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The personal-time bankruptcy

A case study of how working-at-home employees justifies work-life imbalance by time-lending

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Abstract

- Title:** The personal-time bankruptcy: *A case study of how working-at-home employees justifies work-life imbalance by time-lending*
- Course:** BUSN49, Degree Project in Managing People, Knowledge and Change – Master level, Business Administration.
- Author:** Jonas Sennerstig
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- Key words:** Work-life-balance, at-home workers, technology, boundary less work, boundary management, border theory, work-life spillover
- Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to expand on and to nuance the understanding of the work-life balance literature and how at-home workers perceives work-life-balance.
- Methodology:** The study has used a qualitative research method with an interpretative knowledge view in order to gain in-depth understanding of the perception of work-life-balance by the individual. This has been done through in-depth semi structured interviews at a student Nation in Lund.
- Theoretical perspectives:** The study takes its starting point in the existing work-life-balance literature but questions border and boundary theory, that is based on the assumption of work and non-work being physically separated, in order to further investigate how the lack of spatial separation between the two domains affects work-life-balance.
- Conclusions:** The results of the study implicate that a lack of spatial distance between work and home has a significant impact on how work-life balance is perceived due to the difficulties to disengage from work and to establish boundaries between the two domains. Further, time-loans are found to be a technique used to obtain work-life-balance. The author argues that these loans also can take more extreme forms and introduces the concepts of “time-pawning” and “time-bankruptcy”.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The introduction of new technologies is changing the way we work. Smartphones, laptops, Wi-Fi etc. has created opportunities for flexible work arrangements to a larger extent than previously has been possible. Remote work, where the employees performs their work in their home is a global trend on the rise which challenges the conception of family and work as being two physically separated domains (Sullivan, 2000; Lewis, 2003; Eddelston and Mulki 2015).

These new technologies facilitate constant availability and allows us to work anytime and anywhere we like. This has led to a gradual shift in the boundaries between private life and work which heightens the relevance of discussing the concept of work-life-balance (WLB). (Kaiser and Ringlstetter, 2011; Cambell Clark, 2000; Sarker, S., Xiao, X., Sarker, S., & Ahuja, M. 2012).

For the employer, remote work and flexible work arrangements offers benefits like reduced need for office space, increased productivity and a possibility to locate workers close to customers which makes this a lucrative opportunity to reduce costs (Breugh and Farabee, 2012). For the employees these arrangements also can have many benefits like for example flexibility and autonomy in the work. The employees can also save time through eliminating the daily commuting and control where, when and how work is done which could benefit WLB by reducing the conflict between work and family demands. (Lautsch, Kossek and Eaton, 2009; Breugh and Farabee, 2012; Derks & Bakker, 2010). But there is also a down side, Mazmanian, Orlikowski & Yates (2006) underline that new technologies and these work arrangements also can have a negative impact on WLB through the intrusion into one's personal sphere and by creating techno-stress. It is also argued that the integration of the work role and the non-work role by a blurring of the borders between the two domains comes at a price and that this domain integration could be a root to feelings of work-life-imbalance since it is not clear if the work role or the family role is the one which should be prioritized in the home (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008; Park & Jex, 2011; Eddelston and Mulki 2015).

The existing WLB-theory (e.g. Clark, 2000; Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate, 2000; Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015; Nippert-Eng, 1996 and Kreiner et al., 2009) is based on the assumption that the home and the work domain is physically separated (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009; Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005). This might not be applicable to the situation of remote worker since their workplace in fact is embedded in the

family domain (Eddelston and Mulki, 2015) and it is evident that there is a clear gap in the theory regarding remote work and work performed in the home that needs to be addressed. (Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Kossek, Kalliath, & Kalliath, 2012) Some studies of the phenomena of having work and home at the same physical place has been made, for example Butler and Modaffs (2008) study of in-home day care providers or Shen, Miao, Lehto and Zhaos (2015) study of Bed and Breakfast Innkeepers, but it is still an theoretical area that needs further research in order to explore and nuance the literature of working at home further in order to better understand how the lack of spatial separation of the two domains affects the individuals experience of WLB. Shen et. al. (2015)

In this case study a student organization, a so called Nation, in the university town of Lund is studied. In the case organization work is taken place at the same physical place as where the employees live and there is a high degree of integration between the work and non-work domains and it could be argued that the environment is almost borderless.

1.2 Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to expand on and nuance the understanding of the work-life balance literature by questioning the assumption in the existing work-life balance literature that work and home is two physically separated spheres. The study further aims to contribute to the understanding of how at-home workers are affected by the lack of spatial separation between the work and non-work domains and how work-life-balance is perceived by the at-home workers.

1.3 Research Questions

- How does the absence of physical distance between work and home affect one's perception of work-life balance?

- What do individuals with an absence of physical distance between work and home do in order to obtain work-life-balance?

2. Methodology

2.1. Philosophical grounding/Meta-theoretical starting point

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how work life balance is perceived by the respondents in this study. With this in mind an interpretivist approach seems to be the most suitable since this paradigm states that social reality “is the product of the subjective and inter-subjective experience of individuals” (Morgan, 1980). The author of this thesis agrees with Prasad (2005) who argues that the human interpretation is the starting point for developing knowledge about the world and therefore this study has its focus on understanding the socially constructed reality. An emphasis will be given to analyzing how the respondents describe their own situation and when analyzing the empirical material, the focus will be on trying to reveal multiple realities rather than looking for a single reality which is in line with the interpretivistic approach. (Geertz, 1973).

2.2. Empirical data collection

Conducting a case study with a specific research object is in line with the qualitative research approach since this will enable to cover the complexity of the investigated object (Bryman and Bell 2011). Therefore the collection of empirical material was done through six in-depth interviews with employees and former employees at the studied research object. All the respondents in this thesis either hold a full-time position at the Nation or has previously done so. In order to keep the respondents' answers anonymous fictive names have been used. Since this thesis does not have any gender focus and gender is not perceived to be of relevance when interpreting the interviewee's answers, male respondents could have received female fictive names and vice versa, this in order to further enhance the anonymization. Age is also not believed to have any impact on the respondent's answers and therefore this will not be included in the presentation of the employees.

Before the in-depth interviews two informal pilot interviews were conducted. These interviews were focused on investigating the interviewee's experiences of their work at the Nation and what challenges they had come across. Together with the author's preunderstanding of the organization these interviews were helpful when identifying general themes to investigate further while the in-depth interviews provided the deeper understanding needed for the analysis. The case organization will throughout the study be referred to as “the Nation” and not by its real name in order to ensure anonymization for the organization and as previously mentioned,

all the participation respondents have also been offered anonymization in order for them to be able to speak more freely.

The interviews have had a semi-structured design in which a number of pre-determined questions have been formulated but an emphasis has been given to flexibility and the encouragement of the respondents to answer freely and expand upon their answers. (Bryman and Bell, 2011) This rather loose interview structure gave the opportunity for the interviews to elaborate on their answers in order to provide rich and descriptive empirical material. When needed follow-up questions were asked in order for the respondents to further develop their answers. (Kvale, 1996). During the interviews the interviewer had the opportunity to ask not pre-determined questions in order to further investigate interesting areas that the respondents had touched upon in previous answers.

The collection of empirical data and the data analysis were conducted simultaneously which in line with the hermeneutic tradition made it possible to move between the part and the whole and understanding and pre-understanding. Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000) argues that this method facilitates for a deeper understanding of the research topic which will lead to a higher validity. Further the author tried to stay open for alternative interpretations of the empirical material in order to avoid the authors own pre-conceptions and biases to affect the findings.

All interviews were conducted in Swedish since this is the native language of both the researcher and the respondents. The belief of the author is that this enabled the participants to speak more freely and enable richer descriptions of their thoughts and experiences. When translating the interviews a few modifications have been made for better understanding but the author's ambition has been to keep the modifications to an absolute minimum to ensure that the provided statements are as authentic as possible. Thus it is important to be aware that the translation both from Swedish to English and from talking language and to writing language could have an effect on the quotations but even though word order and choice of words at sometimes not are identical it is the authors belief the essence of the quotes is the same. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviews which provided the possibility to go back and go through the empirical material again. The exception is the two first pilot interviews that was rather informal and therefore not recorded.

Some of the interviews were conducted over Skype when a physical meeting was not possible. It is the authors' opinion that even though a physical meeting would be preferable, the interviews conducted over Skype is as relevant as the physical interviews and could be given

the same weight as the physical interviews. It is important to have in mind that the author and the respondents has a personal relation and that this could have an impact on the answers given. The author is under the impression that his personal relationship with the respondents did not have a negative impact on the respondents. On the contrary it sometimes felt like the respondents where more open in their answers since a mutual bond of trust was already established. The respondents could probably also speak more freely since they knew that the interviewer had a rich understanding of the subject and context. This might have resulted in more genuine answers since they did not have to adjust their answers in the same way as they would have needed to do in order for being understandable for a person with less understanding for the context and organizational specific language.

It could be argued that a richer collection of empirical material could have been made by combining the interviews with observation at the Nation but due to the limited scope of the thesis the author has chosen not to make any formal observation. Since the author has previous knowledge and experiences from the organization he assesses that the absence of alternative data collection methods does not affect the trustworthiness of the study negatively in any noticeable extent. The author makes the judgement that the contribution of formal observations would not have contributed to the study to an extent that would justify the conduction of observation on the expense of less interviews.

2.3. Data analysis

The analysis process what not a linear process with clear steps but rather a process that was ongoing and done simultaneously with the data collection. According to Meeriam (2002) continuously analyzing the material throughout the research process makes it easier to identify trustworthy and credible findings. By analyzing and reflecting between the interviews it was possible to learn from each interview and adapt the process accordingly to the new knowledge which is in line with Alvesson (2011, p.46) who argues that interviews benefits “if practical work is guided by on-going considerations of interpretation”.

All interviews where recorded in order to be able to go back and revisit the respondents’ answers. In line with Ryan and Bernards (2003) suggestion, the collected data was gone through several times since they suggest that this is one of the easiest ways of identifying themes. First by listening through the recorded material and then by reading the transcribed material.

The material was then gone through more thoroughly in order to find repetitions, similarities and differences. At this stage themes were identified through searching for repetitions,

metaphors and analogies (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). When doing this the research question was kept in mind in order to be able to investigate what was relevant for the researched subject and what could be reduced. Interesting quotes were collected from the transcribed material and thereafter related to the theory. The process of identifying themes and labeling them was a time-consuming process since different statements could belong to several themes. During the process the themes were re-labeled and the empirical material was sorted and re-sorted several times in order to make the themes and the labeling of them as suitable as possible.

2.4. Limitations and credibility

As described by Alvesson and Sköldböck in their book *Reflexive Methodology* (2009) the relationship between understanding and preunderstanding is illustrated by the circle of alethic hermeneutics in which the understanding of a phenomena is facilitated by the preunderstanding of the phenomena and the understanding helps us to judge our preunderstanding.

In qualitative research it is not only the participants of the study that has multiple realities but also the researcher and the readers. The construction of in-depth knowledge could at times be interfered by our own pre-understanding that works as a complication that hinders us to get further understanding of the phenomena investigated. (Creswell, 2003; Alvesson and Sköldböck, 2009) This complication is highly relevant to keep in mind for the reader of this study since the author beforehand had a rich pre-understanding of the investigated phenomena which proposes a risk of him influencing the findings by letting his own interpretative lens, that is created by his previous knowledge and experiences, affect the collection and analysis of the research data.

As pointed out by Alvesson and Sköldböck (2009) qualitative research is characterized by a high level of subjectivity which makes it essential for the researcher to stay self-reflective and be aware of his own interpretations and pre-understandings. The author is aware of the fact that his subjective opinions about what is relevant and interesting is likely to have influenced the empirical process (Meeriam, 2002) but he has tried to minimize the influence of this by having this risk in mind during the process of gathering of empirical data.

3. Literature Review

3.1. The concept of work-life balance

The separation between work and private life is a quite new occurrence that is a result of the industrial revolution. Before, the main reason for production were for one's own consumption which meant little or no separation between work and private life but due to the industrialization a distance between the two territories started to emerge. With this, two different roles within the household emerged, the man as the "breadwinner" and the woman as the "homemaker" (Clark, 2000 p.748). Changes in society has now made these roles obsolete and with females entering the labor market during the 1970's the care of the children was no longer only the responsibility of the mother and with this shift towards dual income households came the concerns of Work-life balance. (Kelly and Moen, 2007; Jain and Nair, 2013).

