Managing a sustainable career in the contemporary world of work: personal choices and contextual challenges
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1 | Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF RESEARCH

Most of us dedicate a large portion of our lives to work. In fact, the average person spends more than one third of their lifetime working (Pryce-Jones, 2011). It is then safe to say that our jobs and careers can have a huge impact on the quality of our lives. Indeed, the degree to which we are satisfied with our job has been shown to affect our levels of well-being, satisfaction with life, and career success (Faragher, Cass, & Cooper, 2005; Gallup & Oswold, 2014; Unanue, Gomez, Cortez, Oyanedel, & Mendiburo-Sequel, 2017). Considering this impact, it is not surprising that many of us are continuously concerned with making the right career choices and are desperately seeking careers that can make us happy while bringing us success. This concern is especially relevant for the 21st century, where individuals have an endless number of career options and a plethora of career paths to follow (Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk, 2010).

Unlike previous generations, people are no longer bound to work under a permanent contract within a single organization for the rest of their working life. The modern employee has many alternative employment opportunities to choose from, ranging from project work to independent contracting (e.g., self-employment) and everything in between (Barley, Bechky, & Milliken, 2017; Kelliher & Menezes, 2019). In addition to employment-related career decisions, employees face numerous career decisions related to their day-to-day work life. Contrary to former times, when work was performed during standard work hours at the office, many employees are given the opportunity to decide how, when, and where (e.g., working from home) they want to perform their work (Kelliher & Menezes, 2019). Thus, while it used to be perfectly fine for organizations to manage their employees' career, nowadays, individuals are expected to be proactive and take greater responsibility for managing their career and everyday work life. In essence, this means that the responsibility for career management has shifted from organizations to the person.

The shifting responsibility for career management from organizations to individuals is reflected in scholarly career research, with several theoretical frameworks underlining the importance of individuals taking responsibility for their own career success (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; King, 2004). Two theories that have gained particular momentum in the career literature are the *boundaryless* and *protean career* paradigms. Both theories postulate that individuals are independent actors that can self-manage their careers through career decision-making (Crawford, French, & Loyd-Walker, 2013),

by developing competencies and showing proactive career behaviours (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1996).

Taking this perspective, many researchers have studied how career decision-making, career planning, and job crafting can influence career success (see Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017, for a literature review). However, as much as we want to, our agentic behaviours are not always sufficient to make a career; it is in fact very unlikely to craft and manage a successful career on our own. To illustrate, we can take the career progress barriers that women (still) face as an example. Although many women are carefully managing their career, and are willing to go the extra mile by working on their competencies, they are still underrepresented in management positions (see EIGE, 2018), which, largely, can be explained by social norms and gender stereotypes (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Ellemers, 2018). This example demonstrates the influence that less controllable aspects in our life can have on our careers, and the development thereof.

Indeed, recent career research suggests that if we are to better understand how careers develop, we should look at the intersection between the individual and the broader life context (De Hauw & Greenhaus, 2014; De Vos et al., 2018; Van der Heijden & De Vos, 2015; Mayrhofer, Meyer, & Steyrer, 2007). For instance, Van der Heijden and De Vos (2015) recently added the career sustainability framework to the literature to argue that both the *person* and the *context* play a fundamental role when analysing the development and the sustainability of careers. While the person dimension refers to individual agency and personal factors, the context denotes influences that are outside of individuals' control, such as the work environment and society. Consistent with this notion, De Hauw & Greenhaus (2015) define a sustainable career as one "in which employees remain healthy, productive, happy and employable throughout its course and that fits into their broader life context" (p. 224). De Vos and colleagues (2018) recently built on this definition by considering health, happiness and productivity to be key indicators of a sustainable career. My dissertation contributes to this stream of research, and more specifically to the conceptual framework put forward by De Vos and colleagues (2018), by

(i) Investigating how *personal* choices, such as contemporary career decisions and personal factors, such as career self-efficacy and demographics, impact career sustainability.
(ii) Examining the impact of different *contextual* factors, and in particular those originating from work and society, on sustainable careers.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will outline the building blocks of this dissertation. First, I will explain in more detail how sustainable careers can be analysed. Hereafter, I will discuss how career sustainability is affected at the *person* level and how the *context* influences sustainable careers. Then, I will present the research questions that guide the empirical chapters in this dissertation. Finally, an overview of the methodology will be provided.

