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Work-Life Balance Support in the Public Sector in Europe

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Introduction

Over the last few decades there has been a growing attention for the integration of paid work and personal life. The diversity of the workforce is increasing and the number of people who combine tasks is growing. Like national governments, employers are aware of this social trend, with employees increasingly needing to divide their time and attention between the demands of their job and care tasks at home. Research shows that if balancing work and family leads to problems, people function less effectively at work (Dijkers, 2008). Conflicts and tensions between the demands at work and care tasks at home have a disheartening effect on employees, increase their risk of health problems, and consequently threaten the quality of organizations (Van Doorne-Huiskes, 1992).

Over the years, both public policies and organizational policies have been developed to support the integration of paid work and personal life. Some countries are more advanced than others. Scandinavian and post-socialist countries, for instance, are known for their relatively long tradition of state support while in other countries like the Netherlands or Germany state support is relatively modest and more recently introduced (Den Dulk & Van Doorne-Huiskes, 2007). In addition, within countries employers vary in their work-life balance support. In most countries, public sector organizations and large companies are taking the lead regarding the introduction of work-life policies, such as leave arrangements and flexible working hours that support the integration of paid work and personal life (Appelbaum et al., 2005; Den Dulk, 2001; Den Dulk et al., 2010; Evans, 2001; Goodstein, 1994).

This paper focuses on work-life balance support in addition to state regulations (WLB support) in public sector organizations in Europe. How can we explain the level of WLB support within public sector organizations across Europe? Scholars have argued that the lack of market pressures explains the relatively high degree of WLB support in public sector organizations (Den Dulk, 2001; Evans, 2001; OECD, 2001). Reasons for public sector organizations to be supportive is related to their visibility in the public debate and because they are more likely to be evaluated according to government standards and norms, while for private sector companies, profit related arguments are

more important. However, public sector organizations vary in the degree of sensitivity to government standards and norms. Some public sector organizations develop and implement government policies, while others operate more on a 'distance' of politics and policy making. It can be expected that the more public sector organizations are subject to political pressure and involved in policy making, the more they will expose that - as an employer - they take policy measures in this direction.

Furthermore, with the introduction of new public management, business case arguments may have become more important in the public sector. HRM policies are developed to improve the performance of the public sector workforce. In addition, recruiting and retaining personnel become more important in public sector HRM, as due to demographic developments in European countries labor supply decreases. WLB support may serve as one of many instruments to attract and retain public sector employees. In fact, a Dutch survey showed that work life balance as a motive to choose public sector employment has become more important in the recent years, in particular for women (Groeneveld, Steijn & Van der Parre, 2009).

So far, research has paid little attention to variation within the public sector regarding to the development of HRM instruments like work-life policies but merely contrasted public and private sector organizations (e.g. Boyne, Jenkins & Poole, 1999). The public sector, we will argue, consists of different sub-sectors of which some are more sensitive to government pressure than others. In addition, not all European governments emphasize the importance of work-life policies to the same degree. As a result the pressure to enhance WLB support in public sector organizations may vary across countries. In fact, the public sector forms an interesting case to examine the relation between national policy context and organizational HRM policies precisely because of the non-profit nature of public sector organizations.

To date, large-scale cross-national research investigating the relation between national policy context and WLB support in organizations is limited (Den Dulk et al, 2010). We aim to contribute to this gap by using data of the *Establishment Survey on Working time and Work-Life Balance 2004-2005* (ESWT) of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. The ESWT provides information at the organization level on WLB support in 21 countries.

Contribution to existing literature

This paper builds on and contributes to two bodies of knowledge: HRM/diversity policies in the public sector and the work-family research field. Within both fields *large N, cross-national research* is limited. This is in particular true for data collected among organizations on the HR policies they implement and the way they extend statutory provisions. Most studies on diversity policies in the public sector are national employee surveys or case studies. Only a few large N organizational studies exist (see Kellough & Naff, 2004 for an exception). In the work-family research field data collected at the organizational level is very limited (see for an exception Den Dulk, et al. 2010). Most large N studies are based on employee surveys. However, employees are not always aware whether their organization is offering additional arrangements or merely follows statutory requirements. Theoretical explanations of work life policies in organizations can be empirically tested by using the large N dataset of the ESWT survey. By focusing on the public sector in Europe it is possible to put the *variation within the public sector* to the fore and test several assumptions about the motivations of public organizations for conducting work life policies.

Theory

Two theoretical explanations have been put forward to explain WLB support in organizations: the neo-institutional theory and the rational-choice theory (Appelbaum et al., 2005; Den Dulk, 2001; Poelmans, 2005). The (neo) institutional approach emphasizes that there is an increasing institutional pressure on organizations to develop work-life policies due to a changing workforce (more women and two-earner families) who wish to combine paid work with other responsibilities, public attention to these issues and more state regulations. Within the institutional perspective, the influence of the legal and normative environment on organizational structures and practices is emphasized (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, Scott, 1995). Organizations do not only have to meet economic considerations, but also need to respond to regulations, norms, laws and social expectations (Goodstein, 1994). The institutional approach points to the need of legitimacy of the organization in the wider social structure. Variability between

organizations is explained by the extent to which maintenance of social legitimacy is salient to the organization. In particular public sector organizations, like public administration (ministries, federal bodies, local authorities), that operate in close vicinity of the development of state regulations are likely to be more sensitive for government pressure and are often put forward as a role model of a good employer. Public hospitals, schools, social services do provide public goods but may be less sensitive for government pressures to develop work-life policies. For state-owned organizations that operate on the market this might apply even less.

Based on the institutional approach we formulate the following hypothesis on the variation within the public sector:

H1 Public administration organizations are more likely to offer WLB support than other public sector organizations.

In the rational choice theory, the choice of actors is central: actors support work-life policies when the benefits exceed the costs. The costs and benefits of work-life policies are in turn dependent on organizational and institutional conditions. Within this approach the emphasize lies on the impact of work-life policies on the organization, such as the reduction of absenteeism and turnover (Den Dulk, 2001). Research on the costs and benefits of work-life policies is related to the *business case* perspective (Appelbaum et al., 2005, Kossek & Friede, 2006). Central in this perspective is the interest of the organization, economic considerations. Organizations recognize the need of employees to integrate work and personal life but only support work-life policies when this is beneficial for the organization, for instance if work-life policies increase the retention and selection of skilled workers or helps to increase the productivity of employees (Appelbaum et al., 2005, Den Dulk, 2001, Kossek & Friede, 2006). Cost and benefits are related to organizational characteristics such as size, percentage of female workers, and shortage of staff.