A more recent driver for the last years growing interest for WLB is the recent technological advancements that has led to a work intensification since it has provided an opportunity to work not exclusively from the office (Davies, 2013). Guest (2002) further argues that these advancements have increased the pressure for longer working hours leading to less personal quality time. Jain and Nair (2013) further suggests that globalization could be a contributing factor providing the opportunity to work across time-zones. Sturges and Guest (2004) argues that there among the younger generation of the work force is a development towards a renewed awareness of family values who wants to focus more on their personal lives and on finding a balance between their work life and their personal needs.

Even though there is an increased interest for the concept of WLB during the recent years (Sturges and Guest, 2004) there is no clear definition of the concept. For example, Greenblatt (202, p.179) describes it as the "*absence of unacceptable levels of conflict between work and non-work demands*" which is similar to Clarks (2000. p.751) definition of WLB as "*satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict*". Fisher and Layte (p.4, 2003) argues that WLB could be measured by looking at one's "*proportion of free time, the overlap of work and other dimensions of life, and the time spent with other people*", while Guest (2002, p. 263) explains it as "*a perceived balance between work and rest of life*".

In an attempt to clarify what definition will be used when discussing WLB in this thesis we will look at the concept by its different words separately. According to Guest (2002), who also are trying to define the concept by looking at the words separately, "*Work*" could be defined as work performed in exchange for payment which is similar to the definition given by Oxford

English Dictionary (2016) who defines non-work as: “*The sphere of life or experience which is not related to paid employment or work; time not spent at work*” which would suggest that work is the opposite. In common for these two definition is the criterion of payment which for this thesis will be a bit problematic since even though the participants are being paid the work takes place in a non-profit organization and the salary is only a symbolic amount in relation to the amount of work. Therefore, in this thesis work will be regarded as something that can be both paid and unpaid. This view is shared by Lewis (2003) who defines work as obligated time and leisure as the antithesis namely non-obligated which is freely chosen by intrinsic motivation. Further, the term “*life*” will be defined as the opposite of work. Similar terms like e.g. non-work, family (as in work-family conflict), leisure and so on will in this thesis be treated as synonyms if nothing else are said.

Having defined the terms “*work*” and “*life*” we have to define the term “*balance*” which is a much harder thing to do and probably the reason to why there have not been an agreement about one single definition. If we look at the previous mentioned definitions one can see that they all in some way have different approaches to WLB. To start with, we have what is referred to as the conflict approach. Greenhouse and Beutell (1985) discusses three types of conflicts, *time-based-*, *strained based-* and *behavior based conflict* and argues that conflict emerges when the requirements of one role leads to difficulties to fulfill the demands of the other role. When thinking of WLB most people probably think of the time balance but one should also keep in mind that the other factors mentioned by Greenhouse and Beutell (1985) also should be kept into account when discussing WLB. For example, not being able to combine the expectations on oneself in the different domains or the strains from work like fatigue and burnout could cause as much conflict as the distribution of time. This will be further discussed in the paragraphs concerning spill-over theory and border theory.

Secondly we have what usually is referred to as the balance approach. In a later study Greenhouse et. al. (2002) discusses WLB from this point of view in which WLB are divided into different types of balance, *time-balance*, *involvement balance* and *satisfaction balance*. Time-balance refers to the distribution of time between the two domains, involvement-balance the degree of commitment oneself has toward the respective role and lastly, satisfaction balance describes the degree of satisfaction one has in each role. With all this different kind of conflicts and types of balances taken into account it is not easy to find an all-embracing definition of the concept of “balance”. It gets even harder when one has to take into account from whose

perspective balance should be judged, is it an objective phenomenon or is it subjective where the individual makes the judgment about when balance exists?

Balance in general is defined as “*an equal distribution of weight of amount*” (Oxford English dictionary, 2016) but with the different kinds of balance discussed in the previous paragraph (time-balance, involvement-balance and satisfaction-balance) in mind, one could question if this definition is applicable when discussing WLB. Some scholars (see Greenhouse, Collins and Shaw, 2003; Kumar and Chakraborty, 2013; Kallash and Krause, 2012) argues that WLB could be defined with this objective view and argues that balance exists when the individual spends the same amount of time on private life and work. Sparks, Cooper, Fried and Shirom (1997) supports this objective view and points out that there is a positive correlation between the number of hours worked and unhealthy and suggests that when exceeding 48 hours of work per week. This is also agreed upon by Guest (2002, p 264) who claims that “*certain patterns of behavior, such as very long hours at work, has led to legislative and social attempts to define balance more objectively*”. A recent example of this is the new French legislative initiative who gives the employees “*the right to disconnect*” which forces companies with more than 50 employees to draw up a charter of good conduct and set hours when the employees are not supposed to answer to or send emails (BBC, 2016). Even though these kinds of initiatives could be a way of help people reach a better WLB one could question if it is reasonable to evaluate WLB from an objective perspective.

Nam (2014) and Jain and Nair (2013) argues that WLB is a subjective perception of one’s personal situation and question if everyone has the same needs and preferences regarding boundaries between work and private life. If not, a subjective approach to WLB should be more appropriate than an objective. This view is shared by Thomas (2014, p.284) who defines balance as “*a subjective construct, as each person’s idea of what constitutes balance differs*” and by Kossek et al. (2006, p. 351) who argues that “*Preferences for work and family are socially constructed, and there is some social choice in how individuals define boundaries*”. The author agrees with Guest (2002) who argues that what is balance for someone could be experienced as imbalance for the next one and acknowledges that an equal distribution of time is neither a realistic nor a desirable way to create balance. Balance should instead be understood as a sense of stability for the individual and that this will be highly dependent on the circumstances. (Hoff, et. al , 2005; Gröpel and Kuhl, 2006). Lastly one should also consider Brynes (2005, p. 55-56) reminder about how flexibility and autonomy impacts the perception of WLB when he argues that: “*work life balance is about people having a measure of control*

over when, where and how they work". This will be discussed further in the section 3.1.2. when discussing Boundary theory.

Since this thesis takes a subjective approach with the purpose to investigate how WLB is perceived, WLB will be discussed from a subjective starting-point rather than an objective point of view. Therefore, a combination of the definition used by Clark (2000) and Guest (2002) will be used when referring to WLB which in this thesis will be defined as:

"A by the individual perceived balance between work and rest of life with a minimum of role conflict".

3.1.1. Border theory

In her article "*Work/Family Border Theory: A new Theory of Work/Life Balance*" Clark (2000) introduces work/family border theory. She suggests that an individual's private and professional domain are separated by borders and that these borders could be constructed in three different ways: The borders could be physical, psychological or time based. Physical borders are made up of for example walls or distance and most work are carried out in another location than where the private life takes place, in for example an office or at least a home office which in some way are separated from the rest of the home. Similar to these kinds of borders is the time-based borders that uses time to separate work from private life by for example dividing the day in to working hour and leisure time. The last type of border, the psychological border separates the professional and the private life by the way we behave in the different environments. A behavior required in the professional area might not be suitable in the other domain.

Clark (2000) suggests that it is the individual who draws up these borders and decides to which extent the two different domains are separated or integrated. Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate (2000) argues that the strength of the borders and to which extent an individual separates the private and the professional domain is a result of personal preference. Some individuals might have a fondness for a distinct separation of the two domains which will result in the creation of strong borders in order to maintain the two areas separated.

An individual who on the other hand does not have that much against an exchange between the two domains will most likely create rather weak borders. Clark (2000) discusses the strength of the borders in terms of permeability, flexibility and blending which she argues are the three different factors that determine the strength of the borders. Flexibility in this case means the borders ability to either expand or contract in order to accommodate the demands of the other

domain. Permeability refers to what degree an overlap between the domains is acceptable. These two factors determine the third, blending. Scoring high on the two previous will indicate a high degree of blending and vice versa.

Central in the Border theory is the concepts of border crossers and border keepers. The border crossers are the individual who moves in between the two different domains, in this case the employee, and the border keepers are persons that have a significant influence in the respective domain. This could for example be a spouse in the private area and colleague or supervisor in the professional area (Clark, 2000).

3.1.2. Boundary theory

Boundary theory discusses how individuals try to organize and simplify their everyday life by the creation of boundaries between work and family (Ashforth et al., 2000; Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015). Nippert-Eng (1996) and Kreiner et al. (2009) discuss how “mental fences” is created around the work and the family role in order to manage the different roles which accordingly to Dumas and Sanchez-Burks (2015) could be a helpful tool when trying to handling the different responsibilities, identities and relationships of the different roles.

Boundary theory is similar to the previous discussed work–family border theory by Clark (2000) since both theories share the view of the separation of work and family a social construction created by the individual (Eddleston and Mulki, 2015). The difference is that boundary theory focus on *“how individuals engage in daily role transitions as part of their organizational life”* (Ashforth et al., 2000, p. 472), whereas border theory focuses on *“how individuals manage and negotiate the work and family sphere and borders between them in order to attain balance”* (Clark, 2000, p. 751). Central in the boundary research is the concept “Integrators” and “Segmentors” which describes behavioral patterns of how workers constructs, removes and maintains boundaries between the two domains. (Eddleston and Mulki, 2015) Kreiner et al., (2009) and Rothbard et.,al (2005) argues that different individual’s boundary management strategy ranges from full integration to full segmentation of the two areas.

The factors determining the degree of integration and segmentation is flexibility and permeability (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000). *“Flexibility reflects the extent to which a boundary can expand or contract thereby allowing one domain to accommodate the demands of the other. Permeability captures the degree to which elements from one domain are allowed to enter the other.”* (Eddleston and Mulki, 2015). A high degree of flexibility and permeability supports a higher degree of integration while boundaries that are inflexible and scores low on

permeability instead supports segmentation. Boundaries described as flexible and permeable support integration whereas those described as inflexible and impermeable support segmentation. (Eddleston and Mulki, 2015).

Which boundary management strategy is the superior is not possible to determine. Kossek et al. (2012) argues that being able to control the work-family boundaries and adjust it accordingly to one's personal preferences is more important than which strategy is applied. It is argued that a greater degree of integration allows individuals to cope with multiple domain since the integration allows them to handle problems in any domain (Powell and Greenhaus; 2010 Rothbard et.,al 2005). Segmentation on the other hand is argued to buffer negative spillover between the different roles (Ashforth et al., 2000). In the upcoming paragraph we will discuss work-life spillover more in detail in order to see how it affects WLB.

3.1.3. Work-life spillover

As discussed in the previous paragraph, segmentation of the work and the non-work role could reduce negative spillover between the two roles (Ashforth et al., 2000). But what is work-life spillover and how does it affect WLB?

(Edwards and Rothbard (2000) defines Work-family spillover as the effects of work and family has on another that generate similarities between the two domains. This could for example be the moods and attitudes oneself experience at the workplace “spills over” into the family life which indicated that the mood at work are positively related to the mood at home. (Judge and Ilies 2004).

The spillover effect could have both positive and negative effects and could be experienced both from work into the family domain and the other way, from family into the work domain. (Grzywacz, Almeida and McDonald 2002, Guest, 2002) Carlson et al (2008) suggests that one form of positive spill over could be that the skills that an individual gain in one area could be helpful in the other. For example, one could argue that the pedagogical skills that a teacher have gained in her professional domain could be helpful in the personal domain when having her own children and that the problem crisis handling skills one have learned from being a parent also could be helpful in certain situations in the professional domain.

3.2. Technology and Boundary less work

Kaiser and Ringsletter (2011) argues that new technologies and the recent year's technological development has enhanced the relevance for a discussion about WLB. New technology like smartphones, laptops, Wi-Fi etc. has created opportunity for mobile work to a larger extent than

previously has been possible and is an essential factor for performing work whenever and wherever one likes (Lewis, 2003; Sarker et. Al., 2012). In his article "*Perspectives on the study of work-life balance*" Guest (2002) argues that the demands of work are beginning to dominate life since the recent technological development are contributing to a sense of work-life imbalance. This view is shared by for example Hill, Miller, Weiner and Colihan (1998), Tausig and Fenwick (2001) and Nam (2014) who argue that due to the introduction of new communication and information technologies employees are no longer dependent on time and place to conduct their work which leads to a blurring of the work and non-work domain. An example of this blurred boundaries could be found in a study by Wajcman, Bittman and Brown (2008) in which the cell-phones sometimes were perceived as an intrusion in the private life which resulted in negative feelings. Similar results were found in a study by Sarker et. al. (2012) in which mobile workers expressed feelings of annoyance due to the constant intrusion in to their personal lives caused by smartphones. Mazmanian, Orlikowski and Yates (2006) point out that this is something that can lead to techno-stress and Mellner et. al. (2014) further argues that the integration of the two domains are a hinder for the individual to reach WLB. On the other hand, Nam (2014) suggests that the extent to which a person is affected by technology is dependent on how flexible one is which highlights the importance of taking the individual preferences in to account when discussing WLB.

