

1 A sustainable workforce in Europe

Bringing the organization back in

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In need of a sustainable workforce

Globalization, economic fluctuations, the aging population, technological advances, and rapidly changing social structures pose new challenges to creating a sustainable workforce in Europe. The term ‘sustainability’ comes from the environmental domain and refers to using resources in a way that retains them for future generations. As a concept, sustainability can also be applied to employment relations. The European Commission’s Europe 2020 strategy identifies efforts to ensure quality of work and employment conditions as a core tool for promoting a sustainable workforce (European Commission, 2010a, 2016b). Achieving this aim is critical, especially at a time when people are less secure in their jobs, governments are reining in social welfare spending, and the social, economic, and ecological environments are challenging. Generally speaking, a workforce is sustainable when: (1) employees are productive and satisfied (micro level); (2) organizations are profitable and workplaces are cohesive (meso level); and (3) countries have a high labor participation rate and a flourishing economy (macro level) (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, & Kalleberg, 2000; Bäck-Wiklund, Van der Lippe, Den Dulk, & Van Doorne-Huiskes, 2011; DiFabio, 2017).

Work organizations play a key role in building a sustainable workforce. It is organizations that invest money, time, and effort in developing human capital, that put work–life policies in place, that establish flexible work and health arrangements for employees, and that address the long-term employability of older workers. These investments may not always have direct payoffs for the organization itself, although managements most definitely count on such benefits. At the societal level, organizational engagement in a sustainable workforce is crucial for retaining talent and tapping into the unused potential of women, migrants, and older workers (Gallie, 2009; Taylor, Loretto, Marshall, Earl, & Phillipson, 2016; Van der Lippe, 2007).

While few would question the centrality of organizations in nurturing a productive and flourishing workforce, sociologists of work have long refrained from engaging with their role. The research agenda typically centers around labor markets and how they value workers’ attributes. Analyses focus on formal education and labor market experience, or prioritize the role of occupations and how

labor markets ‘select’ workers for more or less advantaged jobs. Work organizations are often missing from such analyses. Others study organizations’ human resources as a system, and its implications for organizational performance. The question of how human resource investments impact individual workers has been left unanswered. At the opposite end of the micro–macro spectrum, we find studies of psychological mechanisms contributing to individual productivity and well-being. By focusing on individual-level mechanisms, however, this body of scholarly work does not problematize the contribution of the organization.

This book proposes to respond to a growing chorus in research that we must ‘bring the organization back in’ (Barley & Kunda, 2001; Baron & Bielby, 1980; Kalleberg, 2009; Scott & Davis, 2015). Major transformations in the organization of work and employment relations, occurring primarily within organizations, necessitate an organization-focused analysis of a sustainable workforce. The increasing diversity of the workforce and its varied preferences regarding fulfilling work require more knowledge of organizational investments in employees’ human capital and their payoffs (Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006). New work forms call for in-depth knowledge of the effect of organizations’ flexibility policies (Ramsdal & Skorstad, 2016). The growing female employment participation rate makes the study of work–life policies all the more relevant (Acker, 2006). An aging population requires an examination of the employability of older employees in organizations (Kooij, Jansen, Dijkers, & de Lange, 2014). The increase in migrant employees in European countries makes it important to understand to what extent programs for training and development can help to improve their careers (D’Netto & Sohal, 1999). Finally, insecure and dynamic labor markets demand more knowledge of which kinds of employment contracts will help promote a sustainable workforce (Kalleberg, 2012; Rodriquez, Johnstone, & Procter, 2017).

