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National context in work-life research: A multi-level cross-national analysis of the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements in Europe

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KEYWORDS

Workplace work-life arrangements;
National context;
State support;
Cultural centrality of work;
Europe

Summary This study focuses on nation-level drivers of organizations' adoption of leaves/child-care and flexible work arrangements (FWA) beyond what is mandated by the state. It is one of the first studies to examine interaction effects between nation-level and organization-level variables. Drawing on institutional theory and work-life research, we focus on three nation-level variables: state support for combining work and family life (original measure including statutory parental leave, public childcare and the entitlement to extend or reduce working hours), cultural centrality of work (measure derived from the World Value Survey, a large project led by Inglehart and colleagues that measures values in more than 50 countries) and male unemployment rate. We test the interactions of these variables with organizational size, sector and proportion of female employees using a data set of 19,516 organizations in 19 European countries (Establishment Survey on Working Time and Work-Life Balance 2004–2005). State support for combining work and family life was positively associated with the adoption of leaves/childcare and FWA; cultural centrality of work was negatively associated with leaves/childcare and FWA; male unemployment rate was not significantly associated with any. Public sector and large organizations were more sensitive to state support, cultural centrality of work and male unemployment than private sector and small organizations. In contrast, organizations employing a greater proportion of female employees were less sensitive to state support. These findings illustrate that organizational policies are influenced by the national contexts in which they are embedded, although some organizations are more sensitive to these contexts than others.

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Introduction

As a prolific body of research analyzes national contexts as intrinsically consistent socio-institutional and economic systems (e.g. Boyer, 2005; Brewster, 1999; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Hall & Soskice, 2001; Maurice & Sellier, 1979; Whitley, 2000), comparative research focusing on similarities and differences across countries is gaining terrain in most areas of social science. Management scholars, in particular, are striving to shift from merely contextualizing their research findings to building frameworks that narrow the gap between macro and micro levels of research (Bamberger, 2008). Likewise, as the work-family/work-life field of research matures, scholars are increasing their efforts to capture the impact of national context on work-life experiences and the different types of support employers provide. Because comparative cross-national research is critical to contextualize our understanding of workplace work-life arrangements and to inform practice for multinationals as well as local employers, numerous calls to broaden the scope and ambition of work-life research have been issued (Bardoel & De Cieri, 2006; Greenhaus & Allen, 2010; Kossek, Baltes, & Matthews, 2011; Ollier-Malaterre, 2010; Poelmans, 2005). There is a particular need for cross-national studies that examine the interactions between public policies at the country level, human resources practices at the organizational level and employees' needs and expectations at the individual level, which scholars have argued are closely interlinked (Bardoel & De Cieri, 2006; Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2012).

However, while a growing body of research is taking up the challenge of investigating work-life experiences with cross-national research samples (den Dulk, 2005; den Dulk, Peters, Poutsma, & Ligthart, 2010; Joplin, Shaffer, Francesco, & Lau, 2003; Lyness & Brumit Kropf, 2005; Lyness & Judiesch, 2008; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009), most comparative international studies have been limited in theoretical scope (Greenhaus & Allen, 2010). A noteworthy gap that hampers our understanding of the drivers for adoption of work-life practices by employers across the globe is the lack of cross-national research taking organizational arrangements and provisions as the dependent variable. A good number of cross-national studies have examined the impact of national context on public policies at the country level (Gornick & Heron, 2006; Hegewisch, 2011; Letablier & Jönsson, 2005; Lewis, 2009) as well as work-family conflict at the individual level (Lu & Gilmour, 2006; Poelmans et al., 2003; Spector et al., 2007; Wang, Lawler, Walumbwa, & Shi, 2004). By contrast, research focusing on the organizational level and in particular on adoption of work-life arrangements by employers is often restrained to a single-country context, usually the US, the UK, Australia or, less frequently, an Asian country (Bardoel, 2003; den Dulk, 2005; Poelmans, 2003).

We believe that such cross-national research at the organizational level would shed light on a debate that has been pervasive in the work-life field of research for at least two decades, that is whether employers adopt workplace work-life arrangements for economic reasons such as maximizing employee retention and performance (for a review, see Kelly et al., 2008) or for institutional reasons such as conforming to coercive and normative pressures (see Dobbin & Sutton, 1998 on how institutional factors at the national level have shaped employment rights in the US; Kelly, 2003 and Kossek, Dass,

and DeMarr, 1994 on how institutional factors at the industry and organizational level impact the provision of employer sponsored childcare; and Peters & Heusinkveld, 2010 regarding telework). There are a couple of noteworthy exceptions looking at nation-level indicators and organizational characteristics simultaneously (den Dulk, Peters, & Poutsma, 2012; den Dulk et al., 2010; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004), which we draw upon, yet to our knowledge, only direct effects of national and organizational level variables have been tested. Therefore, the extent to which country-level variables may interact with organizational variables is unclear. We argue that these interactions need to be systematically theorized and tested in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of what drives organizations to provide workplace work-life arrangements to employees in diverse countries. This is especially important during the rapid globalization of firms that has been taking place recently. Multinational firms face a tension between the goal of implementing a coherent and organizationally consistent set of human resource practices in all of the countries in which they operate, while also responding to country-specific norms, pressures, and mandates. Our paper addresses the relative paucity of cross-national comparative research on work-life arrangements at the organizational level. We draw upon institutional theory and economic considerations derived from the business case to shed light on selected nation-level institutional vs. economic drivers for adoption of workplace work-life arrangements. We examine state work-family support (encompassing regulations regarding public childcare, parental leave and the adjustment of working hours) and cultural centrality of work on one hand (institutional pressures) and male unemployment rate (economic pressures) on the other hand. Specifically, our paper uses data on 19,516 organizations in 19 European countries from the Establishment Survey on Working Time and Work-Life Balance 2004-2005 (ESWT) to examine (1) how state support for the combination of work and family/personal life, cultural centrality of work in a given country and male unemployment rate relate to the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements by employers in that country and (2) how these country-level pressures interact with organizational sector, size and proportion of female employees at the organizational level such that some organizations are more responsive to country-level pressures than others. In so doing, we hope to contribute to the development of theoretically robust explanations of cross-national patterns of work-life support. This paper is the first, to our knowledge, to provide a quantitative multi-level cross-national empirical analysis of the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements accounting for within-country heterogeneity at the organizational level and illuminating the cross-level relationships between higher-level national context factors and lower-level work-life factors.

Literature review

Workplace work-life arrangements

Work-life arrangements provided by employers to help employees jointly manage work, family and other life roles are mainly comprised of (1) leaves (such as parental leaves and leaves to take care of a sick or disabled dependent) and child care/

domestic supports (such as workplace daycare centers or childcare referrals) that are designed to facilitate employee care for family members and (2) flexible working arrangements (FWA), such as the possibility to reduce or extend one's working hours, to work flexible hours or to bank overtime hours (Kossek & Friede, 2006). Prior research showed that work-life arrangements should not be bundled together, as leaves and childcare practices are targeted towards parents of young children, while FWA may be used by employees in all stages of life and for a variety of reasons (Casper & Harris, 2008; den Dulk et al., 2012). Empirical tests have confirmed that employer provisions regarding work-life support tend to be fragmented rather than integrated, (Casper & Harris, 2008; den Dulk et al., 2012; Wood, De Menezes, & Lasoosa, 2003). Therefore, we consider FWA separately from child and dependent care.