Thomas (2014) argues that new technologies has not only brought negative effects but also a lot of positive opportunities that could contribute to increased work-life balance like for example employees not having to be at a certain physical place at a specific time which leads to greater flexibility. This kind of greater autonomy and flexible work arrangements bring other benefits like for example: greater job satisfaction (Vartianen, 2006), reduced work-family conflict (Butler et. al., 2009) and better health (Casey and Grzywacz, 2008; Almer and Kaplan, 2002). Kurland and Bailey (1999) argues that the organization could experience positive effects like improved efficiency and greater productivity and Brannen (2005) that also flexibility could lead to the organizations getting more work from the employees since they are not able to self-regulate themselves. This is agreed upon by Ellingaeter (2003) who suggests that the even though the hours are flexible the time demands are boundless.

In the upcoming paragraph we will discuss how the introduction of new technologies has changed how we work and what implications this might have for the individual's perception of WLB.

3.3 At-home work and remote workers

As discussed in the previous paragraph, new technologies are changing the way we work and remote work where the employee performs their work in their home is a global trend. (Shen et. Al, 2015). Remote work offers benefits both for the employee such as greater flexibility and autonomy and for the employers such as reduced costs for office space and the possibility to locate workers closer to the customers (Breugh and Farabee, 2012) but it also proposes a challenge to the conception of family and work as something that is geographically separated (Sullivan, 2000).

Shen et. al (2015) argues that in situations when work and life is highly integrated and close to borderless it is almost impossible to be able to detach psychologically from work. They argue that Inn keeping is a profession with these circumstances and that one of the most prominent attributes associated with this profession is the blurred physical boundaries between work and non-work which contributes to the lack of WLB many Innkeepers experience. Despite this, little attention has been given to investigate the implications on WLB it has to perform work in the home even though both boundary theory and Clarks (2000) work-family border theory is based on the assumption that the workplace and the home is physically separate which is an assumption that is not likely to be applicable to the situation of remote worker since their workplace in fact is embedded in the family domain (Shen et. Al, 2015).

Eddelston and Mulki (2015) argues that this domain integration possibly could cause feelings of stress and a sense of work-life imbalance since it is not clear which role one should prioritize in the home. This is supported by findings in the study by Shen et. al. (2015) that shows that an integration of the work and the family domain increase conflicts and contribute to an inability to disengage from work which in turn leads to work-family conflict. In a WLB study of innkeepers it was concluded that even though it was difficult to completely disengage from work it was possible to temporarily get respite from work by for example advise the visitors of absence during certain hours in order to create personal time for themselves or by limit the guests access to certain areas of their houses as a way to create boundaries that meets their preferences. (Li et al., 2013) Furthermore, research has found that home-based workers are more likely than office workers to experience that the boundaries between family and work are vague, and that the home-based workers are more likely to experiences feelings of stress and even workaholism (Kossek, 2001, Shen et. Al, 2015). Clark (2000) stress the importance of “border keepers” such as bosses or spouses in order to enhance the individual’s ability to manage borders between family and work but in Eddleston and Mulkis (2015) study of remote

workers very few examples of these border keepers was found. Instead, the respondents often told stories of “border breakers” who interrupted the remote workers forcing them to transition between their work and family role on several occasions throughout the day. Further, the respondents experienced difficulties to fully transition from their work role into their family role and that border breaches by the family in to the work sphere more often where to be described as an interruption than the other way around.

One way to manage WLB for at-home worker could be to use “time-loans”, a method where the worker lends time between the two different domains in order to obtain balance. This method has been found both in a study by Kreiner et. al. (2009) where the respondents banked and borrowed time in long term, and also by Eddleston and Mulki (2015) but in this study the respondents used “mini-loans” between the different domains which were repaid during the same day. This suggests that this method could be used in different ways and to different degrees.

4. The Nations and the student life

This chapter will give the reader a background of the case study organization and its context. Further, the concept of Nations will be briefly explained in order for the reader to be able to understand and relate to the organizations environment and conditions. Lastly, a brief introduction of the respondents in this study will be made.

4.1. What is a Nation? – A historical background

Central in the student life of Lund is something called "Nations" which shortly could be described as nonprofit social student clubs. Nations differ from student unions whose main responsibility is student politics and student rights which is something the Nation not is involved in. In Lund there are 13 Nations which are named after different parts of Sweden. Previously one could only become a member of the Nation belonging to your own place of descent but now days one is free to choose which ever Nation one likes. The Nations in Lund has a history reaching back almost 350 years and some of the Nations were founded at the same time as Lund University, in 1666. It is believed that the origin of the Swedish Nations could be tracked back to the medieval universities of for example Paris and Bologna where the students divided into different societies based of geographical area. These societies in Paris is mentioned as early as 1100. In Germany similar societies also exists which is called "Landsmannschaften". Membership in the Nations is completely voluntary but until 2010 it was mandatory for all university students in Lund to be a member of a Nation. The modern Nations in Lund today offers activities and services that benefits the members. The Nations offer everything from housing opportunities and scholarships to sport- and culture activities but when talking about the Nations most students probably think of the affordable food and drinks that the Nations offer in their restaurant and nightclub facilities. (Studentlund, 2016; Lund University, 2016; Wikipedia, 2016)

All the Nations are run by students who work at the Nation on a voluntary basis. How the Nation is organized differs from Nation to Nation but in general it is rather similar: The highest governing body is the Nation meeting were all members are allowed to vote. Then there is a Nation board often called "Seniors" that is elected by the Nation meeting and who often consists of members that have been very involved at the Nation and members for a long time. The chairman of the board is often something called "Inspector" who often is a professor from the university that has been nominated for the position by Seniors or the Nation meeting due to special competencies. Since the Inspector often hold its position for several years he or she also

contributes with continuity which could be much needed since there is a large circulation of members and volunteers at the Nations since they only are members during their student years.

The executive body of the Nation is called “Quratel”, this is students who are chosen by the Nation meeting and has taken one year off from their studies in order to work full time at the Nation. Quratelet often consists of 3-4 persons and has different responsibilities divided among them much like the management positions in a regular company. Throughout this thesis the actual titles will not be used but instead the more widely known titles CEO, CFO, COO etc. in order to make it more comprehensible for the readers not so familiar with the Nation life. The term “full-timers” will also be used when referring to the position as a profession or speaking of the job in more general terms. The full-timers receive a monthly salary of approximately 10 000 SEK which is an amount equivalent to the financial aid Swedish university students receives from the government when conducting full time studies.

Lastly, the Nation also has a number of people working at the Nation on voluntarily basis. These could either be “foremen” that hold a kind of middle manager position and are responsible for different committees. In the committees the foremen have “workers” who do not have any position of responsibility or commitment to the Nation but only helps the foremen during different activities for example at the night club or in the kitchen. The workers are often very new to the Nation and many of them becomes foremen later on. Throughout this thesis the term “volunteers” will be used when referring both to workers and foremen and there will not be made any distinction between them if this is not needed for the context.

4.2. Participating Respondents

In this thesis six in-depth interviews have been made with six different persons that I have chosen to call: Anna, Johan, Johanna, Emil, Karoline and Karl. They all have or have had one of the following positions that includes the following responsibilities:

Qurator (Q) – Equivalent to CEO, leads and coordinates the work of the management group. Responsibilities include contact with governmental officials and other student organizations.

Procurator Social (PQS). Equivalent to COO, responsibilities include managing the Nations restaurant and nightclub operations, purchasing and contact with suppliers and staff responsibilities.

Procurator Ekonomi (PQE) – Equivalent to CFO, responsibilities include budgeting, bookkeeping and financial planning.

The position is believed to in some cases have impact on the respondent's answers, when this is the case the title will be specified but otherwise the title will not be specified.

4.3 What is the Nation and why get involved?

The sections in this chapter aims to describe what the Nations and the Nation engagement means for people and also why people choose to volunteer at the Nation. This chapter will give the reader an understanding of how the Nation is perceived by and what it means to the respondents which will be necessary for the analysis in the upcoming chapters.

4.3.1. The Nation as a social meeting point

All of the respondents came to the Nation at different points in time and with different backgrounds but they all seem to have been attracted to the Nation as a social meeting point where you can meet friends and socialize. Karoline was introduced to the Nation life through a friend who had volunteered at another Nation and liked the social part:

“You hung out, you could say that it was kind of a hobby, the student life and to meet people in a relaxed environment and run a project together. To have a thing in common that you focus on and a common interest that you want that it goes well for”

For many of the respondents the Nation has been an important part of their life as a student in Lund and they have created a very strong bond to it. Many of them talks about the Nation as a second family or a second home and some even expresses an even stronger bond than that:

Anna: I did not enjoy Lund that much when I moved her but then it is much like you find your family here (at the Nation), it becomes kind of like a sect

Even though the Nation mainly is a positive experience there is also a down side and a risk that the Nation takes overhand and becomes more than a hobby. This is something Karoline has thought a lot about looking back at here time at the Nation. She admits that she dedicated a lot of time to the Nation not only during her year working there full-time but also when she was a volunteer:

“I choose to put in pretty much time in to it, I think you could have a lower level of ambition then I had but I don't think than would have worked for me, I don't think it would have been as much fun then [...]. You spent much, very much time, maybe not to actively do it but to think about it, prepare, plan, you did kind of breath the Nation”

Karoline did not experience that her volunteering had a negative impact on her studies but she thinks that there is a risk of this happening to others. Especially new students with a lot of independent studies and not so much teacher led time and lectures could probably spend a little too much time at the Nation since it is easy to think that you have a lot of time off when you actually have self-studies.

“It is very easy due to the strong fellowship and since it is such a positive driving force in so many ways it becomes kind of a defense mechanism. You choose to focus on the positive and the fun in the Nation commitment and then it gets to compensate for the studies going bad.

You don't take the loss or the defeat of not passing an exam as hard because you got something else instead so you are able to compensate for and trivialize the bad results.

As we have discovered in this paragraph the Nation plays a central role in the lives of those who chooses to volunteer at the Nation. It is central in the social life of many of the volunteers which creates strong both strong friendship bonds and sometimes love relationships. The Nation is perceived as a second family and working at the Nation is a way to socialize and spend time together which makes the work to a positive experience. But there is also a down side and a risk that the Nation engagement takes too much time which could have a negative impact on the individuals work life which in this case is their studies.

4.3.2. The Nation as a career and resume booster

Besides the social part many mention that they believe that their engagement at the Nation is something that they will benefit from further on in life and something that will look good on their resume. Anna says that she thinks that she got her current job due to her engagement at the Nation and that her fulltime position at the Nation probably was what made her resume stick out from the crowd. She underlines the importance of reminding the volunteers about the merits Nation engagement brings since many of the new volunteers at the Nation don't think about this but instead only get in contact with the Nations because of the social activities:

“I think the social is the primary reason and then you learn, or you have to remind them that it also provides you with experience”

Karoline is an example of someone who came to the Nation due to the social activities and explains that it was an old childhood friend that first joined the Nation and when Karoline and some other friends noticed how fun this friend seemed to have and how much new friends she made in a very short period of time she decided to get volunteer at the Nation as well. Even though she joined for the parties she is clear about the fact that she applied to the full time

position as a way to boost her resume and to gain experience. Even though she knew that it would be a challenge she did not hesitate to apply:

“I am attracted to being in a leadership position, to influence and to make an impression. I find directorship as an appealing thought and have always enjoyed responsibilities. [...] If you want to become a manager it might be good to feel this stress and that you never let go off work and that you have work with you at home as well like you have at a private company as well.”

In this paragraph we have seen that even though the Nation engagement is primarily seen as a social activity taken place on one's leisure time it can have positive spillover effects on the work part of one's life in the long run by an enhanced resume, skills and experiences developed through working at the Nation and a wider personal network.

4.3.3. The Nation as a home

The Nation offers housing for its members and all of the interviewee's live or have lived in one of the apartments belonging to the Nation. Since there is a limited number of apartments one has to be active at the Nation in order to get an offer to live at the Nation. Every semester one or two new students get housing offers based on the fact that they derive from a certain province of Sweden but with the exception of that, one has to “earn” your apartment by volunteering at the Nation. When an apartment is available it is often offered to the student with the most involvement at the Nation. Because of this, all of the tenants are people very active at the Nation.

