National Context in Work-Life Research: An Analysis of the Adoption of Work-Life Arrangements in Europe

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Introduction

- Impact of National context
- Differences across Europe
- Employers support
- Interactions between national public policies and HR practices in organizations
- Future developments of work-life arrangements
National work-life policies in Europe

- Historical overview
- Role model countries
- Explaining differences across Europe
Development of national policies

- Leave: maternity, parental and paternity leave
- Public childcare
- Legislation around flexible work arrangements
- Role of EU directives

- Policy dimensions (Korpi et al., 2013)
  - Traditional
  - Dual-earner
  - Dual-carer
Length in weeks of parental leave

Source: OECD family database (http://www.oecd.org/els/family/oecdfamilydatabase.htm)
Total duration of paid leave after childbirth

Source: OECD family database (http://www.oecd.org/els/family/oecdfamilydatabase.htm)
Use of maternity and parental leave by mothers and fathers with a child under the age of 1 (in percentages)

Source: OECD family database (http://www.oecd.org/els/family/oecdfamilydatabase.htm)
Culture and national debates across Europe

- Gender equality
- Work centrality
- Caring fathers
- Who is doing what: role of the state, employers and parents
Explaining differences between countries

Welfare state classifications (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999)
- Social-democratic regime
- Liberal regime
- Conservative
- Mediterranean
- Former-socialist
Role model countries

Scandinavian countries: high scores on dual-earner and dual-carer policies
What are employers in Europe doing?

- Extending statutory leave arrangements
- Introducing flexible work arrangements (FWA’s)
- Childcare/care for elderly/other family members
Which employers offer the most support?

- Sector
- Size
- Proportion of female staff
- Proportion of professional employees
- Shortage of skilled personnel
- Unionization
WLB support in the public and private sector

![Bar chart showing WLB support in various countries for public and private sectors. The x-axis represents countries, and the y-axis represents the mean total WLB support. The chart compares the support levels between the public and private sectors across different countries.]
Interactions national context and employer support

• How are different types of organizations influenced by their country context?
  
  – Country state support (childcare, parental leave, flexible work)
  – Cultural centrality of work
  – Male unemployment rate
  
  – Sector
  – Size
  – Proportion of female employees
Expectations

- Impact of state support and cultural centrality of work on the adoption of work-life arrangements in organizations greater in the public sector organizations than in private sector organizations; large organizations compared to smaller ones; when employing more women

- Impact of male unemployment rate greater in private sector organizations, large organizations and when employing more women
Unique dataset

- 19,516 organizations in 19 European countries
- HR survey
- Construction country-level variables
- Multi-level analysis
Findings

• State support and cultural centrality of work associated with FWA; for childcare and leave arrangements also labor market conditions relevant.

• Public sector and large organizations were more sensitive to state support, cultural centrality of work and male unemployment than private sector and small organizations.

• Organizations employing a greater proportion of female employees were less sensitive to state support.
Concluding remarks

• How relevant is the business case?
• State support catalyst to encourage employers to provide support and vice versa?
• FWA’s and cultural centrality of work: importance of integrating policies in organizational culture and structure