The idea of investing in the workforce has been voiced in many EU directives and national policy initiatives, as well as in the research community (Cappelli, 2008; Den Dulk, Peper, Kanjoo Mrčela, & Ignjatović, 2016; European Commission, 2010a; European Commission’s European Political Strategy Centre (EPCS) 2016; Kossek & Michel, 2010; Schalk & Van Veldhoven, 2010). Nonetheless, a comprehensive account of the contribution of work organizations to a sustainable workforce and the impact of this contribution for workers and organizations is missing from the research agenda. This book proposes to fill this void and has the following aims:

- 1 To provide insight from an international comparative perspective into the availability of organizational policies for a sustainable workforce and their use by employees in different sectors across Europe.
- 2 To analyze the consequences of the availability and use of investments in productive and satisfied employees and cohesive and profitable workplaces in different sectors across Europe.
- 3 To introduce and integrate the meso (organizational) level into research on the micro and macro levels of employment.

Organizational policies

This book will address organizational investments that are thought to make important contributions to a sustainable workforce (see Grossmeier et al., 2016; Kelly et al., 2008; Kossek & Michel, 2010; Tsui, Pearce, Porter, & Tripoli, 1997). These investments are training, work–life policies, employability of older workers, flexibility and security, and health arrangements. Often, but not always, these investments are contingent on national laws and regulations regarding labor and employment. Sweden and Finland, for example, have generous family leave policies that organizations are required by law to implement. It remains to be seen, however, whether mandatory policies are also efficient for organizations. The provision of training may also hinge on labor policies that require regular training, for example about health and safety, in certain sectors and jobs (e.g., nurses). In some cases, for instance in Germany, sector or industry-level collective bargaining agreements stipulate the amount of job-related training that must be provided. Although the country or sector does not provide the training, it mandates organizations to do so. Another example is part-time work. Some countries, including Germany and the Netherlands, have statutory regulations that make it easier for individual employees to change their work hours. Finally, with pension rules and retirement ages varying between countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017a), national differences have emerged in how organizations deal with the employability of older employees.

Beyond institutional control as a homogenizing force, there are multiple reasons why organizations invest differently in employees. On the organization's part, it can be intentional (e.g., provisions for employees with children), but it may also be the unintended consequence of discrimination (e.g., underinvestment in female employees and minorities). Investments therefore can be, and are, directed toward different groups of employees, and in this book we will focus on groups such as men and women, migrant and non-migrant employees, younger and older workers, and lower- and higher-educated employees. The consequences of investments for employees and for the organization as a whole depend on how much is invested and in whom. In this book, we will address both the availability and use of policies and their consequences for the workplace.

Training. Long-term relationships used to provide a favorable setting for deriving mutual benefits from investments in human capital, such as employee training. These days, however, employment relationships are less secure and the workforce more diverse: employees are more open to job change, and employers readily lay off workers when the market deteriorates. This can discourage the organization from making relationship-specific investments and employees from utilizing them. But who still receives training and why? This is a relevant question, since investments in training programs are found to be related to organizational performance (Hansson, 2007).

Work–life policies. Organizations differ significantly in terms of work–family responsiveness and the extent to which they supplement public work–life

policies. That organizations are highly committed to work–life policies might be due to certain economic drivers, but also to institutional pressure. To what extent are statutory arrangements relevant for the way organizations invest in employees with children?

Employability of older employees. Many countries are facing an unprecedented aging of their populations, with consequences for the composition of the workforce. Companies are relying increasingly on the knowledge and skills of older workers; meanwhile, the pool of available workers is shrinking. Some organizations invest more than others in older employees by offering job expansion and other employability plans (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006), but under what conditions do older employees make use of these arrangements?

Flexible employment contracts. Despite the new flexible worker paradigm, the implications of flexible contracts for productivity are unclear (Kossek & Thompson, 2016). Increasingly, organizations rely on flexible contracts to safeguard their profits, but they might still need to invest in temporary workers. Employees are expected to make use of flexible contracts, depending on the type of work, their work–life requirements, and the community infrastructure and country culture. Individual employees respond differently to these policies, but in what ways?

Health arrangements A combination of business norms of responsibility toward the workforce and the expected positive impact of health on employees and their performance (Carmichael, Fenton, Pinilla Roncancio, Sadhra, & Sing, 2016; Goetzel & Ozminkowski, 2008) has led many organizations to offer worksite health promotion (e.g., sports facilities, health checks, healthy nutrition programs), designed to improve employees' lifestyle and health (Anderson et al., 2009). Worksite health promotion has the potential to do this because people spend a large part of their lives at work. It is therefore important to understand under what conditions organizations offer these programs.