Large organizations benefit from economies of scale, which reduces the costs of the introduction of work-family arrangements per employee in their organizations. Hence, the adoption of work-life policies is more costly for smaller organizations.

Moreover, large organizations often have a specialized human resource staff, which is more likely to be aware of increasing demands for WLB support and will have more expertise to react to these developments (Morgan & Milliken, 1992). The proportion of women employees is also a relevant organizational characteristic affecting business case arguments (cf. Poelmans et al., 2003; Remery, Van Doorne-Huiskes and Schippers, 2003). Organizations with a substantial proportion of female workers may benefit more from the effect of work-family arrangements on productivity, absenteeism and turnover than male-dominated organizations (Lewis and Lewis, 1996; Goodstein, 1994), although the skill level of the female workforce may be an important mediator here (Ingram and Simons, 1995). Moreover, the introduction of work-life policies as recruitment and retention tools will be particularly beneficial when organizations are experiencing a shortage or strong competition for valuable workers. Ackers (2003: 227-8) concluded from his research that “the business case for harnessing human resources through work-family policies only works for certain employment groups, such as the more skilled and educated, during periods of full employment and labour scarcity.” With the introduction of new public management, business case arguments, such as size, proportion of female workers and shortage of skilled staff may have become more important in the public sector. Therefore, in case business case arguments play a role, we expect:

H2 The larger the organization, the higher the proportion of female employees, difficulties finding skilled personnel, the more WLB support offered by public organizations.

Public sector organizations act in various institutional environments in which the degree of state support varies. Some countries are characterized by extensive state support, offering generous leave arrangements, extensive public childcare and legislation encouraging flexible work arrangements, while in others legislation is more modest. Regarding the degree of state support, welfare state classifications (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999; Anttonen & Sipilä, 1996; Blossfeld & Drobnic, 2001) 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 (Germany) and Mediterranean countries (Spain, Portugal), the family plays a more central role and state provision is more modest, while in liberal countries (UK), the market is considered the main provider of work-life balance support. Public provisions indicate a strong government commitment to the combination of work and family life and create normative and coercive pressure on organizations to develop additional support. As argued before public sector organizations are more evaluated according to government standards and norms and often put forward as role models. Hence, in countries with strong state support for the combination of work and family life we expect public sector organizations to be more active in additional WLB support than in countries in which state support is more modest.

H3 The more state support in a country for the combination of work and family life the more WLB support in public sector organizations.

Countries not only differ regarding the nature and degree of state support, but also vary with respect to the prevalence of gender ideology and cultural assumptions about work and family. When gender equality is high on the political agenda, public organizations may also feel more inclined to offer WLB support. Lyness and Kropf (2005) used the Gender-related Development Index as an indicator for gender equality in their study on WLB support in organizations. Their findings show a positive relationship between national gender equality and perceived organisational work/family support. Therefore, we control for national gender equality in this study. In addition, we control for national labour market conditions by including the unemployment rate of countries.

Method

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 more than 21,000 organizations and companies with 10 or more employees. HRM managers and union representatives were interviewed over the phone. This study will only make use of the interviews with HRM managers in the public sector. For this study we excluded Greece because of a lack of variation within the public sector (only public administration organizations participated in the research). Hence, our data set contains information on 4,642 public sector organization in 20 European countries.

Measures

Dependent variable

The focus in this study is on work-life balance support (WLB support) provided by public sector organizations extending state provisions and legislation. Within the ESWT survey HRM managers were asked whether the following work-life policies are offered by the organization: allowing part-time according to employee wishes, possibility to change from full-time to part-time employment (for skilled and unskilled work), flexible working hours, working time account (possibility to save hours to take a full day off), employees using parental leave in the last three years, long term leave to take care of ill family members, long term leave to follow education or long term leave for other reasons, workplace crèche, other forms of childcare support, support for domestic work (cleaning or shopping services). For each arrangement a score of 1 is given if the organization offers this possibility or let employees use it as is the case with parental leave. Regarding part-time work a score of 1 is given only when it is mainly used because of employees wishes rather than company needs. The score for WLB support ranges between 0 and 12.

Independent variables

Organizational characteristics

To measure *sector* we constructed three dummy variables: public administration; health, social work and education; and other categories such as state owned transport or energy

companies. Public administration is assumed to be most sensitive for (political) pressures to develop work life policies, whereas organizations in other categories are assumed to be least sensitive for government pressures.

Regarding *size* of the organization a distinction was made between small organizations (less than 20 employees), small-medium sized (20-49 employees), medium-sized (50-249 employees) and large organizations (250 employees or more). The *proportion of women* was included with the following categories: less than 20 per cent female staff, 20-40, 41-60, 61-80 and more than 80 percent of staff is female. Finally, the degree in which the organization experienced *difficulties finding skilled staff* (yes/no) was included as organizational characteristic.

Country characteristics

The variable of *state support* at the time of the survey is derived from Table A1 in the appendix. Based on extensive desk research, each country was rated according to public childcare provisions, parental leave arrangements and support for flexible work arrangements on a 4-point scale (high state support (4) to low state support (1)). High childcare support (4) includes the right to a childcare place and high enrolment of both children younger than 3 years of age and older; medium-high state support (3) refers to substantial enrolment of children younger (more than 30%) and older than 3, but no entitlement to childcare places (for instance, France and Belgium); medium-low (2) implies almost no coverage of the young age group, but substantial enrolment among children older than 3; and low state support (1) refers to very limited public childcare for both age groups.

Regarding parental leave provisions, length of leave, payment, and leave for fathers were taken into account. High state support (4) was taken to refer to long, generous compensated leaves, including paternity leave and/or a specific daddy quota for fathers; medium-high state support (3) for leave arrangements was taken to indicate long leaves and leave for fathers, but more minimal financial compensation; medium-low state support (2) refers to shorter leave periods, more unpaid leave, and/or the absence of specific leave for fathers; low state support (1) implies both the absence of paternity and parental leave, as is the case in Switzerland.

