

# Men in care

WORKPLACE SUPPORT FOR CARING MASCULINITIES

## Men in Care: Workplace Support for Caring Masculinities. Country report. Austria



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Men in Care. Workplace support for caring masculinities | Action grant VS-2018-0417



This report has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.

## ABOUT MiC PROJECT

Men in Care is a European 3-year project (March 2019-Feb 2022) of 12 national organizations (universities, social partners and NGOs) co-funded by the European Commission under the EaSI program (PROGRESS axis). Men in Care (MiC) aims to improve workplace conditions to promote men taking caring roles in seven countries (Austria, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Slovenia and Spain). MiC will assess how policies and workplace cultures can change to enable men to become more active in caring for children, elderly, partners, co-workers and friends. MiC partners are: National Distance Education University (project coordinator, Spain), Fundación 1 de Mayo (Spain), Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark (Austria), European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (Germany), University of Iceland, REFORM (Resources Centre for Men, Norway), Jagiellonian University (Poland), PLinEU (Poland), Diversity Hub (Poland), The Peace Institute (Slovenia), the Association of Employers of Slovenia and the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia.

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1.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

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## 1.1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

The present report<sup>1</sup> summarizes key findings on the issue of gender equality in Austria. It is part of the project Men in Care (MiC) of twelve national organisations from seven different European countries, which will help reduce barriers for men who want to become involved in caring activities. The MiC partner countries are: Spain, Slovenia, Poland, Germany, Norway, Iceland, and Austria. MiC aims to improve workplace conditions to promote men taking caring roles and will assess how policies and workplace cultures can change to enable men to become more active in caring for children, elderly, partners, co-workers and friends. Therefore, the project team conducted reports on the national contexts of each country.

In terms of gender and welfare regimes (cf. Scambor et al 2013: 7), Austria is characterised by a conservative-corporatist welfare regime with impact on gender relations: The male breadwinner/female co-earner model is strongly represented, with men usually working full-time and women part-time. Children lead to a shift in the division of labour from gender equal models towards additional earner models. Bergmann and Scambor (2014c) state for the countries' situation, *"that the norm of male-dominated work-centeredness is starting to stagger under the impression of the economic crisis and the structural change that has been taking place for a long time."*

In EU comparison, Austria is at mid-level in terms of gender equality in general, e.g. in regard to gendered segregation of educational and vocational choice patterns, men's participation in unpaid labor, health aspects, or institutionalized structures of work with men & boys. Nevertheless, gender gaps are significant, as Austria has one of the highest EU gender pay gaps of gross annual income: 37.3% (2017)<sup>2</sup>. The segregated school and vocational system (Gärtner & Scambor 2017) contributes to labour market segregation and gender gaps. Labour market activity divides male and female parents. Persons of both genders with lower school education are hit by unemployment much harder (and with increasing probability) than those with higher graduation. In the former segment the gender gap is also higher. Men in Austria perform about one third of unpaid work while

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<sup>1</sup> Data and analysis included in national reports will be updated when post-covid19 data are available.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/menschen\\_und\\_gesellschaft/soziales/gender-statistik/einkommen/index.html](https://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/soziales/gender-statistik/einkommen/index.html)

39% of the paid work is done by women and 61% by men<sup>3</sup>. Also the high gap in working time for family reasons (26.1% for employees aged 25-49) can be interpreted as a 'motherhood penalty'.

Men contribute much less than women to private/unpaid sick, elder and childcare. In spite of improved regulations for fathers, the uptake rate of paternal leave is still low- In 2018 only 4.5% of the days for parental leave were taken by fathers. However, 32% of the Austrian male employees want to work less. To reach this significant target group and bridge the gap between their attitudes and practices, legal, societal and work-place conditions should improve. Especially in organizations, workplace culture, leave management (also substitutes) and working time and space should be organized in more father friendly ways (Bergmann and Sorger 2017).

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<sup>3</sup> Austrian time use data 2008/09,  
[http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/menschen\\_und\\_gesellschaft/soziales/zeitverwendung/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/soziales/zeitverwendung/index.html)

## 1.2. GENDER GAPS IN EMPLOYMENT

The employment rate for both genders increased between 2007 and 2017 (Figure 1 and Figure 2). However, we can see a downward trend for parents of both genders on lower levels of graduation (Figure 3 and Figure 4). Consistently with other European countries, the Austrian gender gap in employment is hugely different for fathers and mothers (while it is low among men and women without children):

For persons age 25-49 without children, the small gender gap of 3% (in 2007) changed into an inverse gap of -2 (in 2017, compare Figures 1 and 2). But while 83% men of these age without children (2017) were employed (women: 85%), the rate increases in men and decreases in women (with a 2017 maximum of 89% in men and 63% in women of persons with children age 1-2). A high influence can be identified (children age 0) in terms of education, where we can see a class gap of 48% (2017) in men of lower secondary level achievement and those of tertiary level (94%). For women, this education/class gap is even wider (26 vs. 81%).

Consistently with other countries, the Austrian inactivity rate of men (age 25-49, Figure 5) is – throughout all educational levels – significantly lower than women's; however, a convergence is taking place that narrows the gender gap here (gap 2007: 12.2%, 2017: 7.1%).

Also consistently with other countries, inactivity for both genders is inversely proportional to the educational level. For men, the inactivity rate rose from 6.3% to 7.5% (2017); the increase was by far highest in lower education levels (lower secondary or less: went 6.7% up to 20.2%). This can be explained with the crisis of male dominated jobs (mainly in industry, see Scambor et al. 2013).

For women, this gap of inactivity in lower education is rising (especially because women of upper secondary level are significantly more active), while women's total inactivity rate dropped by 3.9%; for men, the inactivity rate has increased on all levels, by 1.2% in total.

The Austrian gender pay gap is one of the highest in Europe. . Wage tax data of 2017 show that employed women earned 21,996 Euro on average, which was 37.3% less than men (34.730 Euro gross).<sup>4</sup> Statistik Austria investigated the influence of observable factors on the gender pay gap in Austria. Measured in terms of gross hourly earnings in the private sector, the gender pay gap was 22.2% overall. If characteristics such as employment status (Figure

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/menschen\\_und\\_gesellschaft/soziales/gender-statistik/einkommen/index.html](https://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/soziales/gender-statistik/einkommen/index.html)

8) sector, occupation, educational level, age, length of service, full-time/part-time, type of employment contract, region and company size are taken into account, the pay gap between women and men is reduced to 13.6%. Taking into account the differences in the extent of employment (part-time) and limiting the comparison to full-time employees throughout the year, the gross annual income of women (36.99 Euro) was still 15.6% lower than that of men (43.84 Euro). But more than half of the gender pay gap remains unexplained even when all the factors mentioned are taken into account.<sup>5</sup>

The Austrian pension gap is slightly above the European median (with the exception of the group 75 and over, which is slightly below the EU median).

The average Gender Pension Gap between the newly awarded retirement pensions for women (2017) and men is 43 percent.<sup>6</sup> Between 2010 and 2012 the Gender Pension Gap has even increased due to a growth for men's pension and a remaining retirement pension for women (EIGE, 2017).

There are several reasons for the high gap: On average, women have 10 contribution years less than men, largely due to interruptions in their careers for childcare duties. Furthermore the average age at which women and men start old-age pension differs by around 3 years. The Austrian social security system punishes every missing year: in the old-age pensions newly recognised in 2017, only two percent of women and 52 percent of men, reached the 45 years of insurance that guarantee 80 percent of the average monthly income as a pension.<sup>7</sup> The gender pay gap mentioned above is also contributing heavily to the pension gap. A causal link can also be drawn to a strongly segregated Austrian labour market: Women often work in so-called women's sectors, which are much worse paid than sectors in which men predominate. This also contributes to the gender pay gap.

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/menschen\\_und\\_gesellschaft/soziales/gender-statistik/einkommen/index.html](https://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/soziales/gender-statistik/einkommen/index.html)

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS\\_20190729\\_OTS0023/equal-pension-day-2019-leichte-verbesserung-gegenueber-vorjahr](https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20190729_OTS0023/equal-pension-day-2019-leichte-verbesserung-gegenueber-vorjahr)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.wko.at/service/arbeitsrecht-sozialrecht/Pensionsberechnung\\_nach\\_Neurecht\\_Pensionskonto.html](https://www.wko.at/service/arbeitsrecht-sozialrecht/Pensionsberechnung_nach_Neurecht_Pensionskonto.html)

## 1.3. ARRANGEMENTS TO COPE WITH WORK-LIFE BALANCE ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE

Also in terms of working time reduction for family reasons, Austria shows the highest gender gap in Europe: While in 2017 only 0.7% of all male employees (age 25-64, see Figure 10) do so, it is 19.9% of female employees. The gap is especially high for employees aged 25-49 (men: 0.8%, women: 26.9%), which can be attributed to parenthood and interpreted as a motherhood penalty. The numbers increased for all genders; for men, the share grew by 0.5 on a very low level, and the gender gap widened. Austrian part time rates for family reasons (and especially that of women) is the highest in Europe, and so is the Austrian gender gap.

For men, the status of being employed or self-employed has only little impact on working part-time for family reasons (difference age 25-49: 1.1%; for age 50-64: 0.2%); for women, this difference is much higher: about 10.3% age 25-49, 3.8% for the elders (see Figure 11). While most female part-timers age 25-49 had family reasons (44.6% of the self-employed, 55.1% of the employed), only 7.1% of the self-employed and 8.2% of the employed male part-timers had family reason for part-time (Figure 11).

In terms of income, we can see a clear tendency for both genders (however on quite different levels): the higher the income, the rarer it is that persons work part-time for family reasons. For all female employees (age 25-49), 49.8% of the lowest income decile indicates family-related part-time, while it is only 5.8 of the highest decile. For men of the relevant group, it is 2.0 in the lowest, 0.1% in the highest decile (Figure 12).

## 1.4. GENDER GAPS IN CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK

*Note: Reliable data in Austria have been collected in 2008/09. These are represented in Figures 13 & 14. A more recent time budget study was announced but postponed. The Federal minister for women explained this with distortions due to the corona pandemic.<sup>8</sup>*

Consistently with other countries in 2010, the Austrian gender gap in household chores is significant. The pattern here is: all chores except construction & repairs is (mainly exceedingly) more often done by women (Figures 13 and 14). Austrian women perform about 66% of unpaid labor and men 34% (household duties, childcare, care work for adults, and volunteer work); for paid labor numbers are flipped: 39% of paid labor is being performed by women and 61% by men (cf. Statistik Austria 2009, Gärtner & Scambor 2018). If only data of employed persons are being considered, the share of men engaged in unpaid labor is slightly higher (38%).<sup>9</sup> Between men in the MiC partner countries, the main difference seems to be the one between Norwegians (who do significantly more) and the others; there are slight differences in the other nation groups (Figures 13 and 14). Austrian men seem to participate significantly less in household chores than others, the gender gap of 15.3% is higher than in the other countries represented with data.

Consistently, according to a comparison drawn by the Hamburg based research institute Statista (based on Eurostat and Destatis data), the share of adults who cook and/or do household chores on a daily basis shows a visible gender gap.<sup>10</sup> The share of men in Austria in household chores (28%) is clearly below the EU median (34%), while the gender gap in

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000119120044/oevp-frauenministerin-raab-eltern-sollen-kindern-gleichberechtigung-vorleben>.

<sup>9</sup> Comparative data of the past decades show that the share of men who engage in domestic work has risen. In 1981 only about 40% of men have participated in domestic work, while in 1992 about 68% and 2008/09 almost 78% of men did chores (in comparison the development for women was: 1981: 88%, 1992 and 2008/09: 95%). However, only 33% of the time spent in unpaid labor is done by men; in childcare, they do 31%. Within the different areas of activity connected to childcare we also find significant differences: body hygiene, accompanying/mobility, feeding/nursing, learning/speaking/reading as well as supervising/cuddling are predominantly done by women; only in the area of play and games there is gender balance. There is relatively little literature on the question of participation of men in care for adult persons, be it parents with care needs or other relatives or the partner.

Zulehner & Steinmair-Pösel (2014) have collected data on this aspect. According to their study 42% of men (and 21% of women) cannot even imagine to reduce their paid employment hours for reasons of care, 9% would quit working altogether (25% of women) and the rest of men and women would opt for some sort of part time model if care for a relative would become necessary. Analyzing more questionnaire elements Zulehner and Steinmair-Pösel (2014) conclude that men prefer a 'mix' of different caregivers which has to be negotiated. Additionally men are more apt to care for the own partner, than other relatives. "In contrast to women who seem to carry care work as an inner responsibility, men view care work as 'voluntary obligation' that is not necessarily part of their identity" (Zulehner & Steinmair-Pösel, 2014: 118).

<sup>10</sup> <https://de.statista.com/infografik/15857/verteilung-von-hausarbeit-bei-maennern-und-frauen/>

Austria (55%) is considerably higher than in the EU median (45%). The Austrian time use survey 2008/09 outlined slightly different results:

“From Monday to Sunday, 92.2% of women and 74.3% of men work around the household. This means that the proportion of men who take part in household chores since the beginning of the 1980s, increased from less than a quarter to almost three quarters. The amount of time has remained more or less the same for men, but has decreased somewhat for women: Today women spend around 4 hours a day cooking, washing, cleaning and shopping for men it's almost 1 ½ hours less.”  
(Time Use Survey 2008/09: 29, translated by authors)

International studies that analyse differences between men and women in informal care show that women still take on long-term care more often than men. Women more often perform intensive personal care and offer care for several family members at the same time (Rimmer, 1983; Russell, 2007); therefore they reduce paid work (Ungerson, 1987; Mooney, 2002). Men more often take on the supporting role, assisting their partner or they enter care role, when caring for their female partner, and less often for other family members. Usually men contribute to the family care capital by establishing the access to informal female caregiver through marriage (Anttonen, 2007).

Looking at informal care in older age groups, studies from Hoffmann & Rodrigues (2009, Figure 15) showed that men are increasingly involved in informal care by age, usually caring for their partners when they are retired. Therefore the increase of life expectancy could lead to an increase of men's involvement in informal care.

## 1.5. INCREASE OF MEN IN CARE

### 1.5.1. Parental/paternal leave 2007-2017

Parental leave for fathers was introduced in 1990 in Austria. The entitlement to this applied to the mother or father of the child and was therefore optional. In 2000 an independent claim for fathers was established, but with a first claim for mothers. Since 2005 an equal claim for both parents is valid in Austria. (Cf. Parent Report Austria 2019: 6)

Leave policies have been reformed several times in the last decades. In 2002 the so-called Childcare Benefit Law was enacted. Since 2010 parents can choose between an income dependent and several different flat-rate childcare allowances, which differ in the amount and duration of the parental leave allowance. In 2017 the different childcare allowance opportunities were merged to one flat-rate childcare account. The currently valid model provides that 20% of the parental leave period is reserved for the second partner. One parent is eligible to up to 28 months of childcare allowance. Both parents applying for it, are eligible to up to 36 months. Depending on the period applied for, the childcare allowance ranges between 33.88 € for the shortest and 14.53 € for the longest period.<sup>11</sup> Also, parents that share their leave equal or 60:40 receive a partnership bonus (500€ per parent).

Exact data sets on the uptake rate, the mean duration of parental benefits by fathers or the fathers' overall share of parental leave benefit months are not available for Austria. The gap in reliable official statistics is criticized by several studies in this subject area (cf. Rille-Pfeiffer et al., 2018: 63; or Pointecker et al. 2018: 9). For example, Rille-Pfeiffer et al. in this regard:

“Since the replacement of the Parental leave benefit by the new Childcare benefit in 2002, there is only information on the number of women and men taking Childcare benefit, which is different to the number of persons taking up Parental leave (i.e. parents not on leave receive Childcare benefit as well as those who are taking leave). There is no way of telling from these figures what proportion of parents take parental leave and it is doubtful whether data on the take-up of Parental leave will be available in the future.” (Rille-Pfeiffer et al., 2018: 62; translated by authors)

<sup>11</sup> [https://wien.arbeiterkammer.at/beratung/berufundfamilie/karenz/Karenz-Regelung.html#heading\\_Dauer\\_der\\_Karenz](https://wien.arbeiterkammer.at/beratung/berufundfamilie/karenz/Karenz-Regelung.html#heading_Dauer_der_Karenz).



The monthly published official statistics suggest that the percentage of participating fathers is relatively low (between 0.6 and 2%), but if one considers that fathers usually choose shorter periods of parental leave it becomes clear, that they also appear less often in the statistics. Looking at fathers who take any period of childcare benefits the numbers are much higher. (Cf. *ibid.*: 63).

Despite the justified criticism of the official statistics, values and their development about take-up rate and used-days by fathers can be found. According to figures by the federal government, 85.380 women and 4.976 men received childcare allowance in October 2017 (childbirth until 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2017, BMFJ, see Figure 16) The take-up rate has increased from 10% in 2007 (cf. Riesenfelder and Danzer 2017:37) to 19,4% in 2017 (cf. Pointecker et al. 2018: 8). Considering the different options of parental leave in Austria, men's take-up rate is 30,66% within the income-dependent childcare allowance and varies between 10,3% and 26,7% within the different flat-rate allowances depending on the duration of the leave (cf. BMFJ 2018).

As mentioned above, fathers in Austria normally choose shorter time periods of allowance than women, therefore it is important to look at the childcare days used by men for a deeper insight into the topic. According to Riesenfelder and Danzer, in 2007 only 4,7% of all childcare days were used by men. 2012 this share increased to 7,7% (cf. Riesenfelder and Danzer: 40). According to Reidl and Schiffbänker this proportion has increased from 1,7% in 2002 to 4,2% in 2011 (cf. Reidl and Schiffsbänker 2013: 10). In 2020, the Federal Accounting Office (Bundesrechnungshof) called the gender distribution in parental leave "extremely unequal": Only 4.5% of the days for leave were taken by fathers.<sup>12</sup>

## 1.5.2. Care occupations

According to figures from LFS and Eurostat (Figure 17), the Austrian share of men in different care occupations in 2018 was the same as EU-28 median, 24% (with a drop of 1% from 2008).

More differentiated, in the Austrian Boys' Day Fact Sheet (Pflügl 2019), care occupations in Austria are usually narrowed to child care educators, primary school teachers, and health care employees/nurses. The following figures on male employees are presented:

- > Child care facilities (total in 2016/17): 1441 male employees (2.33%, see Table 1)
- > Health care/home care/nurses (total in 2016 broken down to full time equivalents): 6406 (13.5%)
- > Volksschulen/Primary schools (total in 2016/17): 2642 men (8%);

The low share rate of men in caring occupations reflects the highly segregated labour market in Austria; women are – consistently to other European states – usually in occupations with lower income, while men more often chose careers related to science, tech, engineering and math (STEM occupations). The reason for the high level of

<sup>12</sup> <https://orf.at/stories/3178297/>

segregation is threefold: persistent gender stereotypes in society that prescribe particular, gendered paths throughout the life course of individuals; a high level of gender segregation of school types that promotes a gender stereotypical occupational orientation and training; a mind-set within business lines and organizations that works as a barrier against change (cf: Scambor et al., 2019; Gärtner & Scambor 2018; Bergmann et al., 2017; Scambor, 2015)

### 1.5.3. Health and self care

According to the Austrian Gender Index,

"(l)ife expectancy has risen steadily since 1960. For those born in 2017, life expectancy was 83.9 years for women and 79.3 years for men. Life expectancy tends to be higher for women than for men. However, this difference has fallen since the 1960s (1960: 7 years) and was 4.6 years in 2017. According to the forecast, it will continue to decrease: to 3.8 years in 2050 and 3.3 years in 2070". (Austrian Gender Index 2018: 17; translated by authors)

Self care in terms of caring practices is important to maintain health. Below, we focus on nutrition, sports/physical activities, substance abuse and violence.