Country-level predictors of the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements

Past research has proposed that institutional pressures and economic drivers constitute two distinct theoretical mechanisms at the country level that may influence the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, & Kalleberg, 2005; den Dulk, 2001; Poelmans, 2005). This echoes and might shed light on the debate within the work-life field between institutional and economic drivers of human resources practices (Dobbin & Sutton, 1998; Kelly, 2003; Kelly et al., 2008; Kossek et al., 1994; Peters & Heusinkveld, 2010). Drawing on this, we chose to include both institutional and economic factors at the country level.

Institutional theory defines institutions as "cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour. Institutions are transported by various carriers-cultures, structures, and routines-and they operate on multiple levels of jurisdiction" (Scott, 1995, p. 33). The (neo) institutional approach emphasizes that the degree of institutional pressure on organizations to develop work-life arrangements is increasing due to public attention to these issues, growing state regulations and a changing workforce that wishes to combine paid work with other responsibilities. Organizations need to respond to regulations, norms, laws and social expectations to gain and maintain their social legitimacy. Drawing on the work of DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Scott (1995), we argue that regulations represent coercive pressures on employers who need to comply with them, while regulations, public provisions and tax incentives signal what the government views as important in a society and as such represent normative pressures to which organizations are likely to respond. Based on this line of reasoning, the few studies that have examined employer adoption of work-life arrangements from a cross-national perspective have all included institutional pressures at the macro level, such as state support (den Dulk, 2005; den Dulk et al., 2010; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009), social welfare systems (Evans, 2001) or public spending (Kassinis & Stavrou, 2011). To be consistent, we include state support for the combination of work and family life as well. Additionally, in an effort to extend understanding beyond what has already been established in multi-level research, we have also included cultural centrality of work in a country to capture how assumptions about the importance of work for individuals and for society as a whole, including

the moral importance of work seen as a duty to society (e.g., the Protestant work ethic), may impact the provision of workplace work-life arrangements. We argue that the more central a country's culture considers work to be, the less likely employers are to allocate rare resources to provide support to employees for combining work and non-work roles. Encompassing national culture as a carrier of institutions (Lewis & Smithson, 2001; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004), this latter variable has explanatory potential above and beyond state support. However, to our knowledge it has not yet been examined in cross-national work-life research.

Secondly, economic conditions in a country-and more specifically labor market conditions-directly influence organizations' ability to attract and retain the skills they depend upon and may thus also trigger organizations to adopt work-life arrangements (Goodstein, 1994). Organizations may be more willing to provide work-life arrangements for employees when unemployment rates in the country are low because workplace work-life arrangements can represent a differentiating competitive advantage to attract and retain employees (Aryee, Luk, & Stone, 1998; Batt & Valcour, 2003; Bourhis & Mekkaoui, 2010). Unemployment rate is a robust indicator of economic pressures in a country. Since female unemployment rate is not only an indicator of scarcity on the labor market but may also be correlated with cultural centrality of work in a country, we have selected male unemployment rate to account for economic pressures at the country level. Below we develop hypotheses for the direct effects of our three country-level independent variables-state support, cultural centrality of work and male unemployment-on organizations' adoption of workplace work-life arrangements.

State support for the combination of work and family life
Some countries are characterized by extensive state support, while in others legislation is more modest. Welfare state classifications (Anttonen & Sipilä, 1996; Blossfeld & Drobnic, 2001; Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999) suggest that the state is an important provider of support in social democratic countries such as Sweden and Finland and in former socialist countries such as Bulgaria and Hungary, although in the latter state provisions have declined since the transition to a market economy (Wall, 2007). In conservative welfare states (such as Germany for instance) and Mediterranean countries (such as Spain and Portugal), the family plays a more central role and state provision is more modest, while in liberal welfare states (such as the UK for instance), the market is considered to be the main provider of work-life balance support (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999; Ferrara, 1996).

There are basically two opposing arguments concerning the relationship between state policies and workplace work-life arrangements. On the one hand, building on institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995), public provisions indicate a strong government commitment to the combination of work and family life and may create coercive pressure on organizations, to the extent that organizations need to comply with regulations, as well as normative pressure to the extent that organizations strive for social legitimacy and will be encouraged to develop additional support for the combination of work and family if this is valued at the government level and implemented by visible organizations (Dobbin & Sutton, 1998). According to this

logic, the more state support in a country for the integration of work and family life, the more work-life arrangements organizations adopt (den Dulk, 2005; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). In addition, the more state support in a country for the combination of work and family life, the stronger employees' sense of entitlement to work-life support (Dublin Foundation, 2003; Lewis & Smithson, 2001). This hypothesis has been supported by some empirical studies (den Dulk & Groeneveld, 2012 for public sector organizations; den Dulk et al., 2012).

On the other hand, a contrasting argument is grounded in Esping-Andersen's work on welfare systems, according to which work-life support can be provided by the state, the market or the family (1990, 1999). Based on this, it can be argued that the presence of public policies makes it less likely for employers to develop their own additional provisions. Rather, it is the absence of public policy that stimulates organizations to develop provisions in order to have a competitive advantage over other employers in the recruitment and retention of talented workers, as is the case in "liberal" welfare systems such as the US or the UK. This is in fact an economic argument. Some empirical work has confirmed this hypothesis (den Dulk, 2001; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009).

We favor the first argument, that state-provided support stimulates normative and coercive pressures for organizations to provide additional arrangements, because this argument has received greater empirical support. Overall, state support creates normative pressure on organizations to support the work-life balance of their employees. Organizations can do so in various ways: they may enhance existing state policies by offering longer leaves or a shorter workweek for instance, or they may provide different policies and arrangements that are not yet included in the scope of public provisions, such as new types of leaves or flexible work arrangements. We therefore offer the following hypothesis:

H1. State support for the combination of work and family life, measured at the country level, is positively associated with the adoption of flexible work arrangements and of leaves/childcare arrangements by organizations in that country.

Cultural centrality of work

Countries not only differ regarding the nature and degree of state support, but also vary with respect to the assumptions about the centrality of work for individuals and for society as a whole. The meaning of work literature has built on the sociology of religion (e.g. Davie, 2007) to examine the moral and religious values underpinning individual's beliefs that work is an obligation and central to society (see for instance, MOW International research team, 1987, Harpaz, 1998 and Parboteeah, Hoegl, & Cullen, 2009). Since work obligation or work ethic at the level of a country is a deep cultural value and thus a set of beliefs widely shared among employees, employers and policy makers, we argue that it may exert normative pressures influencing the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements. We propose that the concept of cultural centrality of work can shed light on what factors at the national level impact work-life experiences

and workplace work-life arrangements. We label it "cultural centrality of work" to better reflect its relevance for work-life research which often discuss work and family role centrality (e.g. Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy, & Hannum, 2012; Settles, 2004).

The US is a typical example of a country where work has ethical and moral value, based on the Protestant ethos of work as a calling and a means to secure everlasting life (Kodz, 2003; Weber, 1930), where social status is attached to income and position in the corporate ladder (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1996; Lamont, 1995) and where the public sphere of work and work-related achievements may be more recognized and valued than the private sphere of care and leisure (Bailyn, 1992; Joplin et al., 2003). Work also had a collective moral value as a way to reform society in the former communist regimes of Eastern Europe countries, which translated into full-time labour participation for both men and women combined with abundant affordable daycare services (Esping-Andersen, 1996; Ferrarini & Sjöberg, 2010). Despite major transitions to capitalist economies, it is likely that work is still viewed as very central in some of these countries. Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands are examples of countries where work-life balance and more generally quality of life are valued (Bäck-Wiklund, van der Lippe, den Dulk, & van Doorne-Huiskes, 2011; Linden, 2007; Ollier-Malaterre, 2011), which translates into more generous paid vacation schemes than in the U.S and in a greater proportion of men and women working part-time in the Netherlands.