1.2   Building Blocks

1.2.1   Characteristics of a Sustainable Career

The concept of a sustainable career is still very much in its infancy and there seems to be little consensus in the field on what sustainable careers are. In fact, scholars have argued that "there is still a lack of an overarching and clear theoretical framework that allows grounded empirical investigation of this phenomenon" (De Vos et al., 2018, p. 2). In an attempt to build clarity and advance our understanding of what makes a career sustainable, De Vos and colleagues (2018) developed a conceptual model of sustainable careers. Their model presents three indicators that can be used to analyse what makes a career less or more sustainable. These indicators include health, happiness, and productivity, and are based on earlier definitions that underline resilience, satisfaction and employability as key characteristics of a sustainable career (e.g., De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2015).

Health refers to both physical and mental states of well-being and denotes the fit of individuals' careers with their mental and physical abilities. For instance, jobs in which individuals experience frequent mental exhaustion may not be sustainable as an individual may withdraw from work due to a burnout (Barthauer, Kaucher, Spurk, & Kauffeld, 2019). *Happiness* encompasses the subjective element of individuals' feeling of satisfaction with their work and career. Jobs in which employees are not satisfied may not be sustainable as they increase individuals' turn-over intentions (Blau, 2007; Van der Heijden, van Dam, & Hasselhorn, 2007). Van der Heijden and colleagues (2007) for instance, found that nurses who were dissatisfied with their job were more inclined to leave the profession. *Productivity* includes both performance at one's current work and chances of future employability. To illustrate, careers in which employees can develop their competencies may foster sustainability as they increase individuals' career potential in the future (Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer, Huibers, & Blonk, 2013; Akkermans & Tims, 2017).

De Vos and colleagues' (2018) conceptualization of a sustainable career is central to the studies presented in this dissertation. Specifically, the first two empirical chapters examine a sustainable career in terms of health, while chapters 4 and 5 use the productivity indicator to analyse a sustainable career. Having established the characteristics of a sustainable career, the next steps are to explore how such sustainability can be achieved and in which ways career sustainability is affected.

1.2.2   The Person Dimension

Individuals have a major impact on their career sustainability, through agentic behaviours, but also through other person-related factors, such as their skills and beliefs (De Vos et al., 2018). I will discuss these two elements

in more detail below and describe how my dissertation builds on these elements.

Agentic behaviours

Career research typically studies how individuals influence their career path through agentic behaviours, such as career decision-making (De Hauw & Greenhaus, 2015). In fact, a recent paper by Akkermans and Kubasch (2017) identified career decision-making as the second most trending topic in contemporary career research. Scholars have studied the concept to understand the processes by which individuals' decision-making strategies, career ambitions, and specific career paths and career choices influence career development (e.g., Kaminsky & Behrend, 2015). In the current dissertation, I focus on the latter. Understanding how specific career choices and career paths influence the sustainability of careers is important because individuals nowadays have a wide variety of possible career paths to follow (De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2015; Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014).

Before I move towards the discussion of the impact of specific career choices on sustainable careers, I will provide an overview of the different career decisions that individuals can engage in. In so doing, I use the taxonomy of contemporary career decisions created by De Hauw and Greenhaus (2015). In essence, the taxonomy distinguishes two ways in which employees can engage in contemporary career decision-making, namely (i) altering the content of work, and (ii) choosing alternative work arrangements. Career decisions related to making changes in the work content represent changes in individuals' job status and their function. Alternative work arrangements, on the other hand, define how employees decide to perform their job, such as opting for part-time work, choosing to work off-site (i.e., remote working) or deciding to be self-employed. Specifically, there are five dimensions (see Figure 1.1), which I will explain in further detail below.

1. Time, which enables employees to change their working hours. While traditionally, employees worked on a standard full-time basis, nowadays individuals can change the number of hours they work. To illustrate, employees can choose to decrease their working hours and engage in part-time work.

