.04)	2.84 (1.27)	2.84 (1.27)
Organizational characteristics						
Size (log)	6.06 (1.41)	5.25 (1.39)	6.33 (1.40)	5.40 (1.28)	5.67 (1.45)	6.03 (1.29)
Private	.39	.63	.57	.74	.89	.76
Sector – Manufacturing	.22	.22	.25	.39	.56	.34
Health care	.42	.17	.09	.07	.04	.04
Higher education	.16	.16	.34	.14	.05	.21
Transportation	.05	.14	.11	.20	.17	.09
Financial services	.12	.15	.14	.13	.07	.09
Telecommunication	.04	.15	.07	.06	.11	.23
Country – NL						
Sweden						
United Kingdom						
Organizational support						
Organizational culture	3.27 (0.86)	3.53 (1.05)	3.57 (0.97)	3.08 (0.94)	3.64 (0.95)	3.53 (1.00)
Managerial support	3.43 (0.66)	3.79 (0.75)	3.76 (0.77)	3.47 (0.76)	3.91 (0.72)	3.91 (0.72)
Collegial support	4.20 (0.70)	4.69 (0.67)	3.98 (0.85)	4.01 (0.81)	4.68 (0.66)	4.07 (0.86)

Respondent characteristics

Gender of the respondent is coded as 0=*female*, 1=*male*. We also controlled for the respondent's age, level of education in years (2-20), and occupational status (ISEI-code), whether the respondent has a partner (0=*no*, 1=*yes*), and the age of the youngest child (0-14).

Department characteristics

We include a number of characteristics of the department where the employee works, and its manger, namely gender of the manager (0=*female*, 1=*male*), whether the manager has children (0=*no*, 1=*yes*), and the size of the department (i.e. number of employees; log of the continuous variable).

Organizational characteristics

Lastly, we control for a number of organizational characteristics, such as size of the organization (i.e. number of employees; log of the continuous variable), whether the organization is private or public (0=*private or mixed*, 1=*public or charity*) and the sector, which is included as six dummies (1=*manufacturing*, 2=*health care*, 3=*higher education*, 4=*transportation*, 5=*financial services*, 6=*telecommunication*). Finally, the country in which the organization is based is added as a control variable (1=*The Netherlands*, 2=*Sweden*, 3=*The United Kingdom*) in order to include country fixed effects. Table 4.1 provides descriptive statistics of all variables.

Analytical Strategy

The relation between working part-time and the experienced work-life conflict is analyzed using an OLS linear regression. To account for the fact that our observations are not independent (as employees are nested within their department), standard errors are adjusted by clustering on the department level.[5] Separate analyses are run for men

[5] Note that we also ran our analyses using multilevel modelling. Results are very similar. Considering the low intraclass correlation coefficient (.04 at the organization and .08 at the department), we decided to refrain from presenting the multilevel models here, but instead present the linear regression with cluster-adjusted standard errors.

and women. In the first model, we include an indicator of part-time work, respondent, department, organizational and country control variables, and organizational support predictors. In the second model we include the interactions between part-time work and organizational support. A Wald-test is used to test whether the effects for women and men differ significantly.

Results

Table 4.2 shows the results of the linear regression of working part-time and work-life conflict. For both women and men we find a significant relationship between short part-time work and work-life conflict (Model 1), indicating that people who work short part-time experience less work-life conflict than those who have a full-time job. No significant difference is found between employees with a long part-time job and those who work full-time. This thus partially supports H1, which states that working part-time relates to lower levels of work-life conflict. Few of the control variables are significant, but we find that for women work-life conflict is greater as years of education increases, and the larger the department in which she works. For men none of the control variables are significant. When it comes to organizational support, having a supportive manager is linked to lower work-life conflict for both women and men. In order to check if there is variation in employees' experiences of part-time work based on the organizational context, interactions were included for family-supportive organizational culture, managerial support and collegial support (Model 2). For women we find a negative interaction between short part-time work and family-supportive organizational culture. In other words, working short part-time relates more strongly to work-life conflict for women in an organization with a family-supportive organizational culture than in organizations where the culture is less supportive. For men the effect is in the same direction, but fails to reach significance. However, we do not find the same relationship for long part-time work for either women or men, and this thus only partially supports H2. Our analyses do not support H3 and H4 regarding the interaction between part-time work and managerial support and part-time work and collegial support, indicating that part-time work reduces employee's work-life conflict independent of the degree to which the manager or colleagues are supportive.

Table 4.2 - The relationship between part-time work and work-life conflict, for women and men

	Women (*n*=735)				**Men** (*n*=656)			
	Model 1		**Model 2**		**Model 1**		**Model 2**	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	3.00***	(0.49)	3.16***	(0.58)	3.12***	(0.48)	3.05***	(0.49)
Part-time work (ref: full-time)								
Short part-time	-0.36***	(0.09)	-0.62	(0.53)	-0.58**	(0.19)	0.17	(1.15)
Long part-time	-0.15	(0.10)	-0.74	(0.56)	-0.06	(0.10)	0.58	(0.71)
Respondent characteristics								
Age	-0.00	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.01)
Education (years)	0.05**	(0.02)	0.05**	(0.02)	0.01	(0.02)	0.01	(0.02)
Occupational status (ISEI)	-0.00	(0.00)	-0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	-0.00	(0.00)
Partner	0.10	(0.09)	0.10	(0.09)	0.14	(0.13)	0.15	(0.13)
Age youngest child	0.01	(0.01)	0.01	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.01)
Department characteristics								
Supervisor is male	-0.10	(0.08)	-0.09	(0.07)	0.15	(0.11)	0.16	(0.11)
Supervisor has a child	-0.01	(0.07)	-0.01	(0.07)	-0.01	(0.08)	-0.01	(0.08)
Size department (log)	0.10*	(0.04)	0.11*	(0.04)	-0.00	(0.04)	-0.01	(0.04)
Organizational characteristics								
Size (log)	-0.03	(0.03)	-0.03	(0.03)	-0.01	(0.03)	-0.01	(0.03)
Public	0.09	(0.15)	0.12	(0.15)	0.18	(0.15)	0.19	(0.15)
Sector	*Included*		*Included*		*Included*		*Included*	
Country	*Included*		*Included*		*Included*		*Included*	
Organizational support								
Supportive culture	-0.05	(0.04)	0.02	(0.06)	-0.01	(0.04)	0.01	(0.04)
Managerial support	-0.37***	(0.05)	-0.41***	(0.07)	-0.32***	(0.05)	-0.31***	(0.05)
Collegial support	0.04	(0.04)	-0.03	(0.07)	0.04	(0.05)	0.05	(0.05)
Interactions								
Part-time work - Supportive culture (ref: full-time)								
Short part-time			-0.17*	(0.09)			-0.16	(0.20)
Long part-time			-0.09	(0.10)			-0.05	(0.09)
Part-time work - Managerial support (ref: full-time)								
Short part-time			0.10	(0.11)			0.09	(0.25)
Long part-time			0.06	(0.12)			-0.12	(0.18)
Part-time work - Collegial support (ref: full-time)								
Short part-time			0.12	(0.10)			-0.11	(0.23)
Long part-time			0.16	(0.09)			-0.01	(0.13)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

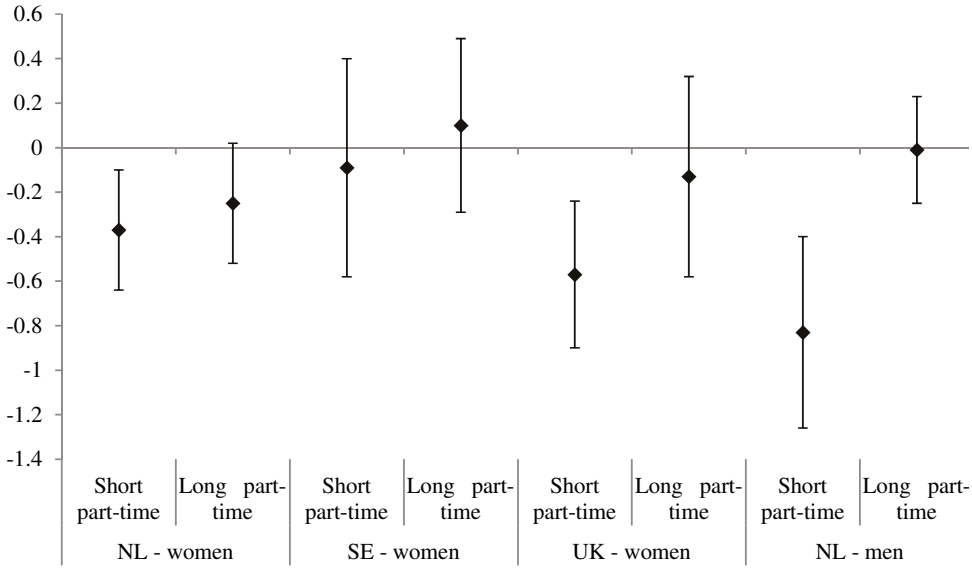
In order to test whether the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict is different for men and women, as hypothesized in H5, we performed a Wald-test (Paternoster, Brame, Mazerolle, & Piquero, 1998) comparing the regression coefficients for the effects of part-time work in Models 1 for women and men. Results show no significant difference between either the coefficients for short part-time work (z=1.05, p=.15) or the coefficients for long part-time work (z=0.64, p=.26), indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the effect of part-time work between men and women. Thus, we find no support for H5. Moreover, H6a-c posed a three-way interaction between gender, the various forms of organizational support and part-time work. Considering most of the two-way interactions are neither significant for women nor for men, it follows that the three-way interactions cannot be significant either. We did a Wald-test to see whether the positive interaction effect of family-supportive organizational culture that was found for women differed significantly from the coefficient for men. This was not the case (z=-0.05, p=.48). Thus, even though the coefficient for men fails to reach statistical significance, the tendency for men is also that working in an organization with a family-supportive organizational culture interacts positively with the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict. Most likely this fails to reach statistical significance because the number of men working short part-time is very low. We reject H6a, H6b and H6c.

Country analyses

We ran our analyses separately per country in order to see whether the results differed or were driven mainly by one country. Results of the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict are presented in Figure 4.1, and the full model can be found in Appendix C1. Unfortunately we had to exclude men in Sweden and the UK in the country specific analyses, as too few men worked part-time in these countries. Figure 4.1 shows the coefficients of work-life conflict for short and long part-time work and their confidence intervals. When confidence intervals do not include zero this means the coefficients are significantly different from zero. We see that short part-time work relates to lower levels of work-life conflict for all groups except Swedish women. For none of the groups does long part-time work relate to significantly different levels of

work-life conflict than full-time work. As all the confidence intervals overlap, no country differs significantly from the others. Moreover, as can be seen in Appendix C1, for each of the four groups managerial support shows up as relating to lower levels of work-life conflict. For Dutch women we also find a relation between collegial support and work-life conflict, though in the opposite direction than we would have expected: women with supportive colleagues experienced *more* work-life conflict. It should, however, be kept in mind that there might be some power issues related to these analyses. The samples for Sweden and the UK are not very big, and some cells contain few people, most notably short part-time work, which is used by 11 Swedish women, 32 English women, and 13 Dutch men, and long part-time, which is used by 34 Swedish women and 18 English women.

Figure 4.1 – Relation between working part-time and work-life conflict, for women in the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom and men in the Netherlands, coefficients and confidence intervals.



Note: presented coefficients result from the models as presented in appendix C1.

Sensitivity analyses

As our organizational support factors might be multicollinear, we also ran our models including only one interaction at a time. Results were very similar, indicating that the results presented above do not suffer from multicollinearity. Additionally, we ran our analyses using multilevel modeling, which also led to similar results.

Lastly, to check whether the analyses for men were driven by Dutch men only we conducted additional analyses where we use a dichotomous variable of full-time vs. part-time work (thus short as well as long part-time taken together) for all six groups, as presented in Appendix C2. When interpreting this table it should be kept in mind that there are still very few men in Sweden and the UK who work part-time. The results show that in all six groups the relationships are as expected, i.e. the point estimates are in the same direction yet smaller and the coefficients are less often significant than for the more detailed short/long part-time analyses, suggesting that the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict mainly exists for the short part-time jobs. The point estimates for all groups, except Swedish women, are in the same direction, suggesting that while the effects of English and Swedish men fall short of conventional statistical significance, the effect for men is not only driven by Dutch men.

Discussion

In this chapter we examined the relation between working part-time and work-life conflict for parents in the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. In addition, we studied whether this relationship is contingent on organizational support and gender. Working part-time can potentially be a great means of reducing work-life conflict (Booth & van Ours, 2009) and is often offered and used for that particular reason, yet research has found mixed effects regarding the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Beham et al., 2012; Kelly et al., 2008). In this chapter we added to existing knowledge in three ways. First, contrary to most previous research we focused on organizational factors, and thereby contribute to a better understanding of how organizational support relates to the outcomes of work-family policies. Second, we examined both fathers and mothers. Previous research has

mainly focused on women (Clark et al., 2017; Haas & Hwang, 2016), however, as work-family policies are increasingly made available to and used by men, it is important to include men in studies on work-family policy outcomes. Third, following recent studies (i.e. Beham et al., 2012; Roeters & Craig, 2014), we distinguished between short and long part-time work to get a more detailed understanding of how part-time work relates to work-life conflict.

Our findings suggest that especially short part-time work is associated with lower levels of work-life conflict, for both men and women. This indicates that being in short part-time work can be a useful means of reducing work-life conflict, regardless of gender. This is noteworthy, as we theoretically expected men to experience fewer positive benefits from working part-time than women, as prevailing gender ideologies and ideal worker norms impose greater expectations on men to be full-time workers (Acker, 1990; Akerlof & Kranton, 2000; Kanji & Samuel, 2017; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Our finding that women and men can both benefit from working short part-time is in line with Beham et al. (2012) and Eurofound (2011), who did not find any gender differences in the relation between working part-time and work-life balance satisfaction for all employees (not only parents). When it comes to long part-time hours, we did not find it to relate to lower work-life conflict. This suggest that a possible explanation for the inconclusive findings of other studies regarding the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict may be that they do not distinguish between short and long part-time jobs. Our finding that only short part-time work relates to lower levels of work-life conflict is in line with the findings of two recent studies that also looked at the countries included in this study. Roeters and Craig (2014) consistently found a significant difference in work-life conflict between women working short part-time and women working full-time, but only in some countries did this relationship also prevail for those in long part-time work. Moreover, Beham et al. (2012) found that the relationship between part-time work and satisfaction with work-family balance was stronger for those working short part-time than for those in long part-time work.

Turning to the moderating effect of the organizational context, we found that women who work short part-time have lower levels of work-life conflict when they work in an organization with a family-supportive organizational culture than when they work

in an organization with an unsupportive organizational culture. For men we found a similar, although not significant relationship. Even so, we cannot rule out that such an effect exists due to the small number of men in short part-time work in our sample. We did not find an interaction between short part-time work and managerial or collegial support. This thus partially matches our expectations: we expected that people who work part-time would feel the need to work harder, due to potential feelings of guilt about deviating from organizational norms that value physical presence and high commitment to the job (Acker, 1990; Anttila et al., 2005; Haas & Hwang, 2016; Lyonette, 2015; Munn & Greer, 2015). This would not fully enable them to experience the benefits from working part-time, unless they experienced organizational support. This was thus found for a supportive organizational culture, but not for managerial support and collegial support. Given gendered norms and expectations we expected that especially men would suffer from not having organizational support, more so than women, as working part-time for them is a greater deviation from norms than it is for women (Acker, 1990; Munn & Greer, 2015). Our findings do not support this, also women who work short part-time experience higher work-life conflict if the organizational culture is unsupportive than when it is supportive. Moreover, the fact that we find this for short but not long part-time could be due to the deviation from ideal worker norms being more pronounced when one works short part-time compared to long part-time (Acker, 1990; Haas & Hwang, 2016; Munn & Greer, 2015).

Although we found no evidence that the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict was contingent on managerial support, we did find that employees with a more supportive manager experienced lower levels of work-life conflict, irrespective of whether they worked part-time or full-time. This is perhaps not very surprising, after all, people who have a more supportive manager are probably capable of making ad-hoc arrangements with their manager, resulting in lower levels of work-life conflict (Abendroth & Pausch, 2017). It does, however, underline the importance of managers in the experience of work-life conflict of employees.

Due to power issues we cannot draw any strong conclusions regarding country differences. Our results showed that short part-time work relates to lower levels of work-life conflict for English and Dutch women and Dutch men, but not for Swedish

women—but this difference was not statistically significant. More research into country differences is necessary to be able to make solid claims regarding whether the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict functions differently in different countries. However, such studies might be complicated by the relatively low levels of part-time work, and especially short part-time work, not least among men.

Limitations

The ESWS was conducted with the aim of collecting detailed multilevel data within organizations. Its main strength is that it combines data provided by the employee, manager and organization, and thereby enables the investigation of the relation between organizations and employees, while also limiting common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). However, there are also some limitations with our data that should be considered when thinking of the implications of this study, most notably that we cannot rule out a selection effect where people who experience more work-life conflict are the ones who start working part-time. Relatedly, organizational support may influence employees' decision whether or not to work part-time—especially for men (Fernandez-Lozano, 2018; Larsson & Björk, 2017; van Breeschoten, Roeters, & van der Lippe, 2018). This would mean that men in unsupportive organizations are likely to select into full-time employment instead of part-time employment—even though they might want to work part-time. Moreover, people who value family-supportiveness (in practice often women) are known to self-select into organizations that are family-supportive and where it may be more common to work part-time, which further leads to gender-segregation in organizations (Cortes & Pan, 2017). This should be kept in mind when interpreting our results, as well as when designing future research. Although this does not solve the issue completely, we recommend future studies to, as we did, include indicators that might capture organizational gender-segregation, such as gender of the manager and sector in which the organization operates.

Implications

On the basis of our findings we would like to underline two issues as main implications. First, part-time work, and especially short part-time work, can be a useful means for

people to experience less work-life conflict. High levels of work-life conflict can relate to lower individual well-being (Amstad et al., 2011), higher societal healthcare costs (Higgins et al., 2004) and lower fertility rates (Begall & Mills, 2011; Soohyun, 2014). This makes it important to provide parents with means to reduce work-life conflict. Thus (national) policy-makers would do well to give many employees the option to request a reduction in working hours. Second, we found that working part-time is equally related to lower levels of work-life conflict for women and for men. This suggests the value of making part-time work—and perhaps work-life policies more broadly—available to men as well. Lastly, although not the focus of this chapter, we found that employees with more supportive managers experienced less work-life conflict. Considering that high levels of work-life conflict are also associated with negative consequences for the organization, such as lower organizational productivity, higher absence and higher turnover (Amstad et al., 2011; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999) it should be in the interest of organizations to encourage managers to be supportive to all employees.