Based on the different natures of FWA on the one hand and of leaves/childcare arrangements on the other hand, we suggest that the cultural centrality of work may have a differential impact on employers' adoption of these arrangements. More specifically, we argue that cultural centrality of work is more likely to impact FWA because employees who work flexibly or reduce their hours divert from the full-time norm of the ideal worker (Bailyn, 1992; Brannen & Lewis, 2000). Even when they do not reduce their hours, employees working flexibly gain more autonomy and control and may thus depart from organizational expectations that they are always available and reactive to work demands. Thus, FWA imply that organizations and managers go out of their way to rethink and modify the way work is organized (Kossek, Lewis, & Hammer, 2010). Therefore, we reason that organizations are likely to be even more reluctant to offer FWA in countries where work is considered very important. However, they may view leaves and childcare arrangements as more acceptable and a relatively easy and less disrupting way to signal conformity to regulations and social expectations. Childcare or dependent arrangements do not change the way work is organized, rather they enable employees to be fully available to work and conform to the full-time norms in organizational settings, thus increasing labor supply. Although leaves disrupt the norm of uninterrupted careers (Valcour, Bailyn, & Quijada, 2007), they are of limited and predictable durations, and may therefore be easier to manage than changing schedules or numerous employees working part-time on an open-ended basis. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H2. The cultural centrality of work, measured at the country level, is negatively associated with the adoption of flexible

work arrangements and, to a lesser extent, of leaves/childcare arrangements by organizations in that country.

Male unemployment

Turning from the institutional to the economic context, we now consider how labor market conditions might impact organizational adoption of work-life arrangements for employees. While high unemployment rates at the country level may undermine employers' adoption of workplace work-life arrangements, tight external labor markets provide employees and unions with increased negotiation power (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). Low unemployment rates also encourage employers to adopt policies and arrangements that may attract and retain employees, because schedule flexibility, location flexibility and childcare practices may help increase labor supply by enticing part-time workers to work full-time or attracting workers on leave to return to work earlier than intended (Epstein, Seron, Oglensky, & Sauté, 1999; Taylor, Funk, & Clark, 2007). In the current study, we chose to focus on male unemployment rates. As has been observed during the recent economic crisis, male and female unemployment rates do not track each other perfectly. Female unemployment might be related to cultural values and norms regarding gender roles and female unemployment may decrease in countries in which more traditional gender roles are prevalent affecting the proportion of women looking for a job. As such male unemployment is a clearer and a better indicator of scarcity on the labor market. Thus, we argue that employers are less likely to adopt work-life arrangements when male unemployment is high:

H3. Male unemployment at the country level is negatively associated with the adoption of both leaves/childcare arrangements and flexible work arrangements by organizations in that country.

Interactions between country-level and organization-level predictors of workplace work-life arrangements adoption

While organizations respond to institutional and economic pressures and in particular have to comply with regulations as we have discussed, they are not merely passive actors (den Dulk, 2001). In particular, a recent body of institutional work has paid more attention to the role of active agency or resistance to institutional pressures, emphasizing that organizations differ in how they respond to their institutional environment and that these differences are connected to organizational characteristics (Scott, 1995). "Active agency implies that there is room for strategic choice in HRM even in highly institutional contexts" (Boon, Paauwe, Boselie, & Den Hartog, 2009, p. 496). Thus, organizations may fully conform to institutional pressures, search for a compromise, make symbolic gestures, or resist or choose to develop active innovative responses (Boon et al., 2009; Oliver, 1991). They may for instance go well beyond regulations in an effort to be recognized as an employer of choice, or they may confine their HR policies to the strict application of regulations. These interactions between institutional pressures and

organizational characteristics have been explored by Goodstein (1994) and Ingram and Simons (1995). While they assumed that the strength of institutional pressures was related to organizational characteristics, they did not consider the differential impact that economic factors may have across types of organizations. Drawing on their work, in the next section we develop a set of hypotheses that incorporate multi-level interactions to predict the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements by employers.

Based on a literature review of predictors of adoption of workplace work-life arrangements, we chose to include three organizational characteristics that affect organizations' sensitivity to institutional and economic pressures: public vs. private sector, organizational size and the proportion of female employees. Prior research found main effects of these characteristics such that public organizations, large organizations and organizations employing a large proportion of female employees provide more work-life arrangements (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Morgan & Milliken, 1992; Wood et al., 2003). In an effort to go beyond these main effects, we focus on the interaction effects between institutional and economic pressures at the country level and organizational characteristics.

Public vs. private sector

In most countries, public sector organizations lead the introduction of workplace work-life arrangements (den Dulk et al., 2010; Evans, 2001). Like Goodstein (1994) and Ingram and Simons (1995), we expect that public sector organizations are more sensitive to institutional pressures to offer work-life arrangements than private sector companies. Public organizations are more likely to be evaluated according to governmental standards and norms (Antonsen & Beck Jørgensen, 1997), and some public sector organizations simply are obliged to execute government policy while others are chosen by governments to experiment with innovative human resource policies. In addition, public organizations are more in the public eye, which may lead them to strive more than private organizations for social legitimacy and be more receptive to normative pressures stemming from the relative cultural centrality of work.

On the other hand, we expect public sector organizations to be less sensitive to economic pressures than private sector organizations because the primary goal of public sector organizations generally is to provide services to citizens rather than to make profits. In addition, they are funded by the government and therefore tend to be more stable less dependent upon current economic conditions, and less subject to short-term perspectives than their private sector counterparts. Public sector organizations also tend to have a more stable workforce and are less likely than private sector organizations to change headcount in response to changing economic conditions (Boyne, Jenkins, & Poole, 1999; Farnham & Horton, 1996). All of these factors suggest that economic pressures in general, and labor market conditions in particular, are less likely to exert an influence on the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements by public sector organizations than by private sector organizations. Given that public organizations are more likely to be receptive to institutional pressures and less likely to respond to economic pressures, we suggest that:

H4. The impact of state support and of the cultural centrality of work on the adoption of leaves/childcare arrangements and flexible work arrangements by organizations in that country will be greater in public sector organizations than in private sector organizations; the impact of male unemployment at the country level will be smaller in public sector organizations than in private sector organizations.

Organizational size

Large organizations are more visible in society than small organizations, making them more sensitive to institutional pressures such as the degree of state support and the cultural centrality of work in a society (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995). Large organizations also have human resources officers and even human resources departments who are more likely to be aware of trends and changes in the environment, including the responses being made by other organizations, and who have the expertise to respond (Morgan & Milliken, 1992). Hence, larger organizations are more likely than smaller organizations to pay attention to normative and mimetic institutional pressures at the country level and thus offer more workplace work-life arrangements (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005; den Dulk 2001; den Dulk et al., 2010; Evans, 2001; Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Osterman, 1995; Wood et al., 2003). In addition, large organizations benefit from economies of scale, such that it is less expensive for large organizations than for small organizations to adopt workplace work-life arrangements (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995). Therefore, we suggest that:

H5. The impact of state support, of cultural centrality of work and of male unemployment at the country level on the adoption by organizations in this country of leaves/childcare arrangements and flexible work arrangements will be greater in large organizations than in small organizations.