Approach

To meet the aims of the book, our approach consists of three central elements, namely, (1) a multi-disciplinary theoretical approach, (2) a cross-country and cross-industry comparative perspective, and (3) a multi-level data design.

Multi-disciplinary theoretical approach

To understand *why* organizations invest in certain work arrangements, *if and why* employees actually use these arrangements, and *what* the consequences are, we make use of an analytical framework that allows us to study how the organization (meso level) interacts with both the employee (micro level) and the country (macro level). Because most research concentrates on either the employee or the country (or a combination of the two), their importance may be overstated (Beham, Drobnič, Präg, Baierl, & Eckner, 2018; Blossfeld & Hofmeister, 2006; Lewis, 2009; McGinnity & Whelan, 2009; Van der Lippe, De

Ruijter, De Ruijter, & Raub, 2010). We therefore combine general theoretical insights from economic sociology with field-specific theories from sociology, economics, psychology, and management. In line with economic sociology (Smelser & Swedberg, 2010), we assume that investments by organizations and their use by employees depend on costs and benefits for both parties. Whether an investment benefits a company's performance depends on its employees' behavior, and vice versa; in other words, organizations and employees are *inter-dependent* (Buskens, Raub, & Snijders, 2003; Williamson, 1989).

Besides the interdependencies that arise during everyday 'transactions' in the workplace, relations between workers are also influenced by stereotypes in society about specific groups – women and minorities in particular. That can have consequences for power relations and inequality in workplaces, as expressed in relational inequality theory (Avent-Holt & Tomaskovic-Devey, 2012a). Culture and norms are therefore influential because tacit norms imposed by the social environment – whether that is the family, the organization, the industry, or the country to which one belongs – shape behavior and actions (England & Folbre, 2005; Ryan & Kossek, 2008; Tomlinson, Baird, Berg, & Cooper, 2018). If a certain group accounts for a large percentage of an organization's employees (be it a group of women, younger employees, or older workers), not investing in relevant policies could lead to costs in terms of hasty resignations, with the organization then losing out on human capital and other skills (Kalleberg, Marsden, Reynolds, & Knoke, 2006; Lazear & Shaw, 2007). For example, if there are no work–family policies available, the costs of staying in the organization are expected to be higher for women (in terms of work–life conflict) than moving to a family-friendly organization. The specific macro-level context also plays a role: extensive government social policies, such as in the Nordic countries, make it less beneficial for organizations to introduce their own policies (Abendroth, Van der Lippe, & Maas, 2012; Esping-Andersen, 2009). Another example involves investing in the long-term employability of older employees: if the organization trains or retrain older employees, it runs the risk of their retiring before the investment can be recouped. Moreover, employer failure to invest in older employees may be tied to status evaluations of this group of employees (Avent-Holt & Tomaskovic-Devey, 2012b).

We deliberately focus on both the availability of investments and their utilization by employees. Research has thus far paid much more attention to the availability of investments in organizations, making it difficult to assess their real impact on workers and organizations (Boxall & Macky, 2009; Thunnissen, Boselie, & Fruytier, 2013). Consider an employee decision to use work–family arrangements. If many of the employee's colleagues and supervisors also have families, that constitutes a meso-level condition that may engender norms that encourage the utilization of work–life arrangements and reduce the risks of doing so (Huffmann, Cohen, & Pearlman, 2010). In addition, the costs of using work–life arrangements will be lower and the benefits in terms of work–life balance and individual performance higher. Interdependence between the parent employee and the supervisor entails more benefits than risks.