Conclusion

With this chapter we extend the burgeoning knowledge about the sometimes ambiguous relationship of part-time work to work-life conflict among parents of young children, by including two moderators: organizational support and gender. Results show that short part-time work (<25 hours) relates to lower levels of work-life conflict, but we did not find this for long part-time work (25-35 hours). We find limited evidence that organizational support moderates this relation; short part-time working women in an organization with a family-supportive organizational culture had lower levels of work-life conflict than short part-time working women in organizations with an unsupportive organizational culture. For men working short part-time we find an effect in the same direction, although this falls short of significance. We do not find a corresponding moderating effect of managerial support or collegial support. Notably, the relation between working part-time and work-life conflict does not differ for fathers and mothers, suggesting that this work-family policy could help both men and women reduce work-life conflict.

The usefulness of family leave policies for extra-role performance:

Disentangling availability and use

5

Abstract*

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate whether the "business-case argument"—that adopting work-family policies can be beneficial for organizations—holds true for additional organizational family leave policies in that they increase the extra-role performance of employees: the extra effort of employees that goes beyond their assigned tasks. Specifically, this chapter examines whether the availability, use or both of organizational family leave policies (longer or better paid maternity, paternity or parental leave) increases extra-role performance, and whether this effect is different for men and women. The results indicate that perceived availability of organizational family leave relates positively to extra-role performance, while use does not. No gender differences were found. Our findings imply that organizations wishing to adopt family leave policies for business-case considerations should invest in making policies available, but should also ensure that employees know that these policies are practically available and accessible to them.

* A slightly different version of this chapter is currently resubmitted at an international scientific journal. This chapter is co-authored by Leonie van Breeschoten, Katia Begall, Tanja van der Lippe and Anne-Rigt Poortman. Van Breeschoten wrote the main part of the manuscript and conducted the analyses. Begall, van der Lippe and Poortman contributed substantially to the manuscript.

Introduction

European organizations increasingly offer their employees longer or better paid family leave policies (maternity, paternity or parental leave) than they are obliged to offer by law (den Dulk et al., 2012; Ronda, Ollo-López, & Goñi-Legaz, 2016). These "additional" or "organizational" leave policies are designed to help employees with young children to better combine work and family life, and as such can be very beneficial to the employees (Ronda et al., 2016). Simultaneously, a "business-case argument" maintains that adopting organizational family leave policies can also be beneficial for organizations (Been, 2015; den Dulk, 2001; Kossek & Friede, 2006), for example because having these policies increases extra-role performance—the extra effort of employees that goes beyond their assigned tasks. However, it remains largely untested whether organizational family leave policies actually relate to extra-role performance, and if so, *how* they relate; is this through policy availability, through policy use, or through both? A further hiatus in work-family research is that men continue to be understudied, with the focus often being on women alone (Munn & Greer, 2015; Sav, Harris, & Sebar, 2013). With this chapter we aim to contribute to the literature by investigating the following research question: *does the availability, use, or both of organizational family leave policies increase the extra-role performance of male and female employees?*

Disentangling the effect of availability and use is essential for fully understanding how policies relate to employee outcomes, and as such is important for both national policymakers and organizations. To our knowledge, few studies have concerned themselves with disentangling availability and use (for exceptions see: Butts et al., 2013; Casper and Harris, 2008). Instead, studies often examine the "effects of work-family policies" without specifying the underlying mechanism, and the majority of studies look solely at availability, sometimes as a proxy for use (Kelly et al., 2008; Kossek & Friede, 2006; Pasamar, 2015). Yet availability and use are unique constructs that may independently and in different manners relate to employee outcomes (Butts et al., 2013; Kelly et al., 2008) and should thus be studied separately. Policy availability could increase extra-role performance because it signals to employees that their employer is concerned about them (Spence, 1973). As employees appreciate this, they want to

reciprocate and put in extra effort (Gouldner, 1960). Simultaneously, policy use might also increase extra-role performance as especially employees who have experienced how useful work-family policies are for them personally might want to reciprocate and increase their extra-role performance (Lind & Tyler, 1988). These two mechanisms are not exclusive, both an effect of availability and an effect of use could exist.

Gender differences continue to be understudied in work-family research. Previous research tends to concentrates on women alone, because they, as the primary caregiver, often shoulder the main responsibility for combining work and family (Munn & Greer, 2015; Sav et al., 2013). However, as family leave policies are increasingly made available to and used by men (Burnett, Gatrell, Cooper, & Sparrow, 2010; Munn & Greer, 2015), a better understanding of gender differences in work-family policies is essential.

Data from the ESWS (van der Lippe et al., 2016) are used, containing multilevel data on 11,011 employees in 869 departments or teams, and 259 organizations, in nine European countries (Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom). A great advantage of this dataset is its multilevel structure, which enables us to combine information provided by the employees with information provided by the organization, and allows us to control for unobserved organizational characteristics that might affect employee outcomes.

Background

Organizations and family leave in Europe

In all European countries employees have the right to some form of paternity, maternity and/or parental leave ("national" or "statutory" policies), although the duration and levels of payment differ tremendously between the countries (OECD, 2017a). In addition, organizations sometimes provide *additional* leave policies on top of the policies offered by the government; they can provide employees with a longer period of leave, or increase the level of payment employees are entitled to during their leave (den Dulk, 2001). The motivation of organizations to adopt additional work-family policies often relies heavily on a business-case argument; that doing so in some way contributes

to their organizational interests, for example because it will attract or retain desirable employees, or because it increases the performance of current employees (Been, 2015; den Dulk, 2001; Kossek & Friede, 2006). However, while this business-case argument has been tested for numerous work-family policies, such as flexible work arrangements or childcare policies (Beauregard, 2011; de Menezes & Kelliher, 2011; Mulvaney, 2014), this has to a lesser extent been the case for family leave policies. This is surprising, because family leave policies provide a great test for the business-case argument, as they are generally instigated at the request of the employee and do not directly serve the organization—in contrast to, for example, flexible working hours, which can also be used to make employees work flexibly on hours that suit the company (Leslie, Manchester, Park, & Mehng, 2012; Wheatley, 2017). In other words, the use of family leave policies is not of itself beneficial for the organization, and thus if family leave policies relate to positive outcomes for the organization, like higher extra-role performance, this functions through other mechanisms, such as reciprocity. Moreover, organizational family leave policies also provide a great case for disentangling availability and use. Due to their infrequent use—after all, people do not have a child often—the availability and use of family leave policies are very distinct constructs. For many other policies availability and use can be more intertwined; for example for flexibility in starting and finishing times it can be difficult to ascertain whether an effect can be attributed to perceived availability or to anticipated use. This is not the case for family leave, if an effect is also found among people who are not of childbearing age any availability effects found support the notion that employees perform better because they reciprocate the signal of organizational concern rather than that they anticipate policy use.

Extra-role performance

While extra-role performance—and performance generally—is at the core of the business-case argument and many articles mention it as one of the potential benefits of offering work-family policies, there have been few studies that empirically test the relation between work-family policies and performance (de Sivatte, Gordon, Rojo, & Olmos, 2015; Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005; Wharton, Chivers,

& Blair-Loy, 2008), with research mostly studying intentions to stay, job satisfaction, and commitment (Butts et al., 2013; de Menezes & Kelliher, 2011; Haar & Spell, 2004; Mulvaney, 2014). This focus on attitude based measures has lead researchers to call for the use of behavioral outcome measures such as performance, as the theoretical rationale also suggests that work-family policies affect employee behaviors (Eby et al., 2005).

Extra-role performance (also referred to as contextual performance or organizational citizenship behavior) refers to activities that aid the organization but are not explicitly required of employees, such as taking on extra tasks, investing in gaining extra knowledge or skills, or in other ways participating actively in activities that are in the interest of the organization (Chen, Eisenberger, Johnson, Sucharski, & Aselage, 2009; B. J. Hoffman, Blair, Meriac, & Woehr, 2007; Koopmans et al., 2011). It is often contrasted with "in-role" or "task" performance, which refers to people's performance in the role for which they were hired, or employees' proficiency in conducting core tasks (Koopmans et al., 2013). For example, while task performance refers to employees' ability to do their work efficiently, extra-role performance would look at whether employees took on extra tasks. While in-role performance can result from employees' desire and ability to work hard, it can also be a result of external factors, are they *enabled* to do their tasks well? Therefore we focus on extra-role performance, as this is indicative of an employee's effort to behave in the interest of their organization.

Theory and hypotheses

Disentangling availability and use

Butts, Casper and Yang (2013) and Casper and Harris (2008) have worked on disentangling the effect of availability and of use. In both studies they looked at bundles of work-family policies rather than only at family leave policies, and used attitudinal measures (such as attachment) as outcomes rather than extra-role performance. However, the theories on why availability and use would increase extra-role performance can be extrapolated and therefore we follow their lead and rely on signaling (Spence, 1973) and self-interest utility theory (Lind & Tyler, 1988) in order to disentangle how policy availability and policy use relate to extra-role performance.

Availability

According to signaling theory (Spence, 1973) people interpret observable actions as signals of less observable characteristics. Organizations know how concerned they are with the well-being of their employees, but the employees do not know this and are unable to communicate directly with the organization as a whole to determine whether it cares about them. This assumption of information asymmetry is a fundamental premise of signaling theory. As employees do not know whether the organization cares for them, they derive a sense of this from signals sent by the organization, such as its adoption of (work-family) policies, which they can interpret as a signal of corporate concern (Connelly, Certo, Ireland, & Reutzel, 2011). According to social-exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the underlying norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), employees and their employers are embedded in interdependent exchange relationships in which one party (the employee) would feel obligated to repay the concern expressed by the other party (the organization). Thus, when employees perceive their organization to be concerned with their well-being, for example through providing them with additional family leave policies, they want to reciprocate this by behaving more in the interest of the organization. Therefore we expect that employees who perceive their organization to offer additional family leave policies have higher extra-role performance than employees who do not (H1).

Following signaling theory all employees, not only those of childbearing age, would reciprocate the perceived availability of organizational family leave policies, because they appreciate the corporate concern that is expressed by making the policy available. Whether the policy is also useful to them personally is therefore not very important (Casper & Harris, 2008; Grover & Crooker, 1995; Prottas, Thompson, Kopelman, & Jahn, 2007). Note that reciprocity is evoked by *perceived* availability, i.e. employees need to be aware of a policy's availability for them to want to reciprocate this availability. Similarly, false perceptions of availability are likely to evoke the same reciprocal behavior.

Use

Signaling theory thus relies on the symbolic value of having work-family policies, and maintains that that evokes reciprocal behavior. Self-interest utility theory (Lind & Tyler, 1988), on the other hand, maintains that it is not so much the symbolic value of having policies that evokes feelings of reciprocity, but mainly the personal benefits people experience when they use these policies. Family leave policies are designed to help people in the period following the birth of a child, by giving them time to be with the child. After employees experiencing how useful or enjoyable the family leave policies provided by the organization were for them personally they would—according to social exchange theory—want to reciprocate and act in the interest of the organization, for example by increasing their extra-role performance (Butts et al., 2013; Casper & Harris, 2008; Lind & Tyler, 1988). Additionally, people who have used family leave policies might be better adjusted to their new life and, for example, experience less work-life conflict and stress, which would enable them to be more productive at work (Butts et al., 2013). Therefore we expect that employees who use organizational family leave policies around childbirth have higher extra-role performance than employees who do not (H2).

Gender

Although the traditional male breadwinner-female homemaker model is no longer dominant in Europe, societal expectations on the role of men and women continue to differ. The work role firstly lies with men, and women continue to shoulder the main responsibility for childrearing (Kanji & Samuel, 2017; Munn & Greer, 2015). As female labor force participation increased so did the need of women to be able to combine work and family life, and historically work-family policies were exclusively targeted at women (Burnett et al., 2010; S. Lewis, 2001). Although nowadays work-family policies are more often made available to men, both countries and organizations continue to offer more far-reaching work-family policies to women than to men (OECD, 2017a; Pasamar, 2015). In line with social norms and regulations, women use work-family policies much more often than men, though male utilization has increased somewhat in recent years (Munn & Greer, 2015; OECD, 2016b). In this context of different social expectations,

different levels of availability and different levels of use it is conceivable that men and women also respond differently to organizational work-family policy availability and policy use, and that therefore the effects on extra-role performance differ between the genders.

As work-family policies are more often aimed at and used by women, it could be expected that both women and men also *view* the availability of such policies as existing mainly for the benefit of women, not for that of men. This would lead to a situation where women view this as a signal of corporate concern that they wish to reciprocate, while men do not, or to a lesser extend. On the other hand, however, it can also be maintained that because men do not usually have access to extended family leave policies (INLPR, n.d.; OECD, 2017a), when they work in an organization that offers them additional family leave policies they interpret this as even more of a signal of corporate concern. After all, it is a departure from traditional gender norms that this organization offers work-family policies to men (van der Lippe et al., 2018). As theory and previous studies leave it unclear whether there would be a difference in effect for men and women, and if so for whom it would be stronger, we take an explorative approach to gender differences. If we find a gender difference this is thus a departure from strict signaling theory, which holds that the signal of corporate concern and the evoking of reciprocity is independent of the personal situation.

With regards to use, we set out above that self-interest utility theory maintains that people would want to reciprocate to the organization when they personally experienced the benefits of using leave. One can again wonder who experiences more personal benefits from using these policies, men or women. On the one hand it can be argued that women experience more benefits when they use leave, because they tend to experience more childrearing demands, as well as a higher physical burden (childbirth, breastfeeding)(Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Weeden, 2005). As they have more to cope with, using additional work-family policies can be a greater help. On the other hand, precisely because men tend to have less access to work-family policies (INLPR, n.d.; OECD, 2017a), they might experience the use of these policies as an even greater personal benefit. Most of their male friends would not have had similar experiences, and being able to do this themselves might evoke greater reciprocity than is the case for

women. Therefore, we again take an explorative approach to see how gender interacts with the relation between the use of work-family policies and extra-role performance.

Method

Sample

For the purpose of this chapter we rely on the entire sample of the ESWS. From the initial sample of 11,011 employees we excluded subjects who had missing values on gender (n=191) or having a child (*n*=372). We also excluded subjects who went on leave, but who worked at another company at the time the child was born were also excluded (*n*=561), as we cannot know whether the use was taken at this company or at another company. For all other missing cases we used multiple imputations with regression switching (van Buuren & Oudshoorn, 1999). This lead to a final sample of 9,887 respondents in 866 teams or departments, and 259 organizations.

Measures

Extra-role performance

Our dependent variable *extra-role performance* (1-5) is based on a scale designed by Koopmans et al. (2013). The measure represents respondents' agreement with five statements on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "always" to "seldom." The statements are "Without being told, I started on new tasks after finishing up my work," "I took on challenging new tasks when they were available," "I worked on keeping my work skills up-to-date," "I took on extra responsibilities" and "I actively participated in meetings and/or consultations." The Chronbach's alpha was .82. A higher score on this variable indicates higher extra-role performance

Availability

The perceived availability of additional family leave (0=*no perceived availability*, 1=*perceived availability*) represents respondents' answers to the question "To your knowledge, does your organization offer longer or better-paid leave arrangements than it is obliged to offer by law? For example longer or better paid maternity, paternity or parental leave." Respondents could answer "yes," "no" and "don't know." For our

analyses we grouped "no" and "don't know" together as there was no theoretical basis to expect a difference between these groups: in both cases respondents experienced no signal of corporate concern. This was confirmed by exploratory analyses which showed no significant difference on performance for respondents who answered "no" and respondents who answered "don't know."

Use

For use we are mainly interested in whether people who used organizational family leave performed better than people who did not use leave *but could have done so* because they also had a baby. In order to accurately tap into this we created a categorical variable which represents whether the respondent has biological children and if so whether he or she used no leave, only statutory leave, or also additional family leave policies. This variable therefore contains four categories: 0=*has no child*, 1=*has child, but did not use leave*, 2=*has child and used statutory leave*, 3=*has child and used extra leave*. People were coded as having used statutory leave if they indicated to have used maternity, paternity and/or parental leave around the birth of their youngest child, but stated that the duration of this leave was shorter or equal to the period they were entitled to by law. People were coded as having used extra leave if one or more types of leave were longer or better paid than they were entitled to by law. In addition to our main analyses on the entire sample, we run an extra sensitivity analysis using only respondents who are parents of a child under three years old. In these analyses the categorical variable thus only has three options: 1=*has child, but did not use leave*, 2=*has child and used statutory leave*, 3=*has child and used extra leave*.

Respondent characteristics

We include a number of respondent characteristics, namely sex (0=*female*, 1=*male*), age, age squared, level of education in years (2-20), and occupational status (ISEI-code). Furthermore, we include whether the respondent has a partner (0=*no*, 1=*yes*), and the age of the youngest child (0-17). Age youngest child was set to the mean for people without children, so we could run the analyses for people with and without children in one model. In the variable use we included whether the respondent has children (0=*has*

no child, 1=*has child, but did not use leave*, 2=*has child and used statutory leave*, 3=*has child and used extra leave*). Including these two variables at the same time means that the effect of age youngest child pertains only to people with a child. As for the interpretation of the variable use: having a child and having used extra leave is used as the reference group in our model. One should read the effect of people without a child as being compared to people with a youngest child of an average age, who used extra leave. As no information is available regarding how long ago the leave was taken, the age of the youngest child can be seen as an approximation. However, it is unfortunately not a perfect proxy, as in numerous countries family leave can be taken in the first years after the child was born.

Organizational characteristics

Furthermore, we include a number of organizational characteristics. As it is known that especially public sector and large organizations take the lead in providing organizational work-family policies (Abendroth & den Dulk, 2011), we include whether an organization is private or public (0=*private or mixed*, 1=*public or charity*) and its size (log of the number of employees). Also the sector in which the organization operated is included (1=*manufacturing*, 2=*health care*, 3=*higher education*, 4=*transportation*, 5=*financial services*, 6=*telecommunication*). Lastly, we also include the country of residence of the respondents (1=*Bulgaria*, 2=*Finland*, 3=*Germany*, 4=*Hungary*, 5=*the Netherlands*, 6=*Portugal*, 7=*Spain*, 8=*Sweden*, 9=*the United Kingdom*). Table 5.1 provides descriptive statistics of all variables.

Availability and use other policies

As it can be argued that the availability and use of other organizational investments affect people's performance, and correlates with the availability of work-family policies, we also control for the perceived availability and use of several work-life policies, namely: flexible starting and finishing times, working at home, reducing working hours from full-time to part-time, and childcare assistance. We created a scale (0-4) which represents the number of these policies which the respondent thought were available or which the respondent reported to have used.

Table 5.1 - Descriptive statistics.