Proportion of female employees

Lastly, the proportion of female employees is a factor that may affect the degree of institutional pressure experienced by organizations. A larger proportion of female employees can produce a greater number of and more forceful requests for work-life arrangements, enhancing normative pressures to adopt workplace work-life arrangements at the organizational level; conversely, not responding to this demand may disrupt harmonious relations within the organization (Dex & Scheibl, 1999). Consistent with what several empirical studies have observed (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Konrad & Mangel, 2000; Poelmans, Chinchilla, & Cardona, 2003; Remery, van Doorne-Huiskes, & Schippers, 2003; Wood et al., 2003), we expect that organizations with a greater proportion of female employees are more likely to adopt workplace work-life arrangements but also to be more sensitive to external institutional pressures to do so.

In addition, the adoption of work-life arrangements may be more sensitive to labor market conditions in organizations employing a large proportion of women, because women are still the primary target and the primary users of these policies (Bowen, 2000; Department of Trade, 2004; Özbilgin, Beauregard, Tatli, & Bell, 2011). Thus, organizations that heavily depend on women may want to adopt

more workplace work-life arrangements in order to attract and retain women when the demand for labor increases. Therefore, we suggest that:

H6. The impact of state support, of cultural centrality of work and of male unemployment at the country level on the adoption by organizations in this country of leaves/childcare arrangements and flexible work arrangements will be larger in organizations employing a greater proportion of women.

Data and methods

Data and design

The data source used for this research was the *Establishment Survey on Working time and Work-Life Balance 2004–2005* (ESWT) collected on behalf of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. In total 21 European member states participated in the research and 21,031 organizations and companies with 10 or more employees. Human Resources (HR) managers and union representatives were interviewed over the phone. This study focuses on the interviews with HR managers.¹ As one of the country variables was missing for Austria and Cyprus, we removed these countries from the dataset. In all, we analyzed 19,516 organizations in 19 countries.

Measures

Dependent variables

The measurement of workplace work-life arrangements in the ESWT refers to extra arrangements which go beyond those provided by national legislation and/or those which surpass state-mandated levels of access. The questions in the survey explicitly refer to the organization as actor providing the arrangements, as in the following sample items are: "Does your establishment offer employees the possibility to adapt-within certain limits-the time when they begin or finish their daily work according to their personal needs or wishes?" and "Does your establishment offer special services in order to support employees in their domestic commitments, such a company kindergarten or crèche?".

As discussed above, we follow recommendations to distinguish between FWA and leaves/childcare arrangements. Regarding FWAs, HR managers were asked whether the following arrangements were offered by their organization: (1) allowing part-time according to employee wishes, (2) possibility to change from full-time to part-time employment for skilled work, (3) possibility to change from full-time to part-time employment for unskilled work, (4) flexible working hours, and (5) working time account (possibility to save hours to take a full day off). We gave a score of 1 for each practice the organization offered, except for the possibility to change working hours, which we coded as 0.5 when this was possible for skilled work and 0.5 when this was possible

¹ More information about the ESWT can be found at the website of the Economic and Social Data Service: <http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=5655>, which archives and distributes the ESWT data, sampling report and technical report.

for non-skilled work to give this practice a similar weight as the other policies. These are all forms of employee-friendly flexibility since the needs of employees are central rather than the needs of the organization (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2002). The score for FWA ranges between 0 and 4 policies offered.

Leaves/childcare workplace arrangements were measured by including the following items: (1) employees using parental leave in the last three years, (2) long term leave to take care of ill family members, (3) workplace crèche, (4) other forms of childcare support, and (5) support for domestic work (cleaning or shopping services). We gave a score of 1 for each practice as well as for letting employees use parental leave. The score for workplace leaves/childcare arrangements ranges between 0 and 5 arrangements offered.

Country-level independent variables

State support. Existing indicators of state support mostly focus on one aspect of state support, such as public spending on family-leave policies (see for instance Stavrou and Kassinis in this volume). However, employees need various types of support to balance work and personal life and social expectations towards support are likely to increase when the government offers a broad range of public provisions. To construct a nuanced and rich measure of state support variable encompassing parental leave policies, public childcare and policies that allow employees to adapt their working hours to their personal needs, we used cross-national data sources that collected comparable data on the three components of work-life support (Deven & Moss, 2005; Immervoll & Barber, 2005; Plantenga & Remery, 2005). The data refer to legislation in 2003, a year before the survey was conducted. We rated each country on a 4-point scale ranging from high state support (4) to low state support (1) for each of these three components of work-life support. To do so, we examined to what extent public policies were actually providing realistic options for most or all employees, as opposed to making symbolic gestures that did not enable employees to better balance work and life. For instance, well-paid parental leaves and incentives for fathers give an accessible and realistic option to temporarily stop working to care for children, whereas unpaid or meagerly paid parental leaves make it more likely than only women, and only lower-level employees, will consider taking up parental leaves. Entitlements to reduce work hours send a strong signal that employees are entitled to reduce or extend their working hours depending on their personal needs, thus entitlements are likely better able to support employees' work-life balance than mere rights to request, because not all employees dare making the requests for fear of career penalties, and also requests can be turned down by managers (den Dulk et al., 2011). Entitlements for all employees also provide broader support than entitlements focused on parents of young children. Thus, we rated as high state support public provisions and legislation that actually grant employees the right to use public childcare, to take up parental leave by offering financial compensation or the right to adjust working hours. In contrast, we rated as low state support limited available childcare reflected in low enrollment rates, meager compensations for parental leaves, and the possibility to ask

for a reduction of working hours without knowing whether the request will be granted. We rated state support for childcare as high (4) when it included the right to a childcare spot and high enrollment of both children younger than 3 years of age and older; as medium-high (3) when there was substantial enrollment (more than 30%) of children younger and older than 3, but no entitlement to childcare places (for instance, France and Belgium); as medium-low (2) when there was no coverage of the young age group, but substantial enrollment among children older than 3; and as low (1) when there was very limited public childcare for both age groups. Regarding parental leave state policies, we took into account length of leave, payment, and leave for fathers. We rated state support for leaves as high (4) when it consisted of long, generous compensated leaves, including paternity leave and/or a specific 'daddy quota' for fathers; as medium-high (3) for long leaves and leave for fathers, but more minimal financial compensation; as medium-low support (2) for shorter leave periods, more unpaid leave, and/or the absence of specific leave for fathers; and as low (1) to indicate both the absence of paternity and parental leave. Regarding state support for flexible work arrangements, we focused on state regulations regarding the possibility to adjust one's working hours in order to care for dependents or meet other responsibilities. We rated state support for the adjustment of working hours as high (4) to refer to the entitlement for all workers to extend or reduce working hours (as is the case in the Netherlands); as medium-high (3) to indicate the presence of an entitlement for working parents to reduce working hours when they have young children (for instance Sweden); as medium-low (2) to indicate a right to *request* reduction of working hours; and as low (1) to reflect the absence of a specific entitlement for workers or only regulations that stimulate employers. The three scores were summated and thus ranged from low (3) to high (12) state support² (see Table 1).