2. Continuity denotes individuals' career experiences across the lifespan. Today, many careers involve breaks and discontinuities. For instance, employees interrupt their careers to travel the world or to start a family, depending on their lifecycle.

3. Employment relation, by which individuals can choose a variety of employment contracts. The increasing number of individuals who are

engaging in independent employment is a clear example of contemporary employment relations.

4. Location refers to individuals' ability to pursue global careers. Because of globalization, nowadays, individuals have the opportunity to take on (short-term) international projects.

5. Personalization is a trend that has become possible because of developments in information technology. In contrast to the traditional 9 to 5 office mentality, many individuals today can choose where and when they perform their work on a daily basis (e.g., work from home or flexitime).
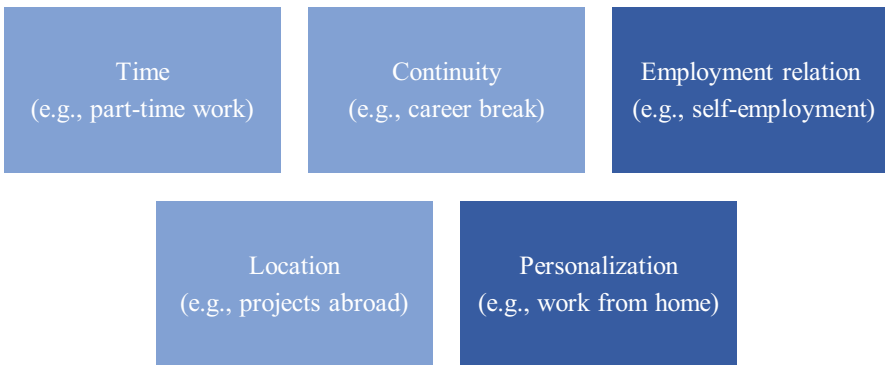
Time (e.g., part-time work)	Continuity (e.g., career break)	Employment relation (e.g., self-employment)

Location (e.g., projects abroad)	Personalization (e.g., work from home)

Figure 1.1 | An overview of contemporary career decisions

The contemporary career decisions illustrated above are assumed to have implications for career sustainability by influencing employees' productivity, health and happiness (De Vos et al., 2018). While I acknowledge the importance of all dimensions, I specifically focus on the *employment relation* (i.e., self-employment in Chapter 2) and *personalization* dimensions (i.e., working from home in chapters 3 & 4), as these are the most common forms of alternative work arrangements (Kelliher & De Menezes, 2019). For instance, in the Netherlands, 17% of the working population generates their own work and engages in self-employment (OECD, 2019). Moreover, figures from the European Working Conditions Survey, drawing on 43,850 employees across 35 European countries, show that 18% of the working population works frequently from home or at other locations outside the office and 30% in the EU28 can determine their own working schedules (Eurofound, 2015).

Personal factors

In addition to the impact of individuals' career decisions on sustainability, scholars have argued that "personal needs, values, and resources form

an important foundation for career-related decision making and are a key ingredient of the sustainability of one's career" (Akkermans, Keegan, Huemann, & Ringhofer, 2019, p.8). Put differently, career-related resources play a key role in navigating one's career. Career-related resources that are central to career development include career adaptability (Spurk, Kauffeld, Meinecke, & Ebner, 2016), competencies (Akkermans et al., 2013), resilience and self-efficacy (Guerrero & Hatala, 2015). Previous research has shown that employees with well-developed career competencies (e.g., proactively exploring career opportunities) experience greater objective as well as subjective career success (Colakoglu, 2011; Francis-Smythe, Haase, Thomas, & Steele, 2013), which relates to the productivity proxy of sustainable careers.

Other personal resources that have been identified as key ingredients of career sustainability include resilience and self-efficacy. Scholars claim that self-efficacy, in particular, plays a critical role in enabling a sustainable career because it reflects "the strength of people's convictions in their own effectiveness" (Bandura, 1977, p. 193). Indeed, the importance of self-efficacy has been demonstrated in research on career success and career adaptability (Abele & Spurk, 2009; Jiang, Hu, & Wang, 2018). Building on this stream of research, the final chapter (5) of my dissertation examines the role of career self-efficacy in career decision-making.