State support regarding flexible work arrangements focused on the state regulations regarding the possibility to adjust working hours to caring or other responsibilities. High state support (4) refers to the entitlement for all workers to extend or reduce working hours (as is the case in the Netherlands); medium-high support (3) indicates the presence of an entitlement for working parents to reduce working hours when they have young children (for instance Sweden); medium-low support (2) indicate a right to *request* reduction of working hours; low state support (1) indicates the absence of a specific entitlement for workers or only regulations that stimulate employers. All scores were summated. The scores ranged from low (3) to high (12) state support (see Table A1 and A2).

To control for the general labour market situation in a country, we used the *unemployment rate* of a particular country in the year of data collection (see Table A1 in the appendix). The United Nations Gender-related Development Index (GDI) was included to control for the *degree of gender equality* in a country at the time of research. A high degree of gender equality may also give rise to more attention to work-life policies among employers (Den Dulk et al, 2010; Lyness & Brumit Kropf, 2005). The GDI is based on the degree of gender equality regarding life expectancy, education and income (Human Development Report 2006). Among the countries in our study Ireland, Sweden and Luxembourg have the highest score while Eastern European countries general have the lowest (Table A2).

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of all variables. Correlations can be found in table A3 in the appendix.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of all variables in the regression analysis

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total Score Work Life Balance Support	4642	4.2506	2.11469
Dummy Sector Public Administration	4642	.3283	.46965
Dummy Sector Health Social work	4642	.3361	.47241
Dummy Other Sectors	4642	.3356	.47226
Dummy female less than 20%	4642	.1422	.34927
Dummy female 20-40%	4642	.1252	.33094
Dummy female 40-60%	4642	.2064	.40475
Dummy female 60-80%	4642	.2467	.43111
Dummy female 80%-all	4642	.2686	.44330
Dummy size less than 20 employees	4642	.2012	.40095
Dummy size 20 t/m 49 employees	4642	.2411	.42777
Dummy size 50 t/m 249 employees	4642	.3277	.46941
Dummy size more than 250 employees	4642	.2301	.42092
Difficulties in finding staff for skilled jobs	4623	.2916	.45454
Unemployment Rate per country	4642	8.222	3.6065
Gender Development Index	4642	.91709	.034318
Total_State_Support	4642	7.9410	1.64180
Valid N (listwise)	4623		

Results

Work life balance support in public sector organizations in 20 European countries

The average number of work life policies offered by European public sector organizations in our sample is 4.25. Organizations in health, social work and education show the highest score on work life balance support (mean = 4.58). The average number of work life policies offered by organizations in public administration is 4.41. The other categories show the lowest score (mean = 3.76).

The number of work life policies offered by public sector organizations varies across countries. Public organizations in Finland offer most work life policies (mean = 6.07), whereas public organizations in Cyprus have the lowest number of work life policies (1.54). In general, it seems that public sector organizations in countries with a high level of state support offer more work life policies than public sector organizations in countries with lower levels of state support.

In most countries organizations in public administration and in the health sector, education and social work offer more work life policies than other public sector organizations. The difference in the average number of work life policies between organizations in public administration and organizations in the health sector, education and social work varies across countries. In some countries public administration offers the highest number of work life policies (e.g. the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland), whereas in other countries organizations in the health sector, education and social work offer the highest level of WLB support (e.g. Spain, France and Italy).

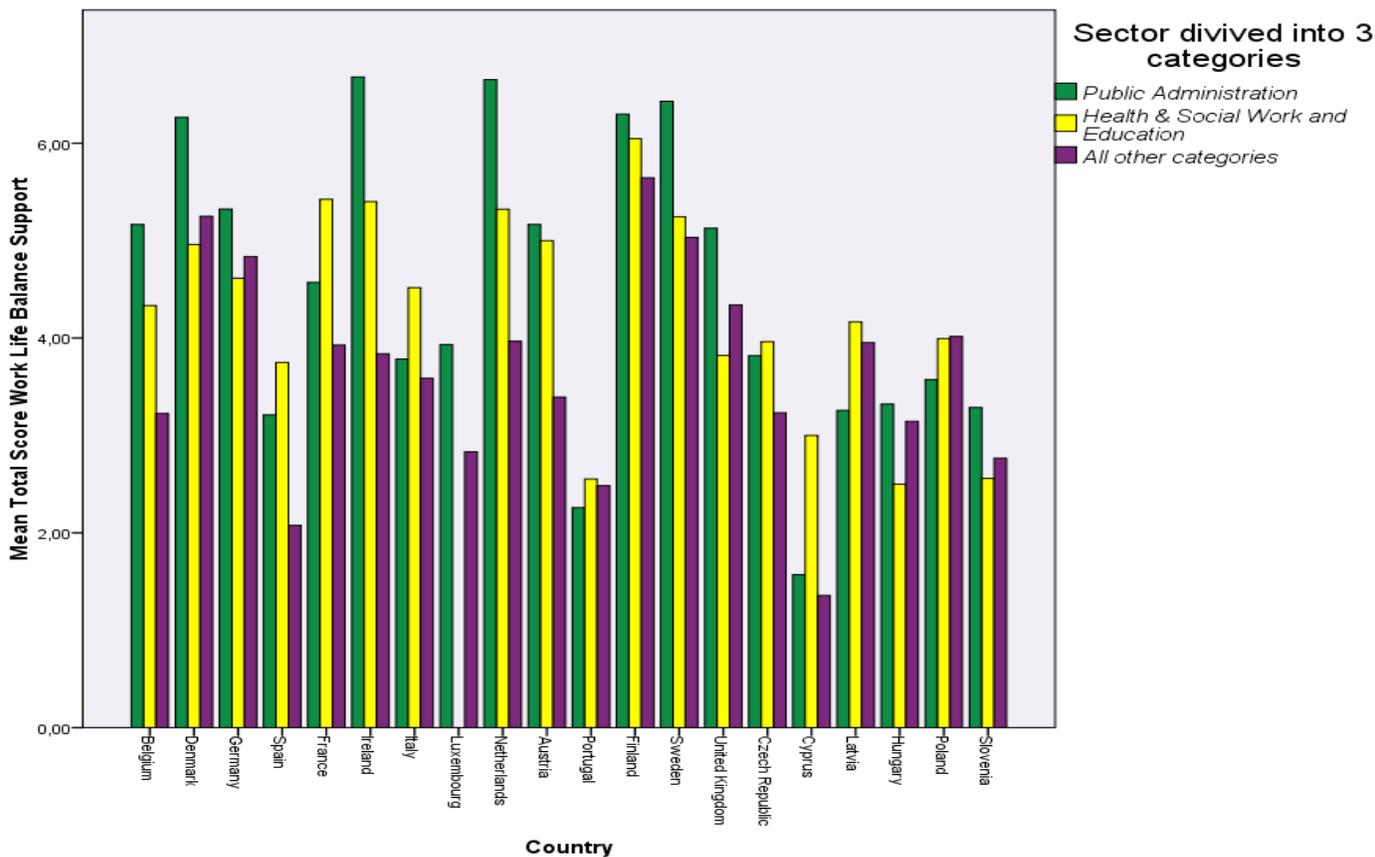


Figure 1: work life balance support in public sector organizations in 20 European countries