Cultural centrality of work. We used the measure of "work obligation" crafted by MOW-International Research Team (1987) and later validated by Harpaz (1998) and Parboteeah, Hoegl and Cullen (2009). As discussed earlier, we relabeled it "cultural centrality of work" to better reflect its relevance for work-life research. It is comprised of five items from the World Values Survey (Inglehart, Basañez, & Moreno, 1998), which is one of the most important cross-national research project to date and measures values and cultural changes in more than 50 countries in the period 1981–2004 (Davie, 2007). In wave 4, respondents indicated whether they agreed with the following statements (measured on a five points scale): "To develop talents you need to have a job", "It is humiliating to receive money without having to work for it", "People who don't work turn lazy", "Work is a duty towards society" and "Work should come first even if it means less spare time". The items were recoded such that the higher the score, the more important work is in a country (Cronbach alpha .69). The weighted data were used to calculate the mean country score to get a representative indicator of how

² More information about leave rates, public childcare availability, and state incentives for flexible working time schemes by country is available on request.

Table 1 State support, cultural centrality of work, and male unemployment rate by country, 2003–2004.

	State support for the combination of work and life	Cultural centrality of work (means)	Male unemployment rate
Belgium	8	3.24	7.6
Czech Republic	7	3.71	6.2
Denmark	10	3.49	4.8
Finland	11	3.26	8.9
France	8	3.36	8.6
Germany	7	3.48	8.2
Greece	7	3.45	6.2
Hungary	7	3.92	6.1
Ireland	4	3.33	5.0
Italy	8	3.75	6.5
Latvia	6	2.93	10.6
Luxembourg	6	3.54	4.7
Netherlands	9	2.85	3.5
Poland	7	3.94	19.0
Portugal	8	3.74	5.4
Slovenia	9	3.78	6.3
Spain	6	3.48	8.2
Sweden	11	3.08	6.0
UK	6	3.07	5.5

Sources:

Deven and Moss (2005), Plantenga and Remery (2005) and Immervoll and Barber (2005).

Employment in Europe 2006 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/keyDocuments.jsp?type=3&policyArea=81&subCategory=119&country=0&year=0&advSearchKey=&mode=advancedSubmit&langId=en>.

European and World Values Surveys wave four. File Producers: ASEP/JDS, Madrid, Spain and Tilburg University, Tilburg, the Netherlands. File Distributors: ASEP/JDS and GESIS, Cologne, Germany.

important employees consider work in their life in each country. As shown in Table 1, country scores tend to be higher for some Eastern European countries previously included in the communist bloc such as Poland or Hungary, as well as for Mediterranean countries such as Italy and Portugal, indicating greater centrality of work in these countries. Scores tend to be middle of the range for continental Europe countries such as Germany or France, and lower for Scandinavian countries such as Sweden and Finland, as well as for the Netherlands, the UK and Latvia.

Male unemployment. Male unemployment rates in 2003 were derived from the European Commission report Employment in Europe 2006 and are also reported in Table 1.

Organization-level independent variables

Respondents were asked whether their organization should be classified as a public sector organization or as a private sector organization. Based on this self-classification a dummy variable was constructed measuring whether an organization belonged to the public sector or not. In the ESTW survey, size of the organization was asked in categories: less than 20 employees, 20–49, 50–249 and 250 employees or more. A distinction was made between small organizations (less than 50 employees) and larger organizations (50 employees or more). The proportion of women was included with the following categories: none at all (1), 0 to less than 20 percent women staff (2), 20 to less than 40 (3), 41 to less than 60 (4), 61 to less than 80 (5), 80 to less than 100% (6), and all staff is women (7). Table 2 shows the descriptive

Table 2 Descriptive statistics.

	N	Mean	SD
Flexible work arrangements	19,516	1.470	1.204
Leaves and childcare arrangements	19,516	1.201	0.839
Total state support	19,516	7.838	1.512
Cultural centrality of work	19,516	2.534	0.282
Male unemployment rate	19,516	7.367	3.212
Sector (public sector)	19,516	0.235	0.424
Size organization (>50 employees)	19,516	0.482	0.500
Proportion female employees	19,516	3.541	1.484

statistics of all variables. The correlations can be found in the Appendix.

Results

In order to explain differences in the number of work-life arrangements between organizations and to test our hypotheses, multilevel regression analyses were performed. Two levels of measurement can be distinguished in our data: the level of countries ($n = 19$) and the level of organizations ($n = 19,516$). We used multilevel analysis to capture this hierarchical structure of the data. To prevent problems of multicollinearity in the model with interaction terms (Model 4), the independent variables were standardized before they were included in the models.

Flexible work arrangements

We will first present our findings on the number of FWA offered by organizations as illustrated in Table 3.

Model 1 is an empty model that models the random effects of country and organization. The intraclass correlation was 0.1498 (0.148/(0.148 + 0.840)) indicating that 15% of the variation in FWA is accounted for by the country level. In the next steps we examined which factors, both on the country level and on the organizational level, explained the adoption of FWA by organizations.

Model 2 added the three country characteristics: state support regarding the integration of work and life, cultural centrality of work in a country and male unemployment rate. In support of hypothesis 1, state support for the combination of work and family life was positively associated

with the presence of FWA. Organizations in countries with a high level of state support for the combination of work and family life offered more FWA than organizations in countries with a lower level of state support for the combination of work and family life. Cultural centrality of work in a country was negatively associated with the adoption of FWA in organizations, in support of hypothesis 2. However, hypothesis 3 was not supported: the male unemployment rate was not associated with the number of FWA offered by organizations. The effect of the male unemployment rate on FWA was not statistically significant. All in all, institutional pressures at the country level seemed to be more important for understanding the adoption of FWA by organizations than economic pressures. Model 2 does not lead to a significantly better fit of the model: the deviance *increased* with 2.

Table 3 Multilevel analyses of the effects of country characteristics and organizational characteristics on the number of flexible work arrangements offered by organizations.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	-0.011	-0.012	-0.014	-0.013
<i>Country characteristics</i>				
Total state support for the combination of work and family life	—	0.162**	0.155**	0.152*
Cultural centrality of work (WVS)	—	-0.192**	-0.179**	-0.177**
Male unemployment	—	0.071	0.044	0.058
<i>Organization characteristics</i>				
Main sector				
<i>Private</i>	—	—	Ref	Ref
<i>Public</i>	—	—	0.044***	0.039***
Size organization				
<50 employees	—	—	Ref	Ref
>50 employees	—	—	0.122***	0.119***
Proportion females	—	—	0.170***	0.166***
<i>Interactions</i>				
Sector* Total State Support	—	—	—	0.021***
Sector* centrality work	—	—	—	-0.012*
Sector* male unemployment	—	—	—	-0.014**
Size* total state support	—	—	—	0.055***
Size* Centrality Work	—	—	—	-0.016**
Size* male unemployment	—	—	—	-0.006
%Female* total state support	—	—	—	0.002
%Female* centrality work	—	—	—	-0.007
%Female* male unemployment	—	—	—	-0.006
-2 Log Likelihood	52,071	52,073	50,891	50,825
Df	3	6	9	18
χ^2 -change in comparison with previous model	—	+2 (Δ df = 3)	-1183*** (Δ df = 3)	-66*** (Δ df = 9)
Variance organization	0.840***	0.840***	0.789***	0.784***
% explained variance	—	—	6.1%	6.7%
Variance country	0.148***	0.099***	0.097***	0.097***
% explained variance	—	%	34.5%	34.5%
N (organizations)	19,516	19,516	19,516	19,516
N (country)	19	19	19	19

All variables have been standardized (with their Z-score).