We explain the *consequences* for the employee and for the organization. When it comes to the intended consequences at each level, we assume that actors evaluate costs and benefits (including norms) that lead to the intended outcomes. We also study unintended consequences, where the relationship is less straightforward because actors do not evaluate it in terms of costs and benefits. Moreover, consequences at the organizational level might not be a simple aggregation of employees' actions (Hedström & Ylikoski, 2011).

Each of the investments studied in this book is an example of where costs and benefits, interdependencies, and norms are important, and therefore also interesting from a theoretical viewpoint. Our authors come from various scientific disciplines (sociology, economics, human resource management/management studies, public administration), contributing different disciplinary insights to the study of sustainable employment.

Cross-country and cross-industry comparative perspective

Organizations are embedded in diverse institutional, industrial, and professional environments, and resources and constraints from the environment have a profound impact on organizational strategies, practices, and their outcomes (Scott & Davis, 2015). The national welfare regime and economies will influence the feasibility or attractiveness of certain investments (Rubery, Bosch, & Lehnendorff, 2008). The nine countries studied in this book, namely, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK, constitute different types of welfare regimes (Bäck-Wiklund et al., 2011; Esping-Andersen, 2009). Although differences between these types are somewhat fluid, Finland and Sweden are typically categorized as socio-democratic regimes, Germany and the Netherlands as conservative regimes, Spain and Portugal as Mediterranean regimes, the UK as a liberal regime, and Hungary and Bulgaria as post-communist regimes. This diverse set of countries provides ample variation in policies, (gender) culture and labor market characteristics (for further elaboration, see Chapter 2).

Within countries, firms are embedded in economic sectors differing in levels of national and international competition and growth, factors that further influence firms' decisions to invest in workers. Existing studies, however, pay little attention to the influence of the institutional and industrial context on organizational investments. Taking environmental dependencies into account is important for understanding differences in organizational investments in a sustainable workforce. The authors address these rich differences by making explicit comparisons between organizational investments and their consequences across different institutional and industrial settings. This book studies six sectors: manufacturing, health care, higher education, transportation, financial services, and telecommunications. These sectors vary widely in the percentage of male and female, younger and older, and lower- and higher-educated employees. This variation has implications for the investments (or lack thereof) in a sustainable workforce at the organizational level. We aimed to include

sectors in our study in which investments in a sustainable workforce will become increasingly important due to current demographic and technological pressures as well as globalization in Europe.

Multi-level data design

A unique aspect of this book is that it analyzes multi-level data on organizations and workers. Existing studies on firms' investments in employees typically utilize one-level surveys, interviewing individual employees from a single company, representatives of firms, or the labor force in general, without identifying the employer (Hansson, 2007). A significant drawback of this approach is that none of these designs can simultaneously address variation between firms in investments (Lazear & Shaw, 2007), as well as the consequences of this variation for individual workers. De Menezes and Kelliher (2011) and others have therefore asserted the need for a multi-level design to study the influence of organizations on employee outcomes.

This book contributes a new, large-scale survey of 259 organizations, 869 work units, and 11,011 employees in six diverse economic sectors in the UK, Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Spain, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, and Portugal (Van der Lippe et al., 2016; see further in Chapter 3) to study the causes and consequences of organizational investments. The organizations studied are in both the private and the public sectors. Once the organization (often the human resources director) had agreed to participate, we contacted employees and their departmental managers at work and asked them to complete an online or paper-and-pencil questionnaire. Topics addressed in the questionnaire included organizational investments and use by employees, performance and satisfaction of employees, and productivity and cohesion of the workplace, as well as many background characteristics of the employee and the organization.