Multivariate analysis

In order to explain differences in WLB support in public sector organizations and test our hypotheses a multivariate analysis is conducted. Table 2 presents the results of an OLS regression analysis with the total number of work life policies as the dependent variable. In model 1 only two sector dummies are adopted as independent variables. The results show that compared to organizations in public administration organizations in the health sector, education and social work offer more work life policies, while the other sectors offer less. In this simple model our first hypothesis is not confirmed: as public administration organizations are assumed to be most sensitive to (political) pressure to offer work life policies, it was expected that they would offer the highest number of policies.

Model 2 controls for organizational characteristics that are derived from the business case argument: the proportion of female employees, the size of the organizations and difficulties in finding skilled staff. The proportion of female employees is associated with WLB support in public organizations. The relationship between the proportion of female employees and WLB support seems to be curvilinear. For organizations with less than 80 percent female employees, the proportion of female employees positively affects WLB support. Organizations with more than 80 percent female employees offer more work life policies than organizations where women are only a small minority, but probably not more than organizations where the proportion of female employees is more than 40 percent. The number of employees is positively associated with the number of work life policies. Difficulties in finding staff for skilled jobs, however, does not impact WLB support by public organizations.

After adopting the business case variables, the effect of sector has changed. The difference in the average number of work life policies between public administration and organizations in the health sector, education and social work is no longer statistically significant. Differences in work life balance support between these sectors can be explained by differences in the economic drivers for conducting work life policies. In contrast, business case arguments do not explain the differences in the average number of work life policies between public administration and the other sectors.

Table 2 Linear Regression Model

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	beta	B	beta	B	beta
(Constant)	4.407***		2.576***		-6.697***	
Public administration (ref)						
Sector Health Social work	.177*	.040	.092	.021	-.115	-.026
Other Sectors	-.643***	-.143	-.290***	-.065	-.235**	-.053
Female <20% (ref)						
Female 20-40%			.706***	.110	.662***	.103
Female 40-60%			1.040***	.199	.964***	.184
Female 60-80%			1.186***	.242	1.141***	.232
Female >80%			.918***	.193	.942***	.197
Size <20 employees (ref)						
Size 20-49 employees			.494***	.100	.443***	.090
Size 50-249 employees			1.023***	.227	1.011***	.224
Size > 249 employees			1.873***	.372	1.758***	.350
Difficulties in finding staff for skilled jobs (yes)			.054	.012	.089	.019
Unemployment Rate per country					.022*	.037
Gender Development Index					7.359***	.120
State support					.309***	.240
F	66.334***		87.925***		118.912***	
Adjusted R ²	.027		.158		.249	
N	4623		4623		4623	

*** p<.001; ** p<.01; * p<.05

Model 3 adds three country characteristics to model 2: state support regarding work life arrangements and two control variables, unemployment and the gender development index. State support is positively associated with the number of work life policies offered by organizations. The conclusion that was based on the country differences in the previous section is confirmed by the multivariate analysis: public sector organizations in countries with a high level of state support offer more work life policies than public sector organizations in countries with a lower level of state support. The higher the degree of gender equality in a country, the more work life policies are offered by public

organizations. Surprisingly, unemployment in a country is positively associated with WLB support by organizations. Adopting the country characteristics in the regression model only slightly changes the effects of the organizational characteristics. In addition, the sector differences remain the same after controlling for country characteristics.

Discussion

This paper investigated the level of WLB balance support in public sector organizations in 20 European countries. Differences in WLB support are explained by considering both institutional and economic drivers. In this paper only first, preliminary results are reported. Based on the institutional theory we expected that public administration organizations are more likely to offer WLB support than public sector organizations in health, education, social work and other sectors (hypothesis 1). The initial results only partly confirmed this hypothesis. Public administration organization do offer more WLB support than organizations in other public sectors but no significant difference was found with health, education and social work organizations after including organizational characteristics. The second hypothesis on business case arguments was confirmed with respect to size and proportion of women. Surprisingly, difficulties in findings skilled personnel did not matter significantly. The initial results also confirmed the third hypothesis regarding state support: the more state support in a country, the more WLB support in public sector organizations.

The study has some limitations and further analyses are needed. Firstly, the impact of institutional pressure was measured indirectly by looking at the impact of sector on the degree of WLB support. The data set does not include a direct measurement of institutional drivers. Secondly, so far, we have not yet taken into account that the organizations are nested in a specific country context. To deal with this multilevel problem, multilevel analyses will be performed. Thirdly, interaction effects will be added to the model. Based on the institutional theory we may expect that public administration organizations will be less affected by economic considerations than public sector organizations operating on a greater distance of national politics. To test this expectation, interaction terms on sector and organizational characteristics need to be estimated. It is also interesting to investigate whether state support and economic considerations

reinforce each other. Interaction terms will be included in future multilevel analyses. Finally, since we are working with cross-sectional data causality issues can be problematic. In particular, in relation to the impact of the proportion of female employees causality questions can be raised. In this paper we assumed that a higher proportion of female staff leads to more WLB support, however, research also shows that WLB support attracts female personnel. In fact, for many women the high degree of WLB support is a reason to choose for a job in the public sector (Steijn & Groeneveld, 2010).