The Nation has its premises on the first floor of the residential building where it has a combined nightclub and restaurant. In a smaller house in the backyard the Nation has its office. The high involvement level of the tenants in the Nation's activities and the fact that the housing and the commercial areas are in the same building creates a very intertwined relationship with no clear boundaries between what is one's own home and what is the Nation. The respondents talk about the Nation as of their second home and the other volunteers at the Nation as a family.

Much like in the paragraph 4.3.1. in this paragraph we have seen that the Nation works as a new family and a new home. Based on my own observations during my years at the Nation this view is not limited to those who actually live in an apartment at the Nation but also includes volunteers not living at the Nation. I would therefore argue that the view of the Nation as a home is not limited to the actual living areas but also includes the commercial areas, the offices and all other areas located in the Nation house. Based on my own experience I would also argue that people who are not living in the Nation building but are volunteering on a regularly basis

would most likely also refer to the Nation as their home and view it as some kind of extension of their own living room which further contributes to the difficulties of drawing a line between the personal areas and the public areas.

In the upcoming chapter 5.3 the implications of this highly blurred boundaries between home and work areas will be discussed further but first we will have a closer look at what it means to be a full-timer and what difficulties that comes with the role.

4.4. Doing it full time – Work-life struggles, sacrifices and frustration

In the previous section we have investigated how the Nation is perceived and have come to the conclusion that those who volunteer at the Nation forms a strong bond to the Nation and the people there. The following sections aims to describe what drives people to take a one year break from their studies to spend one year working fulltime at the Nation. It also describes the differences between volunteering and working full time, how the full timers perceive their position and what challenges it brings. WLB will be discussed in general terms but the employees' perception of their WLB will not be the main focus but will instead be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.4.

4.4.1. Same, same but different – When your hobby becomes your job

Why people decides to apply for a full time position at the Nation differs from person to person but the respondents all agree that there is a huge difference between being a volunteer and working full time. In some way it is the same thing but it is also something completely different due to the increased intensity:

Karl: “You still do it because it is fun and I always saw it as the only reason to why it became your job was because you had so much to do at the Nation that you were not able to study and therefore you had to get paid to do the job. So it kind of just became the next step instead of being something different, essentially it was the same concept. You did it because it was fun and the salary did not correspond to the work you put in at all. [...] Then of course it is stuff that looks good on your resume.”

Karoline: “The commitments differ very much, it becomes a completely new thing when you did it more than full time [...] you get swallowed up, you are there 24/7”

Emil: “You kind of just increased your addiction”

The respondents differ in their view if the position feels like a job or as the hobby it was when they started their engagement at the Nation:

Johanna: "It feels like there is much more responsibility now and you think of it much more like a job instead of it being my weird hobby that you do because it is fun [...] now it can feel much more like you have to do it because no one else does it"

Karoline and Anna agrees that in some ways it feels like a job:

Karoline: "I look at it as a job, no doubt. I get paid to do it and I do it full time if not even more than full time"

*Anna: "It is a real job but it is a very different real job since we are available 24 hours a day and as a matter of fact live at work [...] the work tasks feels like a real job [...]. But the environment we do it in makes it special since all the social things that comes with the *quratelslife*, which is very much, does not come with a regular job."*

Karl and Karoline do not seem to think of it as a job as the previous respondents has described it. Karoline thinks that it is possible to get paid and it still being a hobby:

"It felt like a paid hobby [...] I think it is the whole organization that makes it feel that way, you are surrounded by your friends and people do it because it is fun that is the whole keynote, there would probably have to be some "real" adults in order for it to feel like a job I think"

Karl also expresses that he thinks it is important that it does not feel too much as a job:

"If it feels too much as a job all the time there is a risk that it will not be as fun to take on the commission. Suddenly it becomes just work and you lose the volunteering part of it and that it stills feels like volunteering [...] That is the reason to why you started to get involved in the first place and if you lose that it won't feel equally okay to work those hours for that poor salary."

The respondents expresses that the expectations sometimes can be overwhelming, Emil says that when you were a volunteer no one expected you to always succeed and have time and it was OK to not give a 100 % all the time but at the fulltime position you were expected to always deliver and make sure to get things done no matter how much you had to do. He explains that he often felt guilty towards the volunteers when he did not have the time to finish everything even though he knew that he had done his best and had not finished since he had to do other work tasks.

“It where some kind of obligation threshold, the expectations were significantly higher when you were elected to a full-time position, I don’t think people expected 100 % of your time dedicated to it but it was far more unforgiving.”

Karl experienced that since he now was paid for his work at the Nation the unpaid volunteers sometimes could have unrealistic expectations on the full-timers but thinks that this might also be the case in real companies when you have a leading position:

“Sometimes it felt like those who only are voluntary workers had a bit unreasonable expectations on how much you would be able to work and expected you to always, always, always being reachable at all times. It felt like they maybe could forget that you actually just where a normal human being as well [...] It might be that with all jobs and especially on smaller workplaces like kind of entrepreneurial organizations or if you are high up in the organization one might be expected to always be able to answer the phone.”

In this section the respondents have discussed whether the position as a full-timer could be seen as a job or not. As discussed in the theory chapter one definition of work is the criteria of getting paid (Guest, 2002) which also is the definition given by the Oxford English Dictionary (2016). This is also an argument that Johanna puts forward when she says that since she gets paid it is of course a job. Here it is interesting to discuss if it is to be considered to be a job if the payment only is a symbolic amount that not is in proportion with the time putting into the work tasks. Karl seems to have this view when he argues that the payment is only a compensation he gets since he works so much at the Nation that he does not fulfill the criteria to get student financial aid. Karoline shares a similar view when she express that it is that it is some kind of paid hobby. Looking at Lewis (2003) definition of work which is the one used in this thesis, work can be both paid and unpaid. The central criteria are whether it is obligated time or non-obligated time chosen by intrinsic motivation. This criterion could explain why the respondents are disagreeing whether to label it as work or not since they previously have been volunteers at the Nation and this has been non-obligated time chosen by intrinsic motivation.

To investigate how being a full-timer and a volunteer differs and if it is possible to categorize the full-timer position as work we will look at some of the differences in the upcoming paragraph.

4.4.2. Working in a volunteer based organization, a frustrating but rewarding challenge

Even though the respondent is not sure if they could label the full-timer position as a job we will in this paragraph see that there is a big difference between being a volunteer in terms of perceived responsibility and the voluntarily of the work tasks that should be performed. A reoccurring theme is the tensions and frustration created by working together with people who do not have it as their main occupation but who are only volunteers:

Karoline: "It is very frustrating to work with people, it is a challenging balance to work with people who are doing it on a voluntary basis, to know where the limit goes in terms of how far you could push someone who has taken on a responsibility. At the same time, it is supposed to be fun because joy is the primary motivation, joy and fellowship. So if you push someone to hard it is not fun but you still have to be able to hold people accountable when they have taken on a responsibility and when then people fail to fulfill their commitments it becomes very frustrating"

It seems like the full-timers feels much more responsibilities and obligation towards their work than what they did when they were volunteers. A contribution factor to this seems to be the history and the heritage of the Nation which seems to sometimes be experienced as a burden and as something that you are responsible to preserve. Karl mentioned earlier that he as a Curator felt that he in fact was this 350-year-old organization which could be interpreted as an indication of this. Karoline shares similar thoughts and says that she thinks that the financial situation of the Nations and the competition between them has become much harder the last couple of years which adds on to the pressure:

"I think we are responsible of the survival of the Nation and that it exists in 10 years"

Karl expresses that this feeling of responsibility sometimes makes you take on additional work that you really are not supposed to do even if you do not want to:

"Sometimes the volunteers were not able to find workers to the nightclub by different reasons and then it could have happened that you had to jump in and work at the club [...] It was not my favorite thing in the world to do since you already had been working all day and you had the feeling that this is something that I am really not supposed to do [...] You kind of had to do it anyway. It is like I mentioned before with not working out, you kind of had to do it because it was needed."

He continues his reasoning about how it really not is his work task but that it in some way falls back onto him in the end and therefore becomes his responsibility:

“The actual task for the CEO is to be responsible of the Nation operations and if the nightclub cannot be managed and run properly it will in the end fall back onto yourself [...] but actually it is not a part of the work tasks and it is not for doing that you were elected”

The statements above indicated that the task they perform should be considered as work since it fulfills the criteria of obligated time discussed by Lewis (2003). Another factor that contributes to why it should be should be considered a job is the amount of time they put into work.

Karl: “When you take on the position there was a lot of late night work in general and there were very long work days overall with up to 13-14 hour a day. It took so much time to do everything and basically did not know what to do. You had some idea how to do it and you figured out stuff along the way and how to do it but you still had to learn the work tasks and it took so much time. You were sitting and working until you almost fell asleep.”

Another root to frustration that could be connected to the organization being a volunteer based organization is ambiguous work tasks and unclear goals. Many of the respondent’s experience that since it is an organization based on voluntary work it lacks a lot of the routines and work processes one probably would find at a regular company.

Karoline: “The mental fatigue, especially the first two months when everything is new. The learning and introduction at the Nation is not as long and well-developed as at a company. You do not get the same kind of backing [...] it is a lot of trial and error and that can be a bit frustrating for the volunteers and the workers since their problems cannot wait.”

Emil expresses similar thoughts:

“As long as you work a lot then you are at least doing something, even though you do not really know what you are supposed to do you get a feeling that you at least have accomplished something [...] some kind of shotgun approach”

Even though everyone has expressed that the job as a full-timer at a Nation is very hard and challenging, all of those who are done with their commission are satisfied with what they got out of it and sees it as a valuable experience. Positive aspects of the position are for example that you get a lot of responsibility that you would not get at “regular jobs” and that you have a big personal development during the year.

Karoline: “Yes, I like the development I see in myself because of this and I like, I am very grateful for all the contacts I have gained through this year. I am glad I did it but I would never do it again. But I would never have it undone.”

Karl: Sometimes when you have these kinds of commissions it feels like everything is pretty worthless and there are times when you just do not want to do it anymore [...] In the end it still feels like you have done your best and that it feels pretty OK when you look on it and you feel that it was worth it. I maybe never would have done it again but it was still worth it. [...] You have learned so much about yourself and about you as a person that you never would have known without this position.”

In this paragraph we have concluded that the full-timer position is to be considered as work and that working in a voluntary based organization sometimes can be frustrating and be the root to a high workload. One interesting thing I notice during the discussions about this subject is that several of the respondents use the phrase “I’m glad I did it but I would never do it again” more or less word for word. This wording could also be found in an article about full-timers in the student paper Lundagård (Lundagård, 2007). It seems like being a full-timer is supposed to be something that is connected with a high workload and a working environment that is not sustainable in the long run. In the upcoming paragraph this will be investigated more in detail in order to get a better understanding of the nature of the full-timer position and how it is perceived.

4.4.3. It is a student organization; I am supposed to have poor Work-Life-Balance!

It is not uncommon that people with full time position experience a lot of pressure and the poor working environment and the great amount of stress have been highlighted on several occasions by the newspaper Lundagård which is published by the Lund student union. (Lundagård, 2007; Lundagård, 2013; Lundagård, 2016)

Several of the employees tell stories that indicate that this problem exists also at the Nation in various degrees. Karl tells us about his experiences and what he experienced as challenging during the year:

“... During the first half of the commission (the hardest thing was) to balance my health with work and to take care of myself. [...] At the beginning it went alright but then, in the end of

March and the beginning of April the work load escalated because of Valborg¹ and you kind of let it go (working out and taking care of yourself) and then it became bad pretty fast”

He continues and tells us about the challenges of the position and why a full-timer position could be a big challenge:

“To handle this with being reachable at all times [...] and that you basically are your position during the whole year. [...] I guess it works a bit special with this in Lund, it kind of is: “This is Karl, he is Qurator at the Nation “and then you ARE that the whole year and represents the Nation in everything you do. [...] I am not only me but I am also this 350-year-old organization and that mean that I am its trademark. In that way you are not your own.”

It is not only Karl who has experienced that, as he expresses it;” You are your position”. This is also expressed by some of the other respondents:

Karoline: “I think that the life that we are living at the Nation makes you rather synonymous with your position especially if you are a full-timer, I think it is very glued together.”