According to WHO definitions, 16% of men and 13% of women are obese (obese or heavily overweight). In absolute figures, 550.000 men and 480.000 women in Austria are affected by obesity. Obesity is an increasingly frequent problem with age. Only a small percentage of the young population (15 to 29 years) is heavily overweight (7%). Obesity is most common among 60- to 75-year-olds: Every fifth person at this age is severely overweight (women: 20%, men 22%). The proportion of heavily overweight men (taking the age effect into account) has risen by 3.3 percentage points since 2006/07, while the prevalence of obesity among women has remained the same.

A report on health in the Austrian state of Styria shows a more differentiated picture; it states that

"... the proportion of overweight and obese people in men\* and women\* increases with increasing age, and this proportion decreases again from the age of 75. 40% of men\* and 28% of women\* can be classified as overweight on the basis of their self-report of body size and weight, 16% of men\* and 12% of women\* as obese (...). In terms of educational attainment, it can be seen that people with a master degree or university degree are significantly less likely to be obese (university entrance diploma: 5%; university: 6%) and overweight (university entrance diploma: 27%; university: 26%) than people with lower educational attainment. Among those with compulsory schooling, 26% have a body mass index (BMI) in the area of obesity and 35% have a BMI in the overweight area. Of those who have completed an apprenticeship, 16%

are obese and 39% overweight.” (Kirchengast and Scambor, 2019: 23f.; translated by authors)<sup>13</sup>

A gendered difference in nutrition is visible: The Austrian Health Survey (2014<sup>14</sup>) states that,

“(t)wo out of three women eat fruit every day, more than half of the women eat vegetables every day. Men eat much less fruit and vegetables every day (45% and 40% respectively). However, only 10% of women and 4% of men reach the Ministry of Health's recommendation to eat five portions of fruit and/or vegetables a day.

Almost every second woman and every second man do at least 150 minutes of sport, fitness or physical activity per week and thus fulfil one of the WHO movement recommendations. The recommendation to strengthen muscles twice a week reaches more men than women (36% and 29% respectively). About a quarter of all persons (21% of Austrian women and 28% of Austrians) meet both movement criteria. Young men (18 to 29 years of age) are particularly active in sports: 43% do sufficient fitness and muscle training in accordance with WHO recommendations. (...)

1.76 million Austrians (every fourth person aged 15 and over) smoke daily, 134.000 more than in 2006/07. This increase is mainly due to the fact that more and more women are reaching for cigarettes every day. The smoking rate for men is currently 27% and for women 22%. Compared to the last survey in 2006/07, this means a decrease of one percentage point in the smoking rate among men and an increase of three percentage points among women. About one fifth of the population not smoking daily was exposed to passive smoking. The greatest exposure was among 15-29 year olds, where almost one in three people was affected by passive smoking.” (Translated by authors)

Violence is also a threat to health and well-being, and also here gendered patterns are visible:

“More than half of all women surveyed (56.8%) and almost two out of three men surveyed (61.4%) in adulthood, aged 16 and over, reported having experienced at least one physical assault. 29.6% of women and 27.9% of men

<sup>13</sup> Kirchengast, Anna & Elli Scambor (2019). GeFÖM - Bedarfe und Handlungsempfehlungen zur Gesundheitsförderung von Männern\* in der Steiermark. Ergebnisbericht einer Bedarfsanalyse in Steirischen Regionen. Gefördert vom Land Steiermark/ Gesundheit.

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[https://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/frageboegen/private\\_haushalte/gesundheitsbefragung/index.html](https://www.statistik.at/web_de/frageboegen/private_haushalte/gesundheitsbefragung/index.html)

experienced these physical assaults as threatening.” (Gender Index 2018: 92; translated by authors)

Scambor and Scambor (2015) point out that men not only become perpetrators more frequently, but that many acts of the (mostly male) violence against boys and men (especially in public spaces) are an unreflected normality. They therefore advocate a concept of gender-based violence that also includes such acts.

It can be summarized that – mostly in terms of better nutrition and the prevention of violence, but for some groups also in terms of movement and sports – the care and self-care situation of men in Austria could be improved.

#### 1.5.4. Community care

According to the Austrian report on volunteer work (Freiwilligenbericht, BMASK 2015), 49% of the male and 43% of the female population are involved in volunteer work (ibid.: 19); in the 2009 report, the respective rates were 47% (men) and 41% (women). The report reasons: *“Men tend to be attracted to volunteer positions that offer functions or opportunities to gain prestige and thereby enhance their own social status.”* (ibid.: 20; translated by authors)

The authors differentiate voluntary work in formal and informal work:

- > in formal volunteer work, the proportion is m: 32%, f: 24% (2009: m: 33%, f: 23%)
- > in informal volunteer work, the proportion is m: 32%, f: 31% (2009: m: 27%, f: 28%)

On formal volunteer work, the report specifies:

“The participation rate of men compared to women is significantly higher in disaster relief and emergency services (7% versus 2%), in sports (12% versus 5%) and in political honorary offices (4% versus 2%). In the case of women, on the other hand, participation predominates in the church-religious sector (6% versus 4%) and in the social and health sector (5% versus 3%).” (ibid.: 26, see Figure 18)

Similar traits can be seen in informal care: „As with formal volunteering, informal engagement also has some women’s and men’s specific focuses. For example, if disaster relief is needed or if repairs or crafts services are required, it is mainly men who are involved. Visiting and care services as well as tutoring or housework support, on the other hand, are mainly provided by women. There are no significant gender differences in the other areas of involvement.” (ibid.: 30, translated by authors; see also Figure 19)

“Nearly half of the informal volunteers are involved for up to 10 days a year, a quarter for up to 30 days and another quarter for more than 30 days. On average, women spend more days helping their neighbours than men. While

only 19 percent of men spend more than 30 days doing community work, the figure for women is around 30 percent.” (ibid.: 32, translated by authors)

In the summary of the 1<sup>st</sup> report (Städtebund 2009<sup>15</sup>), the authors also state that

“(t)he participation rate of persons with children in the household tends to be higher than that without children. For women, this is strongly related to the age of the children. If children under the age of 3 are in the household, the participation rate in both formal and informal voluntary work is significantly lower than for women who do not have small children. Only 17.6% of women with children under the age of 3 engage in formal volunteering, 24.6% in informal volunteering. For men, the presence of children does not make a significant difference in the level of participation. 31.2% of men with children under the age of 3 are involved in formal volunteering.” (ibid.: 12)

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[https://www.staedtebund.gv.at/fileadmin/USERDATA/aktuelles/dokumente/freiwilligenjahr\\_freiwilligenbericht\\_zusammenfassung.pdf](https://www.staedtebund.gv.at/fileadmin/USERDATA/aktuelles/dokumente/freiwilligenjahr_freiwilligenbericht_zusammenfassung.pdf)

## 1.6. HOW CAN WORKPLACES SUPPORT CARING MASCULINITIES ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE

### 1.6.1. Men and working conditions

Results of recent studies on working time and satisfaction indicate that satisfaction with the work situation of male employees is highest in countries with low average working hours and lowest in countries with long average working hours (Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann, 2013, 69ff), which can certainly be interpreted as an indication of a desire to turn away from the dictates of the male full-time work culture. Comparative studies show an increasing convergence of working time wishes between men and women and "that the gendered nature of working time is more an expression of institutional and company characteristics (...) which no longer match the needs of employees" (Kümmerling, 2013: 15; translated by the authors). Many men now seem to reject a one-sided employment orientation and increasingly align their identity concepts with other realities of life (e.g. family and care work) (cf. Bergmann, Danzer and Schmatz, 2014; Gärtner, 2012; Kapella, Rille-Pfeiffer et al., 2011; Scambor & Kirchengast 2014; Scambor and Scambor, 2006). At the same time, developments in employment patterns point in the direction of an increasing 'delimitation' of paid labour. The so-called flexible time regime makes it more difficult for men and women to reconcile paid and unpaid work and entails the danger of an intensification of gender-specific role attributions (Böhnisch 2004). This might be an even more significant danger in the current situation in Austria, since the former ÖVP/FPÖ government flexibilized working regulations as of October 2018: daily working hours were raised from a maximum of 10 to 12; weekly working hours from a maximum of 50 to 60.<sup>16</sup>

#### What men/fathers want

According to EWCS data of 2015, 32% of the Austrian men want to work less (25% of the women want this, see Figure 20). This is slightly higher than the median of all MiC partner countries, and it can be seen as a clear request to offer measures for this third of men.

A study in Austria in the year 2014, which examined the possibilities of work-family balance for women and men with children under the age of 12 (cf. Bergmann, Danzer and Schmatz, 2014) illustrated enormous working time requirements for full-time working fathers. Almost half of the fathers surveyed (full-time) state that they regularly work overtime and extra hours (mainly based on all-in clauses or flat rates for overtime). Excessively long working

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.wko.at/service/arbeitsrecht-sozialrecht/arbeitszeit-regelungen-alt-neu-vergleich.html>

hours result in significant dissatisfaction with possibilities for reconciliation. In male-dominated production sectors, the greatest need for change is registered.

At the same time, the study shows the desire of many fathers to balance working time and childcare well, a desire that is realized through some strategies (care leave, working time flexibility with spontaneous requirements of childcare):

"Here (...) the results of the survey can be used to support the observation expressed in recent studies that it is not so much the (male) employees who allegedly do not want to reconcile but are often the traditional industry-specific structures that prevent this from happening" (Bergmann, Danzer and Schmatz, 2014: 74, translated by authors).

### What organizations can do

In general, measures are recommended that widen the range of working times and spaces in order to enable employees, and men in particular, to better balance paid and unpaid care work. These usually include leave arrangements and working time reductions, but they can comprise a diversity of measures and ideas that should be combined; moreover, flexibility measures should reflect that a maximum sovereignty in working time and space is important for work life balance measures (see Huesmann & Gärtner 2015).

Bergmann and Sorger (2017) listed a couple of measures for father-friendly companies in Austria, that can serve as a good model:

Father-friendly company culture:

- > Positive communication and anchoring of the topic in the existing communication and exchange structures
- > a fixed component within the framework of employee conversations, Jour-Fixe and/or team meetings
- > Superiors take a stand on the issue of compatibility and profession and report on their own experiences.
- > Subject of the works council/staff representation
- > Visibility of men on parental leave and part-time parental leave increase by: Short portraits, via intranet, works council mailings, etc.
- > Mentor system: Men with parental leave or part-time parental leave experience will be available as contact persons

Parental leave management:

- > (...) Positive visualization of men on maternity leave on all levels: Management level, management functions, different groups of employees



- > Active communication via various internal media, works council, etc. - invitation to joint planning
- > Active information management: legal framework conditions and operational possibilities
- > Creation of representation arrangements, e.g. substitute staff etc., to allow longer absences.

Father-friendly working hours:

- > Survey of the working time needs of all employees
- > Adapting working hours to the care needs of employees, men and women alike
- > Extension of reconciliation-friendly working hours such as flexitime models to as many employees as possible
- > Adaptation of shift models along the reconciliation needs of employees
- > General consideration of given time targets by school, kindergarten etc." (ibid.: 4, translated by authors)

These measures should be widened and reflected towards men who care for sick and elderly. Moreover, self-care should be implemented (or integrated in company cultures) thoroughly.



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# 2.

## BEST PRACTICES IN AUSTRIAN COMPANIES

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## 2.1. Introduction

### 2.1.1. Welfare regime

The following characteristics can be noted regarding welfare and gender politics in Austria:

- > Austria is characterized by a conservative-corporatist welfare regime with a male breadwinner/female co-earner model. Men usually work full-time and women part-time, if they are not stay-at-home mothers.
- > Bergmann and Scambor<sup>17</sup> state for the countries' situation, *"that the norm of male-dominated work-centeredness is starting to stagger under the impression of the economic crisis and the structural change that has been taking place for a long time."*
- > Austria holds a mid-level position in terms of gender equality in EU comparison, but high gender gaps (Gender Pay Gap, Gender Pension Gap).
- > Men in Austria only perform about one third of unpaid and two thirds paid work. Men contribute much less than women to private/unpaid sick care, elder care and childcare. A paradigmatic shift half way became evident during last decades: fathers leave regulations were implemented, but in spite of improved regulations for fathers, the uptake rate of paternal leave is still low. In 2018 only 4.5% of the leave days were taken by fathers.
- > 32% of the Austrian male employees want to work less. To reach this significant target group and bridge the gap between their attitudes and practices, legal, societal and work-place conditions should improve. Especially in organizations, workplace culture, leave management (also substitutes) and working time and space should be organized in more father friendly ways.<sup>18</sup>
- > Some interview results affirm modern-minded care practices with equal-share tendencies, while others prefer gender-traditional care practices in traditional breadwinner milieu. In the later cases 'modernity' can be exhausted in the Papa month and therefore appears as a pragmatic windfall effect. A male-breadwinner-tendency prevails. The AutoCom expert in the HR department sees the working culture in Austria "in a classical picture", as traditional and widely inflexible, in contrast to Northern Europe (he cites home office in the Netherlands as an example). There is still work to be done, also with regard to gender role models.

<sup>17</sup> Bergmann, Nadja and Scambor, Elli (2014). Bewegung im Geschlechterverhältnis? Ein Blick auf vermeintlich klare Aussagen zum Themenfeld Männer und Gleichstellung. In: beziehungsweise - Informationsdienst des Österreichischen Instituts für Familienforschung. September 2014. S. 1-4.

<sup>18</sup> Bergmann, Nadja and Claudia Sorger (2017). Väter im Fokus: Männer und Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie im Betrieb. Die kleine ViF-Fibel, Wien (<http://maennerundvereinbarkeit.at/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/ViF-FIBEL.pdf>)

## 2.1.2. Methodological remarks: selection criteria, access to organizations, way of conduct

According to the MiC framework concept for analysis<sup>19</sup>, MiC studies work-life measures and organizational cultures “that allow caring masculinities to develop”, especially looking for best practices. All project partners include a study on “three to five best practice companies and/or public administrations” in their countries, focusing on “reconciliation measures, such as longer leaves of absence, tight working times, flextime, and spatial flexibility”, but also on more general organizational cultures. Beyond basic data on gender equality and work-life issues, the teams gathered qualitative interviews data of different groups: (1) organizational experts on different levels of HR management and/or gender equality, (2) male employees with caring obligations who actually take up some of these measures (like parental leave, parental part-time, leaves to care for relatives and/or others in need for support etc., flexible time and space solutions etc.); (3) if available, also the partners of these male carers were interviewed to get a more complete picture of care sharing and its effects on family life and gender equality.

For the selection of companies, not only the existence of good practice approaches was relevant for the Austrian team, but also a certain sectoral spread as well as a public/private mix. From the experience in former projects (like EU project *Work Changes Gender*<sup>20</sup>), a focus on more male-dominated companies in the field of technology seemed a good option.<sup>21</sup> For the MiC organizational analysis in Austria data have been collected mainly through semi-structured individual interviews (using guidelines coordinated in the international consortium), but also through a brief company questionnaire (covering HR, gender equality and work-life policies). Altogether 18 interviews have been conducted - the interviewees are presented in the following chapters outlining the organizations studied.

Multiplier events at the Austrian Trade Union Association (ÖGB) proved to be highly effective in recruiting target groups and in thinking further about company-related issues. Initial interviews in all organizations selected in Austria were conducted with relevant experts in the areas of HR and/or gender equality. In this way, basic information on care, gender and work-life in the respective organization could be gained, but also the process of selecting further interview partners could be advanced, as the experts provided access to the employees.

Male employees who provide care work in their family and living environment were considered as suitable interviewees. This was thought of in a broader sense (e.g. as care for needy relatives), but in practice it was restricted primarily to fathers who, because of their paternity, took temporary leave or reduced working hours for longer periods. This

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<sup>19</sup>See “MiC Organizational Analysis: Proposal for important dimensions & theoretical inputs”, by Elli Scambor & Marc Gärtner, Sept. 2019.

<sup>20</sup> R. Puchert, M. Gärtner & S. Höyng (Eds. 2005), *Work changes gender. Men and equality in the transition of labour forms*. Opladen, Germany: Barbara Budrich Publishers.

<sup>21</sup> However, it was not possible to attract companies of former studies on men to participate.



narrowing alone is an interesting interim result, as it indicates that caring masculinities are strongly associated with involved fatherhood and that other care aspects seem to have a much weaker profile.

Although the intention was to interview the female partners of the carers (and some carers also promised to ask their partners), this was only successful in one case. It can only be assumed that the protection of privacy was important and that the connection to the organizational design of the study was not clear enough.

About two thirds of the interviews were conducted by telephone or video call during the Corona pandemic; this proved to be unproblematic after the period of habituation.

## 2.2. Company summaries

In Austria, three organizations have been studied:

- > Public administration 'WorkNet'
- > Public academic body 'ResearchSchool'
- > Private automotive R&D company 'AutoCom'

The following paragraphs briefly introduce these organizations and give an overview of the interviewees. Their status in terms of gender (in-)equality, work-life balance and conditions for men's care are analyzed in the forthcoming chapters.

### 2.2.1 Public administration WorkNet

WorkNet is a Federal Agency providing public services. It is mainly responsible for the placement of unemployed (and others) into vacant jobs and the information, qualification and financial support of unemployed. WorkNet is an employer based on social partnership (representation of social partners in decision making bodies), having about 6000 employees in Austria, departments in every Federal State (Styria: almost 800 employees) and more than 100 regional agencies. There is a tendency to reduce costs not at least by reducing staff (according to carer interviews).

Interview sample WorkNet (expert interviews conducted late in 2019, all other interviews in 2020):

| ROLE & FUNCTION  | REMARKS  |
|--|--|
| Managing director  |  |
| Gender Equality representative                                       |  |
| Carer 1, management and supervision of regional agencies             | <p>married, his wife is currently in leave</p> <p>two children, age 3.5 (son) and 0.5 (daughter)</p> <p>he took 2 months of leave for his son (right after the 12 months leave of his wife); for his daughter he currently took the Papa month, his wife went back to part-time between her 2 leaves.</p>                          |
| Carer 2, consultant (with special position in migration /networking) | <p>Parental leave 1 year (depending on income)</p> <p>previously Papa month (although no economic benefit was available due to parental leave model)</p> <p>he now works from home in a reduced work time model (minor employment)</p> <p>both partners earn about the same amount, which seems to be relevant for this model.</p> |
| Carer 3, consultant  | <p>Papa month for 1 year old daughter (son is now 3.5)</p> <p>partner took 2 years off for kids</p>  |

## 2.2.2. Public academic body ResearchSchool

Research School is a graduate school, providing studies and research with an emphasis on applied sciences and technology. It has about 3000 employees and about 15.000 students and covers a wide range of subjects from architecture, engineering, geosciences, physics, computer science to biology or environmental studies etc. It closely cooperates with industry.