Moreover, meta-analytic studies have shown that personal factors related to demographics also have the potential to affect the sustainability of careers. In their meta-analysis, Ng and colleagues (2005), for example, found that marital status, gender, age and race predict career success-related outcomes, such as promotions and salary. In addition, research suggests that also individuals' parental status has negative consequences for career success because parents are perceived as being less committed to their work than childless employees (e.g., Benard & Correll, 2010). This dissertation adds to the literature by investigating whether there are differences in the career sustainability of parents and non-parents (Chapter 4).

1.2.3   The Context Dimension

As mentioned in the early sections of the introduction, sustainable careers are not entirely makeable and cannot be exclusively self-managed. Put differently, the context in which careers take place may either create challenges for individuals' career sustainability by creating constraints or foster sustainable careers by generating opportunities (Akkermans, Seibert, & Mol, 2018; De Vos et al., 2018; De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2017; Van der Heijden et al., 2020).

Before I elaborate on the impact of the context on sustainable careers, I will discuss which contextual factors exist, and where they originate from. To do this, I draw on the conceptual framework of De Vos and colleagues (2018). According to these scholars, the different layers of contextual factors that can create challenges or opportunities come from work, the broader

labour market, and private life (see Figure 1.2). In what follows, I will provide a detailed explanation of each contextual layer with examples from the literature.
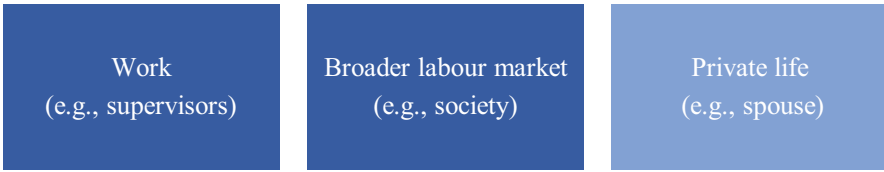
Work (e.g., supervisors)	Broader labour market (e.g., society)	Private life (e.g., spouse)

Figure 1.2 | An overview of the contextual layers

1. Work. The work-related context includes factors at the work group level and organizational level. At the work group level, one can think of social support. For instance, supervisory support at work can buffer the negative effect of high workload on emotional exhaustion (Pluut, Ilies, Curseu, & Liu, 2018), and foster a workplace in which productivity does not come at the cost of employees' well-being. Talent management practices and Human Resource Development practices are clear examples of how context at the organizational level can influence career sustainability, in terms of employability (De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2017; Nijs, Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, & Sels, 2014).

2. The broader labour market. On a more general level, individuals are influenced by the occupational sector and institutional environment in which their careers develop. Technological advancement is a good illustration of how the careers of administrative support staff may be affected at the occupational level (Frey & Osborne, 2017). The institutional environment can be thought of in terms of society and culture. For example, social norms and gender stereotypes create career (advancement) barriers for women (Cardoso & Marques, 2008; Krivkovich, Robinson, Starikova, Valentino, & Yee, 2017) consequently challenging the sustainability of their career, in terms of employability.

3. The private life. An example of the private life context is the spouse within dual-earner couples who influences and is influenced by the individual's career-related decision (Pluut, Büttgen, & Ullrich, 2018; Schooreel, Shockley, & Verbruggen, 2017).

These examples show that there are two ways in which contextual factors can influence career sustainability. First, the extent to which individuals' career decisions are beneficial for career sustainability is dependent on contextual factors, because sustainable careers can only be crafted when there is a clear alignment between the person and the context (Van der Heijden et al., 2020). Second, contextual factors can influence individuals' career decision-making, by creating opportunities or restricting what