Anna: “It is always like I became PQE-Anna during the year. Yes, it is a bit hard (to separate the work identity from the private identity). I got some of my closest friends at the Nation who also knows who I am in private and then it might not be that hard to separate work from private since we spend time together so often but those who are new to the Nation or those who I do not know that well then it is not separated but instead I become a role. I kind of become PQE-Anna and I believe that once you became that I guess that sticks to you even after you have resigned from your position”

It seems like a central challenge with having a full-timer position is to separate the work role from one’s private role and that you are very interrelated to your job. As mentioned in the articles published in the student paper Lundagård (Lundagård, 2007; Lundagård, 2013; Lundagård, 2016) this can lead to people with full-timer position having trouble sleeping, experiencing high levels of stress and in worst cases burn outs.

¹ Valborg is a big festival in Lund where many Nations arrange big events, for many Nations it is the biggest and most time consuming event during the year.

Karoline gives an example of this unhealthy relationship to work and how she felt that she never could take a break from work:

Karoline: "During the semester it is hard to leave since my work are never ending and I always have to keep up and do the bookkeeping. I could skip it a few days and not do it but I have to do it later on so it is kind of hard to go away during the semester. It could be for a weekend at most."

Karoline experienced that not even when she was ill it would be possible to skip work:

"If it was more than a week I would probably need to go down and work, I was, we have all been ill during the semester [...] if you are really, really ill, like if you have more than 40 degrees' fever then you would have to be home but if you do not have that much fever you can just take a pain killer. That is the benefit with work being so close, it is just to go down the stairs"

Karoline shares a similar experience and says that she only left Lund for two days during her full time year:

"You were not able to, you got all swallowed up (by the Nation), you are there 24/7. I probably left Lund for two days during my year and that is rather little"

Despite it seems like there is a risk of the relation to the Nation becoming a bit unhealthy it seems like all the full-timers are alright with making these sacrifices and they were aware of the risk of having to make them on beforehand. Anna tells us how her predecessor warned her about the high pressure and levels of stress and that *"you are not able to understand the amount of stress the job creates until you sit there."*, other respondents seems to also have been aware of the risks:

Karoline: "You have heard of people who hits the wall, there is always a risk of that happening"

Johanna (about the amount of work): "That was a bit unfortunate but you were aware of it when you got in to it"

It is not clear why people seem to be alright with the situation and are willing to do the sacrifices they do but when people apply for a full-timer position they often talk of doing it as a way to “give back to the Nation” and there are indications that other respondents also see it in a similar way. The strong social bonds that have been formed by the volunteers and the Nation might be a reason to why people are willing to make these sacrifices on the behalf of the Nation. Schlosser (2002) argues that employees who identify themselves closely to the organization for which they work for are likely to prioritize their job before other commitments in their lives and are highly engaged in their work. This seem to be the case for the fulltimers at the Nation who tend to repeatedly prioritize their work before everything else.

In the upcoming paragraph we will look more in depth what these sacrifices made for the Nation means to the individual. This thesis will not in any depth discuss why this sacrifices are made and the drivers behind them but instead look how they affect the perception of WLB. That being said it does not mean that this is not interesting or relevant. A discussion of how volunteering affects identity and the will to sacrifice would be much interesting and relevant but due to the limited scope of this thesis this will not be treated any further.

4.4.4. Sacrificing friends, family and health for the Nation

It is clear that all of the full-timers have made sacrifices because of their work, mostly on the expense of their personal life and their personal relationships. All the respondents live in single household without any family or children which might makes it easier to make these sacrifices but they still admit that important personal relationships have suffered during their year:

Emil: Personal relationships to some extent, you were hanging out with the same people (as you worked with at the Nation) [...] I choose to hang out with people at the Nation since it was much easier to in a way be chained to the Nation. You kind of only have time to hang out with the people at the Nation and you do not have any time for the others. I do not think there was any trips back home during my year”

Karoline experienced that since she only meets her childhood friends on a few occasions during the year since she moved to Lund she do not think they experienced any significant different but that her classmates and other friends in Lund outside of the Nation did:

“It probably became a more significant difference for those who was a part of my life outside of the Nation, those who I studied with, I did not see them a lot”

Anna: "During my year I was not home that much but you were either at the office or somewhere else, you were not home and basically you did not live at home, you did not cook and that is a bit extreme"

Besides personal relationships, working out and physical training seem to be something a lot of the respondents gave up because of their Nation commitments:

Karoline: "I gave up playing floorball, when I got involved at the Nation it gradual took more and more time and when I started as a full-timer it was the last nail in the coffin"

Emil tells that he gave up physical training in order to make sure that he always was available:

"I eliminated physical training completely, I think I tried to work out once in the beginning of my commission and that time the volunteers for the lunch or brunch or whatever happened to come earlier than expected and they called me while I was at the gym.

For Karl his health and weight training is an important part of his life and he comes back to this on several occasions during the interview. Even though he normally goes to the gym almost every day of the week this was something that he neglected during his full-timer year which is something he regrets:

"My wellbeing and to work out is rather important, I basically work out every day [...] I just did not have time for it, I felt like I had to let it go because I did not have time and then it was more important that I took care at things at the Nation. Now looking back on it, I feel so much better by working out and I feel happier and more positive and I think that contributes quite a lot to you being able to do a god job and the question is if I had kept on working out if I then could have done even better. That I do not know"

In this paragraph we have come to look more closely on the relationship the respondents have to their work and what sacrifices they are prepared to do at the expense of their private life. It is clear that the respondents are prepared to sacrifice even important things in their private sphere in order to fulfill their work commitments.

4.4.5. Doing it full time, a summary of how the full-timers perceive their job

In the previous paragraphs we have got an insight of how the respondents perceives the job as a full-timer and what the role means to them. Even though it still is something they do because they enjoy it is clear that the job is filled with much more responsibility and demands than it was when they were only volunteers. Much is done because it is required and out of obligation which would qualify it as a job. At the same time, we have understood that it is not any ordinary 9-5 job but a job that comes with a high work-load and a lot of pressure.

For some reason it is widely accepted that the role comes with a high degree of pressure and stress and this is not something that is unique for the studied organization but this is also the case in similar student organizations and other Nations. We have also learnt that the full-timers are prepared to make personal sacrifices in order to fulfill their obligations. In the upcoming chapter we will investigate further how they perceive their work-life balance and what consequences their personal sacrifices might have on it.

5. Living and working without borders – The pursuit of separation

In the previous section we investigated how the role as a full-timer is perceived by the employees and what challenges it brings. In this section we will look more closely on their perception of their own situation and how they are experiencing their personal WLB.

5.1. Always working or thinking of work – Struggling with detachment

As earlier discussed it is clear that the respondents experience that the main challenges of their job is the heavy work load and that they feel that they have to be reachable at all times. Even though the Nation has specific reception hours there is not any clearly defined working hours or clear expectations of when and how much one is expected to work. When asked to estimate how much they work it is clear that all of the respondents work more than a normal 40-hour work week. Emil experiences that there were periods when there was more work and some periods with less work but estimates that he on average worked around 56 hours a week:

“I would almost like to say that it was full workdays all days a week if you were to divide it equally”

All the respondents agree that it is not possible to define what is “work time” and what is “non-work time” is and it is more a rule than an exception that work intrudes on the time that would be considered as free time. Emil explains:

“It was pretty much like even if you were not working you were still working in some sense. [...] If you had a night off and you were to go out with the rest of the Quratel you still were expected to show up if something happened.”

For students, partying and going out could be considered to be one of the main interest and things to do on one’s spare time. Therefore running a nightclub as a part of the Nation seem to have an impact on the separation of work and private activities for the employees at the Nation since it is very unclear if visiting the night club is to consider as work or as a recreational activity.

Karoline: “Every time you are out at the club people came up to you and asked you questions that you did not really wanted to deal with there and then. So I would say that the social life is greatly affected by work and that you live here with all your friends”

Anna: “It happened often when I was out at the night clubs that they (the volunteers) called or came up to me and asked questions because they had different problems. I was constantly required to being able to solve stuff all the time even though I was out as a private person

because work are constantly ongoing all the time and because we also have activities during the night so it was always there. If we were at a dinner party or at a ball they could call during the dinner because something was broken and needed to be fixed. In that sense you were always on duty, or at least I was.”

The statements above where one sphere is interrupted by the other is similar to the finding by Eddleston and Mulki, (2015) in their study of remote workers but in contrast to that study it is work that are perceived to intrude on non-work and not the other way around. This contradicts Eddleston and Mulki's (2015) argument that remote workers are more likely to accept interruptions by family into work than the other way around.

It seems like everyone has experienced problems with people coming up to them at the Nation wanting to talk about work related stuff even though they have been “off-duty” and thinks that that is something that they have to accept. But this is not the only thing that can happen, Karoline gives an example of when it is harder to avoid work affecting private life and why it is so hard to let go of work:

“It is because you live at your workplace. Just because I go up the stairs (to the apartments) I do not stop to think about it [...] One example is when we go down to the club and I notice that is not a lot of people, already then I know what the income and the result will be because that is something you learn by time [...] you go there to have fun but you lose the passion rather quick when the club is not that good because that is our primary source of income and it has happened a couple of times that I am like “I am going home instead, I do not have the energy to stay and look at the misery.” So that is a clear example of when you bring work with you because it is a Thursday or a Saturday night and then I am supposed to have time off and are not even supposed to even work [...] and then it is affected by work pretty clearly”

The statement above is a clear example of negative work-life spillover discussed by e.g. Edwards and Rothbard (2000). This example of how a negative work-related event lets the bad mood it creates spill over into the private domain is similar to what was found in Judges and Ilies (2004) study where they found a positive correlation between work mood and the mood at home.

5.2. “I know I should not do it, but it is convenient” – The technology trap

In this chapter we will look closer on how new technologies impacts the respondent's perception of WLB. We will see that the respondents struggle with a pressure to always being reachable and that attempts have been done to separate work from non-work by for example providing work-smartphones instead of the employees using their own phones. We will also discover that these attempts have failed since different individuals has different preferences of the degree of separation/integration between work and non-work and what implications it can mean if the individual preferences cannot be met.

5.2.1 The pressure of always being reachable

A reoccurring theme during the interviews are the feeling of needing to always being reachable and the stress this causes.

Karl: “You pretty much are expected to be reachable at all times and to be able to provide a good answer if someone calls or sends you a text message. It is mainly the volunteers at the Nation that expects that you are reachable 24/7 and of course you should in as big extent as possible but there are some limits. It wears you out to know that someone always can call and ask you about something.”

All the employees are provided with smartphones from the Nation that they use in their work. They also have computers but these are not laptops but instead non-mobile computers that is located at the Nations office. Despite this, it is common that the employees check their email from home on their work phones or on their personal computers. Since their email client are web-based they are able to access their email from any computer. The only restriction with working from home is accessing their bookkeeping software and the CRM-system which only can be accessed from the office.

Several of the respondents says that they try to not be reachable at all times but it is clear that they struggle with both long hours and that they feel insufficient when they are not able to take care of thing immediately.

Johanna: I try to shut it off after 19.00 and not answer but then if it is an emergency you have to pick it up. So I check it but are trying to shut of the sound and put it away.

Emil: If I did not answer straight away I replied at least within an hour [...] I did not answer when I was doing something important.

One clear example of the need to always stay reachable is given by Karoline who tell us that during the spring semester she and the other employees have meet with Psychology students from Lund University who as a part of their education does practical training in group development and conflict management at different student organizations in Lund. Karoline explains how one of these meetings made her realized how reachable they are and how much they work. She especially reacted to the working hours of one of her colleagues.

“We have psychologists and then we had an exercise in which you were supposed to write down when you at first came into contact with work during the day, for example reading an email, and then the last contact. I had mine at 8.00 and then the last around 19.00 and 21.00. He had his last between 22.00 and 24.00, sometimes after 24.00. He got questions all the time so I could imagine that his job being COO is more stressful. I think that it had a big impact, he became very tired and very stressed out.”

Karl further explains that it is not the fact that people do call but instead the feeling of knowing that they could call at any time that he experienced as stressful. Johanna agrees that it is common that people contact her “off-hours” and at times when she had decided that she was not supposed to work. The phone calls could be about anything and was a constant cause for stress. Sometimes she decides that it could wait until tomorrow but it happens that she needs to interrupt what she is doing to deal with work-related matters on her free time.

“Yes it happens pretty often, it could be about anything “

Emil who has been responsible for the restaurant and the kitchen further explains that is it most common that it is the volunteers at the Nation that usually calls at all times:

If we were at a dinner party or at a ball they could call during the dinner because something was broken and needed to be fixed. In that sense you were always on duty, or at least I was.”