*** $p < 0.01$.

** $p < 0.05$.

* $p < 0.1$.

Model 3 includes three organizational characteristics: public/private sector, organizational size and the proportion of female employees. The results show that public organizations offered more FWA than private sector organizations and large organizations more than small organizations. In addition, the higher the share of female employees, the higher the number of FWA offered by organizations. These findings are in concordance with results from previous research. Adding the fixed effects of sector, organizational size and the proportion of women employees resulted in a significantly better fit of the model. The deviance decreased with 1183 ($df = 3$; $p < 0.01$).

In model 4 interactions of country characteristics with organizational characteristics were included in order to examine whether organizations differed in their responsiveness to country-level pressures. Firstly, in support of hypothesis 4, the impact of state support on the adoption of FWA is greater in public sector organizations than in private sector organizations. Furthermore, the negative impact of cultural centrality of work in a country is stronger for public sector organizations compared to private sector organizations. Contrary to hypothesis 4, public sector organizations were more responsive to the male unemployment rate in a country, with male unemployment negatively affecting the number of FWA offered by public organizations.

Secondly, in support of hypothesis 5, the positive impact of state support and the negative impact of cultural centrality of work at the country level on the adoption of FWA were greater in large organizations than in small organizations. However, organizational size did not moderate the relationship between male unemployment rate in a country and the provision of FWA.

Hypothesis 6 was not supported: the impact of state support, of cultural centrality of work and of male unemployment at the country level on the adoption of FWA was not associated with the proportion of female employees employed by the organization. Adopting the interaction effects in the model significantly improved the model: the deviance decreased by 65 ($df = 9$; $p < .01$).

Leaves/childcare arrangements

Table 4 presents the results of multilevel analyses of the number of leave and childcare arrangements offered by organizations.

Model 1 is again an empty model that models the random effects of country and organization characteristics. The intraclass correlation is 0.079 ($0.079 / (0.079 + 0.918)$) indicating that 8 percent of the variation in leave and childcare arrangements is accounted for by the country level. In the next three models we examined which country and organization characteristics explain the number of leave and childcare arrangements offered by organizations.

In model 2 the three country variables are adopted. The findings support hypothesis 1: state support at the country level positively affected the number of leave and childcare arrangements adopted by organizations. Cultural centrality of work in a country negatively affected the number of workplace leave and childcare arrangements, which is in concordance with hypothesis 2. The direct effect of male unemployment was not statistically significant. Male unemployment rate did not affect

the adoption of leaves and childcare arrangements by organizations. Hence, hypothesis 3 was not supported regarding leaves/childcare arrangements. Model 2 did not lead to a significantly better fit of the model: the deviance *increased* with 6.

Model 3 added the three organization characteristics, public/private sector, organizational size and proportion of female employees. All three organization characteristics affected the number of arrangements offered by organizations. Public organizations offered more leaves and childcare arrangements than private sector organizations and large organizations more than small organizations. Furthermore, the higher the share of female employees, the higher the number of workplace leaves and childcare arrangements offered by organizations. Adding the fixed effects of sector, organizational size and the proportion of female employees resulted in a significantly better fit of the model. The deviance decreased with 3122 ($df = 3$; $p < 0.01$).

Model 4 added the interaction terms. In partial support of hypothesis 4, the negative impact of the cultural centrality of work on the adoption of leaves and childcare arrangements was indeed greater in public sector organizations than in private sector organizations. However, the impact of state support on the adoption of leaves and childcare arrangements was smaller in public organizations than in private organizations and public organizations were more responsive to the country-level male unemployment rate than private sector organizations. In partial support of hypothesis 5, the impact of cultural centrality of work in a country on the adoption of leaves and childcare arrangements was greater in large organizations than in small organizations and large organizations were more responsive to the male unemployment rate in a country than small organizations in terms of provision of leaves and childcare arrangements. However, large organizations were less responsive to state support for the combination of work and family life than small organizations. Contrary to hypothesis 6, the impact of state support on the adoption of leaves and childcare arrangements was smaller in organizations employing a greater proportion of women. In addition, the impact of cultural centrality of work in a country and the male unemployment rate were not associated with the proportion of women employees. Adopting the interaction effects in the model did not significantly improve the model: the deviance decreased by 68 ($df = 9$; $p > .1$).

To summarize our findings regarding interaction effects, our hypotheses were more confirmed regarding leaves and childcare arrangements than regarding FWA. More specifically, institutional pressures were associated with the number of FWA provided by organizations, while both institutional pressures and economic pressures were associated with the number of workplace leaves and childcare arrangements provided by organizations. With respect to state support, an interesting question is which type of state support (public provisions regarding parental leave/childcare or legislation regarding the adjustment of working hours) is most influential. We conducted additional analyses with two separate state support variables, which confirmed our overall findings (results not shown). However, we observed that leaves and childcare state support affected workplace work-life arrangements to a larger extent than state support with respect to the adjustment of working hours.

Table 4 Multilevel analyses of the effects of country characteristics and organizational characteristics on the number of leave and childcare arrangements offered by organizations.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	0.032	0.031	0.027	0.033
Country characteristics				
Total State Support	—	0.141**	0.130**	0.130**
Cultural Centrality of Work (WVS)	—	−0.102*	−0.081	−0.073
Male Unemployment	—	0.049	0.009	0.019
Organization characteristics				
Main Sector				
<i>Private</i>	—	—	Ref	Ref
<i>Public</i>	—	—	0.087***	0.094***
Size Organization				
<i><50 employees</i>	—	—	Ref	Ref
<i>>50 employees</i>	—	—	0.296***	0.298***
Proportion Females	—	—	0.165***	0.168***
Interactions				
Sector * Total State Support	—	—	—	−0.022***
Sector * Centrality Work	—	—	—	−0.022***
Sector * Male Unemployment	—	—	—	−0.029***
Size * Total State Support	—	—	—	−0.046***
Size * Centrality Work	—	—	—	−0.022***
Size * Male Unemployment	—	—	—	−0.018***
%Female * Total State Support	—	—	—	−0.018**
%Female * Centrality Work	—	—	—	0.003
%Female * Male Unemployment	—	—	—	−0.010
−2 Log Likelihood	53,794	53,800	50,678	50,610
Df	3	6	9	18
X ² -change in comparison with previous model	—	+6 (Δdf = 3)	−3122*** (Δdf = 3)	−68*** (Δdf = 9)
Variance organization	0.918***	0.918***	0.781***	0.776***
% explained variance	—	—	14.9%	15.5%
Variance country	0.079***	0.058***	0.050***	0.052***
% explained variance	—	26.6%	36.7%	34.2%
N (organizations)	19,516	19,516	19,516	19,516
N (country)	19	19	19	19

All variables have been standardized (with their Z-score).

*** $p < 0.01$.

** $p < 0.05$.

* $p < 0.1$.

Discussion

In light of the paucity of multi-level cross-national research on the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements, this study was designed to help contextualize our understanding of employer-driven work-life arrangements by examining to what extent such arrangements were associated with institutional and economic pressures at the country level, and how these associations varied according to organizational characteristics.