is possible (De Hauw & Greenhaus, 2015; Feldman & Ng, 2007). In line with the above reasoning, I study contextual factors as an antecedent of career decision-making and a contingency factor that influences the consequences of career decision-making. That is, although contextual factors might directly influence sustainable careers, this dissertation focuses on the interplay between contextual factors (e.g., society) and person-related factors (i.e., career decision-making) that eventually has an impact on the sustainability of careers. The ways in which contextual factors influence sustainable careers is visualized in Figure 1.3. Against this background, the final two empirical studies in the current dissertation examine how *work* responds to individuals' career decisions (Chapter 4) and how differences in promotional opportunities because of *societal* norms influence individuals' career decision-making (Chapter 5).
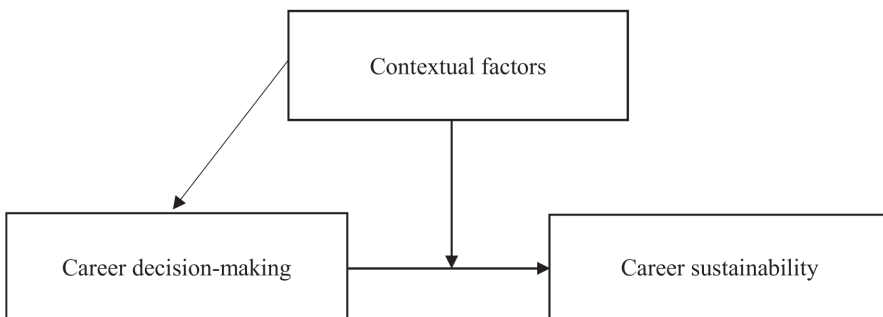

Figure 1.3 | The role of contextual factors in sustainable careers

1.3   Research Questions

In the previous paragraphs, I gave a detailed overview of the frameworks that will be used in this dissertation to study the impact of both individuals and their surrounding stakeholders on sustainable careers. In what comes next, I will specify what is examined in each study of my dissertation and how these studies contribute to career sustainability literature. In addition, I will outline the research questions that form the foundation of these chapters.

    In chapter 2, we take a *person* centred approach to the *employment relation* dimension of the taxonomy created by De Hauw and Greenhaus (2014) to investigate how the contemporary career decision to be self-employed influences individuals' career sustainability. Most studies to date have primarily paid attention to the career sustainability of "traditional employees in organizations" (Akkermans et al., 2019, p. 15) and thus in-depth knowledge about the impact of new employment relations for sustainable careers is still mostly lacking. Yet, for a better understanding of sustainable careers, we need to acknowledge the variety of types of employment that exist in the contemporary world of work (Barley et al., 2017; De Vos et al., 2018). In

fact, scholars have only begun to examine how the health and happiness of those who are not organization-based employed is affected. Recent studies, for example, have investigated the career sustainability of the self-employed and have shown that the self-employed experiences less stress, greater well-being (Baron, Franklin, & Hmieleski, 2016; Hessels, Rietveld, & Van der Zwan, 2017; Stephan & Roesler, 2010) and higher levels of work satisfaction (Van der Zwan, Hessels, & Rietveld, 2018). Yet, an in-depth understanding of the mechanisms through which type of employment influences well-being seems to be missing (Van der Zwan, Hessels & Rietveld, 2018) and it is therefore unclear why there are career sustainability differences across these employment relations.

Chapter 2 aims to add to the literature by elucidating the process by which type of employment affects career sustainability. Specifically, using multi-wave panel data gathered over 15 years from Australian workers, we hypothesize that schedule flexibility and work-home processes can explain any differences in the career sustainability of the self-employed and wage workers on the long-term. Here, career sustainability is conceptualized in terms of individuals' general health status and the variability in their health over time. The central research question guiding this chapter is:

Research Question 1: To what extent does the career sustainability of individuals who decide to be self-employed differ from those who decide to be organization-based employed?

Chapter 3 also investigates how the person can influence career sustainability. Yet, whereas Chapter 2 sheds light on the consequences of new *employment relations* for career sustainability on the long-term, Chapter 3 investigates the impact of daily changes in careers; that is, *personalization* of work (De Hauw & Greenhaus, 2014). Specifically, Chapter 3 reports on a study that links employees' daily decision to work from home to daily experiences of sustainability. Given that the number of individuals who work from home is continuously growing (Matos, Galinsky, & Bond, 2016), it is imperative to examine the impact that this decision has on the sustainability of their career (Kelliher & De Menezes, 2019). Indeed, a number of studies have investigated how working from home relates to happiness and health (Golden, Henly, & Lambert, 2014; Grzywacz, Carlson, & Shulkin, 2008) with numerous papers reporting beneficial effects of working from home for individuals' well-being (see Allen, Golden, & Shockley, 2015, for a meta-analyses).