		Total (*N*=9887)		Women (*n*=5453)		Men (*n*=4434)	
	Range	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Extra-role performance	1-5	3.26	.93	3.25	.93	3.27	.93
Family leave							
Perceived availability extra leave		.13		.13		.13	
Use - no child		.63		.65		.62	
Child, no use		.14		.11		.18	
Child, statutory leave		.19		.20		.17	
Child, extra leave		.04		.04		.04	
Respondent characteristics							
Male	0-1	.45					
Age	14-77	42.17	11.17	41.94	11.11	42.44	11.23
Education (years)	2-20	13.44	3.00	13.59	2.80	13.26	3.22
Occupational status (ISEI)	1-830	56.82	24.09	57.14	19.07	56.42	29.15
Partner	0-1	.73		.71		.75	
Age youngest child[a]	0-17	7.26	5.03	7.55	5.00	6.95	5.05
Contextual factors							
Size (log)	2.20-9.21	5.57	1.42	5.67	1.47	5.45	1.34
Public (vs. private or mixed)	0-1	.40		.49		.30	
Sector							
Financial services		.13		.15		.10	
Health care		.24		.35		.11	
Higher education		.18		.20		.15	
Manufacturing		.23		.15		.32	
Telecommunication		.10		.07		.13	
Transportation		.13		.09		.19	
Country							
Bulgaria		.13		.15		.10	
Finland		.07		.09		.06	
Germany		.09		.10		.09	
Hungary		.12		.12		.12	
Netherlands		.23		.21		.25	
Portugal		.11		.11		.11	
Spain		.08		.07		.10	
Sweden		.09		.08		.10	
UK		.07		.07		.07	
Availability and use other policies[b]							
Availability	0-4	1.13	1.08	1.11	1.08	1.16	1.08
Use	0-4	0.82	0.87	0.77	0.87	0.87	0.87

[a] Excluding people without a child

[b] Flexible working hours, working at home, reducing working hours, and assistance with childcare.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5.1. Employees' average extra-role performance is 3.26, meaning that they scored between "sometimes" and "often." Of all respondents, 13 percent thought that additional family leave was offered by the organization. 63 percent of the sample did not have a child, 14 percent had a child and did not use any type of family leave, 19 percent had a child and used statutory leave, and 4 percent had a child and used extra organizational leave. It stands out that the perceived availability and use among men and women is very similar, which especially for use might seem somewhat surprising considering the fact that it is known that women use more leave (European Parliament, 2015; INLPR, n.d.; OECD, 2016a). However, it should be kept in mind that this reflects whether respondents used *any* extra leave, but says nothing about its duration. Also, our organization-data is not a representative sample, and particularly people (in practice often women) who are currently on leave are likely to be absent from it.

Analytical Strategy

The relation between the perceived availability and use of family leave policies and extra-role performance is analyzed using a multilevel regression model which includes three levels: the employee level, the department or team level, and the organization level. Using a multilevel model allows us to control for unobserved heterogeneity within teams and organizations that might affect employee outcomes. In other words, we take into account that employees from the same team and organization are exposed to team and organizational characteristics that might both influence their perceived availability and use of family leave policies, and their performance. We first run an empty model in order to calculate the intraclass correlation coefficient to determine how much variance is explained by each level. Subsequently, we test our hypotheses. In model 1 we include availability, use, and the control variables, and in model 2 we add the interaction with gender. Lastly, in the third and final model also the availability and use of other work-family policies are included.

Results

Table 5.2 shows the results of the multilevel regression on the relation between perceived availability and use of additional family leave and extra-role performance. Based on the empty model (not shown here), we calculated the intraclass correlation coefficient, and found that 80 percent of the variance can be attributed to the employee, 12 percent to the department or team, and 8 percent to the organization.

In Model 1 we find a significant relation between perceived availability of additional family leave and extra-role performance, employees who perceived their organization to offer additional family leave on average have 0.16 points higher extra-role performance. Thus, we find support for H1, employees who perceive their organization to offer additional family leave policies have higher extra-role performance than employees who do not. However, no such effect is found for use, people who used extra leave do not perform better than people who did not have a child (and thus could not use leave), people who had a child but did not use leave, or people who had a child and used only statutory leave. Therefore, we find no support for H2, employees who use organizational family leave policies do not have higher extra-role performance than employees who do not. Note that also when we change the reference group, no significant difference between any of the groups was found.

Turning to the control variables, we see that there is no difference in the extra-role performance of men and women. Older people have lower extra-role performance, although the effect of age squared indicates that the negative effect of age becomes less strong over time (closer inspection shows that the effect of age becomes flat after 52). Moreover, with every year increase in people's education, their extra-role performance increases with 0.04. Considering the large scale of occupational status (ISEI-code ranges from 1-830) the effect is difficult to interpret and appears small. Closer inspection shows that a one standard deviation increase in ISEI score (24.09) relates to 0.06 increase of extra-role performance. People who live with a partner have 0.08 higher extra-role performance than people who do not partner. Age youngest child does not have an effect on extra-role performance.

Table 5.2 - Multilevel analyses to explain extra-role performance (*N*=9887).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	2.87***	(0.18)	2.84***	(0.18)	2.91***	(0.18)
Family leave						
Perceived availability extra leave	0.16***	(0.03)	0.15***	(0.04)	0.13***	(0.03)
Use (ref: child, extra leave)						
No child	-0.02	(0.05)	0.03	(0.06)	0.03	(0.05)
Child, no use	0.02	(0.05)	0.05	(0.07)	0.05	(0.05)
Child, statutory leave	-0.04	(0.05)	-0.04	(0.07)	-0.02	(0.05)
Respondent characteristics						
Male	0.02	(0.02)	0.11	(0.10)	0.02	(0.02)
Age	-0.02***	(0.01)	-0.02***	(0.01)	-0.02***	(0.01)
Age2	0.00**	(0.00)	0.00**	(0.00)	0.00**	(0.00)
Education (years)	0.04***	(0.00)	0.04***	(0.00)	0.03***	(0.00)
Occupational status (ISEI)	0.00***	(0.00)	0.00***	(0.00)	0.00***	(0.00)
Partner	0.08***	(0.02)	0.08***	(0.02)	0.07**	(0.02)
Age youngest child	0.01	(0.00)	0.01	(0.00)	0.01*	(0.00)
Contextual factors						
Size (log)	0.01	(0.01)	0.01	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
Public (vs. private or mixed)	-0.03	(0.05)	-0.03	(0.05)	-0.05	(0.05)
Sector	*Included*		*Included*		*Included*	
Country	*Included*		*Included*		*Included*	
Interaction with gender						
Availability*male			0.02	(0.06)		
Use*male (ref: child, extra leave)						
No child*male			-0.12	(0.10)		
Child, no use*male			-0.10	(0.11)		
Child, statutory leave*male			-0.02	(0.10)		
Availability and use other policies[a]						
Availability					0.09***	(0.01)
Use					0.08***	(0.02)
Variance level 3	.15	(.02)	.15	(.02)	.15	(.02)
Variance level 2	.15	(.02)	.15	(.02)	.14	(.02)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

[a] Flexible working hours, working at home, reducing working hours, and assistance with childcare.

In Model 2 we test whether there is an interaction between perceived availability and use and gender. Neither interaction was statistically significant, indicating that neither the effect of perceived availability of additional family leave policies, nor the effect of use of on extra-role performance differs between men and women.

In Model 3 we add two additional controls: the availability and use of four other work-life policies: flexible working hours, working at home, reducing working hours, and assistance with childcare. We find that both the availability and the use of these other policies relate to higher extra-role performance. Moreover, the effect of availability that we previously detected becomes somewhat smaller, but continues to exist. Still, no effect of use of family leave policies is found.

Sensitivity Analyses

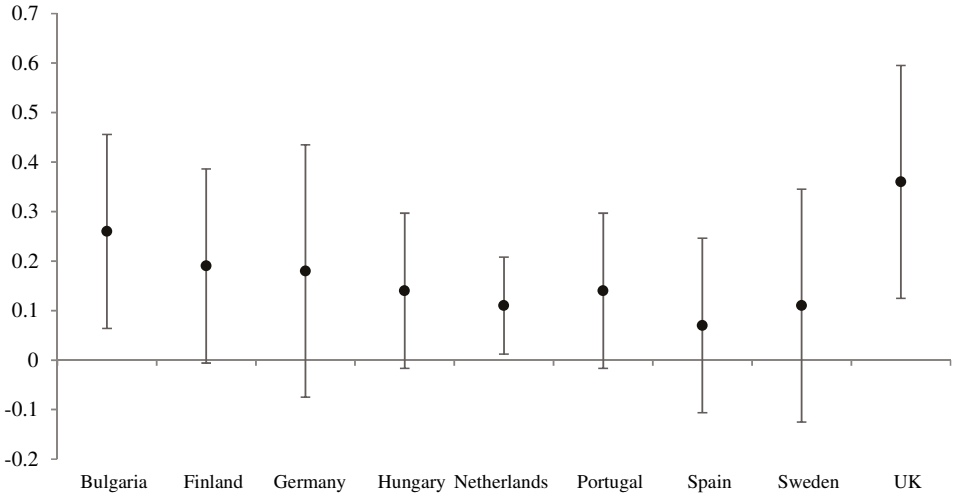
A number of sensitivity analyses are conducted. First, instead of using multilevel analyses we ran the model using clustered standard errors, once at the team-level and once at the organization-level. Both yielded similar results. Moreover, as it can be argued that numerous control variables do not only have a direct effect on performance, but might also interact with the effect of availability and use on performance, we explored interactions with age, education, occupational status, and age youngest child. As can be seen in Appendix D1, none of these are significant. It is especially noteworthy that no interaction with age youngest child is found, as it could be expected that the effect of use on performance would be especially prominent among people with a younger child; after all, age child can be seen as a proxy for how long ago the leave was taken.

We wanted to take a closer look at the effects of availability and use among young parents, for whom these policies were most relevant. Therefore, we conduct additional analyses including only parents with a child under four years. Results of these analyses can be found in Appendix D2. We see that the results for this group are very similar to that of the total sample: we find an effect of availability, but no effect of use. Similar to the total sample no gender differences were found.

Additional country analyses

Lastly, we conduct the analyses separately per country, the results of which can be found in Appendix D3. Note that caution should be taken when interpreting the results for use, as only four percent of the people in our total sample used additional leave, meaning that some cells contain very few people. As can be seen from the appendix, the effect of use is in none of the countries significantly related to higher extra-role performance (though we find a *negative* significant effect of people who used statutory leave compared to people who had no child in the UK). Turning to perceived availability, the results per country are plotted in Figure 5.1 in order to see whether the effect of availability found in the total sample exists in all countries, or is driven by one or a few countries. When confidence intervals do not include zero this means the coefficients are significantly different from zero. Also, when the confidence intervals do not overlap each other, this means the coefficients per country differ significantly from one another. As can be seen, all coefficients are in the same direction, though they do not always reach conventional statistical significance. However, none of the countries differ

Figure 5.1 Relation between perceived availability of additional family leave policies and extra-role performance per country, coefficients and confidence intervals.



Note: presented coefficients result from the models as presented in appendix D3.

significantly from one another (as all confidence intervals overlap). This indicates that the effect of availability functions similarly over the countries and is not driven solely by one country.

Discussion

In this chapter we investigated whether the business-case argument—that adopting work-family policies can be beneficial for organizations—holds true for additional family leave policies in that they increase extra-role performance. Specifically, we have examined whether the availability, use, or both of organizational family leave policies increases extra-role performance, and whether this differs for men and women. An effect of perceived availability of organizational family leave on extra-role performance was found, but not of use. No gender differences were found.

Our finding that the perceived availability of organizational family leave policies relates to extra-role performance supports the notion that employees interpret policy availability as a signal of corporate concern (Spence, 1973), which they consequently want to reciprocate by behaving more in the interest of the organization (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). The effect of availability on performance is among the largest effects that we found, comparable to that of a four year increase in education. It is also found to be robust over countries. Moreover, while the effect of availability of family leave policies on extra-role performance decreases slightly as we control for the perceived availability and use of other work-family policies, it is very interesting to note that it continues to exist. This supports the notion that the perceived availability of organizational family leave policies has a unique effect on its own, additional to that of other work-family policies. This suggests that, following a business-case argument offering additional family leave policies is beneficial for organizations, because it relates to higher extra-role performance.

We found no evidence that employees have higher extra-role performance when they have used family leave policies, and there are a number of possible explanations for this. First, this may of course be due to the fact that there simply *is* no relation between the use of organizational family leave policies and extra-role performance. While we expected people to perform better after having taken family leave, due to a

feeling of reciprocity or experienced benefits, this may not be the case, for example because the feeling of reciprocity is not evoked because of use but mainly due to availability, or because the experienced benefits are only small. Alternatively, however, it may be that there is an effect of use on extra-role performance, but that we have not detected this due to a selection effect, a moderation with the perceptions of the employee's supervisor, and/or because the effect of use on performance is only short-lived. In the case of a selection effect, we may not have found an effect of use on performance because people who are better equipped to handle the birth of a new child, for example because they have a stay-at-home spouse, are simultaneously less likely to use family leave policies and more productive because of their lower childrearing demands. Another manner through which selection might come into play is that less-career oriented employees may be both more likely to use organizational family leave policies as well as to perform worse, while more career-oriented employees might be deterred from using family leave policies by the anticipation of negative career consequences, and already perform better (Evertsson & Duvander, 2011; Sigle-Rushton & Waldfogel, 2007). Additionally, the effect of policy use might be moderated by the perceptions of the employee's supervisor. Studies show that employees who use work-family policies are sometimes seen by their supervisors as less committed to the organization, and therefore are given fewer career-opportunities (Campbell et al., 2012; McDonald et al., 2008; Perlow, 1995). This can decrease their motivation and consequently their extra-role performance, which cancels out any positive effects of use. Lastly, it may be that the effect of family leave policies on performance is quite short-lived and therefore not observable in our analyses. The use of family leave policies is for most employees rather incidental, and employees who are using family leave are generally not present in the organization at the time of use, and thus do not perform (although in some instances leave can be taken part-time (INLPR, n.d.; van Belle, 2016)). This means that the effect of use on performance would mostly occur *after* the leave has been taken, possibly only for a relatively short period of time before things go back to normal. If the effect of using family leave on performance would be short-lived, detecting this effect would be difficult, especially considering leave is only used by a small proportion of people in our sample. Arguably this is not the case for many other

types of work-family policies. Flexible working hours, for example, are often used for a longer period, and during this period employees who are using it *are* performing. This aligns with the fact that we do find an effect of using other policies (flexible working hours, working at home, reducing working hours, and assistance with childcare) on extra-role performance, which are also used by more employees in our sample. In light of these considerations, we maintain that while no evidence was found that the use of organizational family leave policies increases extra-role performance and thereby supports a business-case argument, we can also not exclude the possibility that this is the case for certain employees in certain circumstances, or that these effects may be quite short-lived.

Contrary to our expectations we found no gender difference in the relation between availability and use and extra-role performance: availability has a positive effect on performance for both male and female employees, and no effect of use was found for either of them. This might seem surprising considering that men and women face different societal expectations (Kanji & Samuel, 2017), different levels of policy availability (OECD, 2017a; Pasamar, 2015) and different levels of policy use (Burnett et al., 2010; Munn & Greer, 2015; OECD, 2016b). However, our finding that there are no gender differences supports a strict interpretation of signaling theory, which posits that the perception of corporate concern and the consequent evoking of reciprocity occurs irrespective of how personally useful the policy is for the employee.

Limitations

Despite the insights provided by our research, there are a number of limitations to our study. First, the cross-sectional nature of our data prevents us from making solid causal claims, and we can in particular not rule out a reversed causal effect where better performing employees are also more aware of the policies offered in an organization. Second, as discussed above, measuring the effects of using organizational family leave policies is challenging considering employee selection effects in use, the incidental use of family leave policies, as well as their possible short-term effects. To face these challenges, future studies could collect longitudinal data that specifically target

employees of childbearing age, in order to sample more people who use this type of leave, and be able to measure employee outcomes shortly after the leave was used.

Implications

Our findings have implications for organizations and for other researchers. The positive relation between the perceived availability of organizational family leave policies on extra-role performance indicates that adopting these policies can indeed be beneficial for organizations from a business-case perspective. Although no effects of use are found, we maintain that our findings suggest that organizations wishing to employ family leave policies for business-case considerations should adopt family leave policies and ensure that employees *know* that these policies are available to them. After all, without the employees knowing that the organization is supportive of their needs, they cannot reciprocate this signal of concern (Prottas et al., 2007). Moreover, our findings suggest that it is important that researchers studying the effects of work-family policies view the availability of these policies as a unique construct in its own right—separate from use—which relates to extra-role performance through the signal of organizational concern.

Conclusion

Conclusion

In this dissertation I studied the *use and usefulness* of work-family policies by looking at the interplay of an organizational and a gender perspective. Work-family policies are adopted to help employees successfully combine work and family (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006; Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2012). Therefore, it is important to know what encourages or discourages employees' utilization of such policies (the use of work-family policies), as well as whether work-family policies actually contribute to intended outcomes (the usefulness of work-family policies). I looked at the use and usefulness through an organizational perspective, because organizations hold a central position in the interaction between work and family (after all, employees use work-family policies in the context of their *work*). Likewise, I took a gender perspective, because work-family decisions—by individuals, organizations and the government—are not gender-neutral, and thus work-family decisions and outcomes might be different for men and women. By simultaneously taking an organizational and a gender perspective, I contribute to a more complete picture of the utilization and outcomes of work-family policies.

Summary and research findings per chapter

Chapter 2 - The use of parental leave: The relation between organizations and the utilization of parental leave policies

In Chapter 2 I investigated which organizational aspects relate to the use of one type of work-family policy: parental leave, and whether this differed for male and female employees. I combined two ways of looking at organizations: at the family-supportiveness of their organizational culture, and by treating them as actors that make strategic choices to invest in policies. Theory on organizational support predicts that employees are more likely to use work-family policies if they work in an organization with a more family-supportive organizational culture (T. D. Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999). Institutional theory and business-case argumentation hold that organizations with certain characteristics (i.e. large organizations, organizations in the public sector, and organizations with a greater proportion of women) are more prone to *adopt* work-family policies because it is in their strategic interest (den Dulk, 2001; den Dulk et al.,

2013; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Goodstein, 1994; Kossek & Friede, 2006), and I investigated whether this also extends to work-family policy utilization.

My results suggest that the importance of organizational culture and organizational characteristics for employees' parental leave use is limited—I only found this for organization size—and that instead country-variations play a very large role in predicting the utilization of parental leave policies. While it is unsurprising that country-variations are influential—after all, there are large differences in leave provisions, as well as in cultural norms surrounding utilization—I still expected organizational aspects to be of influence considering their central role in (qualitative) research. Yet this was only limitedly the case. Though sample-size restrictions prohibited me from conducting in-depth country analyses in this chapter, my findings hint at the fact that organizational aspects play a larger role in predicting parental leave utilization in countries where parental leave is well paid. This suggests that organizational aspects only become relevant when people are not restrained by financial limitations, but actually have a choice between using parental leave or not.