Research School looks back on a history of about two hundred years. Today, it considers itself a leading institution of European research and teaching in its core subjects. In its online self-description, ResearchSchool characterises its work as "balanced ... between knowledge-oriented and application-oriented basic research".

Interview sample ResearchSchool (all interviews conducted in 2020):

| ROLE & FUNCTION  | REMARKS   |
|--|---|
| Gender Equality office   | 2 Representatives of the Office for Equality and Promotion of Women at ResearchSchool   |
| Carer 1, research project leader                                 | 40y, married, migration biography (both), partner unemployed<br>1 child (1 y)<br>he took papa month & later 1 month of leave  |
| Carer 2, assistant professor                                     | 40y, living in Carinthia, commuting to Styria, partner 15 weekly hours R&D (private company)<br>3 kids: 4,7,9y<br>1 Papa month, holidays after birth of children, stays sometimes at home when a child is sick            |
| Carer 3, post doc, lecturer (less research)                      | 45y, married, both 75% part-time (wife medical doctor)<br>3 kids: 2,5,7y<br>Parental leave for all (2-4 months), one time also Papa month, 75% part-time (for 1 year now)   |
| Carer 4, researcher  | 38y, Married, wife full-time teacher<br>2 kids (11)<br>child care allowance and informal child care   |
| Carer 5, system administrator                                    | 47y, separated (ex-partner researcher, habilitation)<br>2 children<br>Parental leave: ½ year for every child, cares for both also on weekdays   |
| Carer 6: assistant professor, lecturer, research, administration | 47y, married, both full-time employed<br>2 kids: 7,9y<br>2 month parental leave (12+2 model)  |
| Carer 7: technician  | 32y, married, wife works at city youth department<br>migration biography, interview in English<br>full-time, from two (half) budgets (institute and chair budget of a professor)<br>2 kids: 4,10y<br>home-office and care |

### 2.2.3. AutoCom

AutoCom is a private R&D organization: The automotive company is both seen as a pioneer and a global leader in powertrain technologies. Main areas are development, measurement and instrumentation of vehicle engines. AutoCom is located in a sector/field subject to recent technological change (but no information on restructuring). The company is also quite active in CSR and support of the local cultural scene, which is mainly supervised by the CEO's wife.

The 2019 revenue was about 2 billion €, with about 12.000 employees in more than ten countries around the globe. According to the HR expert, AutoCom is a "knowledge-based" organization with a university graduate quota of about 70%, of which in turn just under a third are "highly qualified experts who would immediately get a job somewhere in research at universities or wherever, which only exists a few times in the world."

Interview sample AutoCom (all interviews conducted in 2020)

| ROLE & FUNCTION              | REMARKS/CHARACTERISTICS   |
|------------------------------|---|
| HR Manager                   | Himself an involved father: during the interview he apologizes for being absent to care for his daughter  |
| Carer 1: program development | 44y<br>75% job (=30h/week)<br>partner: 60% job<br>3 kids: 3,15,17y, took parental leave and care leave when kids are sick   |
| Carer 2: project leader      | 35y<br>part-time work (75%, 30h); parental part-time work<br>partner works 14h/week (+ freelance)<br>2 kids: 3 and 5y   |
| Carer 3: team leader         | 39y<br>38 h/week, Corona = Home office (for both)<br>partner used to work full-time, now parental leave, probably back to 30h/w.<br>3 kids (2 new born twins), took Papa month, wants to take leave next year; potentially time reduction |
| Partner of Carer 2           | 35y<br>part time, politically active besides the job<br>describes herself as the "household manager"  |

## 2.3. Comparative analysis I: 3-phase-model

The following chapter aims to analyse the three selected organizations in terms of gender equality and work-life balance. The general analysis of the organizations studied will be based on a model of three phases of development towards gender equality<sup>22</sup>. In order to take a close look at the in-house conditions for men's care work, it is not enough to pursue gender equality in the form of a mere head-count (although gender indicators are important as well). Moreover, cultural conditions (substructures, gender stereotypes) and measures - not least in the area of work-life balance and family friendliness - have a high priority here.

Quickly summarized, these are the three stages:

- > Stage 1 (early): Gender and according inequalities are mostly ignored, care is not at all seen as an issue that might be related to work or call for measures. Usually, gender traditional behaviour is expected. Men in active caring roles are mostly unknown and/or receive "othering" or sanctions. First considerations and small steps towards gender equality take place, kindergarten etc. ... the link between gender women and care is evident.
- > Stage 2 (middle): Gender Trouble is visible. Gender (in)equality is seen as an issue that usually causes conflicts and requires measures and resources (which are started to being tried out). Carers, also men, have some (individual) scope.
- > Stage 3 (advanced): Gender equality and work-life/work-family policies are regarded a necessary part of HR policies. Care is not only about women/mothers, but also about men (and not only about children, but also about care for sick, disabled and seniors). Measures are structural and relational, so that employees don't feel they have to "beg" or fight for reconciliation/balance options.

Of course, this is an abstract and approximate model, and most organizations show different stages according to departments. However, tendencies might become clearer.

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<sup>22</sup> Holter Ø. G., Riesenfeld V. & Scambor E. (2005). 'We don't have anything like that here!' – Organisations, Men and Gender Equality [So etwas haben wir nicht! - Organisationen, Männer und Gleichstellung]. In R. Puchert, M. Gärtner & S. Höyng (eds.), *Work Changes Gender. Men and Equality in the Transition of Labour Forms* (pp. 73 - 104). Opladen: Barbara Budrich Publishers.

According to Friedland and Alford<sup>23</sup>, the three organizations researched work along different systems of institutional logic: While AutoCom clearly represents a private company in global *capitalism* (i.e. it has to sell products and gain profit, competes with other companies etc.), WorkNet, as a body in federal administration, belongs to the field of *state and politics* (i.e. it provides public services, cannot gain profit, is financed and governed publically). ResearchSchool, as a public academic body, is closer to the state logic, however the logic and functional conduct of *academia* is somewhat different (i.e. it must acquire additional private funding, autonomy of science etc.). These institutional and organizational logics have a major impact not only on the conduct of work, but also on career paths, management strategies and regulations, gender (in-)equality and work-life issues.

The following tables display the main results in each organization, whereas the analytical overview is set out in the following paragraph.

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<sup>23</sup> Friedland R./Alford R. R. 1991. Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices, and institutional contradictions. In: Powell W. W./DiMaggio P. J. (Eds.), **The new institutionalism in organizational analysis**: 232–263. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

# WorkNet

768 employees total in Styria (32,3% men)

| Category               | Subcategory           | Data (2019)/Observation (2019/2020)<br>(data only for men & women)   | Interpretation regarding phases   |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| Social Structure       | Gender (in-/equality) | Share of men in leadership (%):<br>Chair (50%), Top level (75%), 2nd level (46,5%), 3 <sup>rd</sup> level (53,3%)  | In terms of gender equality figures, successful steps have been undertaken in the last 2 decades, with the result of WorkNet getting closer to numeric equality (with a significant exception of the top level).  |
|                        | Work Life Balance     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share of men in part-time: 12,8% (35 men)</li> <li>• Flex-time for all employees</li> <li>• No figures on flex-time, home office or job sharing</li> <li>• Parental leave: men 3 (median 121 days), women 23</li> <li>• Papa month: 6 men</li> <li>• Care leave (short term): 30%, 12 men (Ø 1,33 days)</li> <li>• Care leave (longer): 0 men</li> <li>• Other leave (further education or else): 7 men (with Ø 187 days education or 167 days else)</li> </ul> | <p>Given the pure figures, <b>WorkNet is at or close to advanced.</b></p> <p>However, looking at the share of women in the organization, they are clearly underrepresented on all management levels, suggesting a more medium level organization.</p> <p>This is also confirmed by WLB data: men are represented in part-time or parental/care leave measures, but with a clear difference to women; also, men's share in this seems to be close to Austrian average.</p> |
|                        | Other                 | Flat hierarchies (int. carers)   |   |
| Gendered Sub-structure | Gender (in-/equality) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for the work with clients against gender stereotypes (e.g. advising against part-time for men)</li> <li>• Deputy Country Manager: sexist jokes are a "no-go"</li> <li>• Carers mainly in a breadwinner and "care supporter" position (with partners as main carers)</li> </ul>   | It is an organisation that has been working on the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming from a very early stage (late 90s). Some important developments in services provided but also related to personal development can be seen during the last 20 years. We can  |



|                                    |                       |   |   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|
|                                    | Work Life Balance     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Care is not a career obstacle for men, it rather helps (according to HR department – see measures)</li> <li>In interviewees' environment: no male carer role models</li> </ul>   | <p>definitely say that this organisation is a pioneer in this area.</p> <p>Although problems and inequalities are visible, it seems fair to say the <b>organization advanced significantly</b>, and maybe it is <b>also advanced compared to other (also public) employers</b> in Austria. However, more involvement (and take-up of responsibility) of men for g.e. issues would be needed, where it has to be <b>considered mainly at mid-level. Especially the mind-sets and care</b></p>  |
|                                    | Other                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carers report spirit of solidarity (support of colleagues, also when in care-leave)</li> <li>Carers usually show a traditional mind-set in terms of gender relations (and their own partnership)</li> <li></li> </ul>  |   |
| WLB Policies & Supportive Measures | Gender (in-/equality) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures and regulations to advance g.e. have been implemented: Mentoring, promotion of women into management positions</li> <li>Projects against stereotypes in occupational orientation (Boys'/Girls' Days etc.)</li> <li>Training against gender stereotypes in advisory work</li> <li>Also one man as one of 4 gender equality representatives</li> <li>Measures also targeted on men; part of training for Gender Equality Representatives</li> </ul> | <p>There are offers that help to make WLB much easier (flexitime, teleworking hours). However, these are not always accepted and used by men. (Advisors, who make a huge part of staff and activity fields of WorkNet, up to now cannot work from home.)</p> <p>Care leave for elderly/dependents is not really taken-up by employees (of both genders); however, there is awareness in leadership about the issue (and its gendered implications).</p> <p>So on the page of formal offers (and maybe also management awareness) the organization is (close to) advanced, but on the page of up-take and usage, it is only lower mid-level.</p> |
|                                    | Work Life Balance     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telework-days (usage by men about 25% = 108 days 2019), flexitime etc.</li> <li>Certificate for family friendly organizations</li> <li>Breakfast for re-entry after care-related leave period.</li> <li>Papa-fit project (presenting senior role models for men in care)</li> <li>Men &amp; care is a topic in coaching of managers</li> </ul>   |   |
|                                    | Other                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A roadmap for work-life balance still has deficits in its implementation (Int. GE represent.)</li> <li>Men &amp; care is a topic in coaching of managers</li> </ul>  |   |

# ResearchSchool (RS)

3554 employees total (68.3% men)

| Category         | Subcategory                   | Data (2019)/Observation (2019/2020)<br>(data only for men & women)  | Interpretation regarding phases  |
|------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Social Structure | Gender (in-/equality)         | <p>Men in leadership (%):</p> <p>Level 1 – Rectorate: 3 (60%), Level 2 – Deanery: 6 (86%), Level 3 – Organisation unit: 92 (83%), University council/board: 5 (71%)</p> <p>According to the RS gender equality report 2018, RS featured only 66% female students starting (“freshmen”), 56% female doctoral graduates, and 28% female professors.</p>   | <p>In terms of leadership ratio, RS is still close to level 1, although smaller leadership groups (top level, board) are doing better. But at the operative levels 2 and 3, where much of the everyday management and leadership is conducted, the glass ceiling appears very strong. This is consistent with a general underrepresentation of women in leading academic positions in Austria. Even more, with RS being located in the area of STEM. The leaky pipeline for women appears to be significant.</p> <p>However, men are not under-represented in part-time, minor employment, limited contracts, and in terms of care-relevant indicators, RS is doing better. Altogether, RS can be <b>positioned at a weak level 2</b>.</p> |
|                  | Work Life Balance (fig. 2019) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share of men in part-time: 66.5% (1234 male individuals – women: 621)</li> <li>• No figures on flex-time, home office or job sharing</li> <li>• Parental leave: 12 men (median 83 days)</li> <li>• Papa month: 13 men</li> <li>• Care leave (short term): 174 men (Ø 2.5 days)</li> <li>• Care leave (longer): no distinct data on reasons for private leave</li> <li>• Leave for further education: 2 men (Ø 202 days)</li> <li>• Private leave (care or else): 64 men</li> <li>• Confidential working hours for academic staff.</li> </ul> |  |
|                  | Other                         | <p>Hierarchies: In academia, they can be quite rigid – formally, as well as informally (through qualification processes, dependent on superiors/academic supervisors). However, according to carers at RS,</p>  |  |

|                        |                       |   |   |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|
|                        |                       | their own experiences are usually quite well: mutual dependence, mutual understanding, a will to support care.  |   |
| Gendered Sub-structure | Gender (in-/equality) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male dominated area in two respects: academia and STEM; not only represented in figures/staff composition above, but also in career paths and culture; probably rooted in a traditional mind-set of western-patriarchal rationality.<sup>24</sup></li> <li>• However: mind-sets do not seem to be old fashioned, but more equality-oriented; according to experts, slow modernization (female professors, male carers, etc.)</li> <li>• The carers did not mention "othering" or devaluation against men in care (neither at the work-place nor in the environment)</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Mixed picture – level 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal flexibility between care friendliness and blurred boundaries.</li> <li>• Between male-dominated basic culture and slow (but sometimes effective) modernization and flexible solutions</li> <li>• The group of men carers feels quite well supported within the RS; individualized/cultural flexibility, open-minded colleagues and superiors, equality-oriented carers (with work time reductions and career-oriented partners);</li> <li>• however, reliable structural support seems to be missing, academia is not a (self) care-friendly environment – blurred boundaries, sometimes work without limits etc.</li> </ul> |
|                        | Work Life Balance     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good reputation for in-house child-care quality</li> <li>• Old generation superiors more conservative, more culture of presence, more difficulties with getting parental leave</li> <li>• Experts: "However, if somebody says he does it (parental leave), it is totally clear. It is an option of the person, so it will happen."</li> <li>• Experts on care needs: "There is always a solution" - individual, case-by-case, however: informal.</li> <li>• Trade-offs, compromises (care flexibility for work flexibility)</li> <li>• Mutual support/solidarity in some departments (e.g. between carers)</li> <li>• Situation depending on department and lead manager.</li> </ul> |   |

<sup>24</sup> Feminist critique, see Fox Keller (1985: Reflections on Gender and Science), Connell (1995: Masculinities).

|                                    |                       |  |  |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
|                                    | Other                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture of high performance in academia (work at night etc.): problem for (self) care.</li> </ul>   |  |
| WLB Policies & Supportive Measures | Gender (in-/equality) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender equality office (with different measures on diversity, addressing women/female careers in science)</li> <li>• Action plan for the advancement of women (according to the federal University Act)</li> <li>• Annual information day on women's ways in(to) tech professions and Initiative for Women in Engineering</li> <li>• Special advisory services for girls and young women interested in science (careers)</li> </ul>   | <p>There is a good sample of work-life measures in place, the same seems to apply for gender equality. However, these do not seem to address men and masculinities much (which is usually the case in other organizations, too).</p> <p>In terms of work-life and care measures, the experts point out the case-to-case management, which is supposed to really find suitable solutions. Altogether, the policies and measures range on an advanced level 2.</p> <p>It is, however, not clear how the measures and policies can help to overcome work situations characterised by blurred boundaries and overwork.</p> |
|                                    | Work Life Balance     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representative for work-life reconciliation</li> <li>• In-house kindergarten and flexible child-care service (also during summer)</li> <li>• Information and counselling: "Welcome package for babies", open consultation hours, material/brochures, information and advice concerning care for relatives, classes on basic nursing for relatives</li> <li>• Self care: Yoga, meditation, sport classes (no gender data, but the experts feel men participate – even increasingly at yoga), burn-out prevention etc.</li> <li>• Plan to make remote work/home office more accessible (later in 2020)</li> </ul> |  |
|                                    | Other                 | <p>The experts see the strength of RS in the individual, case-to-case work-life solutions: "Some solution can always be found. This is also written in the info leaflets. The HR department will tell exactly this. They will hand out all information materials and say 'If you do not find something suitable here, we will discuss it again.' There is no great intention to present five different models on the homepage. We rather</p>   |  |

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | say, if we solved six or seven special cases, we will solve this one as well." |  |
|--|--|--|--|

# AutoCom

3726 employees total (83,3 % men)

| Category         | Subcategory           | Data (2019)/Observation (2019/2020)<br>(data only for men & women)  | Interpretation regarding phases   |
|------------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| Social Structure | Gender (in-/equality) | Share of men in leadership (%):<br>Employee<br><br>Management level 1: 100% men<br>Management level 2: 100% men<br>Management level 3: 94% men<br>Management level 4: 95% men<br>Board: 100% men  | <p><b>First phase situation:</b> Autocom is characterized by a highly masculinized management.<sup>25</sup> Board and the first 2 management level do not show gender diversity at all.</p> <p>Most part-time jobs are held by women.</p> <p>Gender-segregated fields (men-tech/ women-admin) are in common, but women are also to be found in tech fields. Gender segregation has for a long time been a persistent burden on the Austrian labour market, but numbers of women in some tech fields have increased in the last years.</p> <p>There is a 'men in care leave' challenge pattern to be seen at AutoCom. This might be an important lever to raise awareness for caring masculinities in the company.</p> |
|                  | Work Life Balance     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part-time work: 6% men and 29% women</li> <li>• No jobsharing measures</li> <li>• Flextime: 93% men and 95% women</li> <li>• Parental leave: 1,6% men and 7,2% women</li> <li>• 50 men in parental leave in 2019.</li> <li>• 2,1 month averaged duration of parental leave</li> <li>• 21 fathers in Papa month in 2019</li> <li>• 1024 men in care leave (2019). 1,41 days average duration</li> </ul> |   |

<sup>25</sup> According to Catalyst, this largely corresponds to the situation in the Automotive industry all over the world: <https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-in-the-automotive-industry/>. According to Deloitte, the perception of women of what their opportunities in the car industry are like has even deteriorated between 2015 und 2018: <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/automotive/women-in-automotive-sector-gender-diversity.html>.

