

Workplace support, work-life balance and flexible working

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Introduction

- Increase in workplace support: work-life policies
- Increasing attention for flexible work arrangements: time/spatial flexibility
- Flexible working a solution for WLB?
 - Small effect on WFC
 - May lead to work more rather than less
- Need to look at the conditions under which flexible working is practiced
 - Specifically look at social support regarding the practice of flexible work arrangements

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Workplace support: policy-practice gap

- Availability versus utilization
- Individual level factors
- Workplace context:
 - Crucial role of managers and a supportive organizational culture
 - The structure of work: autonomy and task interdependence
 - The design of policies
- The Private social context: rising expectations

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Flexible working: push towards integration of life domains towards blurring boundaries

- Boundary management preferences: separation and integration
- Skills: planning behavior, self-regulation, ability to avoid distractions
- Increasing number of choices and decisions
- Flexibility may also deplete resources (Allen et al., 2013)

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Private social context

- Responsiveness: e.g. being able to work undisturbed
- Substitute for private tasks
- Flexibility of the partner, care facilities, schools

Workplace context

- Flexible working is about organizational change
- Supportive organizational culture
- Colleague support:
 - Responsiveness: act of reconnecting the teleworker to the workplace
 - Passive and low effort behavior: adapt communication, accepting small extra efforts like planning meetings
 - Substitution: taking over tasks at the office (Wiebusch, den Dulk & Abendroth, 2017)
- Supervisor support (FSSB, Hammer et al., 2009)
 - Emotional, instrumental, role model and creative WLB management

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Workplace context

- Formalized policies
 - may reduce stigmas, however they may also endanger the need for flexibility
 - A formalized context leads to higher demands for social support
 - Break with traditional way of working
 - Being flexible in response to irregular events
 - Supervisors need to realize a flexible practice
- Job autonomy and scheduling power increase independence and reduces but not diminish the need for social support

Ezra

Workplace context: mobilizing social support

- To mobilize social support at the workplace:
 - Mutual trust: open communication
 - Past supportive behavior: activate supportive behavior from others
 - Formal regulations and organizational self-image as family-friendly: sense of entitlement

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When does flexible working work for WLB?

- **Context: creating the ability to use flexibility as a resource**
 - Introduction of a flexible working scheme and collective adaptive behavior
 - Supportive managers
 - Social support from colleagues
- **Individual perspective:**
 - Boundary management: knowing your priorities in work-life (Annink & den Dulk, 2012; Fenner & Renn, 2010)
 - Capacity of self control (Allen et al., 2013)
- **Household context:**
 - social support and flexibility