Employees were found to be more likely to use parental leave if they worked in a large organization (i.e. 1000 employees or more) than when they worked in a smaller organization. I maintain that this can be explained through business-case argumentation: it is sooner in the financial interest of large organizations to increase access to work-family policies than is the case for small organizations. Large organizations are likely to have a strong focus on attracting and retaining valuable employees (Been, 2015) for which they deem these policies to be beneficial (Been, 2015; den Dulk, 2001; Kossek & Friede, 2006), while providing access to work-family policies is cheaper for them because it is easier to redistribute work or hire temporary replacements (Bygren & Duvander, 2006; den Dulk et al., 2013; Haas & Hwang, 2009). Institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) would also expect that larger organizations are more likely to adopt and provide access to work-family policies, because they would experience greater societal pressures to do so considering their size (den Dulk et al., 2013; Goodstein, 1994). However, similar arguments would apply to public organizations and organizations with a greater share of women, for which I do not find his effect.

When I looked separately at men and women, I found that three organizational aspects related to men's parental leave use: managerial support made men less likely to use parental leave, while use of leave by their manager and working in an organization with a higher proportion of women made men more likely to use parental leave. *None* of these organizational aspects related to women's parental leave use, suggesting that while men are affected by their organizational context in their decision-making, this is not the case for women. This make senses sense in the light of theory on doing gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987) and ideal worker theory (Acker, 1990)—which hold that the centrality of work is more important for men, while being active caretakers is almost expected of women—and that people are likely to behave in accordance with societal expectations. The work-environment would therefore affect men's family-engagement, but not women's. Interestingly, while we expected that men with a family-supportive manager would be more likely to use parental leave, we found that they were actually *less* likely to use leave. This suggests that supportive managers enable men to be involved in childcare informally, which therefore makes them less likely to use formal policies, such as parental leave.

Chapter 3 - The use of part-time work: A vignette-experiment examining considerations to scale back following childbirth

In Chapter 3 I turned to parents' decision-making whether to use part-time work. I investigated which considerations are most important in employees' decision-making to use—or abstain from using—the option to reduce their working hours following childbirth. In order to do so I used a vignette-experiment that I designed specifically for this purpose. In this vignette I included two organizational support factors: expectations of career consequences (McDonald et al., 2008; Perlow, 1995) and collegial support (Kirby & Krone, 2002; McDonald et al., 2005). I further included whether the job would become less enjoyable (Campbell et al., 2012) and financial considerations (G. S. Becker, 1965; Heckman, 1974). Moreover, I conducted a more detailed, in-depth analysis of only three countries: The Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

This chapter shows that all factors included play a role in people's decision-making to scale back, but that there are large gender differences in their relative

importance. Men were found to largely pay attention to whether reducing their hours was expected to have negative consequences for their promotion prospects, while women based their decision substantially on whether this was expected to be met by collegial support. While these can both be seen as forms of organizational support, caring about the opinion of others is arguably a more feminine concern than worrying about your promotion prospects, and I relate this to societal expectations of men that focus strongly on breadwinning and being good workers (Acker, 1990; Kanji & Samuel, 2017; Munn & Greer, 2015). This finding also relates to other studies, which found that men are more likely to value career aspirations, while women value non-career aspirations (Konrad et al., 2000; van der Horst, 2014).

Moreover, both men and women focused strongly on how high their own income was relative to their partner's, yet they do so in different manners. Women are overall more likely to want to reduce their hours than men, but that they become less willing to do so if they have a partner who earns less than they do. This suggests that the default—at least from a female perspective—is that they reduce their hours, not their partner, and only when it is very financially appealing do they want to deviate from this. Men, on the other hand, are overall less likely to want to reduce their hours, but their willingness relates strongly to the income of their partner: if their partner earns more, they are more likely to reduce, and vice versa. This was a surprising finding. Considering the societal emphasis on male breadwinning I expected that men might be inclined to want to work many hours—even when their partner earns more—to compensate for not conforming to norms of male breadwinning (Gilmore, 1990; Greenstein, 2000).

With regards to the different countries, I found that Swedish women in particular, and to a lesser extent also Swedish men, stand out from the other two countries, as they express more inclination to exhibit counter-gender-normative behavior. Like men from all countries, Swedish women also take into consideration whether scaling back would have career consequences. Swedish men largely focus on the same considerations as their Dutch and British counterparts, but are overall more willing to reduce their hours than other men. It is not surprising that it is Sweden that stands out this way, considering it is a country that actively supports equality between the sexes and dual-earner families (Evertsson et al., 2009; Korpi et al., 2013).

Chapter 4 - The usefulness of part-time work for work-life conflict: Moderating influences of organizational support and gender

In Chapter 4 I turned to the usefulness of work-family policies by examining the relation between working part-time and one specific intended outcome: lower work-life conflict of employees. Reducing work-life conflict is often an explicit aim of work-family policies (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006). However, previous studies have found mixed results as to whether this relation exists, and even to whether it is positive or negative (see: Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Beham, Präg, & Drobnič, 2012; Kelly et al., 2008), suggesting that the relation between working hours and work-life conflict is not as clear-cut as was initially assumed, but may function differently under different conditions. Therefore I investigated in this chapter whether the relation between part-time work and work-life conflict is moderated by organizational support and gender. I again conducted an in-depth study of the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

Results show that short part-time work (<25 hours) relates to lower levels of work-life conflict for both men and women, but I did not find this for long part-time work (25-35 hours). This corroborates some previous findings (Beham et al., 2012; Roeters & Craig, 2014), and indicates that being in short part-time work can be a useful means of reducing work-life conflict, regardless of gender. This is noteworthy, as I theoretically expected men to experience less positive benefits from working part-time than women, as prevailing gender ideologies and ideal worker norms impose greater expectations on men to be full-time workers (Acker, 1990; Akerlof & Kranton, 2000; Kanji & Samuel, 2017; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Yet, this showed not to be the case.

Turning to the moderating effect of the organizational context, I found that, as expected, women who work short part-time have lower levels of work-life conflict when they work in an organization with a more family-supportive organizational culture. For men I find an effect in the same direction, and although this falls short of conventional statistical significance, it cannot be ruled out that such an effect exist but could not be detected due to the small number of men in short part-time work in our sample. I maintain that this suggests that the organizational culture communicates to employees what constitutes acceptable behavior. If an organization adheres to ideal worker culture and expects employees to be fully committed and at all times available for work,

employees who deviate from this norm, for example by working part-time, are less capable of enjoying it (Acker, 1990; Haas & Hwang, 2016; Munn & Greer, 2015). I only found this to be the case for family-supportive organizational culture—no corresponding moderating effect of managerial support or collegial support was found.

The low occurrence of part-time work, especially among men, and especially short part-time work, makes it difficult to draw strong conclusions regarding country differences; too few men in Sweden and the UK worked part-time to conduct separate analyses in these countries. Our results showed that short part-time work relates to lower levels of work-life conflict for English and Dutch women and Dutch men, but not for Swedish women—but this difference was not statistically significant.

Chapter 5 - The usefulness of organizational family leave policies for extra-role performance: Disentangling availability and use

In the fifth chapter of this dissertation I examined whether organizational family leave policies (i.e. when organizations offer longer or better paid maternity, paternity or parental leave than they are obliged by law) relate to an intended outcome for organizations: higher extra-role performance among employees. A "business-case argument" maintains that organizations adopt work-family policies not (just) because it is good for employees, but because it can be beneficial for organizations themselves (Been, 2015; den Dulk, 2001; Kossek & Friede, 2006), for example because having these policies increases extra-role performance: the extra effort employees put in, that goes beyond their actual tasks. However, it remains largely untested whether this is actually the case, as well as *how* these policies relate to performance; is this through policy availability, through policy use, or through both?

In this chapter I showed that perceived availability of organizational family leave relates positively to extra-role performance, while use does not. I explain the effect of availability through signaling theory (Spence, 1973), which maintains that employees interpret the availability of organizational work-family policies as a signal of corporate concern, which they consequently want to reciprocate by increasing their performance (Butts et al., 2013; Casper & Harris, 2008; Gouldner, 1960; Grover & Crooker, 1995).

Based on self-interest utility theory (Lind & Tyler, 1988) I also expected to find an effect of policy utilization on extra-role performance. Self-interest utility theory holds that policy use increases employees' extra-role performance, because especially employees who have experienced how useful work-family policies are for them personally want to reciprocate (Butts et al., 2013; Casper & Harris, 2008). However, no effect of policy use on extra-role performance is found. While this might mean that there simply *is* no relation between the use of organizational family leave policies and extra-role performance, I posit in the chapter that it might also be that there is an effect of use on performance, but that I had been unable to detect that in this study. Numerous reasons for this are explored in the chapter, including that people who are currently on leave are not present in our organization data, that better performing people might not use leave, that people who use leave are not given tasks that make them want to perform well, and that the positive effect of utilization might be too short-lived to be detected in this data. In light of these considerations I maintain that I cannot exclude the possibility that the use of organizational family leave policies increases extra-role performance for certain employees in certain circumstances, or that these effects may be quite short-lived.

Lastly, no gender differences were found: for both men and women I found an effect of availability, but not of use. This supports a strict interpretation of signaling theory, which maintains that the perception of corporate concern and the consequent evoking of reciprocity occurs irrespective of how personally useful the policy is for the employee.

General conclusions

This dissertation firstly concludes that a number of organizational considerations play a role in people's decision-making whether to use work-family policies, however, that these considerations are secondary to country variations. This suggests that—although studies often implicitly assume this—the relation between organizational considerations and work-family policy utilization is not universal over countries. Specifically, I suggest that organizational considerations only come into play when the national context is such that both using and not using work-family policies are a realistic possibility, in the sense that this is legally, culturally and financially possible for the employee. Looking at all

countries taken together, I find that employees in larger organizations are more likely to use parental leave than people in smaller organizations. I maintain that this can be explained through business-case argumentation: large organizations see more value in offering policies due to their focus on attracting and retaining valuable employees (Been, 2015; den Dulk, 2001; Kossek & Friede, 2006), while increasing access to work-family policies is cheaper due to scale considerations (Bygren & Duvander, 2006; den Dulk et al., 2013; Haas & Hwang, 2009). Moreover, in order to see which organizational considerations are most important for people's decision-making to scale back their working hours following childbirth I zoomed in on the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK, three countries where regulations and cultural norms make the utilization of part-time work a realistic option for many employees. I find that numerous organizational and financial considerations play a role. Most notably, when scaling back is expected to be met with organizational and collegial support people are more likely to do so, suggesting that when employees think their organization is supportive of employees' family responsibilities—instead of adhering to "ideal worker" expectations of prioritizing work over family—people are more likely to use available policies (Acker, 1990; Haas & Hwang, 2016; Kirby & Krone, 2002; McDonald et al., 2008). Thus, organizational considerations play a role in employees' utilization of work-family policies, especially in countries where regulations and cultural norms make that both using and not using are realistic and relatively common options.

Second, this dissertation shows that work-family policies relate to intended outcomes for both employees and organizations. Starting at employees, I find that short part-time work (<25 hours) is associated with lower levels of work-life conflict for parents. This is in line with theoretical reasoning (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Grönlund & Öun, 2010) as well as with the aim of work-family policies (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006), but had not always been found by previous studies (as discussed in: Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Beham et al., 2012; Kelly et al., 2008). Moreover, this relation was found to be moderated by organizational support, people working short part-time in an organization with a family-supportive organizational culture had lower levels of work-life conflict than those working short part-time in an organization with an unsupportive organizational culture. This indicates that expectations placed on workers through an

organization's culture affect their experience of using work-family policies; employees are better able to enjoy the benefits of using work-family policies in organizations where this behavior does not go against organizational norms, and they thus do not feel pressure to compensate for violating these norms (Acker, 1990; Larsson & Björk, 2017). I further found that when employees know that their organization offers additional (longer or better paid) family leave policies, this relates to higher extra-role performance among employees. This is explained through signaling theory: employees perceive additional policies as a signal of corporate concern, and want to reciprocate by increasing their performance (Spence, 1973). Although I found no evidence that the *use* of family leave policies also relates to higher levels of extra-role performance, I also cannot draw the conclusion that this is not the case. Thus, work-family policies can also relate to an intended outcome for organizations: higher extra-role performance of employees. This suggests that work-family policies can be beneficial for both employees and employers.

Third, what stands out is that gender seems to affect work-family policy use, but not its usefulness. The vignette-experiment shows that women are overall more likely to want to reduce their hours than men, suggesting that women maintain that the default is that they are the ones to reduce their hours. Due to our data collection design, we do not see a gender difference in the use of parental leave, yet all representative data does show this to be the case (European Parliament, 2015; INLPR, n.d.; OECD, 2016b; van Belle, 2016). This gender difference in use of work-family policies is explained through theory on doing gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987), which states that people act in conformance with gender norms because it is less costly to conform to societal expectations than to defy these. The breadwinner-homemaker model continues to be the prevailing norm in European societies: women, and not men, are still expected to shoulder the main responsibility for childcare (Kanji & Samuel, 2017; Munn & Greer, 2015). Moreover, ideal worker theory (Acker, 1990) deals specifically with gender in organizations, and maintains that many organizations have expectations of their employees that are based on a traditional male breadwinner: they expect employees to be fully committed to the job, and to not prioritize family responsibilities. As the ideal worker is based on male breadwinners, women are almost by default not ideal workers,

and are often seen as less serious workers as it is expected that they will prioritize family responsibilities (Evertsson & Duvander, 2011). This also means that women can therefore more easily "get away" with violating ideal worker norms by using parental leave or working part-time than men—they were never expected to meet these anyway. When men violate ideal worker norms this is therefore a stronger violation of social expectations than when women do so, making women more likely to (temporarily) reduce their involvement in paid work for engagement in childcare than men. Aside from net-differences in utilization, I found that organizations play a different role in the utilization-decisions of men and women. When I looked at organizational predictors of parental leave I found that a number of organizational considerations play a role for male utilization of parental leave, but *none* play a role for women. When I looked at the role of organizational considerations on the decision to start working part-time following childbirth, I found that men focus strongly on whether scaling back is expected to have career consequences, while women focus primarily on whether their colleagues would support this. Although both can be seen as measures of organizational support for work-family policies, caring about the opinion of others is arguably a more feminine concern than worrying about your promotion prospects. This suggests that men are likely to adjust their family-involvement to their work-context, and only use work-family policies in an organizational context where this is acceptable and therefore unlikely to harm their career, which they want avoid because their involvement in paid labor is central to their male identity (Gilmore, 1990; Kanji & Samuel, 2017). As work is for women often secondary to home and childcare this would be reversed, they sooner adjust their work-context to family responsibilities.

Interestingly, though, no gender differences in outcomes were found, men and women who work short part-time were both found to have lower levels of work-life conflict. Also, both men and women who perceived their organization to offer additional family leave were found to have higher extra-role performance. This indicates that while gender norms constrict the choices people make, these do not impact the *outcomes* of work-family policies; they can be equally beneficial for men and women. This was a surprising finding, based on gender norms I had expected men to experience fewer positive benefits from working part-time than women, as they are more clearly violating

social norms. This thus turned out not to be the case, perhaps because the men who use work-family policies are a selective group who have already decided to take the step to violate gender norms. Thus, while gender norms affect people's behavior, when men decide to violate expectations and use work-family policies they can reap the benefits in a similar way as women. This would suggest that there is value in offering similar work-family policies to men as to women.

Contributions to the literature

This dissertation contributes to previous literature in a number of ways. First, I expand on previous research by focusing on understudied facets of work-family policies, namely their use and usefulness. Prior research on work-family policies has primarily focused on their availability, while studies on their utilization are very rare (den Dulk, 2001; den Dulk & Peper, 2007). The study of the outcomes of policies (their "usefulness") is more common, though the organizational context is rarely included. I have argued that because work-family policies are adopted with the aim of helping people combine work and family (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006; Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2012), it is important to know why people do or do not use these policies, as well as whether using these policies contribute to the intended aims. In this dissertation I showed that a number of (organizational) aspects contribute to employees' utilization, and that work-family policies indeed relate to intended outcomes for employees and organizations, thereby indicating that while work-family policies can be useful to both individuals and their employers, their mere availability does not automatically lead to their use, but is dependent on contextual factors. Thus, this dissertation particularly underlines the importance of looking beyond the availability of work-family policies, and examining people's utilization decisions.

The second contribution of this dissertation is that I studied the use and usefulness of work-family policies by looking at the interplay of an organizational and a gender perspective. Organizations are central actors in employees' work-family decisions, as they constitute the social environment in which the work-family policies are used. Organizations are gatekeepers that provide or withhold access to the work-family policies that are legislated by the government (Boon et al., 2009; Goodstein, 1994; S.

Lewis & Smithson, 2001), and some organizations also provide additional work-family policies on top of the work-family policies offered by the government (Abendroth & den Dulk, 2011; den Dulk et al., 2012). The large role of organizations in work-family decisions warrants the inclusion of organizations in work-family research, however, organizations are infrequently included in work-family research (Kelly et al., 2008; Kossek et al., 2011). Similarly, while we know that work-family decisions—by individuals, organizations and the government—are not gender-neutral, little is known about how men and women make utilization decisions differently and how the outcomes of work-family policies might be different; primarily because men remain understudied in work-family research (Haas & Hwang, 2016). In this dissertation I looked at the interplay between the two, and found that organizational considerations seem to be important for the decision-making of men and hardly for that of women, while there are no gender differences in outcomes of work-family policies. This underlines the importance of including organizations and gender in work-family research in order to reach a better understanding of the policies' use and usefulness.

An unforeseen strength of this dissertation is that it unveils the role of countries in work-family issues. Most previous research on the interplay between organizations and employees in the context of work-family issues look only at one country, yet the (implicit) assumption is often that mechanisms surrounding the use and usefulness function similarly over countries. However, I find little evidence for this universality, and therefore I maintain that researchers would do well to take caution when extrapolating results regarding work-family issues from one country to another. Moreover, the fact that I found that country differences play such an important role in this context underlines the complexities of work-family issues in Europe. On the one hand the European Union is leading its member states towards a unified approach to work-family issues and gender equality (as exemplified by both topics being among the key principles of the 2017 European Pillar of Social Rights (European Commission, 2017)), but on the other hand we see that strong cultural and legislative differences between countries remain, and that these relate to differences in work-family policy use and, to a lesser extent, differences in outcomes of using work-family policies. Future research would do well to investigate this further.

A fourth and final strength of this dissertation is that I did not just draw on existing datasets, but utilized new data which my colleagues and I collected specifically for this purpose, the European Sustainable Workforce Survey (van der Lippe et al., 2016). Part of the reason why so few studies take an organizational perspective is that few good datasets are available. The ESWS is one of the first multi-country, multilevel organization surveys in Europe. It includes data on employees, their managers and the organization, and thereby enables studying the interplay between these three levels. Using multilevel data proved appropriate, as I found that variation was often explained by multiple levels. Thus, including multiple levels made for a more accurate investigation of what relates to the utilization and outcomes of work-family policies. Additionally, as part of the ESWS I created a vignette-experiment in order to examine which considerations are most important in people's decision-making whether to work part-time following childbirth. Employing a vignette-experiment in addition to traditional survey research was useful because a vignette is especially well suited for disentangling the relative importance of numerous considerations on people's decision-making, something for which surveys are less appropriate. This particularly shows in my finding that men and women both value a number of the same considerations, but vary in which considerations they pay most attention to. Thus, combining multilevel data with a vignette-experiment helped gaining a better understanding of the role of organizations in the use and usefulness of work-family policies, as well as of how people make utilization-decisions.