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Appendix

Table A1 Leave rates, public childcare availability, and state incentives for flexible working time schemes by country

Country	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Availability public childcare	State incentives for flexible working time schemes
Austria	16 weeks (20 for medical reasons), 100% paid	No statutory paternity arrangements (collective agreements generally providing for one or two days).	Max 2 years taken by parents by periods of 3 months, except 1 month taken together. Independent right for father to minimum of 3 continuous months. Three payment options: 1) a long: €436 a month for 30 months of for 36 months if both parents apply 2) mid-range: €266 a month for 20 months (or 24 months for 2 parents) 3) a short: (€800 for 15 months or 18 months for both parents. Rate 3.	Childcare providers are mainly private nonprofit institutions. Facilities are subsidized by municipalities and the states (Länder) and are locally regulated. Sufficient number of places for ages 3-6 but not for younger children. Most children aged under 2 are looked after by a parent on parental leave at home (I&B, 2005). Enrolment children 0-3 years 10.5 %, children 3-5 83,2% ¹ . Rate 2.	Since 1 July 2004, working parents with new born children having the same employer for at least 3 years, have a right to reduce working hours until the child's seventh birthday, upon which the worker is entitled to increase hours to a full-time working week. All other parents can negotiate a reduction of working time until the child's fourth birthday. Rate 3.
Belgium	15 weeks (17 multiple births) 30 days 82% paid, after 75%	10 days to be taken with 30 days after birth, 3 days fully paid, next up to 82%	3 months per parent per child, separate flat rate leave. Rate 2	Approximately 30% of the 0-3 years old are covered by public child care provisions, and almost all 3-6 olds are enrolled in education-based care. The main problem for working parents – especially of children older than 2,5 years of age, are the opening hours of facilities. Rate 3.	Employees with minimum service of 12 months are entitled to reduce working hours by one-fifth for up to five years (6 years in public sector), or by half for one year. Rate 1.
Bulgaria	53 weeks, paid at 90% of earnings	-	Up to a child's 2nd birthday ² , 70% of previous salary. Rate 3	Formerly well-developed public childcare. However, increasing shortage of places. Informal care by extended family becomes popular.	Legislative changes and policy programs in 1990 meant to encourage flexibility; changes in Labour Law 2001 granted employers the freedom to

¹ Source OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

² Since 2009, 450 days up to child's 2nd birthday, paid at flat rate plus 6 months for the mother (unpaid) and 6 months for the father (unpaid) (Kovacheva et al., 2007; Den Dulk & Doorne-Huiskes, 2007; Moss, 2009: <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file52778.pdf>)

				Mothers in full time education free of charge, others pay minimal fee. ³ Enrolment at age 3 63.3%, age 6 84.4% ⁴ Rate 3.	reduce or increase working time and to offer part-time and flexible working arrangements. Only about 2% of employees work part time and 3% work on temporary contracts. Other flexible arrangements in companies are rare. ⁵ Rate 2.
Cyprus	16 weeks, 75 per cent paid	-	- Rate 1	Provision of childcare is limited. Children 0-3 20%, children 3-5 70,4% ⁶ . Grandmothers play an active role in the care of their grandchildren. In addition, there is an influx of domestic workers from countries like Sri Lanka and Philippines who are affordable for medium to high income households. Rate 2.	- Rate 1.
Czech	28 (37 multiple births or for single mother) 69% (up to EUR25 daily)	-	156 weeks, three payment options 1) long option: basic rate of €305 per months until age of 21 months + reduced rate (€150) until age 48 months 2) mid-range option: €305 until child reaches 36 months 3) short option: €455 until age of 24 months, only for women entitled to maternity benefit. Rate 3	less than 1% of children aged 6 months to 3 years are enrolled in childcare facilities ⁷ (P&R, 2005). Children aged 0-3 are mainly cared for by family, informal caregivers or in day nurseries (I&B, 2005). Children 3-5 86,5% enrolment ⁸ . Rate 2.	Possibility of part-time employment for working parents with children under 15 and for pregnant women. There is a legal requirement to take the needs of women caring for children into account when scheduling shift work. Rate 2.

³ Source: Kocheva et al. (2007). Comparative report on the institutional context of work and quality of life.

⁴ Source: Comparative report on the institutional context of work and quality of life (2007). Data childcare enrolment is about 2004.

⁵ Source: European Working Conditions Observatory (2007). <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/2007/01/BG0701069I.htm>

⁶ Source <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf> Enrolment in childcare in 2006.

⁷ After November 1989, the number of facilities for small children dropped sharply, partly due to an extension of the period of parental leave (Remery, Plantenga, 2005)

⁸ Source <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf> Enrolment in childcare in 2006.

Denmark	18 weeks, 100% paid	2 weeks to be taken within 14 weeks after birth, 90-100% paid	32 weeks per child to be shared + individual right of 8 unpaid weeks. 32 weeks 100% (max DKR3515 per week) paid, to be shared. Rate 4.	Full coverage. All municipalities have to offer a guarantee of childcare from the age of 9 months until the school age of 6 years. If the municipality fails, parents are entitled to economic compensation corresponding to private care with a maximum of the costs of day care facilities for children in the age group. Rate 4.	Employer and employee have to enter into an agreement on part-time work, irrespective of collective agreements. The employee is protected against dismissal due to a refusal to enter into an agreement to work part-time or for making a request to work part-time. In cases concerning dismissal in these situations, the burden of proof is shared. This means that the actual circumstances on which the employer bases his right must be established. ⁹ Rate 2.
Estonia	23 (140 days) 154 days in case of multiple births or birth complication), 100% paid	10 days, 100% of average earnings	156 weeks, two types of payment 1) Parental benefit: 100% of average earnings previous calendar year 2) Childcare benefit: flat-rate payment (EUR 38.5 per month), paid from the end of parental leave benefit until the child reaches age 3. Entitlement per family. Rate 3.	Childcare facilities for children under three years old are rare and in urban settings there is a lack of free places for every age. Local governments must guarantee places in nurseries for children who are at least 3 years old. Enrolment children 0-3 36% and children 3-5 86,1% ¹⁰ . Rate 3.	- Rate 1.
Finland	105 weekdays, 90% first 56 days; 70% after that period	18 days; possible to get 12 days extra; pay: earnings-related with minimum flat rate	158 weekdays or care leave until the child is 3 years old; pay: combination of earnings-related and flat rate. Paternity leave bonus if father takes part of leave. Rate 4.	Guarantee of municipal childcare place for children aged 1-5 full time and aged 6-12 after school. Enrolment children age 3 37,7%, children age 6 98,4% ¹¹ . Rate 4.	Possibilities of reduced working hours for working parents (working at least 30 hours) from the end of parental leave until the end of the child's second year at school. Finnish policy tries to support part-time work by paying parents a limited amount (70 euro per month) if they reduce working hours when their children are below age 3 and during