Sustainable workforce: productive and satisfied employees and workplaces

This book is about a sustainable workforce in Europe. Before discussing the structure of the book and the individual chapters, we will look at the general picture of sustainability derived from the European Sustainable Workforce Survey (ESWS) (Van der Lippe et al., 2016). We calculated job satisfaction and self-reported performance at the individual employee level. For job satisfaction, we used the question "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your current job," with answers ranging from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied). For performance, we used the scale by Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, De Vet, & Van der Beek, (2014) that distinguishes between task performance and contextual performance, with a 5-point Likert scale of items whereby low values indicated low performance and high values high performance. An example of a task performance item is "I was able to do

my work efficiently” and an example of a contextual performance item is “I took on extra responsibilities.” Figures 1.1a and 1.1b show individual performance and job satisfaction for all employees by country. Figure 1.1a shows that scores for job satisfaction are relatively high in Finland, the Netherlands, and Sweden,

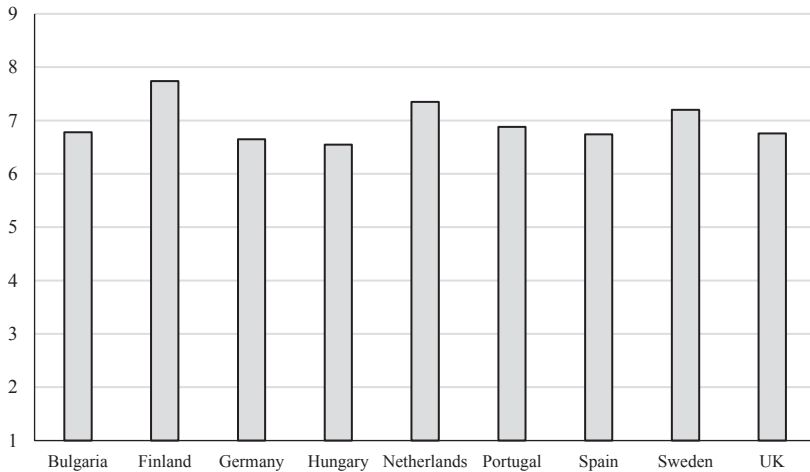


Figure 1.1a Job satisfaction for the nine European countries.

Source: Van der Lippe et al. (2016).

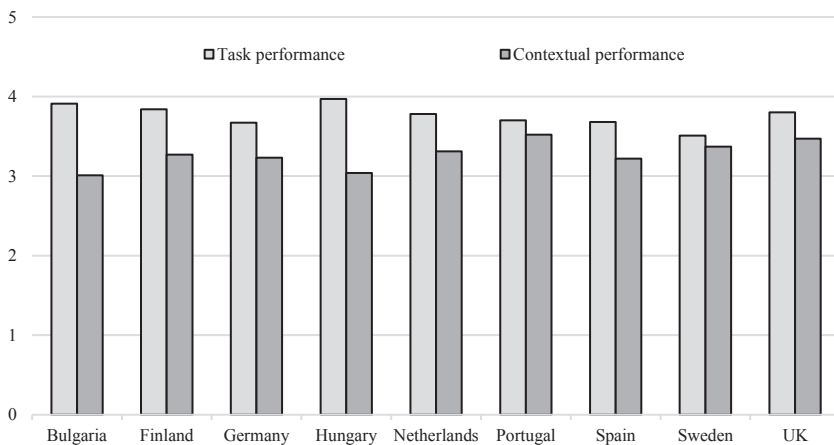


Figure 1.1b Individual performance for the nine European countries.

Source: Van der Lippe et al. (2016).

Note

These figures (1.1 and 1.2) are not necessarily representative of the countries; they are an outcome of the ESWS data.