Limitations and directions for future research

While this dissertation makes some important contributions to the literature, it also has certain limitations. First, work-family policies, and especially family leave policies, are very complex. At the national level they vary in length, level of payment, gender provisions, as well as their universality (i.e. does everyone have access, or are there many caveats?)(European Parliament, 2015; INLPR, n.d.; OECD, 2017a). This complicated international comparison. In this dissertation I decided to tackle this by using a crude, dichotomous measure of leave, which enables country comparison, yet obviously comes at the price of losing detail. It should in this context especially be kept

in mind that organizational considerations and gender might differently affect whether someone uses any leave *at all*, and how long this person goes on leave. These issues warrant further investigation, but the complexities in obtaining a multi-country dataset that includes large samples per country, as well as in measuring leave utilization in a cross-country context, suggest that perhaps smaller studies that focus on one or a few countries would be a more fruitful direction for future research.

A second limitation of this dissertation is the social reality that men use work-family policies infrequently, which restricts the ability to study utilization-decisions and outcomes of work-family policies for men. This makes that, although many governments want to increase male utilization of work-family policies, it is difficult to study what underlies utilization decisions of and outcomes for men. I tried to address this by conducting in-depth country analyses of three countries with relatively high male utilization of part-time work: the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (Eurostat, 2017), but also in these three countries utilization often showed (too) low and I had to group men from all three countries together. Still, other studies have often dealt with the social reality of low male utilization by looking only at women, which comes with the obvious downside that one then does not know *anything* about male utilization. Country specific studies might be better equipped to draw a large enough sample of men, although in some countries with particularly low male utilization rates purposeful sampling might be needed, or small-scale qualitative studies.

Third, in this dissertation I incorporate the role of organizational support for combining work and family, but found this to be a theoretically and methodologically underdeveloped concept. Few studies have concerned themselves with work-family policy utilization, but those that do often include the family-supportiveness of the organization in one way or another (e.g. Kaufman, 2017; McDonald et al., 2005; ter Hoeven et al., 2017; Thompson et al., 1999). The idea is that more support—from the organizational culture, a manager, and/or colleagues—would indicate a better environment for using work-family policies, leading to increased use and a greater ability to experience the intended positive outcomes of work-family policies. However, how the different levels relate is theoretically unclear, are all three levels of support independently valuable ("more is better"), or is their interplay more complex?

Interestingly, while high or at least medium levels of correlation between organizational, managerial and collegial support would be expected (due to selection and influence) I did not observe this. This might indicate a more complex theoretical interplay, or could suggest that quite different concepts were studied. Perhaps measures ought to be more specific as to what is precisely being supported. I find that men with more supportive managers are *less* likely to use parental leave policies, and maintain that this might be because more supportive managers help men in finding other, informal solutions for combining work and family. In this case, measuring general support of the manager for work-family integration would probably lead to different results than measuring managerial support specifically for *using* parental leave. Thus, I would urge future studies to contribute to the theoretical and methodological development of the concept of organizational support for work-family issues.

Lastly, I focused in this dissertation on the role of organizations, but left other actors out of the equation. First, I have only briefly touched upon the respondents' home situation in this study, by only including whether someone has a partner. However, work-family decisions are, of course, often made together by couples (G. S. Becker, 1965; P. E. Becker & Moen, 1999; Kanji, 2013; Kühhirt, 2012). My vignette-experiment also underlines this, the partner's income plays a large role on people's decision-making whether or not to work part-time. Future research could include more information on a partner's working hours, income, and perhaps even characteristics of the partner's workplace (see for example Bygren & Duvander, 2006), or could include further information on the use of childcare or involvement of other caregivers, such as grandparents, who can provide an alternative solution to using work-family policies or dropping out of employment (Geurts, van Tilburg, Poortman, & Dykstra, 2015; Verhoef et al., 2015). Another subject that I largely had to leave untouched is that of informal arrangements between employees and employers, people might refrain from using formal work-family policies because they have informally agreed with their employer that they can be more flexible (ter Hoeven et al., 2017). As mentioned before, I observed that men with more supportive managers are less likely to use parental leave, and speculate that this is because of informal arrangements. Future research would do well to see whether this is, in fact, the case.

Societal implications

Both national governments and organizations increasingly offer people work-family policies, with the primary aim of enabling them to be better equipped to combine work and family (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006; Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2012). This dissertation firstly underlines that using part-time work—and especially short part-time work—can be a useful means for people, both men and women, to experience less work-life conflict. This was not explicitly tested for other work-family policies, but it could be expected that other policies that enable people to be actively engaged in childcare while maintaining their engagement in work can potentially establish the same. Therefore, the first practical implication of this study is that (national) policy-makers whishing to help people have lower levels of work-life conflict would do well to make work-family policies widely available.

However, this dissertation also underlines that just having work-family policies available is not enough, because people's utilization of these policies is also dependent on contextual factors. I find that national variations are actually the biggest predictor of work-family policy use, and that organizations play a more limited role, they only do so within the "realm of possibilities" created by legal, cultural and financial restrictions. I cautiously conclude that organizational factors only play a role in people's parental leave utilization-decisions in countries where parental leave is relatively well-paid at the national level, which suggests that a decent wage substitution is for many people a prerequisite for using parental leave. In a way this is perhaps unsurprising: if it is financially not feasible to not work for a while, most people will not even consider doing this. Other studies also found that when income replacement of parental leave is low, employees are less likely to use leave, but instead find other alternatives, such as dropping out of employment or switching to part-time work (Brinton & Mun, 2016; Pettigrew, 2014). Thus, my second recommendation is that national governments that are serious about giving people the option to combine work and family through work-family policies need to make sure that there is proper wage substitution in place.

Third, I found that when organizations have work-family policies available this is not only good for employees, but can also be beneficial for the organizations, through increased extra-role performance. I found that when employees perceived organizational

family leave policies to be available, they perform higher. Although no effects of use are found, I maintain that this finding suggest that organizations wishing to employ family leave policies for business-case considerations should not only formally adopt work-family policies while discouraging their practical use, because people are unlikely to perceive policies as available when these are practically inaccessible. Rather, organizations should adopt family leave policies and ensure that employees *know* that these policies are available to them. After all, without the employees knowing that the organization is supportive of their needs, they cannot reciprocate this signal of concern.

Fourth, increasing gender equality is often an explicit aim of work-family policies, and historically these policies have helped increase female labor participation and thereby the social and financial emancipation of women (Hegewisch & Gornick, 2008, 2011; Portegijs et al., 2008). Yet work-family policies are mostly offered to and used by women (INLPR, n.d.; OECD, 2016b, 2017a), and as such have paradoxically also been found to perpetuate gender occupational and economic inequality, by hindering women's career progression into powerful, high-level positions (Evertsson & Duvander, 2011; Mandel & Semyonov, 2005a, 2006). The default, from the perspective of national and organizational policy makers, managers, as well as parents themselves, is often that work-family policies exist primarily for women, not for men—which is unfortunate considering my finding that work-family policies can be equally beneficial for men and women. Changing these types of deeply rooted cultural gender expectations is not easy, but nonetheless I think policy makers could start by increasing the length of paternity leave and male parental leave, or reserve part of the parental leave provisions for men. Culture and legislation are strongly intertwined; few policies are offered to men because it is a cultural norm that women are responsible for childcare, but the cultural norm of female childrearing is also perpetuated by existing legislation. As long as men and women do not have access to similar (lengths) of work-family policies, gender equality in the division of work and childcare will for many couples not even be an option, and studies have indeed shown that improving the availability of parental leave for men relates to an increase in male utilization (i.e. Duvander & Johansson, 2012; Eriksson, 2005; Kluve & Tamm, 2009). Moreover, I would argue that increasing male access to work-family policies would not only enable parents who want a non-traditional

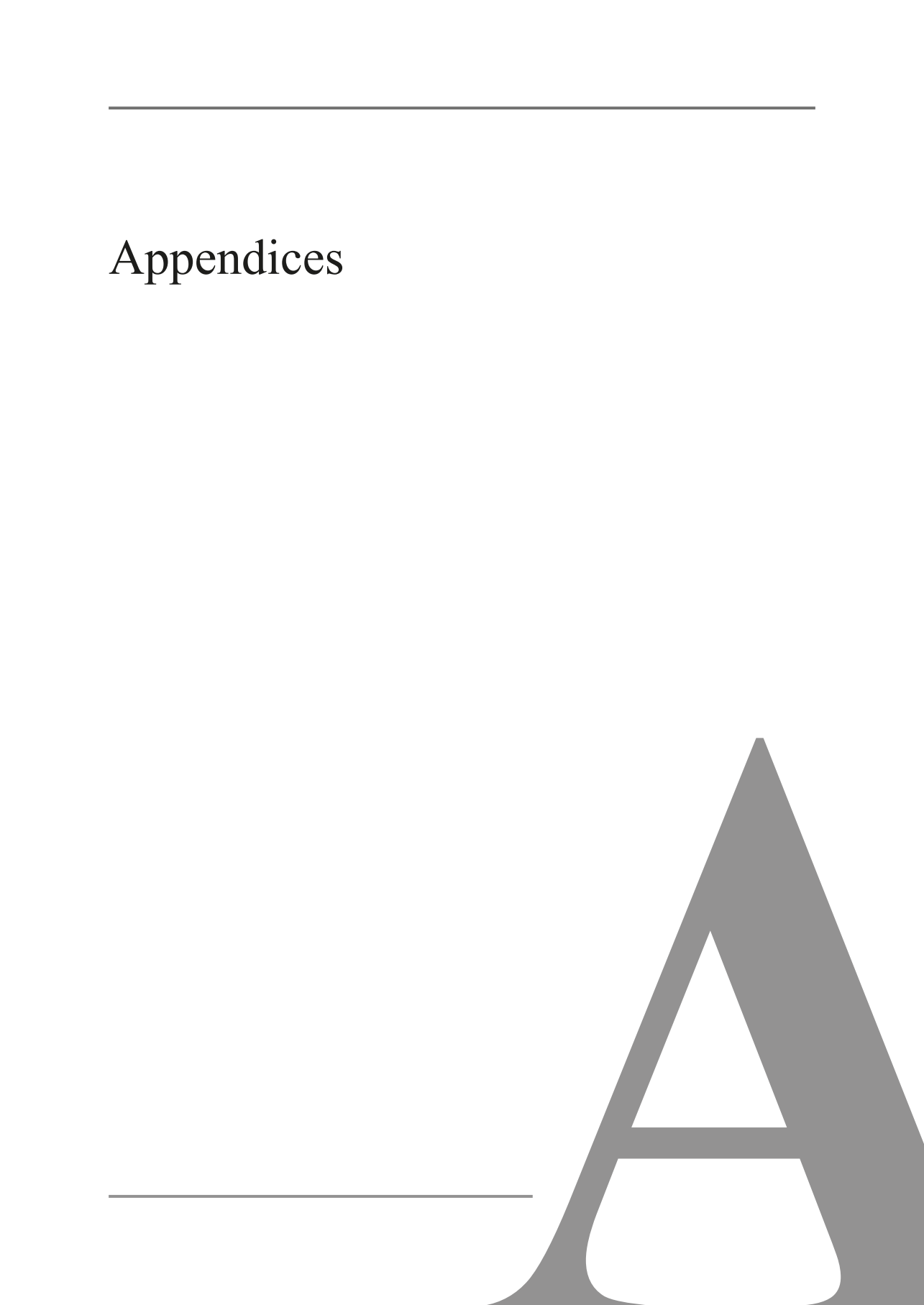
division of labor to accommodate this, but might in the long run also contribute to slowly changing gender norms surrounding the division of labor, as men who defy norms might make it more normal for others to do the same. Such peer effects were, for example, found among brothers and coworkers in affecting the use of paternity leave in Norway (Dahl et al., 2012). Next to these peer effects, adoption of work-family policies that enable fathers to engage more in childrearing might lead to intergenerational reproduction of greater engagement in childrearing among men, similar to that observed to occur among women for their engagement in paid labor (van Putten, Dykstra, & Schippers, 2008). In other words, while extending work-family policies to men will not magically change gender norms in society, the fact that this will enable men who desire to breach current gender norms and be more engaged in childrearing might, in the long run, contribute to deterioration of strong gender norms that focus on male breadwinning.

Organizations do not necessarily share the political aim of wanting to achieve gender equality. Nonetheless, numerous organizations do see themselves as having a social responsibility and want to play their part (Been, den Dulk, et al., 2017). I discussed in this dissertation that many organizations convey implicitly gendered expectations of their employees: they expect them to be like traditional "breadwinners," fully devoted to work, with limited childrearing responsibilities, which hinders the use of work-family policies, especially by men. As mentioned before, changing culture is not easy, but there might be some steps to take. Governmental or non-profit agencies that advocate gender equality could target organizations and their top-management more specifically in a campaign. It might be fruitful to make organizations aware of the gendered expectations that many of them impose on their employees, and to urge them to move beyond expectations of unencumbered, ideal workers who are fully devoted, to valuing more rounded employees that may not always be present or in other ways available for their work. Of course, no earth-shattering effects are to be expected, but it might help for those organizations that want to be socially responsible. Moreover, if greater male access to work-family policies would make that more men use these policies (and thus deviate from ideal worker expectations), I would expect that this also contributes to creating an organizational culture where using work-family policies, for both male and female employees, is acceptable behavior.

Combining a career and childcare

In this dissertation I have examined the use and usefulness of work-family policies through an organizational and gender perspective. I showed that organizational considerations play a role in employees' decisions to use work-family policies, yet that there are large gender and country differences. Particularly, men and women behave gender normatively; women are overall more likely to use work-family policies and less affected by organizational conditions, while these do play a role in men's utilization-decisions. More research is needed as to how the country context relates to work-family policy utilization. Moreover, my study maintains that work-family policies are useful, both for working parents and for organizations, as they relate to lower levels of work-life conflict, and higher levels of extra-role performance. No gender differences are found in this, suggesting that—if given the chance—using work-family policies can be equally useful for men and women. As such, I hope that when the time comes that I decide to be a parent, men, as well as women, will have access to extensive work-family policies, so my partner and I can both combine a career and childcare.

Appendices



Appendix A - Appendices for Chapter 2

Appendix A1 - Descriptive statistics.

		Total		Women		Men	
	Range	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Use parental leave	0-1	.43		.41		.46	
Organizational support							
Perceived cultural support	0-1	.56	.17	.55	.17	.57	.17
Perceived managerial support	0-1	.47	.16	.48	.16	.46	.16
Use by colleagues	0-1	.58	.34	.57	.33	.60	.34
Use by manager	0-1	.17		.13		.21	
Organizational characteristics							
Large (>1000 employees)	0-1	.24		.28		.20	
Public	0-1	.35		.44		.27	
Proportion of women	0-1	.48	.23	.55	.22	.41	.22
Controls							
Male	0-1	.52					
Age youngest child	0-4	2.06	1.27	2.17	1.27	1.96	1.26
Supervisor is male	0-1	.63		.51		.75	
Supervisor has a child	0-1	.53		.47		.59	
Sector and country							
Sector							
Financial services		.17		.20		.14	
Health care		.17		.26		.08	
Higher education		.16		.19		.13	
Manufacturing		.24		.17		.29	
Telecommunication		.12		.08		.15	
Transportation		.15		.10		.19	
Country							
Bulgaria		.11		.13		.09	
Finland		.06		.05		.07	
Germany		.06		.07		.05	
Hungary		.08		.05		.10	
Netherlands		.26		.29		.23	
Portugal		.16		.18		.15	
Spain		.10		.09		.12	
Sweden		.11		.08		.13	
UK		.06		.06		.06	

Note: means and standard deviations reported using the non-imputed dataset.

Appendix A2 - Correlation matrixes for independent variables.

		Organizational support				Organizational characteristics			
		Perceived cultural support	Perceived managerial support	Use by colleagues	Use by manager	Large (>1000 employees)	Public	Proportion of women	Male
Organizational support	Perceived cultural support	1.00							
	Perceived managerial support	**.34**	1.00						
	Use by colleagues	**-.07**	**-.12**	1.00					
	Use by manager	**-.07**	**-.14**	**.21**	1.00				
Organizational characteristics	Large (>1000 employees)	-.00	.06	**-.19**	.03	1.00			
	Public	-.00	**.08**	.02	**-.13**	**.28**	1.00		
	Proportion of women	**-.07**	.05	**.09**	-.05	.01	**.29**	1.00	
	Male	**.06**	**-.07**	.04	**.10**	**-.09**	**-.18**	**-.31**	1.00

Note: bold correlations indicate statistical significance at $p < .05$.

Appendix A3 - Linear probability models predicting use of parental leave (N=1207).

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	.34***	(.09)	.24*	(.10)
Organizational support				
Perceived cultural support	-.08	(.10)	-.01	(.10)
Perceived managerial support	-.07	(.10)	-.10	(.09)
Use by colleagues	.21**	(.06)	-.02	(.06)
Use by manager	.20***	(.06)	.06	(.05)
Organizational characteristics				
Large (>1000 employees)	.06	(.06)	.08+	(.04)
Public	.04	(.05)	.03	(.05)
Proportion of women	.00	(.09)	.06	(.09)
Controls				
Male	.03	(.04)	.03	(.04)
Age youngest child	-.03**	(.01)	-.03**	(.01)
Supervisor is male	.10*	(.04)	.05	(.03)
Supervisor has a child	-.06	(.05)	-.02	(.04)
Sector *(ref: financial services)*				
Health care			.00	(.06)
Higher education			-.01	(.06)
Manufacturing			.04	(.05)
Telecommunication			.08	(.05)
Transportation			.02	(.07)
Country *(ref: Bulgaria)*				
Finland			.12*	(.06)
Germany			.52***	(.07)
Hungary			.20**	(.07)
Netherlands			.11*	(.06)
Portugal			.24***	(.06)
Spain			-.00	(.07)
Sweden			.57***	(.07)
UK			-.16**	(.06)

$^{+}p < .10$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$

Note: Clustered standard errors on the organization.

Appendix A4 - Linear probability models predicting use of parental leave, separately for women and men.