⁹ Plantenga, Remery, 2005:63

¹⁰ Source: OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

¹¹ Source: Comparative report on the institutional context of work and quality of life (2007). Data childcare enrolment is about 2004.

					their children's first two years in school. Parents have the right to request a reduction in working hours for social or health reasons, but part-time work must take the form of a six-month fixed-term contract ¹² . Rate 2.
France	1 st - 2 nd child± 16 days, 3 rd 26 days, 100% paid (max 2773 per month)	14 days (21 multiple births), first 3 days 100% paid	3 years per parent per child, 1 year if adoption, 1 st child only 6 months, 536 euro p/m. Rate 3.	Full coverage for children from 3 years old. For younger children the system is less developed and demand is not met (enrolment 42,9%) ¹³ . Approximately 20% of the children under 3 years are looked after by nursing facilities; another 20% by an (registered) individual child-minder. The others are looked after by their parents (who may be on parental leave) or by an informal arrangement. Rate 3.	Right to apply for conversion fulltime to part-time and part-time to fulltime. Request and refusal procedures and ground for objection must be stipulated in collective agreements. Rate 2.
Germany	14 weeks (18 multiple births), fully paid	No general statutory entitlement	In 2005: 300 euro per month, up to 24 months for families with an income under 30.000 euro a year ¹⁴ . Since January 1 st 2007: 12 months ¹⁵ , paid at 67% of earnings. Unpaid leave 3 years max ¹⁶ . If father takes at least 2 months of leave, overall length of benefit payment is extended to 14 months. Rate 4 ¹⁷ .	Law that children over 3 have the right to be in a financed or subsidized childcare facility. 69.5% of children aged 3 and 40.8% of children aged 6 participate in childcare. Rate 2.	Since 2001, every employee has the right to request a part-time job; the employer can refuse if the firm is unable to change its work organization; part-timer has no right to return to full- time work. Rate 2.

¹² Source: OECD (2005). Babies and bosses. Reconciling work and family life. Volume 4. Canada, Finland, Sweden, and the UK.

¹³ Source: OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

¹⁴ Source Quality of life in a changing Europe (2006). National reports on socio-economic trends and welfare policies.

¹⁵ Since 2007 plus 2 extra reserved for the partner (Kovacheva et al., 2007; Den Dulk & Doorne-Huiskes, 2007; Moss, 2009: <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file52778.pdf>)

¹⁶ Between 2008-2013 early childhood services will be improved by the state to enhance the economic sustainability of an ageing society (BIS, 2009).

¹⁷ Rating based on data 2007 in first analysis. Will be rate 3 in second analysis.

Greece	17 weeks, 100% paid	2 days, fully paid	3,5 months per parent, unpaid. Rate 2	Little coverage for children under 3 years; more extensive coverage for those aged from 3 years to mandatory school age ¹⁸ . Over 50% of nurseries are public but provision is insufficient for children aged under 3 (I&B, 2005). Enrolment children 0-3 18.2 %, children 3-5 56.1 %. ¹⁹ Rate 2.	Parents (employees with 1 year of service) have statutory right to reduce work by one hour less per day for up to 30 months after maternity leave. Mothers can reduce their working day by 2 hours until child reaches the age of 2, or 1 hour until the child turns 4 in the public and financial sectors. Rate 3.
Hungary	24 weeks, min. 4 pre-natal weeks 70 per cent paid, next allowance	5 days (social security)	Up to 2nd birthday child, 70 per cent paid of previous salary (up to a ceiling of €355 per months (70% of minimal daily wage)). Rate 3.	Little coverage (below 10%) for children below the age of 3; extensive coverage (90%) of kindergartens for the age group 3-6. When interviewed, 30% of non-working mothers referred to a lack of places in crèches; 25% answered that the cost of childcare was a reason for not going to work. Enrolment children 0-3 10.5 %, children 3-5 92,8 %. ²⁰ Rate 2.	Upon agreement with employer, the employee may work two hours less per day for the first year after maternity leave and one hour less per day for the next six months. Rate 2.
Ireland	42 weeks, 26 weeks paid 70% with minimum and maximum	No statutory paternity arrangements (but 3 paid days leave are used to be granted by employers at birth)	14 weeks per parent (in separate blocks of a minimum of 6 continuous weeks), unpaid. Rate 2	Childcare services are largely provided through paid and unpaid relatives, careers and crèches/nurseries on the private marketplace; public funding for childcare is extremely limited. Of all women working full time, 50% uses a paid child minder, 8% relies on paid relatives and 14% use formal	No general statutory entitlement. Rate 1.

¹⁸ Due to a decentralization of the provision of public child care there is, however, a severe lack of reliable data (Plantenga, Remery, 2005).

¹⁹ Source: OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

²⁰ Source: OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

				nurseries. Enrolment children 0-3 25.2 %, children 3-5 46,9 %. ²¹ Rate 1.	
Italy	20 weeks, 80 per cent paid	total leave or the part which mother is ill for 80% paid (health insurance also in case of adoption)	11 months to be shared between parents (10 lone parent). If father claims 3, one extra month paid. Child under 3: 30% paid for 6 months maximum. 30% over 6 months only if incomes below a maximum. Child aged 3-8 : unpaid. Rate 3.	Availability and fees of public childcare for children under 3 differ significantly across municipalities; most nurseries are public and subsidized but the majority of children are cared for by family or informal care-givers (I&B, 2005) ²² . Enrolment children 0-3 28,6%, children 3-5 100% ²³ . Rate 2.	Female employees (child under 6, disabled under 18) entitled to work reduced hours. Reasons for refusal employer must be appropriate. Rate 3.
Latvia	19 weeks, 2 weeks extra for women who have received continuous medical care before the 12th week of pregnancy	10 days, 80% paid of the average gross wages upon which contributions have been paid during 6 months	12 months, 70 per cent paid of the average gross wage upon which contributions have been paid during 12 months. Rate 3.	Limited public coverage for young children; fuller coverage for the age group 3-6. Enrolment children 0-3 8,1 %, children 3-5 73.5 %. ²⁴ Rate 2.	- Rate 1.
Luxembourg	16 weeks (20 multiple births), 100 per cent paid	2 days at child's birth, 100 per cent paid	6 months per parent per child, to be taken after maternity leave, before 5th birthday of child. Fulltime: €1840 per	Approximately 10% of children under 3 years are covered by formal arrangements; childcare costs are high and opening hours may not be	No general statutory entitlement. Rate 1.