|                        |                       |   |  |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---|--|
|                        |                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12 men in 2019 in educational leave. 5,2 month average duration</li> </ul>   |  |
|                        | Other                 |   |  |
| Gendered Sub-structure | Gender (in-/equality) | <p>According to the figures above, but even more on the interview with Carer 2, <b>management positions</b> (e.g. senior management) seem to be incompatible with active caring roles (high work pressure, many business trips, lack of flexibility and a lack of self-determination).</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> rarely women and only in lower management positions</p> <p><b>Representation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"very masculine in outward appearance"</li> <li>HR management would like to "take a little counter-measures" and "promote women a little"</li> <li>still progressive company in relation to sector: only 16.5% women overall, but half of women in technical field (women in comparable companies more in peripheral field of secretarial work)</li> </ul> | <p><b>Mix of phase 1 and 2: 'It depends on the manager' pattern.</b></p> <p>Leaders have an important role in organisational change situations. AutoCom is characterized by male leadership on top levels and paths towards a career at AutoCom are equated with extreme sports. Under such conditions management-position and caring role seems to be incompatible: one interviewee quit a high level job ("too stressful, too much travel, too little consideration for family") in order to be active as a male carer. A decision has to be made between care and career. It appears that care participation is only feasible up to middle management level.</p> <p>Leaders are important in organisational change: If you are responsible for the company's success and/or a great number of employees, you do not go home to care for your family easily. If nobody does (and carers are structurally excluded), nothing changes (vicious circle). It seems hard to change the huge pressure in top management.</p> |
|                        | Work Life Balance     | <p>We can see a <b>mix of individualized and cultural approaches</b> towards a better WLB. The carers interviewed formally work less than 40 hours per week, two of them even work part-time. They do not mention stereotypical, gender-conservative reactions from their (work) environment.</p>   | <p>First <b>positive actions for women</b> gain attention, but affirmative action is not visible. Proactive trends are to be seen (e.g. family care as a duty for all genders), but</p>  |



|  |                       |   |   |
|--|-----------------------|---|---|
|  |                       | <p>Although they seem to do less than 50% of family care, they appear as “equality oriented” compared to other male carers in our sample. This might be in a positive interrelationship with the company gender culture.</p> <p>In interviews, male carers and experts say that some <b>younger, open-minded managers tend to be flexible, and less restrictive with home office</b> or time/care flexibility than older ones.</p> <p>The common leadership style indicates <b>caring for motivation &amp; productivity</b> of the “precious” staff – offering flexible (individual) solutions. However, a <b>“family first”-approach might lead to career disadvantages</b>.</p> | <p>AutoCom has only just begun to take its course towards greater gender equality.</p>  |
|  | Other                 |   |   |
| <p><b>WLB Policies &amp; Supportive Measures</b></p> | Gender (in-/equality) | <p><b>Superiors</b> who tend to understand care obligations and generously allow more flexibility for men. Not all do so – especially older men in senior management positions tend to have reservations and prejudice against caring masculinities. From the perspective of male carer it is essential that the topic of men in <b>childcare is in the minds of superiors</b>.</p>   | <p><b>Beginning of phase two:</b> A strategic WLB policy is visible at AutoCom: Publicizing generous WLB policies, accomplished with work-flexibility and individual arrangements, based on agreements with managers, should increase AutoCom’s attractiveness and motivation/productivity. This seems to be effective insofar as AutoCom regionally enjoys a high reputation for family friendliness and WLB.</p> <p>Men as carers are visible. Men take care leave, Papa month and parental leave. These are not pioneers, not isolated cases or deviants. This would better fit into phase</p> |
|  | Work Life Balance     | <p><b>Flexibility measures:</b> Trustful capturing of the working time for a long time/ time compensation account, including good compensation arrangements, highly flexible and quite self-determined / Home office (also before the Corona pandemic) based on agreement with superior</p>   |   |



|  |       |  |  |
|--|-------|--|--|
|  |       | <p><b>Care &amp; crisis measures:</b> Possibility for paid absences in difficult situations (1 week, in exceptional cases 1 month)</p> <p><b>Health promotion measures:</b> sports, small fitness room, health lectures and health checks at work, vaccination appointments at work</p> <p><b>Soft mobility measures:</b> lockers and shower for cyclists, bicycle service in spring</p> <p><b>Family incentives:</b> Discount on company-run vacation activities (apartments)</p> <p><b>Childcare supportive measures:</b> Kindergarten and crèche on the premises (also in summer)</p> | <p>two. But there is still a huge barrier when it comes to management.</p> |
|  | Other | <p>Their <b>expert status</b> puts employees in a strategic position, through which caring roles can be applied more easily.</p> <p><b>Workplace of the future</b> - in view of Corona currently organizational development towards telework</p>   |  |

## 2.4. Analytical overview

### 2.4.1. WorkNet

According to the organisational logic and main tasks, WorkNet's main focus is on gainful employment; this focus is traditionally connected to the adult worker model and rooted in structures of gender inequality<sup>26</sup>, with now prevailing male breadwinner and female co-earner model (including a strong female caring role in Austria). However, the organization has a long history in gender equality – the focus was traditionally strong on women in management positions – and has started to implement Gender Mainstreaming during the late 1990s, focussing on women and (for the first time) men, based on feminist equality discourses.

Among the managers/experts interviewed, there is some awareness about the importance of caring masculinities, while at the same time men on paternity leave and active carers are less represented. A focus on men has been added in recent years, while not yet reflected deeper in the corporate culture: usually, men leaders do not seem to advocate men's role in gender equality, care and change<sup>27</sup>.

A kind of 'carer bonus' is evident. In job application/promotion interviews, male applicants/employees should be asked about caring experiences (parental leave, taking over responsibility for children and partners) and positive responses are supposed to also suggest care for/within the company.

There are hints to some only verbal modernization towards caring masculinities to be seen. Male carers usually do not name concrete measures, so the question remains if the measures really reach the target group (or: if these measures are taken for granted and are not really identified by these carers, although they are helpful).

The prevailing mind-set of the carers interviewed seems (not at least compared to the other organizations in the sample) rather gender-conservative, which is well represented in this quote:

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<sup>26</sup> Sylka Scholz/Andreas Heilmann, Warum Männlichkeit ein Thema der Degrowth-Bewegung sein sollte, in: *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen* 4/2018, S. 36-44.

<sup>27</sup> Poster of the 2012 federal campaign: "Real men go on parental leave"  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-s\\_HfxtCj0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-s_HfxtCj0)

"In spite of all modern approaches with equal rights and that I want to get involved, of course, I said that the main decision should lie with the mother. So I have a traditional image of family and motherhood. And above all my wife should have the freedom of choice. And I have just said that I can choose all kinds of leave of absence from work with my employer without anything happening to me, and she should say how she wants it. And since my wife basically loves to work, she said that she would like to go back after one year at the latest. So we quickly negotiated to use the 12+2 option." (12 months for one, 2 for the other partner – one out of many models in Austria) (WorkNet: carer 1, kids: 0.5,3y)

In an extensive and sample organization like WorkNet, differences between agencies matter a lot: management/role of individual leaders, urban vs. rural cultures & norms, child care facilities nearby etc.

At WorkNet, many measures are available, which indicate a rather advanced stage (compared to many other Austrian companies, also in the sample at hand). It has also been successful in implementing gender mainstreaming and equality measures. Nevertheless, there are still significant deficits at various levels: involving men in gender policies, addressing them as carers, but also methods to address gender-conservative and inegalitarian cultures. **So WorkNet altogether is still at medium level.**

## 2.4.2. ResearchSchool

On the one hand, ResearchSchool offers a lot of individual and informal options to balance work and family care. And we see a relatively high number of male carers in a care positive environment. Almost all IPs report on the informal flexibility in working hours and, in some cases, locations that prevails in the ResearchSchool. This flexibility, however, depends on the attitudes of superiors and seems to be gradually modernizing. Also, according to the experts interviewed, in 2020 a company agreement will be introduced that allows employees up to 25% work time in home office. The pandemic demanded exceptional steps, with up to 100% home office (depending on job) by the end of September 2020.

On the other hand, women are underrepresented in many areas, especially in leadership positions. One of the major work-life and care challenges of ResearchSchool is typical for the whole field of academia: As a sociologist Funken put it at an Austrian conference on careers at universities, "*in academia, careers are for those who receive pulls from the inside and pushes from the outside*"<sup>28</sup>, meaning that successfully combining caring duties and career is highly improbable in this area. The

<sup>28</sup> This reflects (and turns around) Pamela Stone's (2007: "Opting out", Berkeley) remarks on "workplace pushes" and "family pulls" that end the careers of women after they became mothers.

reason for this is deeply rooted in the mission and structure of research and knowledge production: The field is determined by the mode of total commitment to the cause, to which the protagonists have to submit if they want to succeed.<sup>29</sup> Similar to the field of art, this work - although gainful employment - must not only, perhaps not even primarily, be about making a living,<sup>30</sup> but about "the cause", the unique research achievement, scientific progress (in the sense of Max Weber).

As one carer puts it, "If the server goes down at three on Thursday, I'd have to take the kids to work and see what's going on. Or else get a babysitter." (ResearchSchool: Carer 5, divorced, kids: 3,5y)

ResearchSchool is currently classified at medium level 2, although gender data, especially in management positions, do not entirely support this: With a particular high gender gap in deaneries and organisational units, there is a clear need for action, as there is overall in academia and moreover in the STEM area in Austria. But culture and structure apparently enable men to do care work, as documented in the interviews. The portfolio of measures and policies is quite rich, yet it should be directed more inclusively in the direction of men. We can assume that in the milieus/environment of the interviewees, a modernized understanding of fatherhood and partly also of masculinity prevails - not least because female partners also claim this (and their own careers). On the other hand, the field of science shows a strong tendency to dissolve boundaries due to its structure: Working hours are hardly ever re-regulated - and apparently, due to the career structures (but also to the logic of the field) they are not easy to regulate.

### 2.4.3. AutoCom

Considering the numbers, AutoCom appears as a typical company in automotive business, with a low share of women in the tech field and accordingly a low share of women managers.

According to the HR expert, due to a staff of globally rare and highly skilled professionals, "it is important to offer an environment where they feel comfortable in,

<sup>29</sup> As Max Weber put it in 1919: "In the field of science only he (!) who is devoted solely to the work at hand has 'personality.' And this holds not only for the field of science; we know of no great artist who has ever done anything but serve his work and only his work. (...) It is only on the ground of hard work that an idea usually comes to mind." (Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation", from *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Tuebingen, 1922), pp. 524-55. Originally delivered as a speech at Munich University, 1918. Published in 1919 by Duncker & Humboldt, Munich.

<sup>30</sup> Beaufays Sandra ("Wie werden Wissenschaftler gemacht?", 2003, [https://www.genderopen.de/bitstream/handle/25595/206/Beaufays\\_2003\\_Wissenschaftler.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://www.genderopen.de/bitstream/handle/25595/206/Beaufays_2003_Wissenschaftler.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)), p146f. Moreover, care and diverging life tasks that inhibit this concentration will be a disadvantage in the hierarchically increasing competition for scarce resources (professorships, management positions). This makes the academic field highly hostile to care and androcentrism; Joan Acker's (1990/1992) "gendered substructure" grounded in masculinity and the "abstract worker" is being pushed to the extreme.

that they can live out their knowledge and creativity, their expertise in the best possible way". To reach this goal to enhance flexibility and an open, creative environment, he thinks a cultural change is important. But even now, according to the interviewees – some of them working part-time in quite specialized professions – the culture of the company appears open-minded, flexible and family-friendly, opposed to stereotypes of a male-dominated, technical field. Besides measures on self-care and (mental) health, in-house childcare, flexible time and space options as well as generous leave and compensation measures.

AutoCom can be considered a company between phase 1 – early (with an overall lack in gender equality), and phase 2 – medium level (with mostly informal, but also some structural work-life flexibility). It is a knowledge-based organization globally competing for human resources. Thus, it is important to offer a supportive environment for employee (comfortable, apply knowledge and creativity). AutoCom reflects mixed care practices (flexible, but not yet for higher management levels), and some changes towards more caring masculinities are visible. Two drivers seem to move these changes: First, a number of employees with a progressive, equality oriented mind-set (reducing working time, living non-breadwinner arrangements); second, an outcome-oriented, pragmatic management culture which is open to the flexibility concerns of this group. However, according to the HR expert, more of a cultural change in management is necessary to reach an open and creative environment. Moreover, gender equality and caring masculinities need more effort on a structural level.

#### 2.4.4. Men's care orientation and family care arrangements

In the organisations studied there are interviewed carers who are more likely to be mere 'supporters' of their partners in terms of household and (child) care (i.e. breadwinner type), and 'equality oriented' men who do more, sometimes as much as their partners. Important indicators for the distinction can be; duration of parental leave, reduction in working hours, employment and status of the partner.

Here, however, clear differences can also be seen:

At WorkNet, two of the three carers interviewed are or tend to be in a 'supporter'-role, while their female partners take over the far bigger share of family and care work. While the wife of Carer 1 took longer leaves for both children (and also part-time between the leaves), he took a 2 months' leave for his son some 3 years ago, and at the time of the interview, he takes the Papa month for his daughter. He said, "... we consciously decided that she takes 12 months of leave." Thus, he frames the (unequal but common) decision for his shorter leave as "conscious" and somehow special, although he mentions his wife said "she only wanted a short parental leave."

He emphasizes his own contribution within the work-family arrangement:

"Formally, too, I've taken a backseat at the job and have stayed at home... I'm not going on parental leave, for family internal reasons. Otherwise I'll do my part, as maybe not all fathers do, but as it should be." (WorkNet: Carer 1)

Here, we find some conservative gender role attitude and arrangement: He admits, that she does more, care-wise, and his parents help out. This is not a decision based on a big gap in status and income, but rather a remarkable re-traditionalization: Carer 1's wife was in a leadership position, she earned about similarly as he (and originally did not plan a long leave) – but she seems by far the main carer now, and she changed to part-time. Moreover, in the culture that surrounds the couple in their private lives - extended family, friends, acquaintances - a strong gender conservatism seems to prevail, where the mother remains the traditional main caregiver and is also responsible for household chores. This goes so far that the couple occasionally has to justify the fact that she has a job at all. He was even once offered money in his circle of acquaintances, because they found this was apparently only for financial reasons.

At ResearchSchool, we also see 'supporters', but they are a minority. Five of the seven interviewees are 'equality oriented' and most female partners seem to pursue their own careers and some carers also reduced their working time for care reasons.

The partner of Carer 3 works a one hour drive away, *"from a childcare point of view, it wouldn't work if I worked full-time (...) It would wear you out."* He has adapted his leave to the professional needs of women: *"It is a supportive coexistence. (...) Otherwise, there's always one person to whom the children always run to if anything goes wrong. Only if both can carry it to the same extent and in the same way, can it be shared so that not one of them feels that he is always the fool."*

This has an impact also on the culture within the organizations: individual examples of men's care orientation support tendencies of either conservative or egalitarian gender and care cultures, they help shaping collective mind-sets and normalities. It very much depends on whether individual mind-sets or care arrangements are, within the organisations, exceptions, accepted or even hegemonic. Also, hegemonic gender/care attitudes and practices not only within the organization, but in the wider (private, familial, local) context of the employees are critical: Is it accepted or exotic there that men do family care, and that female partners (and mothers) have a career, too? Is it normal that men do not pursue their careers at any price – and reject the breadwinner role? Thus, the environment of the carers (and the gender/ care norms within these environments) matter a lot to the gender/care culture within organizations.

## 2.5. Comparative analysis II: Supportive factors & barriers for caring masculinities

### 2.5.1. Supportive factors

#### Working structures

At ResearchSchool, most academic jobs are not fully regulated in terms of working time, but to a large extent informally. This enables many Interviewee to work flexibly, which also serves the purpose of work-life compatibility. For instance, ResearchSchool Carer 7 has the possibility to be in the office (and productive) very early (6.30h) and to pick up his children from the kindergarten early enough. Informal regulation –like individual agreements between employees/carers and their superiors – seems to serve as an ‘informal strategy’ in terms of ResearchSchool’s work-life management, even when academic work structures can lead to blurred boundaries between work and private life, as pointed out below. However ambivalent, flexibility of time (and sometimes space) is the supportive condition mentioned most by the carers interviewed, depending on the individual work mode/job description, on the department culture and, most of all, on the superior (often contrasting with more restrictive, presence-oriented managers).

Many ResearchSchool carers work flexibly in their home office and can do care tasks (carers 1 and 6), use the informally flexible structures (carers 3 and 5) in addition to part-time work, or depend on them because they commute (carer 2). Carer 6 describes how he reacted when his wife was on a business trip when a child fell ill: *“Then there is no one else, you pack up, go home and pick up the child. That must work. And, as I said, if it has to work, it will work. I will cancel or postpone my appointments as far as possible. And if it’s not possible, because it has to be instant, I try to take part in web or other meeting systems.”*

Carers at ResearchSchool implement care compatibility as a matter of course; but they are also supported by structures and their work environment. Where this is not the case – carer 5 mentions the case of an older superior demanding a justification for the intention to take parental leave – freedom for care is nevertheless enforced.



Even if the results can only be cautiously generalised on the basis of the interviews, contrasts with the other two organisations become apparent here: the majority of ResearchSchool carers seem to be more self-confident towards the organisation (perhaps because of the social and cultural capital they have acquired), but in general - and also milieu-specific - more oriented towards equality than, for example, in WorkNet. It can be assumed that the partners and their equality orientations, gainful employment and status play an important role here.

In contrast to AutoCom (with also specialized, self-confident professionals), it can be assumed that in the academic field of the ResearchSchool the autonomy from the organisation is more pronounced; the lower degree of integration in relation to the market-shaped production area can create degrees of freedom here, which may have to be produced differently in AutoCom.

At WorkNet, work structures seem a little bit less flexible, but more reliable, which is also a resource for caring. The introduction of remote work/telework time budgets allows employees to work locally more flexible, thus supports carers to balance paid and unpaid (family) work better. Also, working time structures (flex-time and working time reduction) have similar effects. These are also mentioned by some of the interviewed carers.

## Company cultures

The culture of a company or organization can be defined as collective practices based on (mostly implicit) assumptions<sup>31</sup> (cf. Acker 1990, Schein 1988), that also impact power relations and everyday interactions. Clearly, gender relations and the question 'Who does the care work?' are power-related, based on collective, mostly implicit assumptions and traditions, which impact work relations, conduct, and careers. Especially interesting seems to be how men's care is conducted in the organizations:

In WorkNet there were only three carers in total, two of whom fall into the category 'supporters', another one is more equality oriented. All in all, a rather gender conservative environment can be assumed for WorkNet. While carers at WorkNet say that they are perceived as 'exotes' (both in their private and professional lives), this is not reported in ResearchSchool and AutoCom. ResearchSchool Carer 2 says of himself that he can also decide not to submit an application if his situation does not allow it, while the working group stands in for each other: A PostDoc of similar age (also 2 children) takes over for him if necessary - and vice versa, if he has to pick up his children, he can do that too: *"There is no discussion. Because I simply know that he will pay it back a hundredfold"*. Mutual flexibility is apparently regarded as an unwritten law:

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<sup>31</sup> J. Acker: Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations. *Gender and Society*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (June 1990), E. Schein: Organizational culture. MIT Working Paper (1988).



"It doesn't matter when or how he does it. He should organise it in such a way that he does the duties for his wife and children, that is... pick it up, take it somewhere. There is no need to discuss it at all, then he just leaves and that's it. Or when the children come he works from home and that's it, there is no discussion, that's clear. Because then I know that when I'm stressed, he'll jump in, that's for sure. We can do it."

In favour of caring men, solidarity among employees to support care leaves of colleagues, is also mentioned by the carers. This was pointed out by carers at all organizations, also at WorkNet. This might mean that, in principle, WorkNet employees tend to be more gender conservative, but when it comes to individually supporting men's care (e.g. parental leave), they help each other.