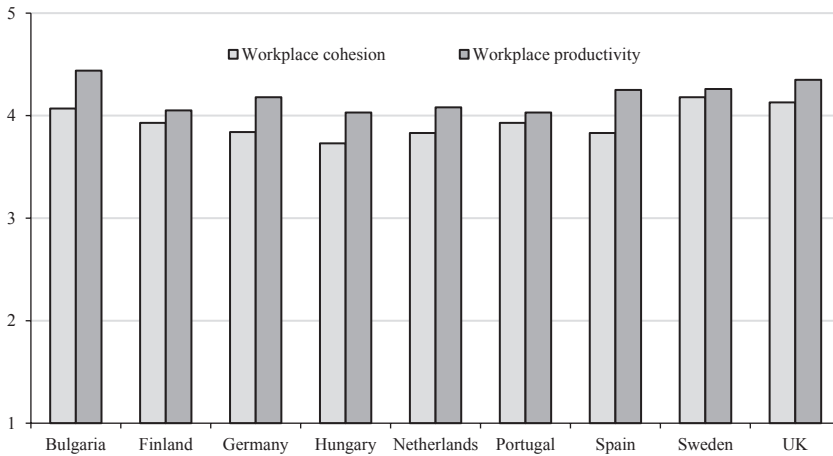


Figure 1.2 Workplace cohesion and productivity for the nine European countries.

Source: Van der Lippe et al. (2016).

and relatively low in Hungary and Germany. Furthermore, self-reported task performance is always rated higher than contextual performance, with the differences being most notable in Bulgaria and Hungary. Scores for contextual performance are also somewhat lower in these two countries than in the others. We performed the same analyses for sectors, and it became clear that there is more variation in job satisfaction and self-reported performance between countries than between sectors. The figures reported by employees who participated in the EWS were similar to European statistics, but there are no comparable figures for perceived performance (Eurostat, 2015).

We performed a similar analysis for workplace cohesion and productivity using ratings provided by departmental managers. Labor productivity is measured by a single item, while department cohesion is measured by four items. Example items are “Everyone feels like part of the team” and “Employees regularly give one another feedback,” using 5-point Likert scale items. Figure 1.2 shows that workplace cohesion is relatively high in Sweden and lower in Hungary, and workplace productivity as reported by the manager is higher in Bulgaria.

Overall, managers’ scores for workplace cohesion and productivity are somewhat higher than the ratings provided by employees themselves for job satisfaction and performance. Once again, the differences between sectors are smaller than between countries.

Structure of the book

The book is divided into three parts. Part I, consisting of three chapters and entitled *Organizations and their employees in a sustainable workforce*, sets the stage,

describes the problem and background, outlines the institutional context and current trends in the nine countries, and provides details about the ESWS. Part II consists of five chapters and is entitled *A comparative approach to which organizations invest in employees: differences between sectors and countries*. Each chapter focuses on a different investment by the organization in specific groups of employees and explains the reasons for these investments, which vary from training to health programs. The chapters look in detail at variations in investments within the industries and countries studied. Part III, *Returns on investments in a sustainable workforce for employers and employees*, consists of six chapters and focuses on the consequences of investments made by the organizations, not only for individual employees but for organizations as a whole. Since the ESWS does not contain information on self-employed workers, additional data are used to understand the consequences of investments for this group on the labor market. The book – which also makes extensive use of additional data on technological change in firms – concludes by discussing challenges for future research.

Although the book has many authors, it in fact resembles a monograph. It begins by discussing the research problem, data, and institutional context, obviating the need to reintroduce the data in each chapter and leaving more room to discuss theoretical mechanisms, findings, and policy recommendations.

Part I begins with this introductory chapter. In Chapter 2, Katia Begall and Anneke van Doorne-Huiskes analyze the institutional context in the nine countries, i.e., the context in which companies and their employees develop strategies to achieve high productivity and satisfaction. The authors examine economic, labor market, and demographic trends in these countries in recent years and focus on commonality and variance in employment, work–family, and health policies in each participating country. This chapter provides a background against which the results of the empirical chapters can be interpreted and facilitates a comparative perspective on the institutional structures. Despite a shared body of European legislation which has led to harmonization in some areas, national contexts still vary widely with regard to the position of older workers, the provisions surrounding work–family compatibility, and the importance of lifelong learning, implying variation in the institutional preconditions for creating a sustainable workforce.

In Chapter 3, Zoltán Lippényi, Thomas Martens, and Tanja van der Lippe outline the data strategy and data collection for the Sustainable Workforce project. Before the start of this project, multi-actor data of this type were non-existent. The authors compare the ESWS to other survey designs, and describe the procedures used for sampling organizations, approaching them about the study, and surveying respondents.