²¹ Source: OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

²² Highly differentiated arrangements by age of children, geographical area and by household type (Plantenga and Remery, 2005).

²³ Source: OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

²⁴ Source: OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

			month during 6 months; part-time €20 during 12 months Rate 3.	compatible with working hours. Enrolment children 3-5 94% ²⁵ Rate 2.	
Netherlands	16 weeks, fully paid	2 days fully paid	3 months ²⁶ per parent per child, one parent at a time, unpaid. Rate 2.	More or less equilibrium between supply and demand (P&R, 2005). Subsidized by both government and/or employers. Shortage of (subsidized and nonsubsidised) childcare places for children aged 0-4. Extracurricular care for children aged 5-12 is available (I&R, 2005). Enrolment (part-time) children 0-3 53,9 %, children 3-5 74,2 %. ²⁷ Rate 3.	Working Hours Adjustment Act: legislation giving all workers (working 1 year) the right to reduce or extend working hours; employer (>10) must comply unless contrary to serious business interest; request possible once every two years. Rate 4.
Poland	First child 18 weeks, (20 second or more children, 24 multiple births)	First child four weeks, second and more 6 weeks, 100 per cent paid	36 months per family, €15 per month for 24 months; Means-tested benefit at household level for 3 years at maximum if monthly household income is less than €145. Rate 3.	Fees for nurseries are paid by parents in full (I&B, 2005). ²⁸ Pre-school childcare attendance approximately 50% in 2004. In 2006, enrolment children 0-3 8,6 %, children 3-5 41,2 %. ²⁹ Rate 2.	Since 2004, a shortened working week is possible for employees Employer is obliged to consider employee's request. Rate 2.
Portugal	17 weeks fully paid ³⁰	5 days; fully paid; 15 optional days fully paid	3 months per parent, unpaid (except for 15 daddy days, 100% paid). Rate 2	Underdeveloped and unable to meet existing needs. ³¹ Target set to cover 20% of children under 3 ³² (P&R, 2005). Subsidies only for public or non-profit private facilities. Kindergartens provide free	Parents of children up to age 12 (or with no age limit if disabled or chronically ill) are entitled to work part-time or to have flexible working hours (up to 2 year, one parent at a time).

²⁵ Source: OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

²⁶ Since 2009 26 weeks per parent, unpaid (before 13 weeks) (Kovacheva et al., 2007; Den Dulk & Doorne-Huiskes, 2007; Moss, 2009: <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file52778.pdf>

²⁷ Source <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf> Enrolment in childcare in 2006.

²⁸ Since 1989 many childcare facilities have been closed or privatised. The coverage rate dropped from 4.2% in 1990 to 2% in 2001 for children up to 3 years of age. (Plantenga and Remery, 2005).

²⁹ Source: OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

³⁰ Increased since 2009, within a framework of more equal sharing between mothers and fathers (BIS, 2009).

³¹ Source: Kocheva et al. (2007). Comparative report on the institutional context of work and quality of life.

³² In 2009, a coverage rate of 33% under 3, 90% children 3-5, 100% children aged 5 is achieved (BIS, 2009).

				childcare for 5 hours/day for 3-6 year olds (I&B, 2005). Enrolment children 0-3 43,6 %, children 3-5 48,6 %. ³³ Rate 3.	Employer may refuse on business grounds or hard-to-fill vacancy but requires an opinion from the tripartite Commission for Equality at Work and Employment. Rate 3.
Slovenia	15 weeks (105 days) 100% of the average earning on the previous 12 months	13 weeks, 100% paid during the first 15 days remaining 75 days, social security based on the minimum	260 days (37 weeks), 100% of average earnings, half for each parent, possible to transfer Rate 3.	Growing inclusion of young children in kindergartens; in 2002/3 more than 40% of the 1-3 years olds were enrolled in (public) kindergartens. Of the children aged 4-6 years the enrolment rate is 65%. There are, however, large differences between urban and rural areas. Rate 3.	One of the parents who minds and cares for a child until the child is three years old or a parent who cares for a child whose medical condition calls for more intensive care, has the right to part-time work. ³⁴ Rate 3.
Spain	16 weeks (18 if 3 or more) 100% up to a ceiling of EUR 3075 a month.	15 days (2 more if multiple births), fully paid	3 years per parent per child, unpaid Reduction daily work time of 30-50%, unpaid. Rate 2.	Public facilities are subsidized. Coverage for age group 0-2 is very low but vast majority of age 3-5 are in subsidized public childcare (I&B, 2005). Enrolment children 0-3 33,9 %, children 3-5 97.1 %. ³⁵ Rate 2.	Reduction of working hours (1/8, a third or half of normal duration) to take care for a child until the eight year or to look after a disabled child can be requested and should be considered by the employer as far as possible. Since 2007, an employee has the right to adjust his/her working hours to comply with family obligations as negotiated in a collective or enterprise agreement. Employers have to inform employees wishing to move from full-time to part-time/part-time to full-time of suitable vacancies. Rate 2.
Sweden	50 days in jobs involving risk to the	10 days; paid 80% of earnings ³⁷	480 days ³⁸ shared, 60 each. First 390 80% paid, 90 days at flat rate. Rate 4.	All children between 1 and 12 years have the right to childcare, pre-school	Right to reduce the working time by up to 25% until child is eight years). Possible unpaid reduction in hours for

³³ Source: OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

³⁴ Source: Plantenga, Remery (2005:63)