	Women (n=583)		Men (n=624)		Difference[a]
	B	SE	B	SE	
Constant	.31*	(.14)	.24+	(.15)	
Organizational support					
Perceived cultural support	-.05	(.13)	.05	(.13)	
Perceived managerial support	.06	(.12)	-.23+	(.14)	
Use by colleagues	-.03	(.07)	-.04	(.08)	
Use by manager	.03	(.06)	.11+	(.06)	
Organizational characteristics					
Large (>1000 employees)	.03	(.05)	.09	(.06)	
Public	.01	(.06)	.02	(.07)	
Proportion of women	-.19	(.13)	.24*	(.12)	*
Controls					
Age youngest child	-.02	(.01)	-.03*	(.01)	
Supervisor is male	.03	(.04)	.08	(.05)	
Supervisor has a child	.04	(.05)	-.05	(.06)	
Sector *(ref: financial services)*					
Health care	.05	(.07)	-.08	(.12)	
Higher education	.04	(.07)	-.03	(.09)	
Manufacturing	.02	(.07)	.03	(.08)	
Telecommunication	.08	(.09)	.02	(.08)	
Transportation	.04	(.09)	-.00	(.09)	
Country *(ref: Bulgaria)*					
Finland	-.05	(.08)	.26*	(.10)	*
Germany	.67***	(.09)	.38**	(.12)	+
Hungary	.23+	(.12)	.21+	(.11)	
Netherlands	.21**	(.07)	-.00	(.09)	+
Portugal	.12	(.08)	.38***	(.09)	*
Spain	-.11	(.08)	.08	(.11)	
Sweden	.61***	(.10)	.56***	(.09)	
UK	-.19**	(.07)	-.15	(.10)	

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

[a] Whether the difference between women and men was statistically significant was calculated using a Wald-test (Paternoster et al., 1998).

Note: Clustered standard errors on the organization.

Appendix A5 – Linear probability models predicting use of parental leave, jackknife procedure (SE).

	Excluding Bulgaria	Excluding Finland	Excluding Germany	Excluding Hungary	Excluding NL	Excluding Portugal	Excluding Spain	Excluding Sweden	Excluding the UK
N	1074	1130	1135	1115	899	1009	1081	1077	1136
Constant	.33**	.25*	.27*	.28**	.20+	.27*	.26*	.24*	.21*
	(.12)	(.11)	(.10)	(.10)	(.11)	(.10)	(.10)	(.11)	(.10)
Organizational support									
Perceived cultural support	-.03	-.02	-.00	-.03	-.01	-.02	.02	.01	.01
	(.11)	(.10)	(.10)	(.10)	(.11)	(.11)	(.11)	(.11)	(.11)
Perceived managerial support	-.05	-.13	-.09	-.06	-.12	-.08	-.18+	-.07	-.08
	(.10)	(.10)	(.10)	(.10)	(.11)	(.10)	(.09)	(.10)	(.10)
Use by colleagues	.03	-.01	-.03	-.05	-.09	.05	-.05	-.04	-.02
	(.07)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)
Use by manager	.05	.06	.08	.06	.04	.09	.05	.08	.06
	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.06)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)
Organizational characteristics									
Large (>1000 employees)	.08	.08+	.07	.07	.07	.08+	.11**	.05	.09+
	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)	(.05)	(.04)	(.05)	(.05)
Public	.02	.04	.03	.02	.00	.05	.05	.06	.03
	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)	(.05)
Proportion of women	.11	.07	.03	.04	.11	-.01	.10	.04	.08
	(.10)	(.10)	(.09)	(.09)	(.09)	(.10)	(.09)	(.10)	(.09)

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note: Clustered standard errors on the organization.

Note: Controlled for: age youngest child, gender manager, whether manager has a child, sector, and country.

Appendix A6 - Linear probability models predicting use of parental leave, country clustering on duration of parental leave.

	Countries where leave is relatively long[a] (*n*=630)		Countries where leave is relatively short[b] (*n*=577)		Difference[c]
	B	SE	B	SE	
Constant	.12	(.13)	.46**	(.15)	
Organizational support					
Perceived cultural support	.02	(.13)	-.03	(.16)	
Perceived managerial support	-.08	(.14)	-.10	(.13)	
Use by colleagues	-.02	(.07)	-.07	(.09)	
Use by manager	.07	(.07)	.07	(.07)	
Organizational characteristics					
Large (>1000 employees)	.06	(.06)	.02	(.07)	
Public	.01	(.06)	.07	(.08)	
Proportion of women	.11	(.12)	.06	(.16)	
Controls					
Male	.05	(.05)	.00	(.06)	
Age youngest child	-.03+	(.01)	-.03*	(.01)	
Supervisor is male	.06	(.05)	.05	(.05)	
Supervisor has a child	-.01	(.06)	-.02	(.06)	
Sector *(ref: financial services)*					
Health care	.04	(.08)	-.03	(.09)	
Higher education	.04	(.07)	-.07	(.10)	
Manufacturing	.16*	(.07)	-.07	(.09)	*
Telecommunication	.12+	(.07)	.06	(.09)	
Transportation	.14+	(.08)	-.09	(.11)	+
Country	*(ref: Bulgaria)*		*(ref: the Netherlands)*		
Finland	.12+	(.07)			
Germany	.54***	(.08)			
Hungary	.19*	(.08)			
Portugal			.12*	(.06)	
Spain	-.03	(.07)			
Sweden	.55***	(.08)			
UK			-.27***	(.06)	

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

[a] Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Spain and Sweden.

[b] The Netherlands, Portugal, and the UK.

[c] Whether the difference between women and men was statistically significant was calculated using a Wald-test (Paternoster et al., 1998).

Note: Clustered standard errors on the organization.

Appendix A7 - Linear probability models predicting use of parental leave, country clustering on level of pay of parental leave.

	Countries where leave is substantially paid[a] (*n*=504)		Countries where leave is (largely) unpaid[b] (*n*=703)		Difference[c]
	B	SE	B	SE	
Constant	.17	(.13)	.43**	(.14)	
Organizational support					
Perceived cultural support	.09	(.14)	-.06	(.14)	
Perceived managerial support	-.25+	(.13)	.02	(.13)	
Use by colleagues	-.04	(.08)	-.01	(.09)	
Use by manager	.06	(.06)	.08	(.06)	
Organizational characteristics					
Large (>1000 employees)	.15**	(.05)	-.01	(.06)	*
Public	.04	(.06)	.05	(.06)	
Proportion of women	.14	(.12)	-.03	(.15)	
Controls					
Male	.01	(.05)	.04	(.05)	
Age youngest child	-.03	(.02)	-.03*	(.01)	
Supervisor is male	.10+	(.06)	.02	(.04)	
Supervisor has a child	-.04	(.06)	-.02	(.05)	
Sector *(ref: financial services)*					
Health care	-.04	(.08)	.05	(.09)	
Higher education	.01	(.08)	-.06	(.08)	
Manufacturing	.11	(.08)	-.06	(.08)	
Telecommunication	.11	(.08)	.01	(.09)	
Transportation	.12	(.09)	-.07	(.09)	
Country	*(ref: Bulgaria)*		*(ref: the Netherlands)*		
Finland	.16*	(.07)			
Germany	.55***	(.08)			
Hungary	.22**	(.08)			
Portugal			.11+	(.06)	
Spain			-.06	(.06)	
Sweden	.57***	(.08)			
UK			-.24***	(.06)	

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

[a] Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Hungary and Sweden.

[b] The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the UK.

[c] Whether the difference between women and men was statistically significant was calculated using a Wald-test (Paternoster et al., 1998).

Note: Clustered standard errors on the organization.

Appendix B - Appendices for Chapter 3

Appendix B1 - Predictive probabilities of the desired reduction of working hours, for all respondents and by gender (SE).

	Total (*N*=2464)	**Men** (*n*=1212)	**Women** (*n*=1252)
Gender			
Men	.54		
	(.04)		
Women	.80		
	(.27)		
Vignette characteristics			
Childcare costs			
Close to hourly wage	.64	.57	.67
	(.03)	(.05)	(.03)
Much lower than hourly wage	.71	.62	.77
	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)
Career consequences			
No career consequences	.63	.51	.71
	(.03)	(.05)	(.03)
Likely consequences	.72	.68	.73
	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)
Enjoyment			
No change in enjoyment	.65	.54	.71
	(.03)	(.05)	(.03)
Likely to lose enjoyable tasks	.70	.64	.73
	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)
Collegial support			
High collegial support	.61	.55	.65
	(.03)	(.05)	(.03)
No collegial support	.73	.63	.79
	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)
Partner earns			
Less	.48	.39	.55
	(.03)	(.05)	(.04)
About the same	.71	.60	.77
	(.03)	(.05)	(.03)
More	.83	.81	.83
	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)

Appendix B2 - Predictive probabilities of the desired reduction of working hours, by gender and country (SE).

	Men			Women		
	NL (*n*=668)	**SW** (*n*=276)	**UK** (*n*=268)	**NL** (*n*=708)	**SW** (*n*=260)	**UK** (*n*=284)
Vignette characteristics						
Childcare costs						
Close to hourly wage	.56	.75	.42	.66	.73	.65
	(.07)	(.08)	(.07)	(.04)	(.08)	(.06)
Much lower than hourly wage	.62	.80	.44	.72	.80	.81
	(.06)	(.07)	(.08)	(.04)	(.07)	(.05)
Career consequences						
No career consequences	.50	.71	.37	.66	.70	.78
	(.07)	(.09)	(.07)	(.04)	(.09)	(.05)
Likely consequences	.68	.84	.50	.71	.83	.68
	(.06)	(.06)	(.07)	(.04)	(.07)	(.06)
Enjoyment						
No change in enjoyment	.53	.70	.44	.69	.70	.72
	(.07)	(.09)	(.08)	(.04)	(.09)	(.05)
Likely to lose enjoyable tasks	.65	.86	.42	.69	.84	.74
	(.06)	(.06)	(.08)	(.04)	(.07)	(.05)
Collegial support						
High collegial support	.53	.79	.39	.64	.64	.65
	(.07)	(.08)	(.08)	(.04)	(.10)	(.06)
No collegial support	.65	.76	.47	.73	.86	.80
	(.06)	(.08)	(.07)	(.04)	(.06)	(.05)
Partner earns						
Less	.40	.68	.17	.53	.70	.53
	(.08)	(.10)	(.09)	(.04)	(.10)	(.08)
About the same	.60	.75	.47	.71	.80	.82
	(.08)	(.09)	(.09)	(.04)	(.08)	(.05)
More	.79	.91	.67	.81	.80	.79
	(.06)	(.05)	(.08)	(.04)	(.08)	(.06)

Appendix C - Appendices for Chapter 4

Appendix C1 - The relationship between part-time work and work-life conflict, for women in the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom and men in the Netherlands.

	NL – women (*n*=413)		Sweden - women (*n*=208)		UK – women (*n*=114)		NL - men (*n*=331)	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	1.77***	(0.51)	2.90**	(1.06)	3.16**	(1.28)	3.81***	(0.69)
Part-time work								
(ref: full-time)								
Short part-time	-0.37**	(0.14)	-0.09	(0.25)	-0.57**	(0.17)	-0.83***	(0.22)
Long part-time	-0.25	(0.14)	0.10	(0.20)	-0.13	(0.23)	-0.01	(0.12)
Respondent characteristics								
Age	0.01	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.02)	-0.02	(0.02)	0.00	(0.01)
Education (years)	0.06**	(0.02)	0.08**	(0.03)	-0.02	(0.04)	0.02	(0.02)
Occupational status (ISEI)	-0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.01	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.00)
Partner	0.12	(0.08)	0.14	(0.20)	0.20	(0.40)	-0.09	(0.24)
Age youngest child	-0.01	(0.01)	0.03	(0.03)	0.01	(0.03)	-0.02	(0.01)
Department characteristics								
Supervisor is male	-0.08	(0.09)	-0.12	(0.16)	0.05	(0.19)	0.11	(0.15)
Supervisor has a child	-0.00	(0.08)	0.01	(0.13)	0.02	(0.21)	0.06	(0.10)
Size department (log)	0.07	(0.04)	-0.01	(0.08)	0.37**	(0.12)	-0.04	(0.05)
Organizational characteristics								
Size (log)	-0.03	(0.03)	0.05	(0.05)	-0.14	(0.10)	-0.09**	(0.04)
Public	0.03	(0.17)	0.34	(0.21)	0.40	(0.53)	0.08	(0.16)
Sector	*Included*		*Included*		*Included*		*Included*	
Organizational support								
Supportive culture	-0.08	(0.05)	-0.01	(0.06)	0.13	(0.14)	-0.03	(0.06)
Managerial support	-0.23**	(0.07)	-0.55***	(0.10)	-0.51***	(0.11)	-0.29***	(0.07)
Collegial support	0.11**	(0.05)	-0.03	(0.08)	0.03	(0.12)	-0.02	(0.06)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Appendix C2 – The relationship between part-time work (short and long part-time work taken together) and work-life conflict, by gender and country.

	Women						Men					
	NL (*n*=413)		Sweden (*n*=208)		UK (*n*=114)		NL (*n*=331)		Sweden (*n*=221)		UK (*n*=104)	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	1.81***	(0.51)	2.91**	(1.06)	3.39**	(1.27)	3.88***	(0.71)	2.13**	(1.05)	0.62	(1.03)
Part-time work	-0.30**	(0.13)	0.04	(0.18)	-0.42**	(0.18)	-0.13	(0.12)	-0.11	(0.20)	-0.17	(0.50)
Respondent characteristics												
Age	0.01	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.02)	-0.02	(0.02)	0.00	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.01)	0.00	(0.02)
Education (years)	0.06***	(0.02)	0.08**	(0.03)	-0.03	(0.04)	0.02	(0.02)	-0.00	(0.03)	0.01	(0.05)
Occupational status (ISEI)	-0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.01	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.01	(0.01)
Partner	0.11	(0.08)	0.14	(0.20)	0.23	(0.40)	-0.03	(0.26)	0.33	(0.17)	-0.19	(0.34)
Age youngest child	-0.01	(0.01)	0.03	(0.03)	0.01	(0.03)	-0.01	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)	-0.03	(0.04)
Department characteristics												
Supervisor is male	-0.09	(0.09)	-0.12	(0.16)	0.06	(0.20)	0.17	(0.17)	0.19	(0.20)	-0.22	(0.38)
Supervisor has a child	-0.01	(0.08)	0.01	(0.13)	0.12	(0.21)	0.04	(0.10)	0.08	(0.15)	-0.26	(0.21)
Size department (log)	0.08**	(0.04)	-0.01	(0.08)	0.39**	(0.12)	-0.05	(0.05)	0.02	(0.08)	0.20	(0.10)
Organizational characteristics												
Size (log)	-0.03	(0.03)	0.05	(0.05)	-0.14	(0.10)	-0.08	(0.04)	0.07	(0.04)	0.16	(0.09)
Public	0.02	(0.17)	0.35	(0.21)	0.43	(0.53)	0.13	(0.18)	0.68**	(0.26)	0.18	(0.58)
Sector	*Included*		*Included*		*Included*		*Included*		*Included*		*Included*	
Organizational support												
Supportive culture	-0.08	(0.05)	-0.01	(0.06)	0.10	(0.13)	-0.04	(0.06)	0.00	(0.06)	0.03	(0.10)
Managerial support	-0.23**	(0.07)	-0.54***	(0.10)	-0.50***	(0.11)	-0.29***	(0.07)	-0.38***	(0.08)	-0.20	(0.18)
Collegial support	0.11**	(0.05)	-0.04	(0.08)	-0.01	(0.12)	-0.02	(0.06)	0.11	(0.12)	0.21**	(0.09)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Appendix D - Appendices for Chapter 5

Appendix D1 - Interactions with age, education, occupational status, and age youngest child (SE) (*N*=9887).

	Age		Education		Occupational status		Age child	
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 1**	**Model 2**
Constant	2.88***	3.25***	2.87***	2.87***	2.88***	2.89***	2.88***	2.92***
	(0.18)	(0.32)	(0.18)	(0.29)	(0.18)	(0.25)	(0.18)	(0.19)
Family leave								
Perceived availability extra leave	0.12	0.16***	0.19	0.16***	0.13	0.16***	0.15*	0.16***
	(0.11)	(0.03)	(0.13)	(0.03)	(0.09)	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.03)
Use (ref: child, extra leave)								
No child	-0.02	-0.48	-0.02	-0.03	-0.02	-0.01	-0.02	-0.25
	(0.05)	(0.29)	(0.05)	(0.24)	(0.05)	(0.18)	(0.05)	(0.25)
Child, no use	0.02	-0.25	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.02	-0.08
	(0.05)	(0.31)	(0.05)	(0.26)	(0.05)	(0.19)	(0.05)	(0.09)
Child, statutory leave	-0.04	-0.30	-0.04	-0.02	-0.04	-0.14	-0.04	-0.07
	(0.05)	(0.30)	(0.05)	(0.26)	(0.05)	(0.19)	(0.05)	(0.08)
Main effect of the interaction variable								
Age, education, occupational status or age youngest child	-0.02***	-0.03***	0.04***	0.04*	0.00***	0.00	0.00	-0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.02)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)
Interaction with Availability	0.00		-0.00		0.00		0.00	
	(0.00)		(0.01)		(0.00)		(0.01)	
Interactions with use (ref: no child)								
No child		0.01		0.00		-0.00		0.03
		(0.01)		(0.02)		(0.00)		(0.03)
Child, no use		0.01		-0.00		0.00		0.01
		(0.01)		(0.02)		(0.00)		(0.01)
Child, statutory leave		0.01		-0.00		0.00		0.01
		(0.01)		(0.02)		(0.00)		(0.01)
Variance level 3	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02
	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)
Variance level 2	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02
	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)

$^{+}p < .10$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$

Note: All other variables included in the original model were included in this model as control variables.

Appendix D2 - Analyses only for parents child <4 (*N*=1379).

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	3.35***	(0.74)	3.37***	(0.74)
Family leave				
Perceived availability extra leave	0.14*	(0.06)	0.09	(0.09)
Use (ref: child, extra leave)				
Child, no use	-0.06	(0.09)	-0.08	(0.13)
Child, statutory leave	-0.01	(0.07)	0.04	(0.10)
Respondent characteristics				
Male	0.03	(0.05)	0.07	(0.14)
Age	-0.06	(0.04)	-0.06	(0.04)
Age2	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
Education (years)	0.03*	(0.01)	0.03*	(0.01)
Occupational status (ISEI)	0.00**	(0.00)	0.00**	(0.00)
Partner	0.06	(0.12)	0.06	(0.12)
Age youngest child	0.03	(0.02)	0.03	(0.02)
Contextual factors				
Size (log)	0.03	(0.02)	0.03	(0.02)
Public (vs. private or mixed)	-0.09	(0.09)	-0.09	(0.09)
Interaction with gender				
Availability*male			0.11	(0.12)
Use*male (ref: child, use extra leave				
Child, no use*male			0.02	(0.17)
Child, statutory leave*male			-0.11	(0.14)
Variance level 3	.15	(.05)	.15	(.05)
Variance level 2	.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)

$^{+}p < .10$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$

Appendix D3 – Analyses separately per country (SE).