However, the vast majority of these studies have taken an all-or-nothing approach, where experiences of full-time office employees are compared with full time teleworkers (Allen et al., 2015; Delanoeji, Verbruggen, & Germeys, 2019). Yet, considering that work personalization frequently happens on a daily basis as many individuals alternate between their home and office days (Biron & Van Veldhoven, 2016; Delanoeji et al., 2019), it is imperative to examine how day-to-day decisions related to the workplace

affect individuals' well-being. To this end, we adopted a more episodic approach of working from home and developed an intraindividual model that examines the implications of working from home for individuals' well-being on a day-to-day basis. Data for this chapter were collected among 34 professional workers and 24 spouses, who were asked to fill out three surveys (the spouses only one) a day for two consecutive workweeks. The central research question to this chapter is as follows:

Research Question 2: How does the decision to work from home influence individuals' daily path towards sustainable careers?

An individual who chooses to work from home is assumed to fare better in terms of his or her well-being (i.e., the health indicator of career sustainability), which is the focus of Chapter 3. But what about the implications for his work performance and employability and thus the productivity proxy of sustainable careers? Here is where the *context* comes into play. As mentioned earlier (see section 1.2.3.), the positive outcomes of individuals' career decisions for sustainable careers can only prevail if contextual factors do not create constraints for the individual, and hence support the decision. Drawing on the contextual layers as provided by De Vos and colleagues (2018) Chapter 4 looks at employees' decision to work from home from the perspective of *work*, and in particular that of supervisors.

Working from home changes the social dynamics of careers, where traditionally the individual worked in an office surrounded by colleagues or clients (Richardson & Kelliher, 2015). Deviating from traditional career norms may hinder individuals' career sustainability, in terms of employability, because the career success model of several workplaces still revolves around the ideal worker who has no obligations outside of work and is always at the office (Blair-Loy, 2003; Wynn & Rao, 2019). Indeed, recent research suggests that there is a dark side to flexible working practices (FWPs) in terms of employees' career progression (Kelliher & Anderson, 2008; Leslie et al., 2012; Yam, Fehr & Barnes, 2014). Yam and colleagues (2014), for instance, showed that supervisors give lower performance ratings to employees who arrive later at work. Although these studies are primarily focused on flexitime as a practice (Leslie et al., 2012; Yam et al., 2014) recent research suggests that working from home may also have a dark side and has the potential to negatively affect individuals' careers.

Some studies, for instance, have shown that the strength of employees' relationship with their supervisor influences the job outcomes of employees who decide to work from home (Golden & Veiga, 2008; Gajendran et al., 2014). Moreover, Greer and Payne (2014) show in their qualitative study that supervisors are worried when employees work from home they are not as focused on their work as in the office. These studies clearly highlight the importance of supervisors, and in particular, supervisors' perceptions for sustainable careers. Yet, research to date has only begun to investigate the precise psychological mechanisms and boundary conditions that help under-

stand why working from home has a dark side. It therefore remains elusive why and when working from home is harmful to career sustainability.

In Chapter 4, we address this limitation and focus on the perceptions that supervisors have of their employees who work from home, because supervisor perceptions influence key HR-related processes in organizations, such as performance evaluations (Bratton & Gold, 2012; Schuh et al., 2018). Here, we identify supervisors' perceptions of employees' organizational commitment and work centrality as key mechanisms that explain why working from home may negatively affect performance ratings and therefore career sustainability. Yet, we also acknowledge that the negative effects of working from home may not always prevail, and may depend on characteristics related to the *person*. We focus on parental status in particular as previous research suggests that parents are more likely to be penalized when using flexible working practices (Leslie et al., 2013). That is, we hypothesize that supervisors form a different perception of employees who choose to work from home, depending on whether the employee is a parent or not.