³⁵ Source: OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

	fetus or 60 days allocation of parental leave ³⁶ 80% up to a ceiling of EUR 43,070 (min. EUR 19 per day).			children (1-5 years) on a full-time or part-time basis and school children (6-12 years of age) are entitled to care after school-hours e.g. in leisure time centers ³⁹ . Rate 4.	parents of children up to 2nd grade. Right to return to full-time job at the end of the period. Employer should accommodate employee wishes for reduced hours. Rate 3.
Switzerland	16 weeks, 80% up to a max of SFR 172 per day	-	- Rate 1.	Undersupply of childcare places in many regions. Some facilities are subsidized. Terms are at the discretion of Municipalities (I&B, 2005). Enrolment children 0-3 unknown, children 3-5 38,0 %. ⁴⁰ Rate 1.	No general statutory entitlement but employer must take into account family responsibilities of employees with children up to 15 or relatives in need of care when setting work and rest times . Rate 2.
UK	52 weeks of which 6 weeks 90% of earnings, 33 weeks flat rate.	14 days; €17.18 week or 90% of earnings if this is less ⁴¹	13 weeks per child (18 if disabled and both working parents), unpaid. Rate 2.	most of the places created are part-time and targeted at 3 and 4 years olds (P&R, 2005). 5 sessions/week of 2.5 hours of free care is provided for 3-5 year-olds in nursery school (Immervoll and Barber, 2005). Enrolment children 0-3 39,7 %, children 3-5 91,0 %. ⁴² Rate 2.	State-run work-life balance campaign in 2000; From 2003, right to request for flexible working hours (change in number of hours; timing of hours; location of work; flextime) if child under 6 years or a disabled child under 18 years, or to care for an adult; duty to consider from employer. Rate 2.

³⁶ Since 2009: 2 weeks obligatory before of after delivery. Indefinite at 80% of earnings if job is a risk to foetus (BIS, 2009)

³⁷ In January 2008 the payment level was reduced to 77,6 per cent. Since July 2008, the 'gender equality bonus' offers the parent who has stayed at home the longest a bonus when he/ she goes back to work and the other parent uses the Parental leave (BIS, 2009).

³⁸ In 2009 this became 420 days (Kovacheva et al., 2007; Den Dulk & Doorne-Huiskes, 2007; Moss, 2009: <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file52778.pdf>)

³⁹ There is an increase in the number of children attending pre-school because of a new right for children of unemployed parents and parents on parental leave to attend pre-school (Plantenga and Remery, 2005).

⁴⁰ Source: OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

⁴¹ Government ambition to allow fathers to take up to six months additional leave during the child's first year if the mother returns to work before end of maternity leave.

⁴² Source: OECD (2006). Enrolment in childcare in 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/13/37864698.pdf>

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Sources

- Maternity, paternity, and parental leave: OECD data (PF2.1: Key characteristics of parental leave systems), policies implemented at January 1st 2007

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/45/26/37864482.pdf> .

See footnotes for (additional) comments based on (Kovacheva et al., 2007; Den Dulk & Doorne-Huiskes, 2007; Moss, 2009:

<http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file52778.pdf>) and BIS (2009).

- Availability public childcare: Plantenga and Remery (2005), based on national reports. Whenever available, complemented with data from Immervol and Barber (2005).

- State incentives for flexible working time schemes: OECD Family Database (2010: p.8), policies implemented at January 1st 2007.

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/1/52/43199600.pdf>

Table A2 State support, unemployment rate and GDI by country, 2005

Data 2005	WLB state support	Unemployment rate	GDI	
			Rank	Value
Austria	8	5.8	17	0.937
Belgium	8	8.4	12	0.943
Bulgaria	7	10.1	44	0.814
Cyprus	4	5.3	27	0.900
Czech	7	8.0	28	0.881
Denmark	10	4.9	15	0.940
Estonia	7	7.9	34	0.856
Finland	11	8.6	11	0.943
France	8	10.0	14	0.940
Germany	8	9.3	21	0.928
Hungary	7	7.1	30	0.867
Ireland	4	4.3	4	0.951
Italy	8	7.7	18	0.934
Latvia	6	8.9 ⁴³	41	0.843
Luxembourg	6	4.6	6	0.949
Netherlands	9	6.2	9	0.945
Poland	7	17.8	33	0.859
Portugal	8	7.5	26	0.902
Slovenia	9	6.5	24	0.908
Spain	6	9.1	19	0.933
Sweden	11	5.6	5	0.949
Switzerland	4	4.1	10	0.944
UK	6	4.8	16	0.938

Sources:

Human Development Report 2006: Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2006/>

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>

⁴³ Employment in Europe, data about 2005 (2006: 267)

Table A3 Correlations

		Correlations							
		Total Score Work Life Balance Support	Sector divided into 3 categories	Female proportion	Number of employees	Problems of establishmen t: difficulties in finding staff for skilled jobs	Unemployme nt Rate per country	Gender Development Index	Total_State_ Support
Total Score Work Life Balance Support	Pearson Correlation	1,000	-,126**	,178**	,333**	,045**	-,071**	,235**	,331**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000	,000	,002	,000	,000	,000
	N	4642,000	4642	4642	4642	4623	4642	4642	4642
Sector divided into 3 categories	Pearson Correlation	-,126**	1,000	-,211**	-,075**	,033*	,059**	-,067**	-,034*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000	,000	,025	,000	,000	,020
	N	4642	4642,000	4642	4642	4623	4642	4642	4642
Female proportion	Pearson Correlation	,178**	-,211**	1,000	,007	,023	,020	-,034*	,082**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		,632	,123	,166	,020	,000
	N	4642	4642	4642,000	4642	4623	4642	4642	4642
Number of employees	Pearson Correlation	,333**	-,075**	,007	1,000	,129**	-,001	,050**	,071**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,632		,000	,941	,001	,000
	N	4642	4642	4642	4642,000	4623	4642	4642	4642
Problems of establishment: difficulties in finding staff for skilled jobs	Pearson Correlation	,045**	,033*	,023	,129**	1,000	-,070**	,020	-,021
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,025	,123	,000		,000	,183	,160
	N	4623	4623	4623	4623	4623,000	4623	4623	4623
Unemployment Rate per country	Pearson Correlation	-,071**	,059**	,020	-,001	-,070**	1,000	-,507**	-,191**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,166	,941	,000		,000	,000
	N	4642	4642	4642	4642	4623	4642,000	4642	4642
Gender Development Index	Pearson Correlation	,235**	-,067**	-,034*	,050**	,020	-,507**	1,000	,500**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,020	,001	,183	,000		,000
	N	4642	4642	4642	4642	4623	4642	4642,000	4642
Total_State_Support	Pearson Correlation	,331**	-,034*	,082**	,071**	-,021	-,191**	,500**	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,020	,000	,000	,160	,000	,000	
	N	4642	4642	4642	4642	4623	4642	4642	4642,000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).