	Bulgaria	Finland	Germany	Hungary	Netherlands	Portugal	Spain	Sweden	UK
N	692	916	723	897	2285	1111	810	1162	1291
Constant	3.40***	3.02***	3.99***	3.16***	3.05***	3.23***	3.86***	2.41***	2.29***
	(0.49)	(0.48)	(0.63)	(0.54)	(0.32)	(0.58)	(0.73)	(0.51)	(0.50)
Family Leave									
Perceived availability extra leave	0.26**	0.19+	0.18	0.14+	0.11**	0.14+	0.07	0.11	0.36**
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.13)	(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Use (ref: no child)									
Child, no use	0.01	0.16	0.17**	-0.02	0.00	0.12	0.08	-0.10	0.03
	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.06)	(0.10)	(0.13)	(0.10)	(0.08)
Child, statutory leave	0.04	-0.01	0.14	-0.12	0.02	0.01	0.01	-0.03	-0.22**
	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.10)
Child, extra leave	-0.05	n.o.[a]	n.o.[a]	0.03	0.07	-0.01	0.06	-0.02	-0.16
	(0.15)			(0.12)	(0.09)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.18)	(0.22)
Variance level 3	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.13	0.12	0.16	0.17
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(.07)	(0.04)	(0.54)
Variance level 2	0.16	0.14	0.08	0.14	0.13	0.06	0.19	0.09	0.14
	(0.91)	(0.07)	(0.12)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.25)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.74)

$^{+}p < .10$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$

[a] Too few observations (<20).

Note: All other variables included in the original model were included in this model as control variables.

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References

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Samenvatting in het Nederlands

(Summary in Dutch)

Het combineren van een carrière en een gezin

Gebruik en gevolgen van werk-familiebeleid in Europese organisaties

Achtergrond

Door de toename van het aantal eenouder- en tweeverdienersgezinnen zijn er steeds meer mensen die een carrière combineren met een gezin. Om hierbij te helpen bieden de meeste Europese landen werk-familiebeleid aan, zoals bijvoorbeeld verlofregelingen (zwangerschapsverlof, vaderschapsverlof en ouderschapsverlof) of de optie om in deeltijd te werken. Daarnaast zijn er organisaties die hun werknemers extra werk-familiebeleid aanbieden, zoals langer of beter betaald verlof dan wettelijk verplicht, betere toegang tot deeltijdwerk, of kinderopvang op het werk. Het is belangrijk dat ouders werk en gezin goed kunnen combineren, want onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat wanneer ouders hier moeite mee hebben dit negatieve gevolgen kan hebben voor henzelf (door fysieke of mentale klachten), hun kinderen (door lagere frequentie en kwaliteit van ouder-kind-tijd), hun werkgever (door lagere productiviteit of aanwezigheid) en de maatschappij (door hogere zorgkosten en lagere fertiliteit). Daarom is er grote maatschappelijke relevantie in zorgen dat ouders werk en gezin goed kunnen combineren.

Een tweede reden waarom werk-familiebeleid relevant is, is dat het vaak als expliciet doel heeft om bij te dragen aan gelijkheid tussen mannen en vrouwen. Werk-familiekeuzes zijn niet los te zien van gender; in alle Europese landen werken vrouwen minder en zorgen ze meer voor kinderen dan hun mannelijke partners. Dit heeft ook een normatieve grondslag: vrouwen worden vaak geacht de hoofdverantwoordelijke te zijn voor de zorg voor kinderen, terwijl hun mannelijke partner de hoofdkostwinner is. Neem bijvoorbeeld overheden, die vrijwel allemaal moeders veel langer verlof geven dan vaders. Hoewel werk-familiebeleid zoals deeltijdwerk en verlofregelingen initieel maakte dat vrouwen die voorheen niet werkten konden toetreden tot de arbeidsmarkt, doet het de huidige positie van vrouwen op de arbeidsmarkt geen goed. Deeltijdwerk en lang verlof belemmeren de doorgroei van vrouwen naar hogere posities. Daarnaast geven werkgevers vrouwen soms geen baan of promotie omdat vrouwen met zorgtaken

gezien worden als minder ambitieus, of omdat werkgevers bang zijn dat vrouwen in de toekomst kinderen krijgen en werk-familiebeleid gaan gebruiken. Dit zou minder een probleem zijn als mannen ook toegang hebben tot riant werk-familiebeleid, en hier gebruik van maken; dan liggen de gevolgen niet alleen bij vrouwen. Daarnaast is het ook in het belang van mannen om gendergelijkheid in werk-familiekeuzes te vergroten, omdat zij nu vaak de kans missen om intensief betrokken te zijn bij de opvoeding van hun kinderen. Mannen die wel familie boven (of zelfs naast) werk prioriteren worden daar op de werkvloer nu vaak harder voor afgestraft dan vrouwen. Tot slot, wanneer partners werk en zorg niet verdelen op basis van hun talenten maar op basis van gender loopt de maatschappij talentvolle vrouwen mis op de arbeidsmarkt, met alle economische gevolgen van dien.

Dit proefschrift

Er zijn dus meerdere redenen waarom het belangrijk is om jonge ouders – zowel vrouwen als mannen – mogelijkheden te geven om werk en gezin te combineren, en veel Europese landen en organisaties bieden dan ook werk-familiebeleid aan dat hierop gericht is, zoals verlofregelingen en deeltijdwerk. Veel blijft echter onduidelijk over werk-familiebeleid: wanneer gebruiken mensen het beleid waar ze recht op hebben? En, draagt het beleid ook echt bij aan de beoogde uitkomsten, zoals minder werkprivé-conflict en meer inzet op het werk? Daarnaast is opvallend weinig bekend over de rol van de werkgever in werk-familiebeleid: zijn er bepaalde organisaties waar het makkelijker of moeilijker is om bijvoorbeeld verlof op te nemen? Het is een gemis dat werkgevers weinig worden meegenomen in werk-familieonderzoek; mensen gebruiken werk-familiebeleid immers binnen het bedrijf waar ze werken, en het bedrijf kan een rol spelen in hun beslissing om wel of niet beleid te gebruiken, alswel in hun ervaring van het gebruikte beleid. Daarnaast wordt vaak gedacht dat mannen en vrouwen andere dingen belangrijk vinden in hun werk-familiekeuzes, maar hier is weinig over bekend omdat de meeste onderzoeken zich alleen op vrouwen richtten. In dit proefschrift onderzoek ik dan ook *het gebruik en de gevolgen* van werk-familiebeleid (deeltijdwerk en verlofregelingen), en onderzoek ik dit vanuit een organisatie- en een genderperspectief.

Gebruik en gevolgen van werk-familiebeleid

Gebruik van werk-familiebeleid

Hoewel werk-familiebeleid steeds vaker aangeboden wordt, blijft het gebruik hiervan achter – zeker onder mannen. Onderzoek suggereert dat dit niet alleen komt doordat mensen dit niet willen gebruiken. Er zijn ook mensen die wel van werk-familiebeleid gebruik zouden willen gebruiken, maar dit toch niet doen, bijvoorbeeld omdat ze het gevoel hebben dat dit niet kan in hun bedrijf, of dat het te slecht is voor hun carrière. Er is weinig onderzoek gedaan naar hoe organisaties het gebruik van werk-familiebeleid beïnvloeden, zijn er bijvoorbeeld organisaties waar dit makkelijker of moeilijker kan? En wat is de rol van de organisatiecultuur? Daarnaast is wel bekend dat mannen minder werk-familiebeleid gebruiken dan vrouwen, maar we weten niet of organisatiekenmerken een andere rol spelen in de keuze van mannen en vrouwen. In de eerste helft van dit proefschrift onderzoek ik dan ook hoe het gebruik van werk-familiebeleid door mannen en vrouwen varieert over organisaties.

Gevolgen van werk-familiebeleid

In dit proefschrift kijk ik ook naar de gevolgen van werk-familiebeleid, dat wil zeggen: of het beleid relateert aan beoogde uitkomsten. De voornaamste reden dat werk-familiebeleid wordt aangeboden is dat het werknemers kan helpen om werk en familie te combineren en daarmee werk-privéconflict kan doen afnemen. Echter, vorig onderzoek kwam tot tegenstrijdige bevindingen. Mogelijk komt dit doordat eerdere studies de werksituatie niet meenamen; misschien leidt werk-familiebeleid wel tot minder werk-privéconflict in organisaties die positief tegenover het gebruik van zulke regelingen staan, maar niet in organisaties die hier negatief tegenover staan. Daarnaast bieden organisaties vaak werk-familiebeleid aan omdat ze hopen dat dit goed is voor hun organisatie, bijvoorbeeld omdat werknemers zich dan meer gaan inzetten. Of dit echt zo is weten we echter nog niet. In beide gevallen is ook onduidelijk of dit anders zou werken voor mannen en vrouwen. In de tweede helft van dit proefschrift onderzoek ik daarom hoe werk-familiebeleid relateert aan twee beoogde uitkomsten: werk-privéconflict en inzet, voor mannen en vrouwen.

Het samenspel tussen een organisatie- en een genderperspectief

Organisatieperspectief

Organisaties hebben een centrale rol in werk-familiekwesties. Ten eerste zijn ze poortwachters voor het werk-familiebeleid dat aangeboden wordt door overheden. Zelfs wanneer mensen officieel toegang hebben tot beleid kunnen werkgevers in de praktijk de toegang vaak reguleren. Daarnaast kunnen bedrijven ook *additioneel* werk-familiebeleid aanbieden, zoals langer of beter betaald ouderschapsverlof, meer opties voor deeltijdwerk, of kinderopvang. Toch worden organisaties maar weinig meegenomen in onderzoek naar werk-familiekwesties. Onder studies die dit wel doen zijn twee manieren van kijken naar organisaties te identificeren: ze zien organisaties als rationele actoren die strategische keuzes maken, of ze kijken naar de organisatiecultuur.

Studies die organisaties zien als rationele actoren baseren zich vaak op institutionele theorie of business case argumentatie. Institutionele theorie stelt dat organisaties (werk-familie)beleid aanbieden wanneer ze sociale druk voelen om dit te doen, en dat sommige organisaties (bijvoorbeeld organisaties in de publieke sector) meer druk ervaren dan anderen. Dit maakt het rationeel voor deze organisaties om werk-familiebeleid aan te bieden: het levert ze legitimiteit op. Business case argumentatie stelt dat organisaties vooral beleid aanbieden wanneer ze denken dat de financiële baten opwegen tegen de kosten, bijvoorbeeld omdat het bepaalde werknemers aantrekt of omdat werknemers zich meer gaan inzetten.

De tweede manier waarop studies soms kijken naar de rol van organisaties in werk-familiekwesties is door te kijken hoe familie-ondersteunend de organisatiecultuur is. Elke organisatie heeft een eigen organisatiecultuur die de integratie van werk en familie al dan niet steunt. In sommige organisaties worden werknemers er hard op afgerekend als zij familie prioriteren (bijvoorbeeld door werk-familiebeleid te gebruiken), zij worden dan gezien als minder toegewijd en ambitieus. De rationele keuzes van een organisatie en de organisatiecultuur kunnen met elkaar in lijn zijn, maar kunnen ook los staan. Organisaties kunnen bijvoorbeeld vergaand werk-familiebeleid aanbieden omdat ze geloven dat dit bepaalde medewerkers aantrekt (business case argument), terwijl het gebruik hiervan in de praktijk wordt ontmoedigd door een cultuur waar van medewerkers verwacht wordt dat ze werk boven alles prioriteren.

Genderperspectief

Werk-familiebeslissingen van individuen, bedrijven én de regering zijn niet gender-neutraal. Het kostwinner-huisvrouw model zit diep geworteld in Europese samenlevingen, en stelt dat vrouwen hoofdverantwoordelijk zijn voor het huishouden en de kinderen, terwijl mannen hoofdverantwoordelijk zijn voor het inkomen. In lijn hiermee wordt werk-familiebeleid zowel vaker aangeboden als gebruikt door vrouwen dan door mannen. De sociologische "doing gender" theorie biedt een verklaring voor waarom dit het geval is. Volgens deze theorie gedragen de meeste mensen zich in lijn met gendernormen omdat er minder negatieve gevolgen zijn wanneer je je gedraagt volgens sociale verwachtingen dan wanneer je deze overtreedt. Daarom zijn vrouwen geneigd om de zorg voor kinderen te prioriteren boven werk, zij zijn immers hun hele leven aan deze sociale verwachting blootgesteld. Als kind kregen ze poppen om voor te zorgen, en ze zagen dat hun moeders, tantes en juffen ook zorg droegen voor de kinderen. Gendernormverwachtingen kunnen ook beïnvloeden hoe mensen het gebruik van werk-familiebeleid ervaren, mannen krijgen bijvoorbeeld vaker spottende reacties uit hun omgeving wanneer zij een stap terug doen in hun carrière om voor de kinderen te zorgen.

Het samenspel tussen een organisatie- en een genderperspectief

De vraag is of organisatiekenmerken dezelfde rol spelen voor mannen en vrouwen in hun werk-familiekeuzes en -uitkomsten. Een theorie die organisaties en gender combineert is de theorie van de ideale werker. Deze theorie stelt dat veel bedrijven georganiseerd zijn rondom de notie van een "ideale werker," gebaseerd op de traditionele mannelijke kostwinnaar. Deze ideale werker kan zich volledig richten op zijn baan en heeft geen andere (familie) verantwoordelijkheden, bijvoorbeeld omdat hij ondersteund wordt door een huisvrouw. Hierdoor kan hij altijd aanwezig zijn en werk prioriteren. In bedrijven die deze ideale werker-norm sterk aanhangen zal het gebruik van werk-familiebeleid dus ontmoedigd worden. De ideale werker is inherent mannelijk aangezien deze gebaseerd is op de traditionele mannelijke kostwinnaar. Dit maakt het voor vrouwen moeilijker om aan ideale werker normen te voldoen, zij moeten zich in organisaties die deze norm aanhangen extra bewijzen. Tegelijkertijd betekent dit ook

dat wanneer mannen wél familie boven werk prioriteren dit een nóg grotere afwijking van de norm is. Dit impliceert dat mannen minder geneigd zullen zijn om werk-familiebeleid te gebruiken, meer letten op de organisatiecultuur in hun keuzeproces, en, wanneer mannen wél werk-familiebeleid gebruiken zij hier meer negatieve gevolgen van ondervinden dan vrouwen.

Data

In dit proefschrift maak ik gebruik van de European Sustainable Workforce Survey [ESWS], welke mijn collega's en ik verzameld hebben in 2015 en 2016. Deze data is verzameld onder organisaties in negen Europese landen: Bulgarije, Duitsland, Engeland, Finland, Hongarije, Nederland, Portugal, Spanje, en Zweden. De ESWS bestaat uit drie vragenlijsten: één voor werknemers, één voor managers, en één voor de organisatie (die wordt ingevuld door de human resources manager). Door deze vragenlijsten samen te bestuderen kan de samenhang tussen werknemerskenmerken en werkgeverskenmerken goed onderzocht worden. Naast deze vragenlijsten heb ik ook een vignetexperiment ontworpen en deze samen met de vragenlijsten uitgezet. Vignetexperimenten lenen zich beter dan vragenlijsten voor het bestuderen van keuzes van mensen, omdat wordt aangenomen dat mensen vaak zelf niet goed weten wáárom ze bepaalde keuzes maken. In een vignetexperiment krijgen respondenten meerdere nét andere korte verhalen te zien, en wordt gevraagd hoe ze zich dan zouden gedragen. Hierdoor kan bestudeerd worden welke aspecten in de verhalen hun keuzes beïnvloeden. In dit vignetexperiment onderzoek ik welke overwegingen het meest belangrijk zijn in de besluitvorming van werknemers om wel of niet minder te gaan werken na de geboorte van een kind.

Samenvatting per hoofdstuk

Hoofdstuk 2 - Het gebruik van ouderschapsverlof: De relatie tussen organisaties en het gebruik van ouderschapsverlof

In hoofdstuk 2 onderzoek ik hoe organisatiekenmerken relateren aan het gebruik van één type werk-familiebeleid – ouderschapsverlof – en of dit verschilt voor mannen en vrouwen. Ik kijk hiervoor zowel naar organisatiekarakteristieken die kenmerkend zijn

voor de rationele kosten/baten analyse van een bedrijf (organisatiegrootte, publieke of private sector, en het aandeel vrouwen in het bedrijf) als naar organisatiecultuur.

Ondanks dat het idee was dat veel organisatiekenmerken een rol zouden spelen voor het gebruik van ouderschapsverlof, vind ik dit maar in beperkte mate in dit hoofdstuk: dit blijkt alleen voor organisatiegrootte het geval te zijn. In plaats daarvan blijken verschillen in het gebruik van ouderschapsverlof voornamelijk gedreven te worden door landen. Er zijn natuurlijk grote verschillen tussen landen in zowel werk-familiecultuur als verlofregelingen, en het is dus logisch dat er grote verschillen tussen landen bestaan in het gebruik van ouderschapsverlof. Toch had ik verwacht dat organisaties er óók toe zouden doen, omdat dit regelmatig is aangetoond in (kwantitatief) onderzoek. Wanneer ik uitgebreider kijk naar de landenverschillen lijkt het erop dat organisaties een grotere rol spelen voor het gebruik van ouderschapsverlof in landen waar dit verlof goed betaald wordt. Dit impliceert dat organisaties pas een rol gaan spelen in deze keuze van mensen wanneer mensen het gebruik van verlof kunnen betalen.

Daarnaast blijkt dat mannen meer ouderschapsverlof gebruiken wanneer ze een manager hebben die zelf verlof heeft gebruikt, en wanneer ze werken in een organisatie met een groter aandeel vrouwen. Mannen gebruiken *minder* ouderschapsverlof wanneer ze van hun manager steun ervaren voor het combineren van werk en familie, waarschijnlijk omdat deze dan informele oplossingen kan bieden (zoals vaker thuiswerken of af en toe later beginnen) waardoor het gebruik van formeel beleid niet nodig is. Geen enkel organisatiekenmerk relateerde aan het gebruik van ouderschapsverlof door vrouwen. In het licht van gendernormen is dat niet heel gek; veel vrouwen zullen toch wel actief betrokken zijn bij hun gezin (door werk-familiebeleid te gebruiken of door helemaal te stoppen met werken) ongeacht de situatie op werk. Mannen, daarentegen, worden geacht in de eerste plaats kostwinnaar te zijn, en laten het daarom meer van de werkcontext afhangen of ze daarnaast een grotere rol gaan spelen in de opvoeding van hun kinderen. Dit maakt dat de werk-context de familie-betrokkenheid van mannen beïnvloedt, maar niet van vrouwen.

Hoofdstuk 3 - Het gebruik van deeltijdwerk: Een vignetexperiment naar de overwegingen van mensen om minder te werken na de geboorte van een kind

In hoofdstuk 3 onderzoek ik de keuze van ouders om wel of niet in deeltijd te gaan werken na de geboorte van een kind. Ik kijk hier naar Nederland, Engeland en Zweden, drie landen waar deeltijdwerk vrij gebruikelijk is en het relatief makkelijk is om minder te gaan werken. Ik onderzoek welke overwegingen het meest belangrijk zijn voor het maken van deze keuze middels een vignetexperiment dat ik speciaal hiervoor heb ontworpen. In een vignetexperiment krijgen respondenten meerdere nét andere korte verhalen te zien, en wordt gevraagd hoe ze zich dan zouden gedragen. Een aantal overwegingen worden onderzocht: of collega's de keuze om minder te werken steunen, of minder werken slecht is voor promotiekansen (beiden relateren aan de mate waarin de organisatiecultuur de keuze om minder te werken ondersteund), of het werk minder leuk wordt als de werkuren worden verlaagd (bijvoorbeeld omdat leuke taken dan moeten worden afgestaan), of kinderopvang duur is in verhouding tot het uurloon, en of iemand meer, minder, of ongeveer hetzelfde verdient als zijn/haar partner.