To examine these perceptions, we developed two experimental vignette studies in which students and professional workers were asked to assume the role of the supervisor and rate the job performance of an employee who chooses to either work from home on a regular basis or always at the office. Moreover, we manipulated the parental status of the employee to understand whether demographic factors related to the *person* impact the strength and direction of the proposed relationships. Thus, other than investigating the interplay between a person's decision to work from home and supervisors' perceptions about this behaviour, this empirical study examines how demographic factors interact with perceptions coming from the context.

The research questions that will be answered in this chapter are:

Research Question 3a: What are the implications of working from home for supervisory performance ratings?

Research Question 3b: To what extent does parenthood influence the relationship between working from home and supervisory performance ratings?

Chapter 5 continues focusing on the interplay between *person* and *context* on sustainable careers. However, while Chapter 4 investigates how the context reacts to individuals' career decisions, the final chapter investigates how individuals' career decisions are influenced by contextual constraints. Specifically, this chapter looks at contextual challenges originating from *society* (De Vos et al., 2018).

Countless studies have shown that women are more likely than men to encounter barriers to career progression (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts, 2012) – often referred to as the glass ceiling (Eagly & Carli, 2007), because of implicit *think manager – think male* biases. Nonetheless, society has witnessed a rise of women in leadership positions (Catalyst, 2017). Yet,

these are leadership positions with a great risk of failure (Glass & Cook, 2016; Ryan & Haslam, 2005), a phenomenon that Ryan and Haslam (2005) termed the glass cliff. While research has examined why organizational gatekeepers put women in glass cliff positions, it remains unknown why women take the helm of such positions. A female job seeker's perspective will enhance our understanding of how contextual factors influence the career paths of employees belonging to minority groups.

Here, we posit that due to the limited number of promotional opportunities that women are offered through their career, they are more willing than men to accept a risky leadership positions. Thus, perceptions of the leadership position as a promotional opportunity may explain differences in men's and women's willingness to accept a risky position. However, we also acknowledge that personal resources can help individuals to remain persistent in the face of challenges and aid them in building a sustainable career (De Vos et al., 2018). Building on previous research that postulates that career self-efficacy plays a particularly important role in building a sustainable career (Bandura, 1977; De Vos et al., 2018) we shed light on the role of this career resource.

Incorporating the perspective of the job seeker, Chapter 5 reports on two vignette experiments conducted among students and professional workers that capture individuals' perceptions of a risky leadership position, their willingness to accept such a position and their beliefs in their own ability (i.e., career self-efficacy). Investigating how both contextual and personal factors affect individuals' decision making and eventually career paths may enrich our understanding of the interplay between the person and the context (De Vos et al., 2018). The research questions guiding this chapter are:

Research Question 4a: To what extent do external barriers (i.e., lack of promotional opportunities) explain women's willingness to make a risky career move, in terms of accepting a risky leadership position?

Research Question 4b: How do personal resources, such as career self-efficacy, influence women's career decision to accept a risky leadership position?

1.4   OUTLINE AND RELEVANCE OF METHODOLOGY

Research on career sustainability has been mainly conceptual and theoretical (De Vos et al., 2018; De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2015; Valcour, 2015). The current dissertation consists of four quantitative studies with different research methodologies that are aimed at contributing to the empirical validation of the career sustainability framework. The first empirical chapter makes use of multi-wave, longitudinal, data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) that yearly collects data from more than 12,000 Australians on many well-being and employment-related outcomes. Utilizing 15 years of data, this chapter contributes to the career

sustainability literature by advancing our understanding of how individuals' careers develop each year and what makes careers more or less sustainable on the long term (Van der Heijden et al., 2020).

While multi-wave data can tell us more about how careers unfold over time, such an approach limits our understanding of what can be done on the short-term to enhance sustainability. That is why Chapter 2 employs experience sampling methodology and conceptualizes career sustainability (i.e., health) as a day-to-day process that is linked to individuals' *daily* decision to work either from home or at the office. I follow a total of 34 employees and 24 partners over two workweeks and collect data on where they work on a particular day (i.e., either from home or at the office) and how well they feel each day. This study is among the first (see also Delanoeije et al., 2019) to study the relationship between working from home and the health indicator of career sustainability on a daily basis.