Main effects of national-level factors on the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements

In line with our hypotheses our findings indicate that institutional pressures in a country were associated with the adoption of work-life arrangements by organizations, while economic pressures as captured in our research were not. More specifically, state support for the combination of work and family life was positively associated with the adoption

of both FWA and leaves/childcare arrangements and cultural centrality of work was negatively associated with FWA. To the extent that male unemployment is a robust indicator of economic pressures on the provision of work-life practices, these findings shed new light on the classic debate on the impact of institutional vs. economic pressures regarding the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements and beyond (Dobbin & Sutton, 1998; Kelly, 2003; Kossek et al., 1994). While the general rhetoric put forward by practitioners and consultants emphasizes the business case and pictures workplace work-life arrangements as tools to attract and retain employees, prior research questioned this reasoning. The work of Dobbin and Sutton on the rise of human resources management divisions in the US after the passage of Civil Rights legislation and the work of Kelly (2003) on employer-sponsored childcare programs go back to the tenets of institutional theory that “in order to survive, organizations conform to what is societally defined as appropriate and efficient, largely disregarding the actual impact on organizational performance” (Tolbert & Zucker,

1996). In addition, Kossek et al. (1994) argued that in the US increased employer's interest in work-life arrangements "is more easily attributed to a growing institutional view that work-family issues are a business concern than to empirical evidence that adopting such programs will yield large economic benefits" (1994:1122).

Our findings bring new evidence that institutional pressures may be more strongly associated with the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements than economic pressures (in the ESWT data at least) and thus suggest that institutional pressures may be more effective in enticing organizations to adopt such arrangements. For policy makers, these findings suggest that state support for the successful combination of work and family does not only provide direct aid to families, but could also act as a catalyst to encourage employers to provide work-life arrangements to their employees, thereby amplifying the positive impact of legislative provisions. Coercive and normative pressures may stem from regulations such as the right to request flexible or reduced hours, from publicly funded infrastructures, from tax incentives or from communication campaigns as was done for instance in the UK in 1998 and 1999 with the National Childcare Strategy and the National Carers Strategy (Ollier-Malaterre, 2009).

This study also extends a stream of work striving to solve the puzzle of the relationships between state support for the combination of work and life and employer adoption of work-life arrangements, for which empirical evidence diverges (den Dulk & Groeneveld, 2012; den Dulk et al., 2012 found a positive relationship while den Dulk et al. (2010), den Dulk (2001) and Ollier-Malaterre (2009) found a negative one). We found a positive relationship, in support of the entitlement argument that the more state support in a country for the combination of work and family life, the stronger employees' sense of entitlement for work-life practices (Dublin Foundation, 2003; Lewis & Smithson, 2001). The previously divergent findings were likely induced by measurement differences and our study contributes to clarifying this question by using better measurements. While den Dulk et al. (2012) examined organizations' decision to offer any practice and Ollier-Malaterre (2009) reported human resource managers' perceptions of the role state support played in their decisions, based on interview data, we assessed the number of arrangements provided by organizations. The data used for this study are also more recent and allow for a distinction between different types of work-life arrangements. Lastly, our study contributes to comparative work-life literature by introducing cultural centrality of work as a country-level variable that explains variance in the adoption of organizational work-life arrangements. Cultural centrality of work, capturing the degree in which work is valued and seen as a duty and an obligation to society (Harpaz, 1998; MOW International research team, 1987; Parboteeah et al., 2009) was negatively associated with FWA but was not associated with leaves/childcare arrangements, in line with our prediction that FWA are more disruptive of the norms of the ideal worker and of full-time work than are temporary leaves that return workers quickly to full-time work and childcare arrangements that enable employees to continue working (Bailyn, 1992; Brannen & Lewis, 2000; Kossek et al., 2010). This implies that cultural centrality of work is a useful country-level indicator that should be examined in cross-

national research on work-life integration and potentially on the adoption of other human resources practices related to diversity management and career development and advancement (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007).

Interactions effects of national-level factors and organizational-level factors

Examining within-country heterogeneity and in particular how national-level factors may impact different types of organizations in different ways, we found that public sector organizations were more sensitive to institutional pressures than private sector organizations. Specifically, public sector organizations were more likely to offer FWA in countries with high levels of state work-life support and to offer FWA and leaves and childcare arrangements in countries with lower societal cultural centrality of work. Furthermore, they were more likely to offer FWA and leaves and childcare arrangements in countries with low male unemployment. The finding that public sector organizations were more sensitive to economic pressures may be explained by the introduction in the public sector of the New Public Management (NPM) logic: NPM-style reforms aim at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of public sector organizations and to replace traditional bureaucratic models of personnel management with the Human Resource Management paradigm (Mesch, Perry, & Wise, 1995; Perry, 1993). It may be, thus, that public organizations have to demonstrate more accountability for how citizens' money is spent. In addition, recruiting and retaining personnel are becoming more important in the public sector as well, due to the aging of the population in most European countries and consequently decreasing labor supply. Work-life arrangements adopted by the organization may serve as one of many instruments to attract and retain public sector employees (den Dulk & Groeneveld, 2012). In fact, a recent Dutch survey showed that work-life balance as a motive to choose public sector employment has become more important in recent years, in particular for women (Groeneveld, Steijn, & Van der Parre, 2009).

In addition, we found that large organizations were more sensitive to institutional and economic pressures than smaller organizations (for all the relationships we tested except the impact of state support on leaves and childcare arrangements and of male unemployment on FWA). These findings are in line with what neo-institutional theory predicts regarding large organizations' greater visibility and greater need for social legitimacy (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; Osterman, 1995).

Lastly, our finding that organizations employing a greater proportion of female employees were less sensitive to state support with respect to leaves and childcare arrangements brings new evidence for the possibility that these organizations may be limited in their abilities to provide the more expensive workplace work-life arrangements such as leaves (Bond et al., 2005). For FWA we did not find interaction effects between country factors and proportion of female employees. This might be due to the fact that FWA can be introduced for other reasons than supporting the combination of work and family life.

Our study is the first to our knowledge to theorize and empirically account for cross-level interactions between

country-level and organization-level indicators. Our findings lend further support to work on organizational agency—understood as the strategic choice or latitude organizations have in their policy-making (Boon et al., 2009; Oliver, 1991)—and in particular to the work of Goodstein (1994) and Ingram and Simons (1995), who view the strength of institutional pressures as being related to organizational characteristics. By going beyond the classic main effects analysis of the impact of country- and organization-level variables on organizations' adoption of work-life arrangements to include a theoretical conceptualization and an empirical analysis of the interactions between the macro (country) and meso (organization) levels, we hope to contribute to the development of theoretically-robust understanding of cross-national patterns of workplace work-life arrangements and in particular of the interactions of institutional pressures and organizational agency.

Practical implications

Our study offers important practical implications. First, our findings suggest that institutional pressures such as state support for the combination of work and family life or the importance ascribed to work in a country influence organizations' propensity to provide work-life arrangements to their employees. This stands in contrast to the idea that organizations primarily act in accordance with the business case. Organizations would benefit from gaining a clearer understanding of exactly what kinds of institutional pressures are likely to influence their human resources decision process, depending on their characteristics—in particular, whether they are a public or private sector organization, a large or small organization and whether they are employing mostly men or women. Further, our findings show that organizations adopt more work-life arrangements when the government does as well. This is important in light of current temptations on the part of policy makers in some countries to cut public support in the hope that organizations will compensate. If policy makers want organization to make greater investments in supporting work-life integration, then the state needs to model the way. In addition, if policy makers are concerned with the combination of work and family life in a country, they should reflect on societal attitudes regarding the cultural centrality of work in their country and present work-life initiatives in a way that is consistent with and sensitive to prevailing attitudes. For instance, in the UK, the 1998 and 1999 national programs and public campaigns on work-life balance provided a significant boost to jumpstart organizational adoption of work-life practices (Dex, 2003).