### Gender culture/gendered substructures

While the figures speak for greater equality at WorkNet, the understandings (and practices) of the carers interviewed are more gender conservative. The technical organisations ResearchSchool and AutoCom, which are clearly more male-dominated, are - despite unfavourable figures - culturally more modern and open-minded. It seems helpful that in AutoCom, as opposed to the stereotype of a male dominated company, the caring role of male employers is accepted. This acceptance, instead of exoticizing, 'othering' or ridiculizing men's care, and even the understanding that caregiving is as much a man's task as it is a woman's, is critical for a care-oriented organization. For instance, AutoCom carer 3 says that his circle of acquaintances, he has heard about other, more conservative company cultures, where fathers are told: "How can a man in his prime go on parental leave, when the men are supposed to work, right?" He does not see that at AutoCom, because it does not fit in with the company culture he perceives positive. At ResearchSchool, a modernised gender culture seems to be normal in business. ResearchSchool carer 7, for example, classifies the ResearchSchool *„at the top position“ of his Austrian employers to date. He particularly mentions – beyond the care-friendly flexibility of the work conduct and management – the personal support of his superior, who understands his care obligations and enables flexibility.*

### Leadership: style/type of management, the role of managers

At all three organizations we see leadership cultures that allow an involved care role also for men, however the structures of these leadership cultures differ.

At WorkNet, a top-down approach in favour of gender equality and the quite family-friendly working time schedule of public administration build a well environment for men's care. Carers confirm the experts' responses that superiors support paternal

leave and men's involvement in family care. Giving care and parental leave advice is a task of superiors, and managers receive information and training to do so. Thus, care is a leadership issue, which however may differ from culture and everyday conduct. Experts describe a formal code of conduct for superiors to ask becoming fathers about reconciliation plans in order to support them. This is, according to these experts, sometimes responded with irritation (which is presumably related to the quite gender conservative background among the employees).

At ResearchSchool, carers describe they have experienced a 'paradigm shift': While younger supervisors are more flexible, the older generation insist more strongly on spatial presence in the office, as carer 2 reports: *"You have to be in the office a lot, I'm being sarcastic, warm up the air. It doesn't matter if you don't get anything done, you're physically present, only then you work. You had to break that up, that's just the way it is, it took a bit of time, you have to be honest."* When it was seen *"that you can still be productive, produce enough good publications, the figures speak for flexibility."* He *"practically fought for it"*.

It was clear that the mindset was different, but a self-confident approach seemed helpful in terms of a more flexible conduct: *"You have to teach them slowly and carefully that it is not a bad thing, but has positive sides. (...) I am completely different. I tell my people where, when and how they work is irrelevant. The work must happen."*

However, the majority reports quite good experiences with their superiors, like ResearchSchool Carer 5: *"When I tell my current boss 'I have to get the children now' - even if we have a huge emergency - he knows I have to get the children now, I'm not saying this for fun. And if I say 'I'll be back', then that's the deal we have anyway. (...) It also helps a lot that I know I can always take the children to the office. I don't have anyone to get upset about children crying or screaming, at least on the first day."*

At AutoCom, leaders tend to care for the motivation and productivity of the "precious" staff<sup>32</sup> – which means they offer flexible (individual) solutions (as indicated by all carers and confirmed the partner of C 2). AutoCom carer 3 points out: *"Now that I have children of my own, I realize just how socially minded the company is towards parents and work. I have the support of my superiors, I can probably be relatively flexible and quick when children are ill, stay at home or work from home"*. He first told his superiors that he wanted to leave for the Papa month shortly before the change of a position: *"They received everything extremely positively, congratulated me of course and the superior of my current superior said that it is customary for him nowadays to have men taking care of the children. He did that too, and for him it is*

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<sup>32</sup> It is, however, unclear, to what extent the individual "value" of an employee, their skills or "market position" is a decisive factor here. It seems probable that in a private business, other than in a public administration, individual conditions are more negotiable; however, even this probably has a (positive) impact on the work-life culture and the options of others.

*natural that almost everyone of our age has to do it, so to speak. And accordingly, it is of course something special when someone tells you that directly.*" Only then he sent messages to the HR department, and further information (about formal implementation) through them. Home office/remote work is allowed mostly in an informal way directly through the departments and superiors. If it can be implemented, thus very much depends on the superior; the interviewee indicate that their superiors are positive and flexible.

Caring masculinities are – also in their connection to gender equality – not (yet) seen as a management issue, as would be desirable. Only at WorkNet we were able to identify explicit leadership policies to promote care orientation focusing men (mainly the mentioned code of conduct), and it appears strategically linked to. However, implicitly and without signs of a conceptual discourse on this, some managers in the organizations studied have apparently adapted their practice – allowing flexible time and work from home – to the growing number of active fathers on several levels. Some also serve as role models for their staff. For instance, the ResearchSchool experts mention a high-ranking representative in the in-house magazine, who took parental leave and is still in charge of bringing his kids to kindergarten: *"When the head of controlling says 'I wouldn't really want to miss my parental leave, although I couldn't really imagine it at first', it probably does more than if we were to look for the individual fathers and present them as the special thing. To a certain extent they don't want that at all. Those who want to take parental leave, for them it's something that seems completely normal in their lives."* And carer 5 reports a "trickle-down effect": *"Because many professors and scientific staff take this freedom, it is also easier for us non-scientists to do so."* The behaviour of superiors (boss stays with sick child) legitimises one's own compatibility.

### Other relevant players and networks

Having a migrant background, ResearchSchool carer 1 received his first information on work conduct but also on parental leave (and parental allowance) at the ResearchSchool Welcome Centre. It is therefore advantageous to systematically sensitise all relevant company units to the topic of 'men and care'.

At WorkNet, there are Gender Equality Representatives in every agency, and managers participate in a two days training on gender & diversity every other year. Trainings tackle gender stereotypes (e.g. advising men against family care) show that steps are undertaken to enhance the gender culture, but also, how sensitive advisory work at WorkNet is – and how necessary it seems overall to reflect the (gender) stereotypes that are also represented in the carer interviews.

### Implementation of official regulations

In ResearchSchool, formal regulations like parental leave/Papa month are implemented. If barriers arise, the carers seem to know how to make it happen. According to the wide space of informal agreements, the ResearchSchool experts

mention that superiors react individually differently to caring men: *“But if somebody says he does it (parental leave etc.), it is totally clear. It is an option of the person, so it will happen.”*

However, the experts basically see the strength of ResearchSchool in the individual, case-to-case work-life solutions: *“Something can always be found. This is also written in the info leaflets. The HR department will tell exactly this. They will hand out all information materials and say ‘If you do not find something suitable here, we will discuss it again.’ There is no great intention to present five different models on the homepage. We rather say, if we solved six or seven special cases, we will solve this one as well.”* They guess it might be because of the culture in the field of technology: *“If there is a problem, we will solve it.”*

Depending on the department/specialist area and employees’ own decision, different models can obviously be lived in the ResearchSchool. Because the respective situation is quite specific, it can only be generalised that there is little standardisation of work forms and therefore flexibility is often pronounced, compared, for instance, with WorkNet.

ResearchSchool carer 5 takes a similar view of its position in comparison with private companies: He does feel pressure and stress (because defects and failing computers can lead to project problems and loss of money). But he feels that he has an advantage over peers in the business community, despite lower earnings, *“because there is no production line if a computer is broken. (...) And the university also offers me free time. I can say I have an appointment at 10 and go away for an hour now.”*

Summary: Main supportive factors

- > WorkNet: relatively gender-equal management with interest in caring masculinities; public service ‘flexicurity’; some measures implemented (flexi-time, father’s role models, gender awareness trainings etc.).
- > ResearchSchool: flexible time & space; younger superiors/managers with open-minded attitudes; environment: partners have own careers and expect equal care.
- > AutoCom: company cares for professionals & provides space for their family needs; modern, flexible management.

## 2.5.2. Barriers

### Working structures

At WorkNet, one of the most critical barriers in terms of work structure is the lack of spatial flexibility for most advisory jobs, as carer 1 points out. However we do not know if/how this changed during the Corona epidemic. While the WorkNet study was carried out, only one of the carers interviewed – carer 2 with a special project – had

the opportunity of telework. Carer 3 pointed out, that he does not see working from home as an option for himself, which is obviously connected to WorkNet culture: He learned in his basic training not to take work home: *"If you cannot do this, you are finished after one year."* So either because of regulations, or the job itself, or the management or the mindset of the employees, the office seems to be the only workplace, which can clearly be a barrier against care balance.

ResearchSchool: Due to the high pressure of expectations and the conditions of research, informal working structures and missing time control lead to blurred boundaries between work and private life, for instance night work or unplanned assignments. In general, some interviews show that people are working 'at the limit'. Flexible working hours allow for 'normal operation', which is, however, already closely timed and requires overtime and/or weekend/night work. Unforeseen (but not necessarily rare) events (sudden work necessities, illnesses etc.) endanger this 'on edge' scenario.

- > Carer 2 reports high work pressure and occasional night work, but has come to terms with both. He alternates care times with his wife and tries to keep Friday evening and Saturday off work.
- > Carer 5 worked from time to time during parental leave to ensure the transfer of knowledge for his replacement: *"That was good, but at the same time balancing was always difficult. I was very overwhelmed with job and children after parental leave"*. He has also worked with a sick child and also during maternity leave, e.g. in emergencies and names 'loyalty conflicts' as a topic for himself. When a child is ill *"the whole framework has fallen over."*
- > Carer 6 works - with 1720 contractually official annual working hours - 2200-2500h in real terms and says: *"300 overtime hours is almost the bottom end" ... "It is rather rare that I go home under 50 hours"*.
- > Some carers describe their arrangement as a 'trade-off': they exchange a tolerable amount of income foregone and stress for time sovereignty, mostly functional compatibility possibilities and/or a safe and pleasant work.

In general, ResearchSchool work culture could be called a 'flexible unlimitation structure' - with possibilities for reconciliation supported by an understanding and sympathetic environment. It is also a precarious culture of compatibility (cf. Gärtner 2012): functional (but demanding) as long as nothing serious happens.

A low proportion of women (and the widespread lack of female leaders), as is the case with AutoCom, often has the effect of delaying or hindering the care compatibility of men and goes along with rather gender-traditional mind-sets. Beyond a high level of flextime, other (formal) measures are not visible: There are no data and presumably no availability of job sharing; only about 200 of the about 3,500 employees were eligible to home office work. This and the generally more informal structure of WLB



(based on direct communication with superiors) may reduce the access. Measured against this, the interview statements are surprisingly positive.

However, Carer 2 has made the experience that care is a career disadvantage, and balancing work and family can apparently only be achieved through renunciation. He resigned from a senior management position (directly below executive management); he found it *"too stressful, too much travel, too little consideration for family"*. He sees it as a part of a usual executive work culture (also beyond AutoCom), and emphasises that *"when you get to the top and you only work with the managing directors and all the other people in charge globally, the family aspect falls away. That falls out. In my current area, HR, that is already very good."* In general, AutoCom is *"very good for the family. Although the other level where I was, that's illusory. The crucial point where I said, now it's over, was that I should please fly to India for a 5-hour meeting. That also explains a bit strikingly why it can't work with a family. In the end, I said I was no longer prepared to pay this price. (...) So I said, you have to choose what you want to leave behind, and marriage and my children are not it. I also have friends and acquaintances in the vicinity who have stayed on the career track, where marriages are now also falling apart. (...) It's not worth the money (...) and certainly not worth the health."*

## Company cultures

At WorkNet – and probably at many workplaces – one of the bigger obstacles seems to be the mind-set of male employers (like fathers) themselves. Here, the management is interested in improving gender equality, while opportunity to reduce working time exists. As already pointed out, quite conservative mind-sets of some of the carers interviewed point to an environment that hinders progress towards an equal distribution of care work.

As for ResearchSchool, we have seen benefits of the individual/informal culture, but there are also challenges. In particular, the 'unlimitation' culture of blurred boundaries and overwork – also in the mind-sets of the employees – has a critical impact, as the experts argue: *"If people don't pay attention, they don't get held off and they're not told 'Maybe you should pay attention' or so. In my view, there is still a strong performance culture here, where the issue of work-life balance is left to each individual. It's not that they say there are no more sessions at 5 pm or something like that because people were supposed to be jogging. Also the server is not switched off. And if it gets tight and it's about personnel matters and it affects me as chairman of the working group, the principal will call at 8 in the evening or at 7.25. I could do the same if I think it's urgent."*

The corporate culture allows employees to work with little time boundaries, and they do not have to take working time records. Employees, like often in research, do not accept working time limitation. Time limits in server access *"would not work well. It would lead to more rebellion than reassurance. (...) There were wild discussions (...)"*

*Researchers said they could not work like this if they had to write down working hours. They can't do that. They feel restricted in their freedom of science. I always found that a bit strange, because, why, in other systems scientists do have working hours. But that was not enforceable in our system.*"(ResearchSchool experts)

AutoCom culture seems mainly structured by high-level productivity in terms of global competition, which leads to high work-loads, but also to a degree of care for the "precious" employees. According to Carer 2, some managerial positions are "too stressful, too much travel, too little consideration for family" and incompatible with a carer role. It also affects the leeway for self-care and a healthy life-style: He had "not really burnout, but tinitus". He contracted covid "at a company event, which decided the change for good. (...) It's not like anyone is paying attention. (...) "If you say 'family first', then they say 'fits', but then the job is in the back. I felt that myself."

### Gender culture/gendered substructures

Although at WorkNet there is a serious and sound perspective (represented in the management) on men and the desire to include them, it seems that in practical in-house gender policy over the past two decades the link to men has not yet been pronounced; the focus has been on the advancement of women. This was also documented in the gender action plan, which has the title "Frauenförderplan" (plan to advance women). The carers interviewed in WorkNet do not seem overly informed about measures, which can either mean that men are not targeted (or only 'on paper') or that the interviewees themselves are not too interested in making most of the situation (which seems quite probable, as was stated above). Gender stereotypes seem to be quite 'normal' within the organization (as stated in the interviews): care is usually/more seen as a female issue; carers interviewed do not connect care (much) with gender equality in WorkNet. Although supervisors talk to men who become dads might be symbolically relevant, the carers interviewed do not find it relevant for themselves. It seems particularly difficult to bridge the in-house culture gap (and mind-set of the employees), which seems to be the biggest obstacle against caring masculinities in WorkNet.

### Leadership: style/type of management, the role of managers

In most organisations, managers (and often direct superiors) take the position of gatekeepers for or against the balance of work and family care<sup>33</sup>. At AutoCom and ResearchSchool, quite many interviewees see examples of a mostly 'older generation' of superiors/managers as inflexible, restrictive, ignorant or even care-hostile – however, these seem to be exceptions for the carers interviewed.

<sup>33</sup> Gärtner, Marc (2012). Männer und Familienvereinbarkeit. Betriebliche Personalpolitik, Akteurskonstellationen und Organisationskulturen. Opladen: Budrich UniPress, p. 158-162.

ResearchSchool carer 5 experienced his first parental leave - then with a former superior - as requiring legitimation: *"The first conversation was, I come into the office and say that I would like to take parental leave. 'Is that legally your right?' was the first sentence. Then the conversation developed a bit better, but I was truly angry."* Despite adverse experience, he took two longer periods of leave. This indicates that superiors and their mind-sets are important - especially if the framework is informalized and the individual departmental cultures become particularly important. However, they are not omni-relevant gatekeepers, but an even stronger influence can be attributed to the individual carer mind-set (care 5, for instance, refers to his men's group experiences), the partnership (in the case of carer 5, a full-time scientist), the workplace and private environment.

At AutoCom, carers and the HR expert also say that some (mostly older) managers tend to be inflexible, more rigorous/restrictive with work flexibility and home office. And carer 2, because of its experience in senior management, considers this area to be completely incompatible; he points out high pressure, travels, a lack of flexibility and a lack of self-determination as reasons.

### Other relevant players and networks

The cooperation of actors who could promote equal share and caring masculinities is hardly visible (or to some degree at WorkNet.) At ResearchSchool and AutoCom, the support of men's care seems a bit passive: Those who are willing to take parental leave receive support- if the superiors understand. However, a more active approach to make care and gender equality an in-house topic for men is missing.

We did not find that organizations systematically present male carers as role models (as part of a gender equality policy). Role models seem to only appear individually, and not too often.

At ResearchSchool, the experts interviewed also point out their reservations against presenting male employees as carers (e.g. in terms of parental leave): Men, they say, do not want to be *"in front of the curtain"*; they don't want to be praised for something that is normal for women. *"What reason is there to praise men for going on maternity leave? That's why it's so ambivalent to pick men out of science and show them off in the playground."* Therefore, no action like 'Father of the Month' is implemented.<sup>34</sup>

On the one hand, the danger of a double standard seems real (and is sometimes discussed). On the other hand, presenting men as carers is not necessarily praising them, but showing that it is possible (while acknowledging that it is not yet culturally normal), asking them about barriers and supportive conditions, both in order to make it more normal.

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<sup>34</sup> In other sequences, though, the ResearchSchool experts emphasize that role models are actually important.



Summary: main barriers:

- > WorkNet: „environmental inequality“ - top-down equality is curbed by rural-conservative majority attitudes 'on the ground'; bigger pay and care gaps between couples; inflexible structure (e.g.: advisory service).
- > ResearchSchool: high pressure and blurred boundaries in academia; no formal time-limit for researchers; (some) old-school superiors; no active approach to men's care.
- > AutoCom: top management is high stress level, no care-compatibility; global business requires travelling; very male-dominated; no active approach to gender equality (obviously even less as a topic for men).

## 2.6. Care during the COVID-19 epidemic

The Corona pandemic had huge implications for the work conduct all over the world, and also in the organizations studied here. Two of the three organization studies (ResearchSchool and AutoCom) were conducted at least partly during the pandemic. Where this was the case, Corona appeared to be a 'game changer' in terms of living and working conditions. This emerged not only due to care requirements (home schooling, closed kindergartens), but also because of the local flexibility of work. This is particularly visible in the case of the home office: where there was previously a lack of flexibility and a restrictive approach to it, there was now no way around it if companies wanted to minimise the risk of infection.

At ResearchSchool, for example, during the pandemic, local flexibility or the home office was enforced for all meeting/examination formats. For ResearchSchool carer 7, the home care arrangement was reversed: Whereas his wife had previously been the main carer for childcare, he now took over the majority of the care of the children in the home office. His wife has recently taken up a full-time position at the Youth Welfare Office (long commuting distance). Thanks to his core working time between 9am and 1pm and the home office conditions improved by Corona, he now has time for journeys to kindergarten and the care of the children at home.

At AutoCom, according to AutoCom carer 2, due to the requirement for global accessibility, home office was not very common, and Friday was a normal working day (and not a shorter one as in many other companies) for the same reason. Only a few parents made exceptions here, the company had rather "*kept these measures small*". However, Corona had ushered in a "*different era*". The AutoCom HR expert confirms that before Corona, home office was handled generally a little more restrictive (and usually only in some jobs more frequently, for about 4% of justified cases). Through Corona, the share of work from home was about 60%, partly more. This has sharpened awareness in management too, partly because productivity is not restricted, but sometimes even more efficiently. He says, this has been evaluated externally with positive result, especially for well performed departments which had already implemented hybrid working and flexible work organization in the past. Since the culture of being present at the in-house workplace has been so widespread at AutoCom common, the HR expert says "*we try to break it up*" in order to modernize work structures and cultures. In his view, Corona has provided an opportunity here

to take a leap. Nevertheless, there is still need for training, coordination, communication of new forms of work.