In dit hoofdstuk laat ik zien dat alle bovenstaande overwegingen een rol spelen in de besluitvorming van mensen om wel of niet minder te gaan werken, maar dat er grote genderverschillen zijn in welke overwegingen het belangrijkst zijn. Mannen blijken vooral in overweging te nemen of minder werken hun promotiekansen zou schaden, terwijl vrouwen hun keuze baseren op of hier steun voor is van collega's. Daarnaast blijkt dat zowel mannen als vrouwen aandacht besteden aan hoeveel zij zelf verdienen in relatie tot hun partner, maar dat ze dit op een andere manier doen. Als beide partners ongeveer hetzelfde verdienen zeggen vrouwen veel vaker minder te willen gaan werken dan dat mannen dat doen. Alleen als hun mannelijke partner minder verdient dan zijzelf willen vrouwen vaker hun huidige uren blijven werken. Dit suggereert dat de standaard – althans volgens vrouwen – is dat zij degene zijn die minder gaat werken en niet hun partner, *tenzij* het financieel heel aantrekkelijk is om dit om te draaien. Mannen, daarentegen, willen gemiddeld genomen minder snel minder gaan werken dan vrouwen, maar zij laten dit in veel sterkere mate afhangen van het inkomen van hun partner. Als hun partner minder verdient dan zijzelf willen ze eerder hun huidige uren behouden, maar als hun partner meer verdient zijn ze best bereid minder te gaan werken.

Hoofdstuk 4 - De gevolgen van deeltijdwerk voor werk-privéconflict: De modererende rol van organisatiesupport en gender

Waar ik in hoofdstuk 2 en 3 voornamelijk heb gekeken naar de keuze om wel of geen gebruik te maken van werk-familiebeleid, richt ik me in hoofdstuk 4 op de gevolgen van dit soort beleid. Ik kijk naar de relatie tussen deeltijdwerk en één specifieke beoogde uitkomst: lager werk-privéconflict van werknemers. Hoewel het verlagen van werk-privéconflict vaak een expliciet doel is van werk-familiebeleid heeft vorig onderzoek dit niet altijd gevonden, soms werd zelfs gevonden dat werk-familiebeleid relateert aan *meer* werk-privéconflict. Deze wisselende resultaten zouden kunnen komen doordat er geen rekening werd gehouden met de organisatiecontext. In dit hoofdstuk onderzoek ik of de relatie tussen deeltijdwerk en werk-privéconflict afhangt van organisatiesteun en gender.

Mijn resultaten laten zien dat mensen met een kleine deeltijdbaan (<25 uur) minder werk-privéconflict ervaren dan mensen met een voltijdbaan. Dit geldt niet voor mensen met een grote deeltijdbaan (25-35 uur). Dit suggereert dat het hebben van een kleine deeltijdbaan een nuttige manier kan zijn om minder werk-privéconflict te ervaren, ongeacht iemands geslacht. Dit is opvallend, theorie had mij doen verwachten dat mannen minder zouden profiteren van deeltijdwerk dan vrouwen omdat gender- en ideale werker-normen van mannen verwachten dat ze in voltijd werken. Echter, dit bleek niet het geval te zijn. Mannen en vrouwen die in deeltijd werken hebben beiden minder werk-privéconflict dan hun tegenhangers die voltijd werken.

Kijkend naar het modererend effect van de organisatie dan blijkt dat, zoals verwacht, mensen met een kleine deeltijdbaan minder werk-privéconflict hebben wanneer hun organisatie een familie-ondersteunende organisatiecultuur heeft dan wanneer de cultuur niet ondersteunend is. Ik stel dat dit komt doordat de organisatiecultuur aan werknemers communiceert wat acceptabel gedrag is. Wanneer een organisatie geen familie-ondersteunende cultuur heeft maar juist sterk een ideale werker-norm aanhangt, dan zullen werknemers die van deze norm afwijken en tóch in deeltijd werken minder in staat zijn te genieten van de voordelen van deeltijdwerk. Zij zullen vaak willen bewijzen dat ze alsnog gecommitteerde, ambitieuze werknemers zijn, en gaan daarom harder werken of vaker overwerken, waardoor hun werk-privéconflict

niet afneemt. Ik vind dit modererend effect alleen voor de familie-ondersteunendheid van de organisatiecultuur. Geen soortgelijk effect van steun van de manager of steun van collega's wordt gevonden.

Hoofdstuk 5 - De gevolgen van extra verlofbeleid voor de inzet van werknemers: Het onderscheiden van aanbod en gebruik

In het vijfde hoofdstuk van dit proefschrift onderzoek ik of het verlofbeleid van organisaties (langer of beter betaald zwangerschaps-, vaderschaps- of ouderschapsverlof dan verplicht) relateert aan één van de doelen van elke organisatie: meer inzet van werknemers. Volgens een business case argument nemen organisaties werk-familiebeleid niet alleen aan omdat het goed is voor werknemers, maar ook omdat het goed is voor henzelf, bijvoorbeeld omdat werknemers zich meer zullen inzetten. Ik onderzoek of deze relatie tussen verlofbeleid en inzet bestaat, en hoe dit dan werkt; zetten mensen zich meer in wanneer ze weten dat hun bedrijf extra verlof aanbiedt, of zetten ze zich meer in wanneer ze verlof hebben gebruikt? Of relateert zowel het aanbod als het gebruik van verlofbeleid aan meer inzet?

Mijn resultaten laten zien dat wanneer mensen weten dat hun organisatie extra verlof aanbiedt zij zich meer inzetten. Ik stel dat dit komt doordat wanneer mensen zien dat hun werkgever in hen investeert zij ook wat terug willen doen voor het bedrijf. Ik vind geen effect van het daadwerkelijk gebruik van verlof. Dit had ik wel verwacht, omdat juist wanneer werknemers ervaren hoe nuttig het beleid is dat de werkgever ze aanbiedt, ze wat terug zouden willen doen. Toch kan ik niet concluderen dat er geen relatie is tussen het gebruik van verlof en inzet, het zou ook zo kunnen zijn dat dit effect er wel is, maar dat ik het niet heb kunnen detecteren. Het kan bijvoorbeeld zo zijn dat er ook ambitieuzere mensen zijn, die zich meer inzetten én geen verlof gebruiken uit angst dat het hun carrière schaadt. Het zou ook kunnen dat sommige mensen die wel verlof gebruiken hier op afgerekend worden door hun baas, wat hun inzet juist vermindert. Of misschien is het effect van het gebruik van verlof op inzet wel van korte duur, waardoor het moeilijk te meten is met een vragenlijst. Om dit verband echt uit te sluiten is dus meer onderzoek nodig. Tot slot lijken er geen verschillen tussen mannen en vrouwen te bestaan, beiden zetten zich meer in als ze weten dat hun bedrijf extra verlof aanbiedt.

Conclusie

Met dit proefschrift draag ik bij aan de kennis over het gebruik en de gevolgen van werk-familiebeleid, en over de rol van organisaties en gender hierin. Ik trek drie voornaamste conclusies. Ten eerste concludeer ik dat organisaties een rol spelen in de besluitvorming van mensen om werk-familiebeleid te gebruiken, maar dat dit secundair is aan landenvariaties. Dit suggereert dat – hoewel studies dit vaak aannemen – de rol van organisaties in werk-familiebesluitvorming niet in elk land hetzelfde is. Ik speculeer dat organisaties pas een rol gaan spellen wanneer de nationale context zo is dat zowel het gebruiken als het niet gebruiken van werk-familiebeleid realistische opties zijn, omdat het juridisch, cultureel en financieel mogelijk is voor de werknemer om te kiezen.

Ten tweede laat dit proefschrift zien dat werk-familiebeleid relateert aan beoogde uitkomsten voor zowel werknemers als werkgevers. Een belangrijk doel van werk-familiebeleid is het verminderen van werk-privéconflict, en ik vind inderdaad dat ouders met een kleine deeltijdbaan (<25 uur) minder werk-privéconflict ervaren. Bovendien blijkt de mate waarin dit het geval is af te hangen van of het bedrijf een familie-ondersteunende organisatiecultuur heeft. Werknemers die in deeltijd werken in een organisatie met een familie-ondersteunende organisatiecultuur hebben minder werk-privéconflict dan mensen die deeltijd werken in een organisatie die minder ondersteunend is. Dit suggereert dat mensen meer in staat zijn om te profiteren van de baten van deeltijdwerk wanneer het hebben van een deeltijdbaan niet tegen de organisatiecultuur indruist. Werk-familiebeleid kan ook relateren aan beoogde uitkomsten voor bedrijven: mijn resultaten laten zien dat wanneer werknemers weten dat hun bedrijf extra verlofbeleid aanbiedt (langer of beter betaald verlof) zij zich meer inzetten voor het bedrijf. Ik stel dat dit komt doordat werknemers wat terug willen doen voor hun werkgever wanneer zij het gevoel hebben dat deze iets voor hen doet door extra verlof aan te bieden. Dus, werk-familiebeleid kan zowel voor werknemers als werkgevers goed zijn.

Ten derde valt op dat er man/vrouw-verschillen zijn in het gebruik van werk-familiebeleid, maar niet in de gevolgen ervan. Dat er verschillen zijn in het gebruik van werk-familiebeleid is niet zo gek. Normen rond de verdeling van arbeid en zorg zijn sterk genderafhankelijk: vrouwen worden geacht hoofdverantwoordelijke te zijn voor

het huishouden en de kinderen, en mannen voor het verdienen van geld. Naast nettoverschillen in gebruik blijkt dat mannen en vrouwen hun keuze om wel of niet werk-familiebeleid te gebruiken ook laten afhangen van andere factoren. Organisatiekenmerken en carrièreoverwegingen spelen een grotere rol voor de besluitvorming van mannen dan voor vrouwen. Dit betekent dat mannen hun betrokkenheid bij hun gezin aanpassen op de werksituatie, en alleen werk-familiebeleid gebruiken in een organisatie waar dit acceptabel is. Voor vrouwen is dit juist andersom, werk is voor hen vaak secundair aan de zorg voor kinderen en ze passen hun baan eerder op de thuissituatie aan. Opvallend genoeg heb ik geen genderverschillen in uitkomsten gevonden: zowel mannen als vrouwen ervaren minder werk-privéconflict als ze een kleine deeltijdbaan hebben. Ook het verband tussen het aanbieden van extra verlof en inzet is hetzelfde voor mannen en vrouwen. Dit was een verrassend resultaat, ik had verwacht dat mannen minder voordelen zouden ervaren van deeltijdwerk omdat ze duidelijker gender- en ideale werker-normen overtreden als ze in deeltijd werken dan vrouwen. Dit bleek dus niet het geval, en hoewel gendernormen dus het gedrag van mensen beïnvloeden, beïnvloeden ze niet de gevolgen. Dit suggereert dat het nuttig kan zijn om hetzelfde beleid aan te bieden aan mannen en aan vrouwen.

Maatschappelijke aanbevelingen

Op basis van dit proefschrift kom ik tot een aantal maatschappelijke aanbevelingen. Ten eerste onderstreept dit proefschrift dat deeltijdwerk – en vooral kleine deeltijdbanen – nuttig kunnen zijn om minder werk-privéconflict te ervaren. Dit is niet expliciet getest voor andere vormen van werk-familiebeleid, maar ik verwacht dat ander beleid dat mensen in staat stelt om werk en privé goed te combineren (zoals verlof, maar ook bijvoorbeeld flexibele start- en eindtijden) eenzelfde effect kunnen hebben. Daarom is mijn eerste aanbeveling dat (nationale) beleidsmakers die mensen willen helpen om minder werk-privéconflict te ervaren er goed aan doen om werk-familiebeleid beschikbaar te maken.

Dit proefschrift laat echter ook zien dat alleen het aanbieden van werk-familiebeleid niet genoeg is, omdat mensen er niet altijd gebruik van zullen maken. Het blijkt dat landenvariaties het meest verklaren van het gebruik van werk-familiebeleid en

dat organisaties een beperktere rol spelen, zij doen dit alleen binnen de mogelijkheden die geschept worden door juridische, culturele en financiële randvoorwaarden. Ik concludeer voorzichtig dat organisatiekenmerken pas een rol spelen in de besluitvorming van mensen omtrent ouderschapsverlof wanneer dit verlof relatief goed betaald wordt. Het lijkt er dus op dat (gedeeltelijke) loondoorbetaling voor veel mensen een voorwaarde is voor het gebruik van ouderschapsverlof. Mijn tweede aanbeveling is daarom dat overheden die mensen in staat willen stellen werk en gezin goed te combineren zorgen dat er een substantiële loondoorbetaling is tijdens het verlof.

Ten derde blijkt dat wanneer organisaties werk-familiebeleid beschikbaar maken dit ook goed kan zijn voor de organisatie, omdat de inzet van werknemers dan hoger is. Uit mijn onderzoek blijkt dat wanneer werknemers weten dat een organisatie hen extra (langer of beter betaald) verlof aanbiedt, zij zich meer inzetten. Ik vind geen verband tussen het gebruik van dit beleid en inzet. Toch stel ik dat dit niet betekend dat bedrijven werk-familiebeleid alleen formeel beschikbaar kunnen maken terwijl ze het praktisch onbruikbaar maken. Immers, mensen gaan zich meer inzetten wanneer zij beleid *zien* als beschikbaar. Daarvoor is het nodig dat dit beleid toegankelijk is.

Het vergroten van gendergelijkheid is vaak een expliciet doel van werk-familiebeleid, en initieel droeg werk-familiebeleid hier ook aan bij, het stelde moeders in staat actief te blijven op de arbeidsmarkt. Echter, omdat werk-familiebeleid momenteel vooral wordt aangeboden en gebruikt door vrouwen zit het verdere emancipatie in de weg. Werk-familiebeleid is er – volgens overheden, bedrijven én ouders zelf – toch vooral voor vrouwen, die hierdoor vaak lang afwezig zijn van de arbeidsmarkt. Ook gezien mijn bevinding dat werk-familiebeleid net zo nuttig kan zijn voor mannen als voor vrouwen is dit jammer. Het is lastig om dit soort diepgewortelde culturele gendernormen te veranderen, maar beleidsmakers kunnen beginnen met het verlengen van het vaderschapsverlof en ouderschapsverlof voor mannen. Cultuur en wetgeving hangen sterk met elkaar samen: er wordt weinig beleid aangeboden aan mannen omdat het een culturele norm is dat vrouwen voor kinderen zorgen, maar de norm dat vrouwen voor kinderen zorgen wordt ook in stand gehouden doordat mannen niet in staat worden gesteld actiever bij de opvoeding betrokken te zijn. Zolang mannen

en vrouwen geen toegang hebben tot dezelfde verlofregelingen is gendergelijkheid in de verdeling van arbeid en zorg voor veel stellen niet eens een optie.

Organisaties delen niet per se het politieke doel om bij te dragen aan meer gendergelijkheid. Toch zijn er veel organisaties die vinden dat ze een maatschappelijke verantwoordelijkheid hebben die ze willen nemen. In dit proefschrift bespreek ik hoe veel organisaties (onbewust) van hun werknemers verwachten dat ze zich gedragen als stereotype "kostwinners": volledig toegewijd aan het werk met minimale verantwoordelijkheden voor de opvoeding van kinderen. Dit soort verwachtingen beperken het gebruik van werk-familiebeleid, vooral onder mannen, en maken ook dat mensen die dit beleid gebruiken er minder van profiteren. Zoals eerder besproken is het moeilijk om cultuur te veranderen, maar toch zijn er wel stappen die gezet zouden kunnen worden. Overheden of actiegroepen die zich inzetten voor gendergelijkheid zouden bijvoorbeeld bedrijven en hun topmanagement specifiek kunnen benaderen in een campagne. Het kan de moeite waard zijn om organisaties bewust te maken van de verwachtingen die zij hebben van hun werknemers, en ze te stimuleren om los te komen van de verwachting dat goede werknemers alleen maar toegewijd zijn aan hun werk. Hoewel natuurlijk geen wonderen verwacht moeten worden van dit soort maatregelen kunnen ze wel bijdragen aan een langzame cultuurverandering, waardoor het combineren van een carrière en gezin – voor zowel mannen als vrouwen – makkelijker wordt.

Dankwoord

Dankwoord

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Curriculum Vitae

CV

Curriculum Vitae

Leonie van Breeschoten was born April 12th 1991 in Oss, and grew up in Veenendaal. In 2012 she obtained her bachelor's degree *cum laude* from University College Roosevelt in Middelburg (honors college of Utrecht University). During her bachelor's she majored in sociology, human rights, and international relations. She also studied a semester abroad at Monash University in Melbourne. In 2014 she obtained her master's degree *cum laude* in International Crimes and Criminology at VU University Amsterdam, where she studied human rights violations from a social scientific perspective. Here she also followed an additional research track.

In September 2014 Leonie started working as a PhD Candidate at the Interuniversity Center for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS) at Utrecht University, of which this dissertation is the final product. As part of her PhD Leonie partook in designing the first wave of the European Sustainable Workforce Survey and its data collection. Moreover, in 2017 she went on a research visit to Stockholm University, where she cooperated with Marie Evertsson. For this she received a selective Internship Grant of the European Consortium for Sociological Research (ECSR). Furthermore, at Utrecht University Leonie taught the bachelor course *sociale problemen* (social problems) and supervised bachelor theses.

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To help people combine a career and childcare, European governments and organizations are increasingly making work-family policies available, such as family leave policies (maternity, paternity and parental leave) or the option to work part-time. This dissertation investigates the use and usefulness of such policies by adopting an organizational and a gender perspective. In the first half of this dissertation it is examined whether the organizational context relates to men and women's use of work-family policies. In the second half of this dissertation the usefulness of work-family policies is examined, by investigating to what extent work-family policies relate to two intended outcomes: lower work-life conflict and higher extra-role performance. Results show that organizations play a role in people's decision-making to use work-family policies, and that work-family policies, to a certain extent, relate to their intended outcomes. However, while there are gender differences in the use of work-family policies, no gender differences in outcomes are found. This suggests that while gender norms constrict the choices people make, they do not impact the outcomes of work-family policies. In other words, work-family policies can be equally beneficial to men and women.

Leonie van Breeschoten obtained her BA in social science from University College Roosevelt (cum laude), and her MSc in international crimes and ciminology from VU University Amsterdam (cum laude). She conducted the PhD research presented in this book at the Interuniversity Center for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS) at Utrecht University.