Limitations and future research

The ESWT represents an unusually rich dataset for examining the role of national context in the implementation of work-life arrangements across countries due to its size and broad coverage of European nations. Despite this data resource, however, our study is not without its limitations. The ESWT dataset is cross-sectional, which precludes our ability to draw the causal inferences that a multi-wave longitudinal study would allow. With respect to the critical country-level state support variable, however, we were able to construct this

predictor from 2003 records of national legislation (i.e., policies in effect a year prior to the collection of the ESWT data), thereby ensuring that the chronological ordering of variables reflected the causal ordering implied by our model.

The multi-level research design of our study limited the number of variables we were able to examine simultaneously. We were obliged to limit ourselves to a few theoretically relevant variables in order to meet the guidelines of accepted statistical practice of our analytic technique. Additionally, owing to the difficulties of collecting good quality indicators on a large number of countries and organizations, we were not able to include all the measures that interest us, nor are all of our measures ideal. In particular, we recommend that future research on the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements incorporate country-level measures of gender ideology and of the relative cultural centrality of work compared with other life domains, as well as measuring unionization at the organizational level.³ When gender equality is high on the political agenda and the national culture places high value on the quality of family life, organizations may also feel more inclined to offer support for the combination of work and family life. We considered using the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) as an indicator for gender equality, as Lyness and Brumit Kropf (2005) and den Dulk et al. (2010) have previously done. However, the GDI is not a direct measurement of the national gender equality culture in a country; rather it measures the degree of gender differences in a country with respect to life expectancy, income and education. It can be considered as a rough outcome measure of cultural assumptions about the role of men and women in society. Moreover, the GDI is also influenced by the relative affluence of a country, making it difficult to disentangle the impact of economic and cultural factors. In addition, we recommend that future researchers examine whether employee pressure might influence either state support, organizational provisions or both. Third, while the cultural centrality of work variable as we have operationalized it sheds new and valuable light on organizational adoption of work-life arrangements, the data indicate limited variance across countries. Therefore, we recommend that future research also examine cultural centrality of work compared with family and other life domains (such as community involvement), as such national values can exert influence over what sorts of work-life initiatives are seen as legitimate and worthwhile. Lastly, our findings suggest that future research that incorporates more organization-level variables could contribute to understanding of the factors that affect adoption of workplace work-life arrangements. In particular, future research should strive to examine the impact of unionization because unionization has been identified as a potential predictor of organizational adoption of work-life practices (Dex & Scheibl, 1999; Woodland, Simmonds, Thornby, Fitzgerald, & Mcgee, 2003). Since unions can pressure organizations to develop work-life arrangements, examining the interactions with state support for the combination of work and family life, cultural central-

³ Given the number of countries, we were restricted in the number of country-level variables we were able to include. We did, however check whether the degree of cooperation in industrial relations in a country matter for the provision of workplace FWAs and workplace leave and childcare arrangements in organizations. No significant effect was found.

ity of work and unemployment rates would yield interesting additional insights into the multi-level understanding of what shapes organizational adoption of work-life arrangements across countries.

In addition, future research could distinguish between different types of national policy support (leaves, childcare and flexible working) and examine whether they influence the type of workplace arrangement introduced at the organizational level. While we were not able to fully address this question in the scope of this paper, we ran analyses separating state support for public childcare and statutory leaves from state support for flexible working hours, and found that state policies regarding childcare and leaves were related to the adoption of workplace work-life arrangements. We urge scholars to pursue this line of research.

Conclusion

In line with the growing interest in the work-family field for comparative cross-national research as well as with recent calls in management research for multi-level theorizing that goes beyond the mere contextualization of findings, our study shows that institutional pressures at the national level, such as state support for the combination of work

and family life and cultural centrality of work, influence organizational adoption of work-life arrangements and that they influence some organizations more than others. Innovative multi-level research designs such as ours provide means to conduct empirical tests of organizational agency theory and yield a richer and more nuanced understanding of the impact of national context on employers' response to work-life integration. We hope that such research designs can help shed new light on the impact of national context in other areas of research as well.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to our editor Ellen Kossek and to three anonymous reviewers for their constructive guidance, as well as to Rouen Business School Academic Dean Henri Isaac whose support enabled the 2011 Paris International Conference where our discussions began.

Appendix A.

See Table A1.

Table A1 Correlation Matrix Variables in Multilevel Model.

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8
V1: Number of FWA	—							
V2: Leave/childcare arrangements	0.289**	—						
V3: Total state support	0.206**	0.162**	—					
V4: Cultural centrality of work	-0.201**	-0.111**	-0.184**	—				
V5: Male unemployment	0.002	-0.007	-0.151**	0.343**	—			
V6: Sector (public)	0.135**	0.183**	0.048**	-0.026**	0.101**	—		
V7: Percentage females	0.155**	0.215**	0.003	-0.002	0.090**	0.307**	—	
V8: Size > 50 employees	0.186**	0.313**	0.011	-0.011	0.015*	0.077**	0.043**	—
V9: Sector⁺ state support	0.077**	0.031**	0.093**	-0.059**	-0.106**	0.101**	0.093**	0.034**
V10: Sector⁺ centr work	-0.039**	-0.055**	-0.056**	0.146**	0.172**	-0.030**	-0.025**	-0.020**
V11: Sector⁺ male unempl	-0.049**	-0.026**	-0.095**	0.154**	0.324**	0.106**	0.062**	0.006
V12: Size⁺ state support	0.072**	-0.015*	0.011	-0.010	-0.030**	0.036**	0.012	0.045**
V13: Size⁺ centr work	-0.033**	-0.030**	-0.009	0.029**	0.043**	-0.021**	0.006	-0.001
V14: Size⁺ male unempl	-0.031**	-0.027**	-0.030**	0.043**	0.078**	0.007	-0.019**	0.001
V15: %Fem⁺ state support	0.042**	-0.001	0.063**	0.024**	-0.032**	0.095**	0.061**	0.012
V16: %Fem⁺ centr work	-0.018*	0.004	0.024**	0.057**	0.064**	-0.026**	-0.019**	0.005
V17: % Fem⁺ male unempl	-0.022**	-0.005	-0.034**	0.061**	0.193**	0.068**	0.055**	-0.018*

	V9	V10	V11	V12	V13	V14	V15	V16	V17
V9: Sector⁺ state support	—								
V10: Sector⁺ Centr Work	0.289**	—							
V11: Sector⁺ male unempl	0.206**	0.162**	—						
V12: Size⁺ state support	-0.201**	-0.111**	-0.184**	—					
V13: Size⁺ centr work	0.002	-0.007	-0.151**	0.343**	—				
V14: Size⁺ male unempl	0.135**	0.183**	0.048**	-0.026**	0.101**	—			
V15: %Fem⁺ state support	0.155**	0.215**	0.003	-0.002	0.090**	0.307**	—		
V16: %Fem⁺ centr work	0.186**	0.313**	0.011	-0.011	0.015*	0.077**	0.043**	—	
V17: % Fem⁺ male unempl	0.077**	0.031**	0.093**	-0.059**	-0.106**	0.101**	0.093**	0.034**	—

** $p < 0.01$.

* $p < 0.05$.

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