Even though there is no policy determining how fast one is expected to answer work-calls and to what degree one are supposed to be reachable after office-hours it seems like the full-timers feels obligated to be reachable at all times. Sarker et. al. (2012) argues that when the employee is provided with a smartphone, it implies a sort of psychological contract that the employees is expected to answer work-related phone calls and emails even after office hours. In this situation it is hard to tell if this is the case or if the expectations derive from somewhere else but as we will discover in the next paragraph before smartphones was provided to the employees they used their own smartphones which in this case contradicts that this is the reason to the

psychological contract of always being reachable. A more probable theory is that the emotional commitment the full-timers feels towards the Nation could be a more possible explanation.

Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, (2007) and Fenner & Renn (2004) who argues that employees who has an affective commitment towards their job, is ambitious and a high degree of job involvement tend to have a work-centric identity which is often the case with individuals who are frequent users of workplace technology. This fits well into the respondents in this study who clearly has an affective commitment towards their job and are having problems not using their workplace technology.

5.2.2 The failed separation initiative – The importance of individual preferences

It is clear that with smartphones and email the respondents could be reached to a larger extent than what was possible before these new technologies. Until two years ago the Nation had a fixed telephone at the expedition that was answered during office hours and did not provide smartphones for the employees but instead only regular cell phones without the possibility to access the internet or check emails. This led to the employees using their own phones for work purposes since these were more convenient and provided the possibility to check emails etcetera. In an attempt to provide a better working environment through separating work and private life the Nation replaced the old phones with smartphones in 2014 so that the employees would not need to use their own phones. The fixed expedition phone was also removed since people found the cellphone numbers online and used them instead when no one answered in the fixed phone.

Two years after this initiative is seems that it was not that successful when it comes to separating work and private life and providing an opportunity for the employees to relax. Most of the employees keeps their work phones with them at all times and some of them do not even use them but have instead connected them to their private phones so that they do not have to bring two phones with them at all times.

Karl: I had a work phone during the first 6 months but then I felt that it was a hassle to always have two phones with me. I started to make a few phone calls with my private phone and eventually I only used my private phone.

Karoline tells that one of his colleagues never brings her phone with her home but instead leaves it at the office in order not being disturbed by calls during evenings. Karoline does not feel the need to leave the work phone at the office and just like Karl she does not use her working phone either:

“They are connected to each other; I do not use my work phone”

Anna explains that how you do vary from person to person and that there is no developed policy for phone calls, emails and when you are expected to be reached.

“I always brought my phone with me home [...] I know that some people turns off and does not answer calls at home because they have gone home for the day and I respect that but I felt that I could check an email.”

At the same time as they admit that the need to be reached at all times it is a cause for stress they also claim that they do not see it as a problem to bring their work phones home and to work from home:

Karoline: “Yes I check my email from home, but it is mostly because it is fun to see if something is happening”

Anna: “I never thought it was a problem to have the email at home for example, if I saw that I received a new email I did not perceive it as stressful.”

It is obvious that there are different preferences among the respondents about whether if they want to separate their work phone from their own phone or not. Some find it stressful to always have their work phone with them while some are fine with it. In the upcoming paragraph we will further investigate what implications there might be if one is not able to adjust the boundaries between work and non-work accordingly to one's preferences.

5.2.3. When the individual preferences cannot be met - Technology as an intruder

Even though some of the respondents have choose to use their private phones instead of their work phones because it is more convenient all of the respondents seem to agree that they actually should keep their private and work phones separately in order to increase WLB.

Johanna: I know that it is not good for shutting off work but I do it because it is convenient, my private phone is much better than my work phone and I know that it is something that it something that you should not do but it turned out this way anyway

Another recurring challenge is the fact that they work with volunteers. It is obvious that this has an impact on the internal communication. Everyone uses their private Facebook accounts to communicate with the volunteers since the volunteers do not have any work email and uses Facebook more often than email. Quratelet are using both Facebook messenger and Facebook

groups as a way to communicate with the volunteers. Johanna expresses that this is a problem but claims that it is hard to get around since Facebook is such a convenient communication tool.

“I tried to keep it to calls, text messages and email but it was not possible to avoid Facebook since you have everyone there [...] because of that it became the most convenient way of communication [...] I am not a big fan of it but mostly use it because you have to, if you do not have someone’s number and you have to get a hold of someone quickly if often becomes the easiest solution. People do not check their email as often as they check their Facebook. I would not recommend it but it hard to get by.”

Emil also uses Facebook since it is a convenient tool even though it makes him more reachable:

“I put a lot of private things at works disposal in order to be available and if they write at night just before I go to bed I will answer and the I turn of the phone or put it on soundless [...] it is such a helpful tool”

Karoline admits that it is a problem to use Facebook since then people do not hesitate to ask about anything which tend to result in more questions. People tend to think one more time and try to solve problems on their own before they send an email but with Facebook it is so easy to ask about anything. Therefore, she prefers email and would like to avoid using Facebook but when she needs answers quickly she uses it anyway since then it is the best channel.

“I have myself to blame, I started to write to them on Facebook and ask about things and if I do that it is hard to tell them that they are not allowed to write to me.”

Emil also brought his phone with him even though it meant that people could contact him” off-hours”:

“I refused to shut if off because if there is something that goes wrong I wanted to know it myself no matter where I was and when it was.”

He tells that the only time he did not bring his phone with him and was not reachable, one of the volunteers in charge of the lunch tried to reach him to get the keys to the kitchen earlier than usual and that he felt guilty for not being able to help her which probably is a reason to why he after that always kept his phone with him. He further explains that he felt that being able to be reached was a part of the job:

“When I entered my position I entered with the attitude that it was supposed to be that way, it was so intertwined (with private life). In some way I also chose not to do that.”

“It could be hard a bit frustrating that you always could be stopped and asked about something or if you had the your phone being called three times at 07.00 a Saturday just to answer really simple questions”

In this chapter we have learnt that the respondents struggle to obtain work-life balance which is easier said than done since technology makes work constantly available. In the upcoming paragraph we will look closer in to the environment in which the respondents work, even if they would be able to shut of their phones and not being reached by calls or emails they still live right by work which contributes to the difficulties to detach completely.

5.3 When work is home – living and working at the same place.

Shen et. al. (2015) argues that remote work where the employee performs their work in their home is a global trend but there is still little research about how this new way of working affects the employee. In the upcoming paragraph we will investigate how the respondents are affected by the fact that they live and work at the same place and we will learn that it is far from unproblematic.

5.3.1 The home, an extension of the office?

The lack of physical borders becomes evident when talking to the employees about their work. Many of them did not live in the Nations apartments before they were elected to their position but felt a need to move in there because of the job. The respondents say that they do not think it is necessary to live at the Nation in order to be able to do their job but the fact that it is only one person who have had a full-timer position during the last six years who has not lived at the Nation. This could indicate that it is expected that you live at the Nation in order to be closer to the Nations activities and being more available. During the interviews for the full-time positions the candidates is always asked if they would move to the Nation if elected which further strengthens the theory that is expected.

The respondents also highlight the convenience of living at the same place as where they work:

Anna: I do not think I wanted to live anywhere else because I thought it was comfortable and necessary to live that close since it always where so little time between different doings.

It is not only the fact that you always can be reached that could be problematic with living at the same place as where you work. It also seems to create a feeling of work always being present and several of the respondents talks about how they have problems to detach from work. Anna tell us about her experiences:

“I noticed a clear difference, my first semester I lived at the third floor in the building with the windows facing the street and then I really could shut off but during the second semester I lived a bit further down in the building with the windows facing the courtyard and the office and then I could experience that it was harder to shut off or letting it go because then I always saw if there was someone at the office who was working or there earlier than me or later than me and that could be an element of stress to always kind of see work and that effected pretty much”

5.3.2. Work-life conflict – Struggling with border breakers

The interviews are in general satisfied with their housing and highlights many of the advantages of living at the Nation. It is convenient since you already spend a lot of time there, it is centrally located and you live close to all your friends. But they also point out some problems with living at the same place as where you work and how this can contribute to increased stress and unrealistic demands of constant availability. Karl explains:

“There is a convenience with living at the same place as you work since you can get out of bed and then you are like 5 meters from work. But of course there is also a downside, you cannot do anything without people knowing where you are. If you think “okay screw this, now I am going home to watch TV, play computer games” or whatever, you do not have the freedom to do that undisturbed without people knowing that “ah, he is not at the office, then maybe he is home” and then coming knocking on the door”

Having to deal with work related thing at home is not unique for Karl’s story but instead something that almost everyone has experienced. Karoline has also experienced this and thinks that it alright if people comes to her apartment with work related matters and she thinks that it makes some things more convenient:

“Now they can come up to me during the nightclub and knock on my door pretty easy when I am at home [...] I think that it is alright, if they need a key or are not able to find something then I think it is alright to ask.”

But there are also occasions when it is not as pleasant to being easy to reach:

Johanna: There has been some nightly visits [...] came banging at my door at 02.00 in the middle of the night [...] then I was pretty furious.

In this paragraph we have investigated how the full-timers experiences how it is to live at their workplace where most of their friends also lives and how this affects their possibility to manage

the boundaries between work and non-work. In the existing theory Clark (2000) and Kreiner et. Al (2009) discuss how family members can have the function as "Border keepers" who helps the individual to manage the borders between work and family. In this case this is interesting since the friends who are living at the Nation who could have worked as Border Keepers in this case is involved at the Nation as for example volunteers on their leisure time. This means that what the full-timers look upon as work is looked upon as non-work by the friends which creates kind of a paradox which means that the full-timers are not able to use their friends as border keepers.

In the next paragraph we will investigate how the full-timers uses alternative methods to managing the boundaries between work and non-work and how they seek for border keepers in other environments.

5.3.3. Leaving - A way to get temporary respite

In the previous paragraph it became obvious that the lack of border keepers could be a problem from the full-timers when trying to manage the work/non-work boundaries. Anna explains how important it is to let go of the Nation in order to relax mentally but admits that it is hard to do:

"It is about meeting those outside of the Nation as well and to spend time with other people and just not mentioning the Nation for one night which is hard. To go home to the family sometimes which is really important, dare to take some time off, the Nation will not go under if one of the full timers are away for one weekend. Things will work themselves out"

Karl also suggest that meeting outside friends can be a way to get a break:

"I felt that in some social contexts, in some social spheres then you understood that now I am only Karl instead of now I am Karl CEO at the Nation. You were able to relax and just be yourself and did not have to think before you talked and everyone knew that I am just me who accidentally became CEO later on."

Leaving the Nation temporarily also seems to be a way for the respondents to wind down and detach from work. Karl explains how this helped him:

"I was pretty lucky since my parents live in Malmö which is close to Lund and furthermore they live close to the train station so it took me 30 minutes' door-to-door before I was home with my parents so I went there some weekends and disconnected. [...] It meant kind of, I had the phone with me but I was not at the Nation and people knew that I was away so it was not the same. If it was not anything urgent people did not try to reach me in the same way."

For some of the respondents a small break was enough:

Johanna: “[...] it can be a bit tenacious that you feel that you kind of are on duty all the time and that it is you who have to fix it if something breaks [...] You can let it go pretty well but you let it go even more if you leave the Nation and the building [...] I used to go over to a friend’s house and just hang there for a few hours when it was as most stressful. Or just sit in a park or go out for a coffee, it is not like you have to leave town.

But for others more drastic means were necessary and some employees have gone further away in order to be able to relax. Karl tells us about a period when it was as most stressful at the job:

Karl: [...] it was not enough to go home to my parent’s place for a weekend or so, so I was like: “Now I will fly to Berlin, screw this I have to leave the country”

Anna thinks that it varies very much from person to person how affected you are by living and working at the same place and how hard one has to let go of work:

“I think it depends a lot on the person and how much one values to be alone. You always becomes more available at the Nation all the time, you can always solve things and it becomes harder to say “No I will deal with this tomorrow” because you are there anyway and everyone knows it but I thought it was almost necessary to live at the Nation.”

In this paragraph we have seen that since the other people who lives at the Nation cannot fulfill the role as border keepers the full-timers seek for this function elsewhere by turning to family and external friends. We have also seen how escaping from the Nation by creating a physical distance seems to be a border management strategy for the full-timers.

5.3.4. Trying to establish boundaries – What is me and what is work?

Karoline argues that it is primarily the activities in the blurred borderline between work and private life like for example representing the Nation at a ball that could cause stress and fatigue since even though these activities are supposed to be fun you still have some kind of work role the whole evening. Socializing with other Nations and student organizations is one of the benefits with the job but since the others at these events also have full time positions at other student organizations there is a risk that you will not be able to detach mentally from work since this is the one thing everyone at the event has in common which easily makes work the topic of conversation accordingly to Karoline.