In Part II, Nikki van Gerwen, Vincent Buskens, and Maria das Dores Guerreiro (Chapter 4) focus on the question of which employees are more likely to receive training. Trained employees often have better opportunities for promotion and higher wages than untrained employees, which makes unequal access to training a possible mechanism that can foster inequality between men and

women. This chapter contributes to the literature on gender differences in training participation. Whereas previous research has focused on either employee or organizational characteristics related to employees' training opportunities, this chapter moves beyond the existing literature by examining whether these characteristics have a differential influence on the training participation of men and women. It does so while focusing on three different types of training: training given by a co-worker, training given by a professional, and enrollment in an educational program. The authors look specifically at which organizations are more likely to invest in training their employees by considering the type of organization (public or private), its size, and the presence of collective bargaining agreements.

In Chapter 5, Leonie van Breeschoten, Katia Begall, Anne-Rigt Poortman, and Laura den Dulk examine the correlation between the organization and the utilization of one specific work–family policy: parental leave. Organizations and national governments are increasingly making work–family policies available to help working parents combine a career and childcare. Nonetheless, many people who might benefit from these policies do not use them, and we know little about why they do or do not. Some studies have suggested that organizations restrain or encourage people's use of these policies, yet no large-scale quantitative studies have been carried out. This chapter specifically combines two ways of looking at organizations: it considers how family-supportive their organizational culture is, and it treats them as rational actors that make strategic choices to invest in policies – choices that are influenced by organizational characteristics such as size, public ownership, or the proportion of women employed. Based on a business-case argument, the authors expect organizations that operate in a competitive climate to be particularly keen to invest in work–family policies, as such policies can attract and retain employees and improve employee satisfaction and performance. At the same time, it is public sector organizations in particular – which tend to be less profit-oriented – that are known for offering work–family policies, as they are more sensitive to institutional pressures.

In Chapter 6, Jelle Lössbroek, Joop Schippers, Bram Lancee, and Stefan Szücs study the older workforce. As the average age of workers increases across Europe, organizations face the challenge of adapting their personnel policies to this situation. Three types of policies have been found to potentially help prolong working lives and are frequently implemented: activating/training policies, flexibility policies, and phasing-out policies. Training participation has been widely studied and is known to decline as workers age. The literature on flexibility policies focuses on younger workers, and little is known about which workers use phasing-out policies. To understand the extent to which human resource arrangements contribute to working longer, it is important to know who uses the options formally available to workers. This chapter studies which older workers are most likely to participate in flexibility and phasing-out policies (in the organizations that offer them). The authors investigate two cost–benefit arguments from both the employee's and the employer's perspective: older workers' age and their job compatibility with certain personnel policies. They

also test the importance of two attitudinal considerations: gender roles and managerial agism.

In Chapter 7, Anne van der Put and Jornt Mandemakers focus on the healthy workforce, which is in the interests of employers and employees alike. They investigate what organizations do to promote and facilitate employee health. Their analyses are motivated in part by the large socio-economic disparities in health across Europe. Differential access to health interventions at work constitutes an important pathway for socio-economic health differences among employees, but little is known about the determinants of access to health interventions at the organizational and/or employee level. The authors first map the European organizational landscape in terms of four healthy interventions: (1) healthy nutrition, (2) sports participation, (3) ergonomic facilities, and (4) health checks; they then focus on country and sector differences. Employees generally less often perceive health interventions to be available than is reported by organizations themselves. The authors then move to the employee level to see what explains employee perceptions of health interventions, drawing on information and motivation theory and incorporating employee and organizational characteristics.

In Chapter 8, Silvia Maja Melzer looks at the specific situation of immigrants in achieving a sustainable workforce. Although the wage disadvantages of immigrants are well documented, there has been little interest shown in their access to employer-provided training, although this is likely to create many opportunities for them. As access to employer-provided training is related to various aspects of employment in which immigrants are disadvantaged and they have less chance of integrating successfully into the host country's labor market, it is important to identify the factors that restrict their access. This study examines access to employer-provided formal training and how firms' resources, training costs, and training intensity influence immigrants' opportunities to participate in training. Although training enhances employees' human capital, decisions regarding training are not individual decisions but depend as much on the employer as on the employee.