AutoCom carer 3 told us, that under Corona conditions this year *"the Papa month was economically a gift to the company, that has to be said. I didn't receive a salary for a month, which of course helps in a tense economic situation."*

## 2.7. Good practices

In general, reliable legal mechanisms (such as paternity/parental leave and legal rights to part-time work/working time reduction) at political level (collective bargaining) are an important basis. Broad public communication and effective compensation payments support their implementation. The more men are involved, the more likely it is to break through stereotypical role allocation in the workplace in a model, practical and everyday way. We have found promising mechanisms in every organisation that deserve to be disseminated or publicly discussed and further developed. Unfortunately, these measures/mechanisms often encounter obstacles; nevertheless, they should be put up for discussion here:

**WorkNet:** A direct approach to expectant fathers works well in a top-down way (and involves managers/superiors), but is unfortunately inhibited at the grassroots level (but perhaps it does lead to productive irritation despite these obstacles). Caregiving experience of men is evaluated as a positive competence for the company in the context of recruitment and application. A strong focus on women in management positions and on men in care is visible. This is something that is definitely recommendable for organizations where this is lacking. In particular, awareness trainings covering gender stereotypes and a better inclusion of involved fathers are recommended for transfer.

**ResearchSchool:** The claim to find tailor-made and flexible solutions works (according to carers) quite well through open-minded superiors, mutual flexibility and trade-off (reliable, motivated employees are more likely to be granted care flexibility like early closing time for picking up children). Individualised solutions, however ambivalent, work well for many carers.

**AutoCom:** Work-life-oriented management concepts even with high performance requirements (although top management cannot be linked with care duties). Compatibility for men is discussed with a focus on combining full-time work and care work ('work compression'). First considerations about gender equality measures focussing on women are to be seen and should be complemented with the focus on 'men and care' also as a management issue.

ResearchSchool & AutoCom: Company childcare - although many carers have said that they do not use it themselves, the existence of a company kindergarten might be important for several reasons: it is a very practical support for those employees who use it and/or depend on it, plus it is symbolically (in- and externally) important to be recognized as a 'caring organisation' - and it also can have an impact on the organization's care culture. Not at least, as the AutoCom HR expert points out, fathers are visible as carers when bringing and picking up their children from the company kindergarten, which raises visibility of caring masculinities within the company.

## 2.8. Needs, recommendations and ideas for action in WS3

### 2.8.1. Recommendations for improvement of existing measures

Some carers propose a better societal and political support, not at least financially. In particular, the Papa month is financially unattractive, which should at least be discussed in the context of the whole parental leave/allowance system.

WorkNet:

- > Checking to what extent client consulting really has to take place in an office; extending the flexibility in terms of space and time (for carer).
- > Several carers found the question of representation in the event of care-related absences in need of clarification.
- > In some cases, reference is made to measures (e.g. talks with fathers) about which even those responsible in the company have little knowledge. These measures must be brought to life.
- > More security in case of re-entry. There are hints to be found, that planning reliability on particular projects after returning from parental leave cannot be provided. Although a safe return to a particular/individual job/project is not always possible, support, transparency and commitment of management would be helpful.
- > A strong focus on women in management positions and on men in care is visible. While effects are clearly visible for women in management positions, measures for men in care are very hesitant.
- > An image campaign on fatherhood and get fathers out from behind the curtain (name them on the website) should increase the attractiveness of paternity leave and parental part-time for men.

- > Carer 2 obviously meets difficulties in adjusting his work packages to reduced working hours, "*Of course, it's my own fault, because these are projects of mine.*" Since the structure is well regulated in public service, this seems to be a question of support (by management, training and counselling).
- > Another improvement might be needed in the individual calculation of working hours: This runs, according to Carer 2, only via customer appointments, so that his project is difficult to account for.

ResearchSchool and AutoCom:

- > As in most STEM based organizations (and all over academia), gender equality, namely the promotion of women is still necessary; in both organizations, the permeability of hierarchical levels for carers of both genders is a crucial question.

ResearchSchool:

- > Work with superiors on flexible versus presence cultures: How much presence is really needed, how much reconciliation/flexibility is possible.
- > Integrate department in conversation (360-degree-approach): Avoid overload of staff and colleagues.<sup>35</sup>

AutoCom:

- > Following the question of gender equality in management positions: How can the existing good conditions for carers be extended to managers, so that a return to a lower position as in Carer 2 is not the only option?
- > Home office and working time reduction should be easier in departments where it is difficult now. Maybe the ongoing change process in culture and management is a good
- > Make invisible care work visible – in the sense of high performance not only in paid work but also in care.

## 2.8.2. Recommendations for new measures/actions to be implemented

WorkNet: Training(s) for managers and equal opportunities officers with a focus on unpaid care (who mainly cares?), caring masculinities, men & gender equality and its significance for WorkNet. Other issues from interviews with carers:

- > Information flow about measures seems to leave room for improvement

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<sup>35</sup> A closer look at the project FlexShip is recommended: <https://www.eaf-berlin.de/en/project/flexible-working-arrangements-in-leadership/>.

- > Security and clarity in general seems missing; carers had to care for information about regulations themselves;
- > Information about leave regulations, pros and cons of Papa month, transition from educational leave to parental leave.
- > Clear informants seem to be missing, HR/staff management seem to need better training here
- > Leave management, substitutes and re-entries after leave

ResearchSchool and AutoCom: Flexibility/compatibility should no longer be purely individual –managers should be specifically trained in the direction of care flexibility, offering role models/champions to create role models.

AutoCom:

- > Difficulty to combine top management and active caring roles (carer 2): conversation in top management (not only at AutoCom) about management (culture) and care seems recommendable. In fact, carer 2 offers a good reason: prevent a divorce and the loss of your family – by taking care in time.
- > Carer 1 wishes for a sabbatical or a longer time-out to do something completely different; also a leave for further education (“Bildungskarenz” in Austria) would be welcome.

### 2.8.3. Recommendations for further studies / trainings

WorkNet:

- > Vocational counsellors, who make a huge part of the staff and the organization’s activities, up to the interview process could not work from home. Did Corona change something about the presentism? If not, this might be a good sub-project: Work-Life Balance through Online Counselling
- > Gendered substructures: While the management seems to have changed (at least to some extent) towards gender equality, the everyday culture (at least among men) seems not to be overly affected. This needs to be discussed with experts/contacts.
- > Caring masculinities: The carers do not really see a connection to in-house gender equality. It might be an option for WorkNet to link men, care and gender equality more intensive, since there are in-house players who could see the benefits (those caring for gender equality, some carers, maybe other players in management, maybe politics). This could be a stakeholder seminar dedicated particularly on this connection! It needs a narrative that supports this connection!



## AutoCom &amp; ResearchSchool:

- > Gender Diversity is needed on all levels, especially on leadership positions. A closer look at initiatives (Girls' Day etc.) and organisations that support women careers in STEM is highly advisable (e.g. Femtec).
- > Care at ReserachSchool and AutoCom could benefit a lot from a more active approach towards men which is already practiced at WorkNet: to reach out to men and make their share of care (and the whole topic of gender equality and men's role) a topic of the in-house conversation.

## ResearchSchool:

- > More (cross-university) initiative on WLB/compatibility/care at universities is needed (Conferences at Universities, e.g. Linz 2015)
- > How to work on a time structure that keeps things flexible but avoids overwork and blurred boundaries?

## AutoCom:

- > Carer 2 points out that more flexibility is needed. He says, *„I work less effective in the office“*, and demands, that it should not matter when or where somebody does the job. He actually favours a 35h/week at the same salary, because the efficiency increases (*“less meetings“*). This could be discussed in general. However: Does this further privilege occupational groups that have relatively much working time sovereignty anyway?

General: Building on already existing material (like Focus leaflet in 2006), a 'Guideline for a Caring Organization' seems to be needed. It should focus on how workplaces can be made 'fit for care' and comprise issues like (to be completed/worked out): Work structures (time and space), flexibility, management/leadership, information & advisory mechanisms, organization culture (including substructures, gendered expectations/stereotypes etc.).

## 2.9. Reflection of the results

“I agreed to let you join this force with the promise that family would not be an issue. I don’t mean to be hard-ass, but in this unit the job comes first, second, and third.” (FBI-Agent Cooper to a colleague and mother of a sick child, *The Blacklist*, season 1, Netflix 2013)

- > In general, the organizations studied have, at least, begun to develop family friendly measures that are also available for men carers. Other than 15-20 years ago, during the studies *Work Changes Gender* (2001-04) or *Fostering Caring Masculinities* (2005-06), men carers are usually not ‘exotic’ (with some exceptions), they are usually recognized in HR, among employees and managers (and also, in many countries, a topic in the media).
- > But in many cases and in different forms – either by blurred boundaries in science and upper management or by inflexible working conditions etc. – working cultures seem structured as if family care would be suspendable, expandable or optionally transferable (as a paid service). If the job does not come first (and, in some cases, second and third), at least the career, or even the job itself can be at stake.
- > We might call the process a *restricted normalization of men’s care*: Organizations are getting more used to actively caring men, but there are still structural, some cultural and many promotion-/hierarchy-related limitations.
- > ‘Environmental norms’ of the employees matter: milieu, collective cultural orientation and attitudes towards gender and care distribution; social background, class, city vs. countryside, educational background etc. are important here, as they shape organizational cultures and hegemonic attitudes at the workplace. Main indicators seem to be: carers’ attitudes to gender and care norms, gendered practices (care distribution), own working time/leave practice, female partners’ careers. Also: are the carers rather ‘supporters’ or ‘equality-oriented’ (or something else)?

- > Structure of work patterns: 'unlimitation' (ResearchSchool, AutoCom-Management) vs. 'containment' (WorkNet): What is needed for a gender-equitable care arrangement?
- > Poles of conflict:

|                 | INDIVIDUAL SOLUTIONS AGREEMENTS                                  | VS. COLLECTIVE                                      |
|-----------------|--|---|
| <b>Example</b>  | Individual agreement on working time/location                    | Firm regulation of working time and home-office etc |
| <b>Strength</b> | Tailor-made, unbureaucratic, quick to adapt                      | Predictable, reliable, crisis-proof                 |
| <b>Weakness</b> | Arbitrary, can create pressure and dependence, lack of insurance | Tedious, bureaucratic, inflexible                   |

- > Bigger organizations are rather "insular" than compact: WorkNet is divided into regional offices, ResearchSchool into departments/institutes, which can be distinct in terms of work conduct, culture, mind-sets etc. (however overall management is the same). AutoCom, being an international company, will be partitioned into different sub-cultures as well. This is relevant for the research question and also for measures:
  - How are policies implemented?
  - Which networks of actors exist, which information channels?
  - Which organisational cultures form the background? Which milieus are they derived from, and how are they positioned on gender equality and (implicitly?) caring masculinities? Can a 'care hegemony' be established?
- > Reflection of the 3-phase model for company change: Here the differences between WorkNet on the one hand and ResearchSchool /AutoCom on the other hand - also methodologically - appear particularly significant:
  - WorkNet: Numerically and in terms of gender equality policy efforts clearly better than the others, but in the background strong stereotypes, conservative attitudes, family care gaps.
  - AutoCom: The opposite - weak on paper, but more progressive attitudes (and couple arrangements - reductions in unemployment, employment status of partners)
  - ResearchSchool: Moderate on paper, 'unlimited' by the field logic of science; but flexible and progressive attitudes and arrangements.
  - What are priority indicators for a more advanced phase:

- Equality: the in-house gender statistics or more equality in the carers' partnerships?
- Work-life balance: a reliable but not very flexible security (at WorkNet) or individualized flexibility (as at ResearchSchool)?
- Depending on the selected priority, AutoCom, for example, appears either as an extremely unequal company (almost without female managers), or as relatively progressive and care-friendly in a generally masculine industry.
- So, how do we evaluate the general normalities versus the indicators in a concrete organization. For instance, how important are the industry/field conditions when it comes to rank/evaluate an organisation? How is it with hierarchy positions: is a 2 months leave and a 5 hours/week reduction of a manager less than a 5 months leave/8 hours reduction of a junior employee?

## APPENDIX: FIGURES AND TABLES

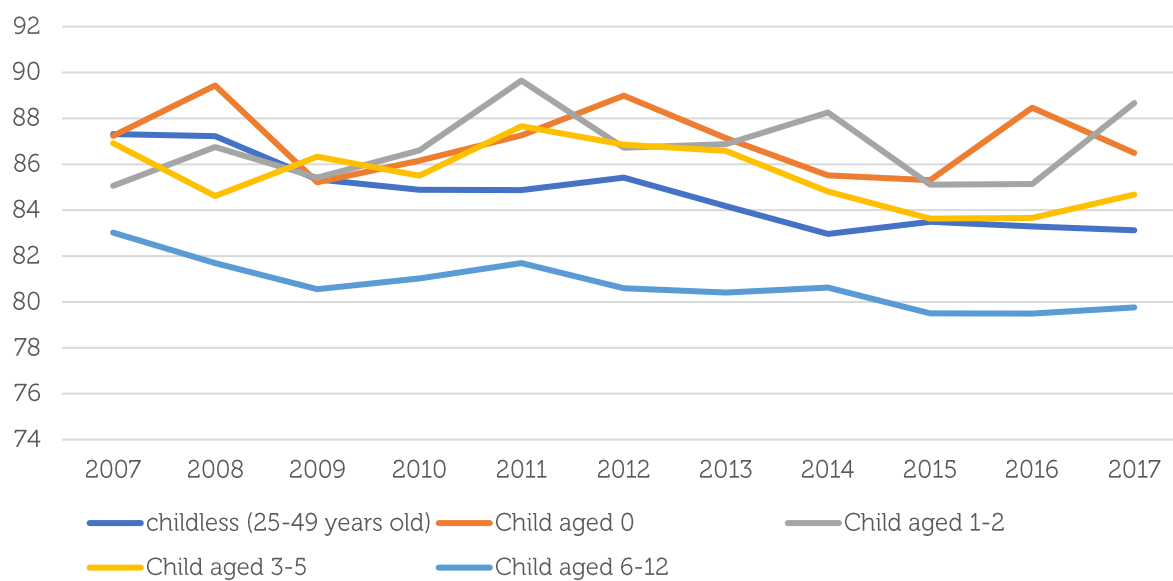


Figure 1. Employment rates by age of youngest child, men, 2007-2017.  
Source: EU-LFS Microdata

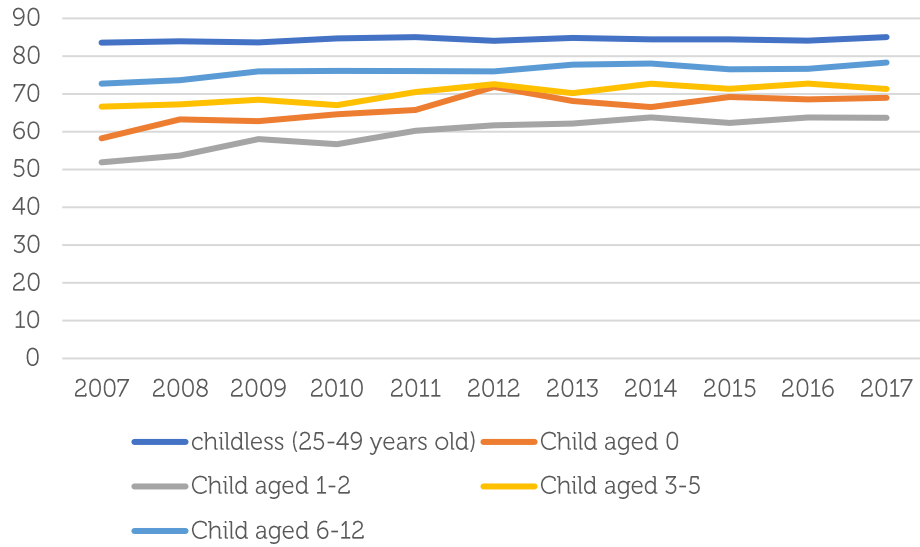


Figure 2. Employment rates by age of youngest child, women, 2007-2017.  
Source: EU-LFS Microdata

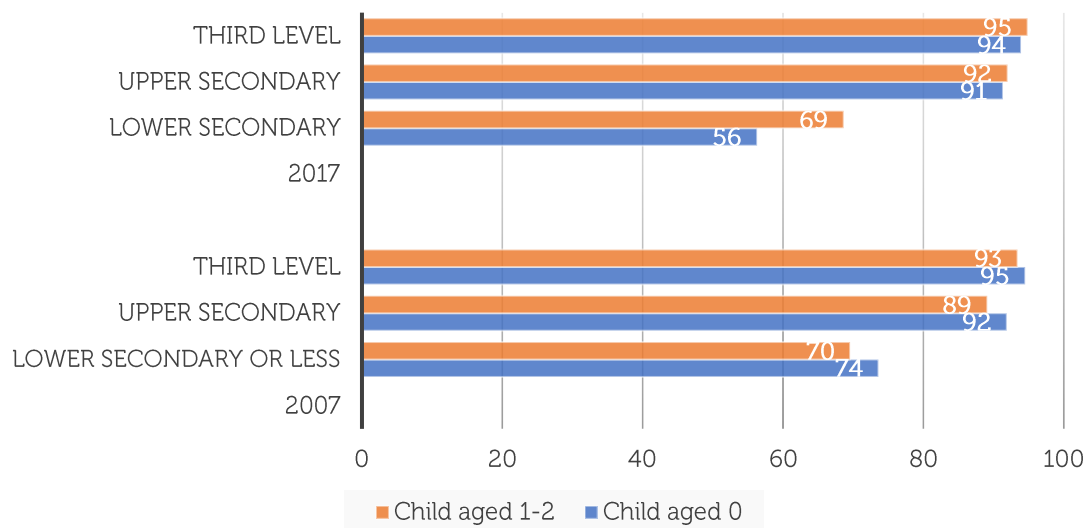


Figure 3. Employment rates of fathers, by age of child and education, 2007-2017.  
Source: EU-LFS Microdata

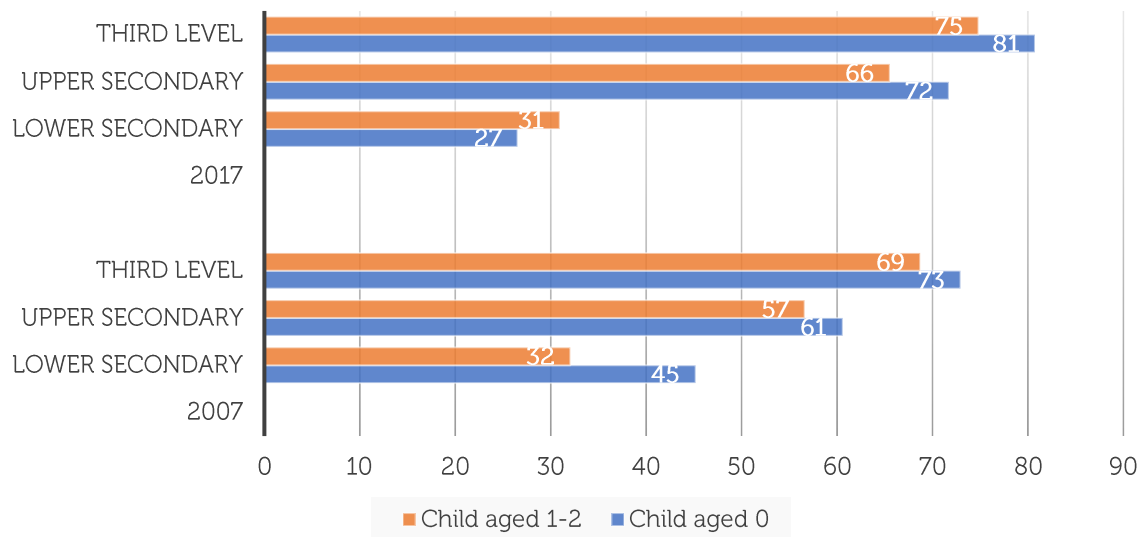


Figure 4. Employment rates of mothers, by age of child and education. 2007-17  
Source: EU-LFS Microdata