“You have to go to some balls, you have to go to some party, I think that could wear you down more than answering questions, you don’t get any leisure time.

Karl explains that he and his colleagues tried to clarify their expectations on each other by defining “office hours” when one was expected to work:

“We had a policy that you were supposed to be at the office at least between 9 and 17 on weekdays as long as you were not doing work anywhere else. Then of course sometimes you were there earlier and often you left later if you had stuff to do, like meetings that ran over time and other things. [...] You were supposed to know what you could to expect from each other and knew that everyone was there equally much.”

He further explains that he experienced that the volunteers respected these “office hours” but that it still happened that he was contacted outside of these hours:

“I actually experienced that those who were volunteers at the Nation called during day time and not at strange hours, but then there was people who you did not know at all who could call at some strange hours. Probably they were not so familiar with the situation and you got a few strange phone calls in the beginning of the term from people looking for housing or people wanting help administrating their member fees [...] That was really a thing that people could call about exactly at all times and wanting help straight away [...] There were no limits (of when they could call) since the phone number where available.”

Karoline and Johanna have also experienced this but does not seem to find it that problematic:

Johanna: “It was pretty easy to separate it, then of course it was some parts that interfuse but it feels like that is hard to avoid in the Nation world.”

Karoline: “I did not have any problems with it, but then of course there were others that had it and then you had to be clear about it and that now when we are here watching a movie then I am not here as your boss but as a private person. You kind of had to mark that now I am not here, could we not talk about this tomorrow when we are at the Nation instead? [...] To be COO is a title but you are also a person as well. You have to be able to look beyond the titles when you are spending time with your friends and I think the friends also has to be reminded about that some times. Especially since you are so caught up with the Nation and are thinking and living for the Nation.”

But there were also times when the respondents actively regulated their behavior in order to fit in to the demands from the work role:

Karl: I had a talk with my colleagues during the spring about how important it is that the others in the student life thinks that we are nice since they are potential customers and because they are an excellent channel to reach out to other potential guests through. It contributes rather much to the Nations trademark if we as persons are well liked since we are a prominent signpost of the Nation.”

It varies from person to person if they are considering it a problem not being able to make a clear cut between your private identity and your work identity. Several of the employees admitted that their work identity somewhat limited or had an effect on the private identity and actions since they experienced that others always looked upon them as their professional identity and with those expectations people had on you from that role:

Karoline: You were more aware of your role and that you could not behave anyway

Karl: It could be that you are thinking about it too much and that you let it restrict your personality a little bit too much and I guess I kind of felt that to the beginning.

Karoline: When you become a full-timer it is like you always are carrying that position and at all times has it as a front so because of that I think that there is a lot of people who finds it more comfortable to not be at the Nation when one is partying.”

Also, the way the respondents have been trying to cope with this varies. Johanna tried to create stronger borders between her private and her professional self by using a job uniform:

“You put on the sweatshirt and the work keys and then you are at work [...] I do not know, I guess there is something psychological with having a job uniform and it has worked pretty well actually. It feels a bit more like that you are at work when you have it on [...] I would gladly have printed several more so that you could wear it to work every day”

The statement above is an example of how rituals could be used to transition between the different roles. This is a technique that also was found in a study by Eddleston and Mulki (2015).

Karl on the other hand experiences that having strong borders could be a burden and his way of handling the stress he experienced his first term were to be to get rid of the borders and accept full-scale integration of the two roles:

“I came to some kind of insight, I stopped trying to pretend that like I was not working sometimes and I went from to a large degree separating on when I stopped working and that I had my work phone and my private phone and trying to separate it that much. When I started my second semester I did not have the energy to keep that up and instead I was satisfied with the fact that I am working basically all the time and that I AM this now and I was fine with that. That made me feel much better during the fall. I experienced that it was easier to look on it like “I give up” and that you needed to be reachable at all times and then suddenly during the fall if the phone rang and I saw that it was work related and was something that I were supposed to answer but I was in a situation in which I felt that I was not able to answer, I felt that it does not matter If I do not take the call but instead calls back in half an hour since it is just half an hour. If it would have been during the spring I would have answered anyway and because of that I experienced that I could manage my job in a better way. In some way I was able to balance my private life with my job better when I had realized that well I do not have a private life anyway.”

The statement above is an example of full integration as a way of managing work/non-work boundaries which is possible accordingly to Kreiner et. al. (2009) and Rothbard et. al. (2005) who suggest that boundary management strategies can be placed in a continuum from full integration to full segmentation.

5.4. Coping with WLB through flexibility and time loans

As learnt in the previous chapter the respondents are having a hard time to accomplish a satisfactory level of work-life balance. In the upcoming chapter we will learn more about their different techniques to handle work-life imbalance and why they seem to accept an imbalance.

5.4.1. Flexibility – A devil in disguise when trying to handle WLB

In the previous paragraph we learnt that one coping strategy used by the respondents to regulate WLB is by temporarily leaving the workplace. This is often done when they have a sense of imbalance that have gone quit far. In the upcoming paragraphs we will investigate how they are handling it a bit more proactive on a day to day basis. One recurrent coping strategy among the respondents is using the flexibility in their work in order to create some kind of balance.

Johanna explains that the flexible nature of the work is something that helps her to cope with the high work load and to handle the stress:

”I think it is very flexible, for example if you want to go away two hours a day in the middle of the day that works because then I could just work during the evening instead [...] There is maybe a meeting here and there which is fixed moments, the rest one could spread out so it is very flexible. [...] That is something that I have used, when it has been a bit stressful then I have been taking a break in the middle of the day and been working a bit longer or working during a weekend instead.

Other examples given by the respondents is the possibility to leave to make personal errands during office hours since these are rather flexible. Some of the respondents point out that it is possible to sleep in those days you feel tired and do more of the work during the evenings. Since you have so close home it is also possible to do personal household chores like go change on the laundry machines or take a short break to go home and do the dishes. It seems like this kind of flexibility helps the respondents to reduce conflict between the work- and private domain which is in line with Butler et. al. (2009) who argues that flexibility is a way to reduce work-family conflict.

However, Johanna underlines that the flexibility has a down side as well:

“With this kind of job, when the working hours is a bit fluent, it feels like it is also very easy that you do a bit more.”

The existing literature supports Johanna’s thoughts about how flexible work hours can result in in the hours worked. For example, Brannen (2005) suggests that flexibility could be a way for

the organization to get more work out of the employees since they will have a hard time to self-regulate themselves. Ellingaeter (2003) suggests that even though the work hours are flexible, the time demands are boundless which seems to be a description that fits in well with the studied organization in which the employees feel a need to be reachable at all times.

5.4.2. “Only for one year” – Justifying work life imbalance temporarily

Several of the full-timers seems to justify their work-life imbalance with the argument that it is for a limited time and that the commission as a full-timer only is for a year.

Karoline: “No I guess it is not reasonable (to be reachable 24/7) but at the same time it is reasonable, the Nation operations requires it and it is only a time limited commission so I believe that you go in with the attitude of it being that way and then you will handle it better than if you do not go in with that attitude”

It seems like this could be a way to handle the heavy workload at the moment but that is not sustainable in the long run. Many of the respondent’s gives the impression that one year of working like this is on the limit to what one can handle and Anna expresses that it is a problem to never being able to have private time:

“It would not have worked to have the commission any longer, I do not think I would have the energy for it [...] not to be able to decide over your own time [...] it is basically every night and every weekend as well, I mean, to have your own life and being able to decide over it, that is probably why I would never have wanted to have the commission for another year.”

Karoline agrees:

“I thought it was very hard to keep up the motivation, you have to be very motivated to endure it. [...] If you had more articulated leisure time maybe you should become more motivated and keep flame burning”

Emil expresses that the fact that he also felt a responsibility towards the Nation to do as much as possible during his year and that this sometimes could be a burden:

“At the same time work was an interest so it became like you redistributed the time and the energy that you put into the different interest not by choice but out of necessity [...] because there were so much that you could do and that you should do with your position when you had your year.”

He explains that this sometimes could lead to feelings of guilt and insufficiency:

“There were no upper limit of the number of things one had to do [...] If you had to little to do it was because you do not realize that you can do stuff. [...] When you did not do anything it was because you had so much to do but you still felt guilty because you maybe did not have time for everything.”

Emil admits that work took over some of his private interest but legitimizes it with it just being for one year so in some way it is alright even though it might not be healthy:

“This was a bit unmerciful to what you want to do, even if it were fun it was not your choice to do it but instead you had to do it on the expense of other things”

In this chapter we have investigated how the full-timers justifies their poor WLB with that they only have the commission for a limited time and therefore it is acceptable with this imbalance. This phenomenon will be discussed further in the discussion in which two new concepts will be introduced as possible explanations to the phenomena and what implications it might have.

6. Discussion

6.1. Technology's impact on the full-timers perception of WLB

When looking on how new technologies impact the Nations full time employee's perception of WLB it is clear that the empirical findings gives supports to the existing literature (e.g. Lewis 2003; Sarker et. al., 2012) which highlight that these new technologies has made it possible to work whenever or wherever one likes. The respondents are to a high extent using this possibility and with the help of their smartphones they are reachable at all times and ready to answer job related questions or solve upcoming problems no matter the time of day. As argued by Guest (2002) our respondents expresses that being reachable at all times on their smartphones are experienced as stressful and it seems to contribute to a sense of work-life imbalance. It is also highly visible that new technologies contribute to the blurring of the borders between the work and non-work domains as discussed by e.g. Hill, Miller, Weiner and Colihan (1998), Tausig and Fenwick (2001) and Nam (2014).

All the respondents seem to some extent be aware of how their work-life balance could be negatively affected by blurred boundaries and it seems like they share the view of Mellner et. Al (2014) who argue that the integration of the two domains are a hinder for the individual to reach WLB. They have taken some measures to prevent this, as for example getting work smartphones in order to stop the use of private smartphones in their work and thereby create borders between work and non-work. Despite the awareness of the possible negative impact of blurred boundaries between work and non-work and their attempts to prevent this it seems like the negative impact of the blurred boundaries is not a problem for everyone. For example, some of the respondents chooses not to separate their work and private phones. At the same time some of the respondents are really firm with this separation and don not bring their work phone with them home and never checks email from home. This support the arguments by e.g. Nam (2014) and Jain & Nair (2013) that WLB is subjective and that everyone does not have the same preferences.

In line with Thomas (2014) who argues that new technology not only has a negative impact on WLB we can also see that the respondents experience positive impacts of new technology. Since now days a lot of the matters previously handled at the expedition during office hours now can be handled online or via email the Nation has been able to change their office hours and instead of having the expedition open 10-13 every day they now only have the expedition open 12-13 which seems to have led to greater flexibility which in turn has led to greater job

satisfaction. This is in line with the reasoning of Bryne (2005), Thomas (2014) and Vartianen (2006) and it also seems like this have contributed to a positive effect for the organization as a whole in line with Kurland and Baileys (1999) discussion of improved efficiency and greater productivity.

In general, it seems like email and smartphones do not have an extensive negative impact on the employees' perception of their WLB since they are able to self-regulate their use of these technologies according to their individual preferences. Instead what seems to create feelings of work-life imbalance is when one is not able to regulate the degree of blending between the work and non-work domains. The clearest example of this found in the empirical material is how the respondents experiences the use of their personal Facebook accounts in their work. It is clear that the respondents feel that Facebook is such a useful tool in their communication with the volunteers that they have to use it in their work in order to perform their work efficiently. The work phone and the email is possible to keep separated but it takes a lot of self-discipline not to use Facebook for work related matters since it makes the communication so much easier. This leads to them not being able to choose whether or not they would like to use this tool which in turn could be argued that they are not able to choose their degree of blending according to their preferences. This is a clear example of Brynes (2005) argument that what is perceived as balance for the individual is highly dependent on the circumstances and one's perception of WLB is to a large extent about having control over when, where and how one is working.