In Part III, Jasmijn van Harten, Zoltán Lippényi and Paul Boselie provide a general assessment, in Chapter 9, of how different sets of human resource investments in employability impact employee performance and well-being. They address a key debate in human resource management: do human resource investments enhance both employee well-being and performance and generate mutual gains for workers and organizations, or do human resource investments have trade-off effects, meaning that either performance or well-being is negatively affected? This chapter assesses these conflicting hypotheses for investments in organizational flexibility and training.

In Chapter 10, Zoltán Lippényi, Alessandra Gasparotto and Youko Nätti study the consequences of temporary employment for employees' perceived work-life balance. The risks that temporary employment poses to work productivity, due to job insecurity, work intensification, and competition, are well documented in the literature. Much less research has been devoted to the

implications of temporary employment for the interface between work and private life. This chapter fills the gap by studying how temporary jobs influence the perceived balance between work and private life. It also addresses the role of the meso level by looking at whether temporary workers perceive their work–life balance as poor when the organization views them as incidental labor as opposed to prospective employees in secure jobs.

In Chapter 11, Wietke Conen and Paul de Beer look at investments in employability and the value of work, comparing employees and solo self-employed workers. Organizations may invest in their employees to enhance individual (and organizational) performance, for instance by offering various human resource policies (training, health policies, work–family policies). But what if there is no ‘organization’ to make that investment? In this chapter, the focus is on investments in the employability of employees as compared to solo self-employed workers. The authors first address whether employees differ from solo self-employed workers in their self-assessed skills: do they think their skills correspond well to their own work duties, or would they require further training? Next, they examine to what extent and how solo self-employed workers – as compared to employees – ensure that they remain employable. And finally: do investments in employability have an effect on employees’ and solo self-employed workers’ current ‘value of work’ and their (perceived) chances in the labor market – in other words, on their (expected) utility? The authors use data from the sixth European Working Conditions Survey (2015) to address these questions.

In Chapter 12, Margriet van Hek and Anja-Kristin Abendroth focus on male and female leadership and promotional opportunities of men and women. Managers decide on the hiring, promotion and wages of their employees. Male and female managers may differ in the extent to which they promote female and male employees. Female managers might act as agents of change that improve women’s chances of obtaining better positions in the organization. Conversely, female managers may act as cogs in the machine; “queen bee” theory asserts that female managers do not benefit women’s promotional opportunities because they aim to distance themselves from feminine matters to underscore their (masculine) professionalism. This chapter tests these competing hypotheses and asks: to what extent are women’s and men’s perceived promotional opportunities affected by the proportion of female managers in their organization, and by being supervised by a female manager?

In Chapter 13, Jannes ten Berge and Maarten Goos study technology implementation and changes in the educational and age composition of enterprise workforces. Their study examines how technology implementation within enterprises impacts the educational and age composition of workforces, those entering and those leaving companies. They advance the literature on the labor market consequences of technological change by focusing on the impact of technology within the workplaces where it is implemented, rather than inferring from aggregate data on structural changes in labor. They use large-scale matched employer–employee panel data from the Netherlands that directly

measure technology implementation in over 3,500 enterprises between 2000 and 2014 to test their ideas about the impact of entrants and leavers on the composition of the workforce.

Finally, in Chapter 14, Tanja van der Lippe and Éva Fodor synthesize and discuss the results of all the previous chapters, identify future challenges, and make suggestions for future research.

Investments in a sustainable workforce in Europe offers an agenda for future research regarding the obstacles and opportunities for a sustainable workforce in Europe from a global perspective. The multi-layered analysis presented in this comprehensive book helps us rethink Europe's workforce by providing new empirical as well as theoretical underpinnings.