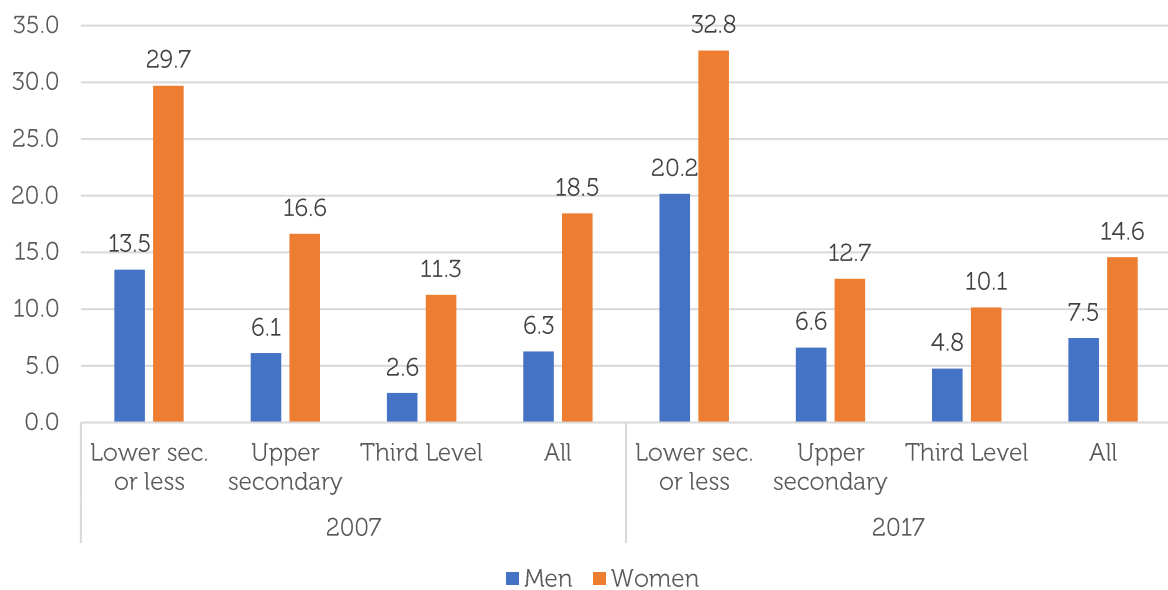


Figure 5. Inactivity rates for family reasons by gender and educational level, 2007/2017. Source: EU-LFS Microdata

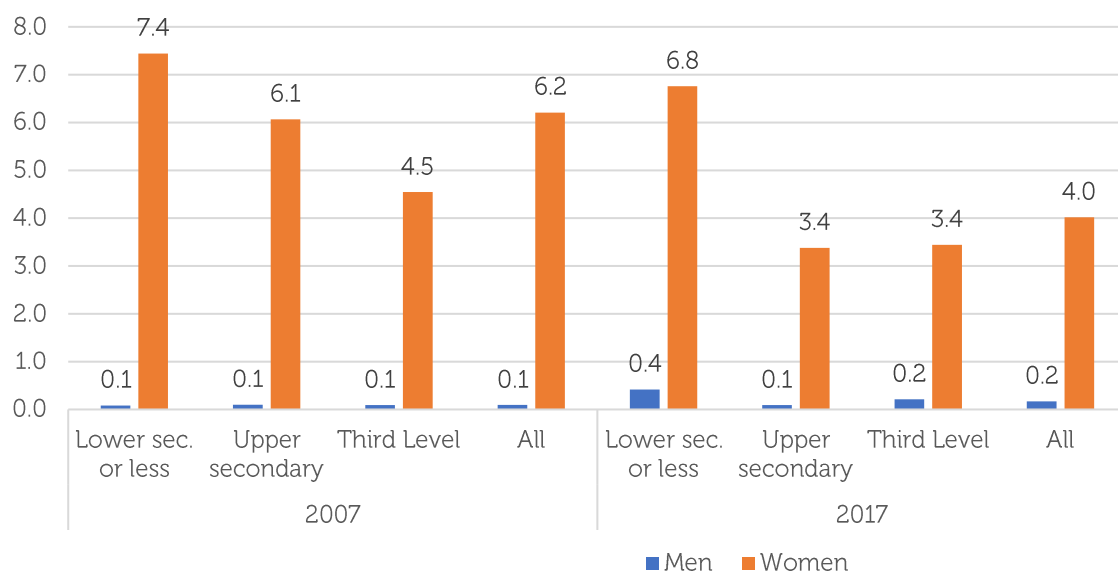


Figure 6. Percentage of people aged 25-64 who are inactive due to family reasons, 2007-2017. Source: EU-LFS Microdata



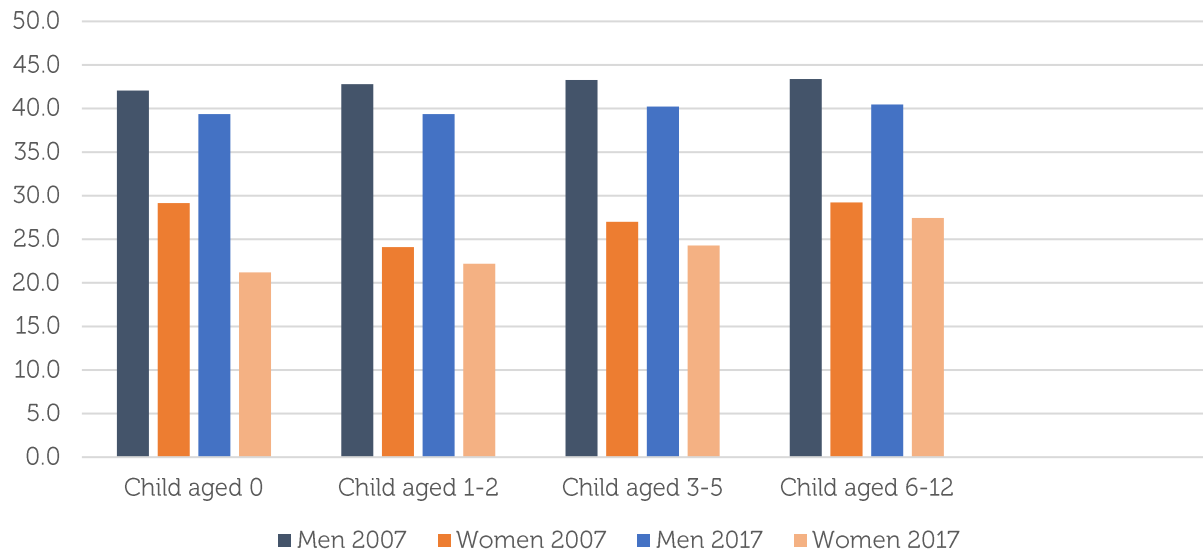


Figure 7. Weekly paid work hours of parents, 2007/2017 by gender and age of child.

Source: EU-LFS Microdata

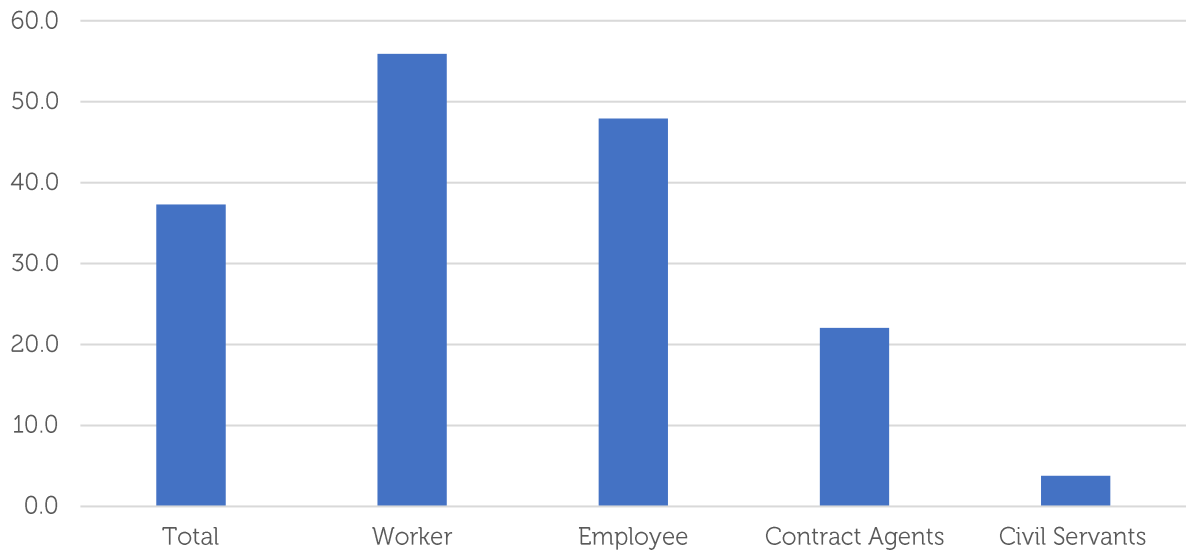


Figure 8. Unadjusted Gender Pay Gap, gross yearly income (median), Austria,

2017. Source: Statistik Austria;

[https://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/menschen\\_und\\_gesellschaft/soziales/gender-statistik/einkommen/index.html](https://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/soziales/gender-statistik/einkommen/index.html)

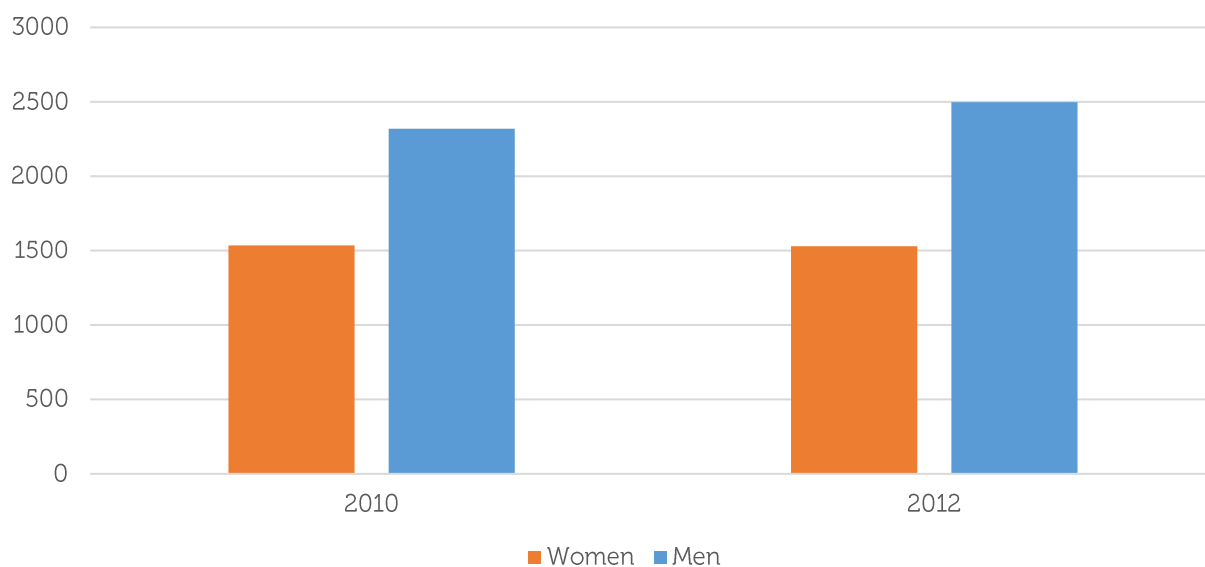


Figure 9. Mean monthly pension (euro), by gender, Austria, 2010-2012. Source: EIGE's calculation based on SILC microdata

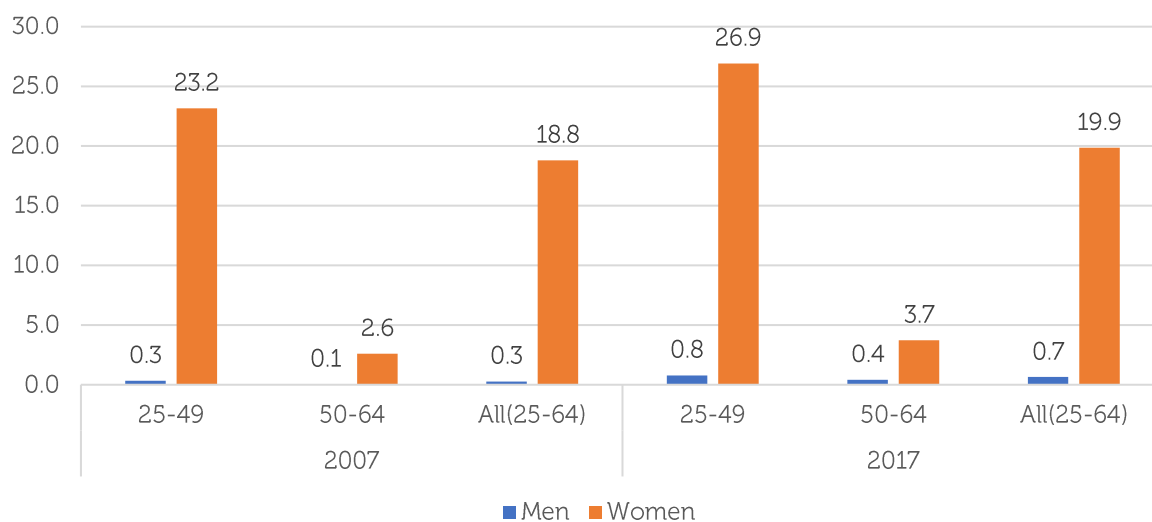


Figure 10. Percentage of employees working with a part-time contract due to family reasons, by gender, 2007-2017. Source: EU-LFS Microdata

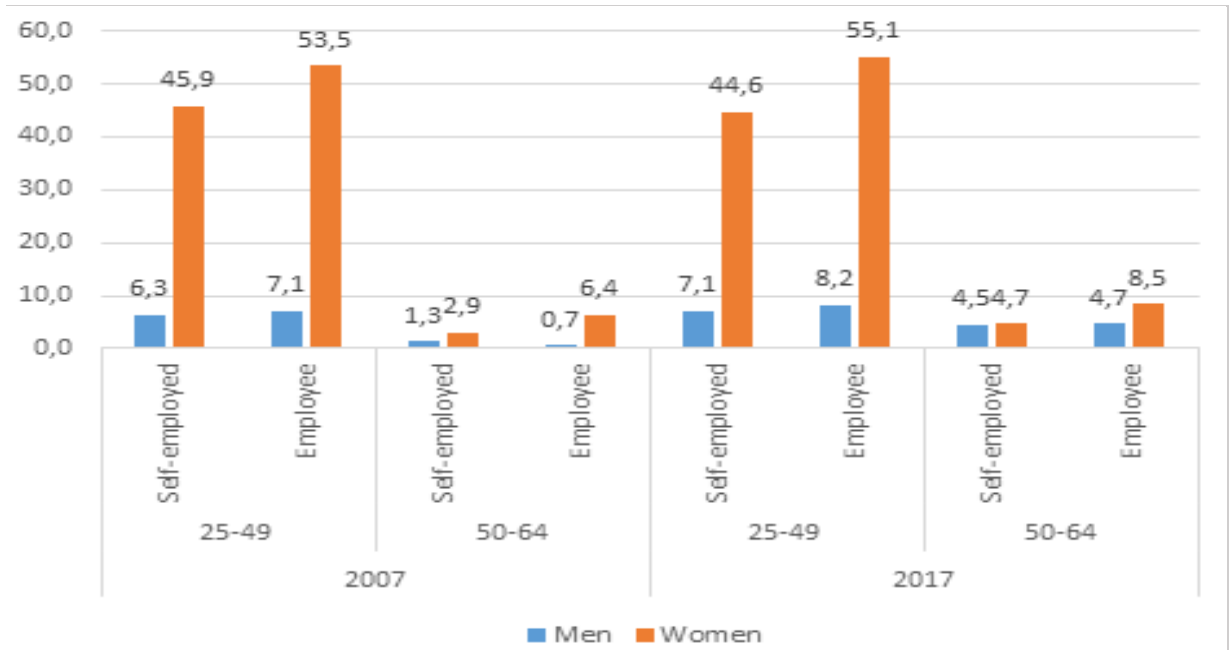


Figure 11. Percentage of employed people who work part-time for family reasons by age, professional status and gender, 2007-2017. Source: EU-LFS Microdata

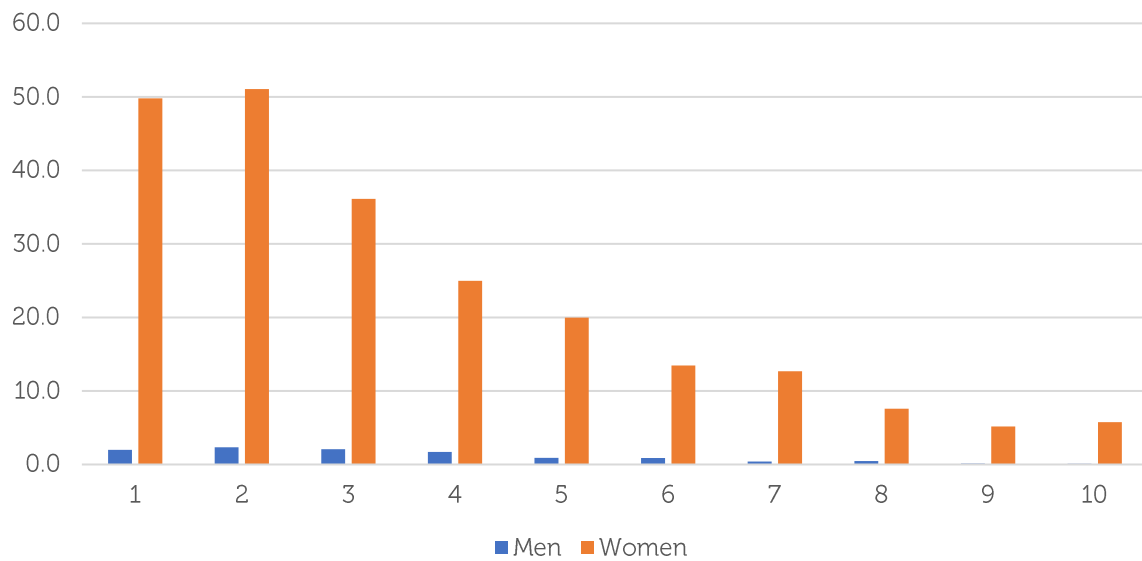


Figure 12. Percentage of employed people who work part-time for family reasons by gender and income deciles (1= lowest, 10 = highest income group), 2016. Source: EU-LFS Microdata

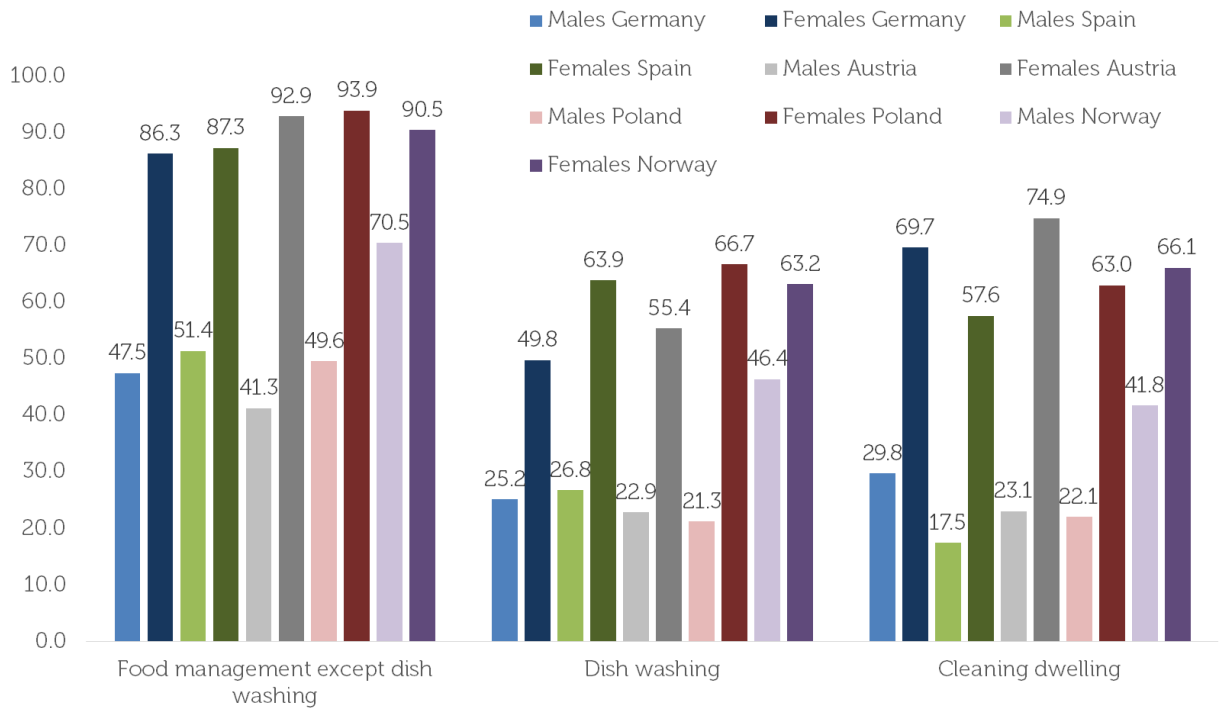


Figure 13. Participation rates in household chores by women and men in couples, with children under 6 years, 2010. Source: Time Use Survey, 2010, Eurostat.