6.2. Negotiating the boundaries between work and non-work.

In the same way as technology has an impact on what degree the respondents are able to adjust the degree of blending between the private and the professional sphere it seems like the type of organization the employees work in prevents them to regulate the borders according to their preferences. When looking upon the work environment described by the respondents and comparing it to Clarks (2000) border theory it stands clear that the employees work in an environment that prevents the creation of strong borders. As we remember, Clark (2000) argued that the borders between the private and the professional sphere could be physical (working and living at different places), psychological (different behavior in the different spheres) or time based (doing work at specific hours). It is clear that the full-timers are not able to adjust these borders according to their individual preferences and that this creates stress and a feeling of imbalance. As discussed in the previous paragraph when talking about technology it is possible to accomplish balance when it is possible to manage the separation between work and non-work according to the individual preferences but it can be problematic when the individual

preferences cannot be met. It is clear that the respondents' works in an organization and a context that has significant impact on how much they are able to adjust the strength of the borders and that it is not possible to meet one's personal preferences. The innkeepers in Shen et. als. (2015) study tried to maintain borders between their work and non-work domain was by limiting access for the guests and by communicating their preferences of boundaries to the guests by for example a sign that tells which areas that is off limits for guest. To some extent the respondents tries to do this as well but it is clear that it sometimes can be problematic and that it is a balance between privacy (keeping one's personal Facebook account strictly personal) and work efficiency (using it for work reasons).

Just like in the study of innkeepers by Shen et. Al (2015) the respondents experience that the work role becomes embedded into the non-work domain since their home becomes associated by their professional role which leads to work physically and physically intruding on their private role. The respondent in the study of remote workers by Eddelston and Mulki (2015) expressed how they were unable to disengage from work and that they were constantly pulled to work, for example they expressed this as "on 24/7" and "chained to the computer" which is expressions very similar to the full-timers in this study who expressed they need to be constantly available and reachable at all times. The method of using family members as border keepers like suggested by Clark (2000) and Kreiner et. Al (2009) are not working for the fulltimers since the friends who lives at the nation and are equivalent to family for the fulltimers, does not only have the role as family but also the role as colleagues since they are active at the nation. What is perceived as leisure activities for the volunteers are perceived as work by the fulltimers which results in a boundary conflict. The fulltimers are having a hard time to maintain the domains separated because of this which contributes to work-life-imbalance. Earlier we heard Karoline who expressed that going to dinners and balls and represent the nation was more exhausting than the actual work since it is so hard to know the difference between what is work and what is not.

As argued by Nam (2014) and Jain & Nair (2013), WLB is a subjective perception and everyone does not have the same preferences of how integrated or separated work and non-work should be in order to achieve WLB. Theoretically it should be possible achieve WLB in a highly integrated environment like what is the case for Innkeepers or the fulltimers at the Nation but the results of this study shows that it is challenging and not everyone's personal preferences are compatible with this kind of environment. It is likely that remote workers and at-home workers

are more likely to experience work-life-imbalance and needs to be aware of what one could do in order to prevent or minimize negative effects of poor WLB.

6.3. Coping strategies: Introducing the concepts of “Time bankruptcy” and “Time Pawning”

In the empirical material we have found different techniques used by the respondents in order to cope with work-life imbalance. The work is taking place in an environment that is highly integrated with the employee’s personal domain where the workplace is imbedded in the personal domain and it is obvious that the employees struggles with work-life in the same way Shen et. al., (2015) suggest is the situation for innkeepers. Shen et. al., (2015) argues that WLB-literature based on the boundary theory and Clarks (2000) work-family border theory might not be relevant for workers who performs their work in the home since these theories are based on the assumption of a spatial separation between the work and the non-work domain. The findings in this study suggest that the existing literature is in fact relevant but the lack of physical separation between the two domains brings some challenges for the employees but it is still possible for them to create borders but these are weak and highly permeable.

In the empirical material we have seen how the respondents in different ways are attempting to create borders between work and their private life in all three different ways suggested by Clark (2000). Physical borders are created by for example leaving the work phone and computer at the office in order not to perform work at home but at the same time we have heard stories about problems to detach from work and fully transition into the private role since they still in some way are at the workplace. Due to modern technology the workplace is no longer dependent on geographically location in the same way. We have also been told that is sometimes happens that the full-timers deal with work related things in their private residences such as giving out keys to the volunteers and answer questions and that they in some way thinks that it comes with the job. We have also heard that the employees feel a need to leave the Nation and e.g. visiting their parents for a couple of days which is something the author believes is a reaction to the lack of spatial separation of the two spheres and a way to momentarily create a physical boundary towards work.

Attempts to create psychological borders is done by for example using work clothes as a way of signaling when they are working and when they are working both towards themselves and towards others. A challenge here is that it seems to be hard to draw a line between when working and when they are not working. One of the responsibilities of the full-timers is to be hosts at

the Nations parties and events so in some way they are also working when visiting the restaurant and the night club but in a way they are also there for their own enjoyment. One of the respondents told us about how she went to the night club when having a night off but could not enjoy herself because she kept thinking of the financial result when she saw that there were not as much visitors as usual. I have also myself experienced the difficulty to fully transition into the private role when visiting the Nations activities during the year I held a full time position at the Nation. If it is messy at the club or if there is a shortage of volunteers in the bars causing poor service, I experienced it hard to have a good time since I was thinking about how it was bad for business. Often I and other full-timers actively choose to not visiting the own Nation activities due to this which is a clear example of how the lack of borders makes the work role take overhand on the expense of the private role.

When it comes to Time-based borders attempts has been made to have specific office hours and turning of work at specific times but we have also learnt that the employees finds the flexibility associated with the work and the possibility to perform work whenever they like as one of the main contributors to upholding WLB which makes these borders rather weak as well. It is interesting to note that many of the employees accepts full integration between the two roles even though they do not seem to be completely comfortable with it with the excuse that it is for a limited time only. For example, Karoline who said: *“No I guess it’s not reasonable (to be reachable 24/7) but at the same time it is reasonable, the Nation operations requires it and it is only a time limited commission.”* Or Karl who said that he gave up trying to create boundaries and accepted full integration of the two roles:

“I came to some kind of insight, I stopped trying to pretend that like I was not working sometimes and I went from to a large degree separating on when I stopped working and that I had my work phone and my private phone and trying to separate it that much. When I started my second semester I did not have the energy to keep that up and instead I was satisfied with the fact that I am working basically all the time and that I AM this now and I was fine with that. (...) In some way I was able to balance my private life with my job better when I had realized that well I don’t have a private life anyway.”

Similar statements have been made by almost all of the respondents and a reoccurring explanation to why they have accepted weak and highly permeable boundaries or in some cases even full integration between the two domains is that it is for a limited time. It seems like one way of decreasing the problems of what could be perceived as work-life imbalance is by self-bargaining in which poor WLB is accepted with the argument of it being for a limited period

of time. I argue that this is similar to the technique of “time-lending” proposed by Kreiner et al. (2009). In the study by Kreiner et al. (2009) it is discussed how borrowing time from one domain to another could be used as a technique to manage work-family conflict and create a temporal balance between the two domains. This phenomenon was also found by Eddleston and Mulki (2015) in their study of remote workers who used “mini-loans” of time which were repaid on a daily basis. The empirical findings in this study suggests that even more extreme version of these time loans exists as a way to achieve work-life balance. Therefore, the author would like to introduce two new concepts as addition to the theories of time-lending: Time pawning and Time bankruptcy.

Time pawning occurs when one of the domains is allowed to take over completely or nearly completely on the expense of the other domain. Most likely this is supposed to be for a limited time just like in the case when making a loan at a pawn shop. Time pawning could be seen as a last resort that is used when regular time loans are not enough to adjust the work-life imbalance but by using time pawning one might be able to achieve work-life-balance or at least reduce the perceived imbalance to levels that is manageable. Another difference between regular time loans and time pawning is that you have to give up something when you make a time pawning. For example, one of the respondents in this study said that the only way he was able to reach some kind of work life balance was by accepting full integration and the work role taking over completely. Only by depositing his private identity he was able to get a time loan big enough to manage the time claims on his work identity. The respondents accept that the work sphere takes over on the expense of the private sphere since it is for a limited time. They all have the intent to bail out the time they temporarily have refrained from and they clearly state that this solution would not be sustainable in the long run but for one year it is acceptable.

Time bankruptcy occurs when one domain takes over to such degree and for such a period that it is not possible for the worker to repay the debt to the other domain but instead becomes insolvent which results in a time bankruptcy. The result of such a bankruptcy could for example be an escape or exit from that domain. The exit could be both physical, by leaving the domain by for example quitting the job, and psychological, by feelings of indifference towards the organization or loss of emotional attachment to the organization. We have not been given any clear examples of this in the study, the closest any of the respondents has been to such a bankruptcy is moving from their apartments at the Nation in order to be able to repay their time debt but none of the respondents has gone through a complete bankruptcy.

7. Conclusions

This final chapter will give a summary of the main findings in the study and present what theoretical contributions makes to the existing work-life-balance literature. Further, the findings will be looked upon in a wider context in order to present limitations of the study and give suggestions of further research that could be of interest.

7.1. Findings and theoretical contribution

The purpose of this study was to make a contribution to the existing literature by questioning the existing assumption that work and non-work is two spatial separated spheres. This was done through an in-depth study at a case organization where the two domains are highly integrated and nearly borderless. The study was based on two research questions that worked as guidance throughout the process:

- *How does the absence of physical distance between work and home affect one's perception of work-life balance?*
- *What do individuals with an absence of physical distance between work and home do in order to obtain work-life-balance?*

The results of the study show that the absence of physical distance between work and home has a significant influence on how work-life-balance is perceived by the individual but that it not per se has to be a hinder to obtain WLB. As seen in previous studies, one's experience of WLB is highly connected to the possibility to adjust the level of integration to meet one's individual preferences. The respondents in the study accepted high levels of integration between the two domains since they viewed this as necessary to handle the job but the results show that this sometimes could be problematic when the level of integration did not correspond to the individual's preferences. The lack of physical distance forced the respondents to seek other ways to create and maintain boundaries between the two domains as an attempt to obtain work-life-balance but this was far from unproblematic. Not having work and non-work physically separated are affecting one's possibilities to obtain the two other types of borders since works becomes embedded in the home and the personal domain. This results in difficulties to detach from the work role and fully transition into the private role since work is always present. New technologies further enhance this effect since work is not dependent on a physical location but can be performed whenever and wherever. It might also be so that it is not the fact that technology enables the employees to perform work whenever and where ever one likes that

creates feelings of stress and difficulties to detach but instead that it is knowing that others know that it is possible which creates expectations to always be reachable.

Since the boundaries between the two domains were very weak and highly permeable the respondents in the study was forced to find alternative way to achieve work-life-balance or decrease perceived work-life-imbalance. The degree of flexibility in the job that enables the employees to move between the two domains which is found to be an important way to reduce conflict between the two areas. By making small “time-loans” from one area to another it is possible for the respondents to meet the demands of both areas to a greater extent. These time loans where both done and repaid on a daily basis but larger amounts of time could also be banked and repaid in the future. As a contribution to the existing literature I would like to suggest that these kind of time loans also can take more extreme forms where one area is allowed to take over completely on the expense of the other. In the study some of the respondents accepted full integration between the two domains and claimed that even though it was not according to their individual preferences the job required it and some even claimed to “be” their position.

The explanation to why full integration was accepted was because the commission only was for a limited period time and therefore work-life-imbalance could be accepted. I would label this phenomena *time pawning* which is a more extreme version of the previous discussed time loans. Furthermore, I would also like to introduce the concept of *time bankruptcy* which could be a result of time loans or time pawning in a situation where one domain has been allowed to take over to such an extend and period of time that the time debt is not possible to repay. Such a bankruptcy could result in an escape or exit from the domain that has been insolvent. The exit could be both physical, by leaving the domain by for example quitting the job, and psychological, by feelings of indifference towards the organization or loss of emotional attachment to the organization.

These two new concepts contribute to the existing work-life-balance literature by presenting an alternative view on WLB. Further, this study provides some new insights on the effects on how WLB is affected by the lack of physical separation between the work and non-work domain.

7.2 Suggestions for further research

During the research process several interested questions have been raised but due to the limited scope of this thesis many of them had to be left un-investigated. There is still a gap in the work-life-balance literature since much of it is based on the assumption of work and non-work being two spatial separated spheres. The technological advancements which contributes to the global trend of remote working makes it important to investigate what implications it has for the individual since in the future this separation could not be taken for granted. In order to investigate the implications of the lack of separation more studies have to be made in different kinds of industries and organizations to be able to make any generalizable claims of its effects. One potential area of research could be to look at students who in fact are their profession which would suggest that they also lack clear boundaries between the private and the professional spheres.

Another question that have come to my attention during the research process is to what extent the emotional connection to the organization affects the creation of boundaries. In the studied organization the respondents turned their hobby into their job which probably means that they have a stronger emotional bond to the organization than if it was “just a job”. How an emotional bond to the job affects how one experience WLB would be an interesting area of research since this is likely to have affected the results in this study to some extent.

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