A final methodological contribution lies in the use of experimental vignette studies. I believe that experimental vignettes have the potential to improve our understanding of biases, perceptions and attitudes that influence individuals' path towards career sustainability. Such a design can help capture psychological mechanisms underlying individuals' perceptions and biases that may be difficult to study in real-life scenarios because of confounding variables that cannot be controlled (Evans et al., 2005).

In sum, the different study designs that are utilized across the chapters of this dissertation enable us to answer different types of questions related to sustainable careers. That is, the multi-wave study can enhance our understanding of what makes careers sustainable over the long term, the experience sampling chapter helps elucidate what individuals can do on a daily basis to promote sustainability and the experimental vignettes provide insight into the perceptions and biases (e.g., ideal worker bias) that cause some more than others to experience challenges in managing a sustainable career. A structural overview of the four empirical chapters and research questions is presented in Figure 1.4.
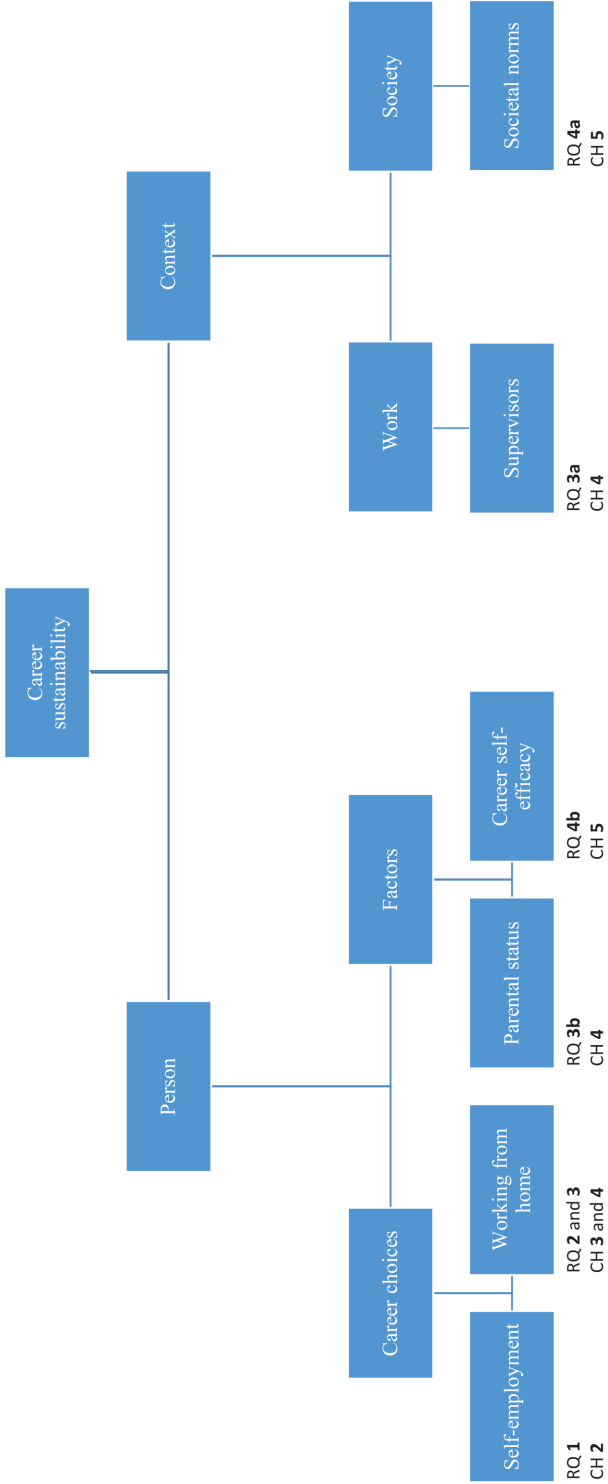
Figure 1.4 | Structural overview of the four chapters (CH) and research questions (RQ)