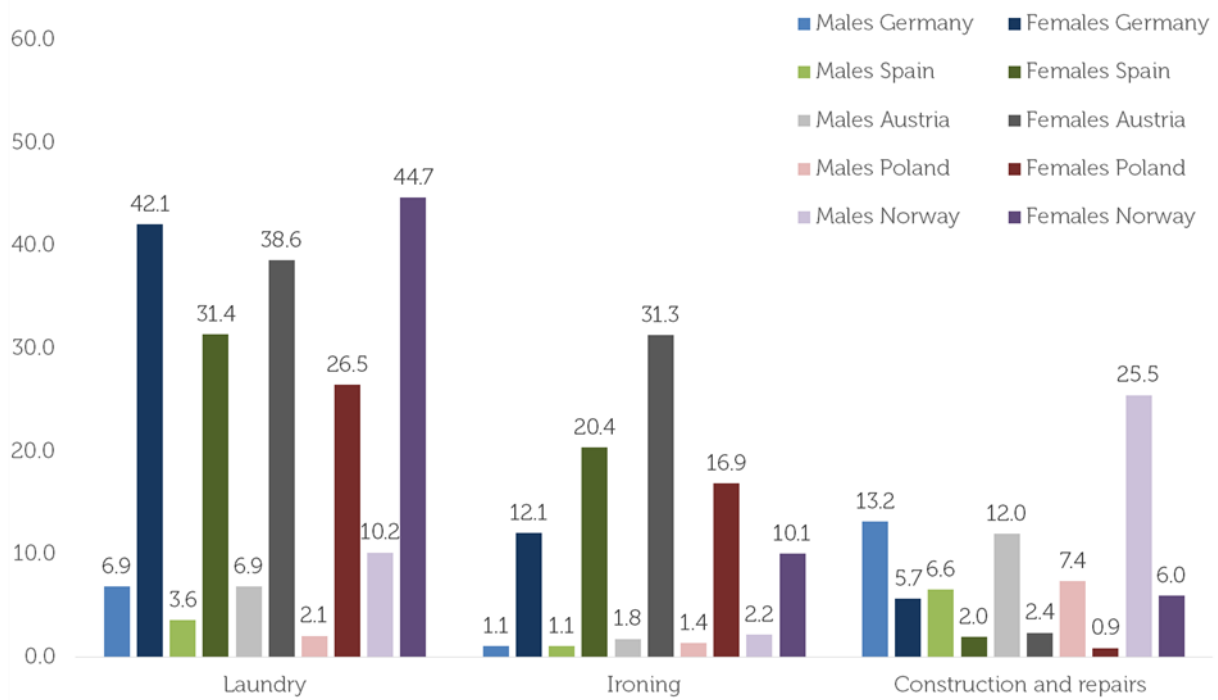


Figure 14 Participation rates in household chores by women and men in couples, with children under 6 years, 2010. Source: Time Use Survey, 2010, Eurostat.

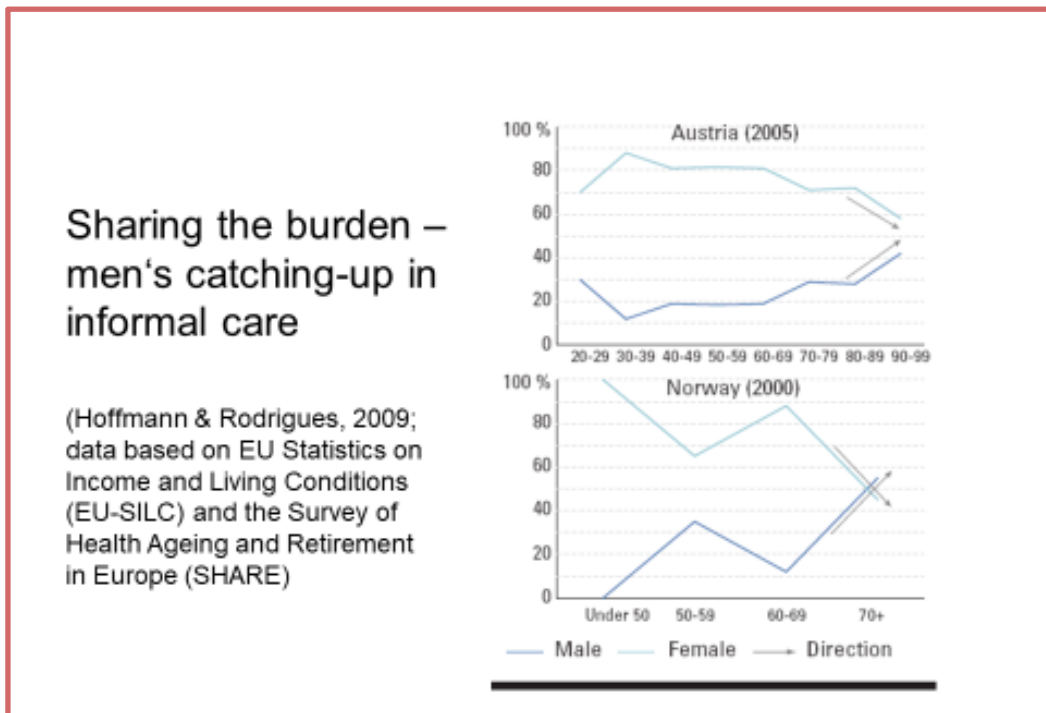


Figure 15. Men providing informal care, Austria and Norway, 2000 and 2005. Source: Huber, Rodrigues, Hoffmann, Gasior and Marin (2009): 58.

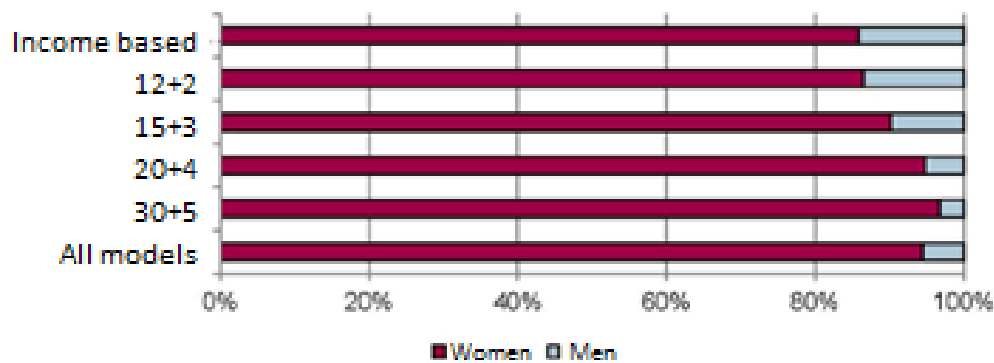


Figure 16. Take-up rate of childcare allowance in October 2017 (childbirth until 28th of February 2017). Source: Gender Index 2017. <https://www.frauen-familien-jugend.bka.gv.at/frauen/gender-mainstreaming-budgeting/gender-daten.html>

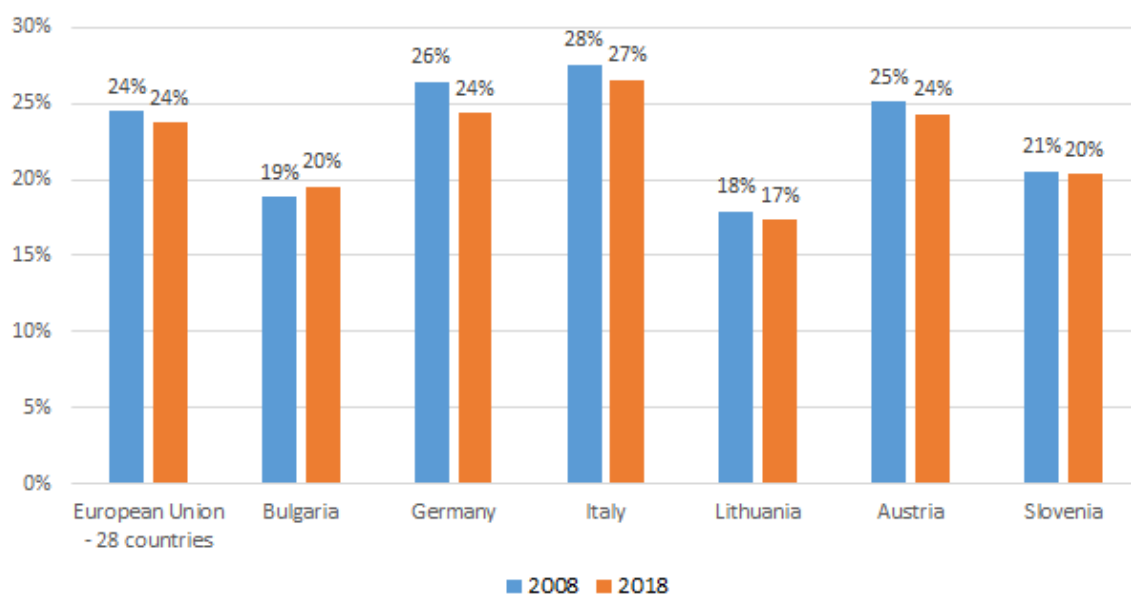


Figure 17. Share of men among “care workers” by country, in %, 2008 and 2018, ager 15–64. Source: Holtermann et al. (2019), based on Eurostat, LFS data

|                             | Staff  |        |        |      |       |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|------|-------|
|                             | total  | women  |        | men  |       |
| Crèches                     | 10,119 | 9,924  | 98.07% | 195  | 1.3%  |
| Kindergartens               | 36,067 | 35,437 | 98.25% | 630  | 1.75% |
| After school care           | 7,315  | 6920   | 94.6%  | 395  | 5.4%  |
| Mixed-age care facilities   | 8376   | 8155   | 97.36% | 221  | 2.64% |
| Child care facilities total | 61,877 | 60,436 | 97.67% | 1441 | 2.33% |

Table 1. People working in different child care facilities in Austria, by gender, 2016/17. Source:

[https://www.boysday.at/cms/boysday/attachments/9/5/7/CH3889/CMS1466600366941/factsheet\\_bd-berufe\\_mp\\_v1\\_19-01-09.pdf](https://www.boysday.at/cms/boysday/attachments/9/5/7/CH3889/CMS1466600366941/factsheet_bd-berufe_mp_v1_19-01-09.pdf)

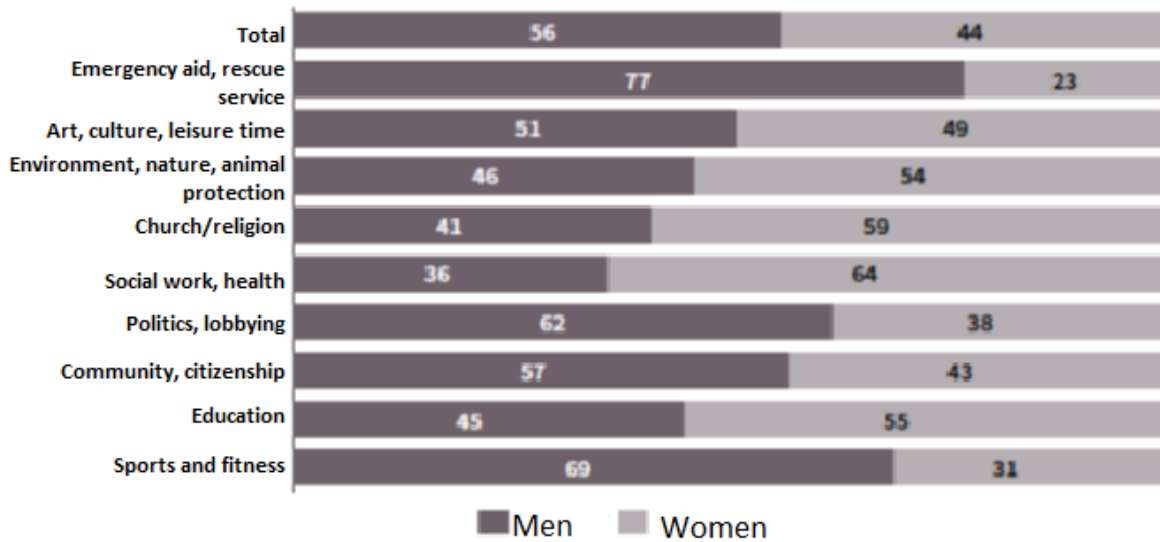


Figure 18. Structure of Formal Volunteer Work by Gender. Source: Freiwilligenbericht, BMASK 2015: 27

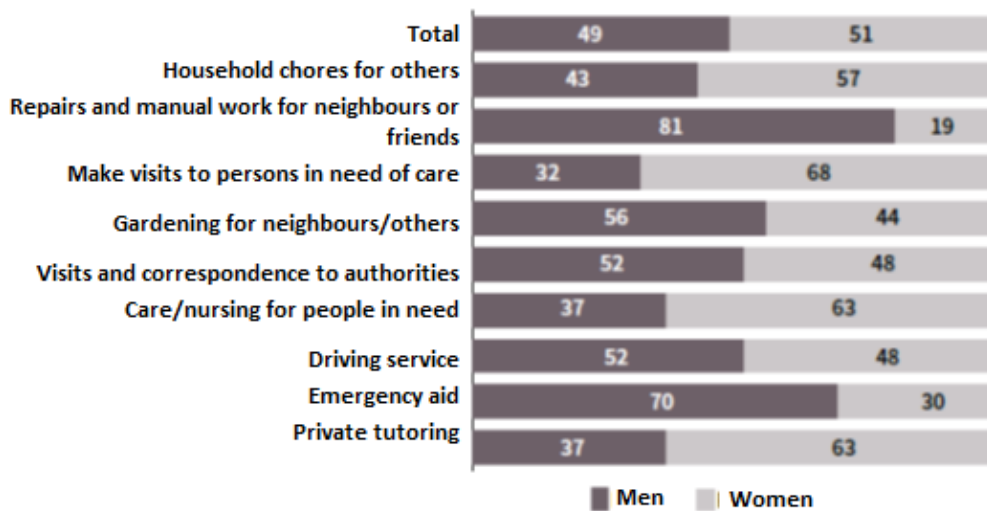


Figure 19. Structure of Informal Volunteer Work by Gender. Source: Freiwilligenbericht, BMASK 2015: 32

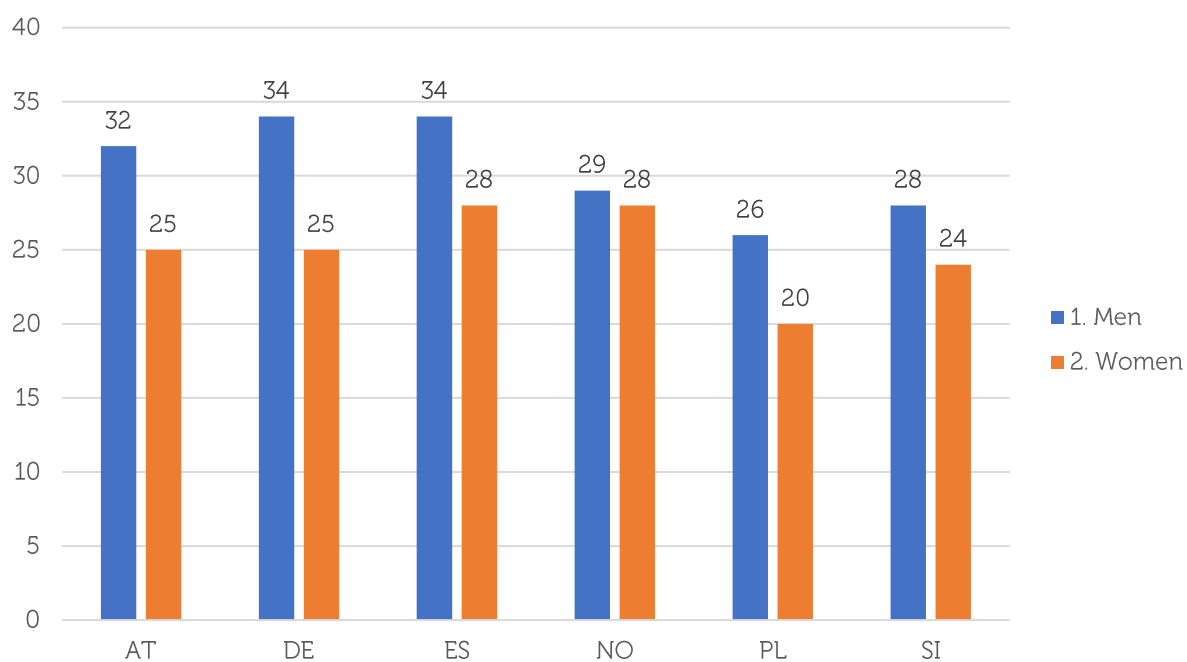


Figure 20. Percentage of working people who would like to work less than currently, by gender

Source: European Working Conditions Survey, Eurofound, 2015