



# FOCUS

Fostering Caring Masculinities

## German National Report

by Marc Gärtner, Jonas Gieseke, Stefan Beier  
Dissens Research and genderWerk



The Equality and  
Anti-Discrimination Ombud



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### German National Report

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**Pa: „Guess what! *Daddy* takes parental leave!“**

**Kid: „Milksop!“**

**... a long, long way...**

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# 1. Introduction

The project Fostering Caring Masculinities (FOCUS) aims to examine and improve men's opportunities for balancing work and private/family life in order to encourage the preparedness of men to take over caring tasks. To reach this goal the project focuses on companies' framework conditions to perceive and include men as actors and target groups in equality policies.

FOCUS is a project involving five countries: Germany (Dissens e.V.), Iceland (Centre for Gender Equality), Norway (The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud), Slovenia (Peace Institute) and Spain (University of Girona).

The project is funded through EU's Community Action programme to promote Gender equality between men and women. FOCUS is connected to one of the prioritised themes of the program, "the role of men in the promotion of gender equality, in particular the role of men and fathers in the reconciliation of work and private life". The project was initiated by the Norwegian Ministry for Children and Family Affairs which also co-funds the project.

## 1.1. *Work life balance*

According to Fiona Williams (2003) we should not ask ourselves how care and the needs for care are implemented in the work, but how work can be involved and implemented into care. This line of thinking, acting and implementing the work/life balance aims at family-friendly policies as well as at work policies enabling men and women to share responsibilities, caring and family life. In this regard traditional gender roles are challenged, which opens space for rethinking the concepts of men, women, femininity and masculinity. Moreover it changes the perception of caring as a gender-related burden and an undervalued activity in society. It enables us to think of it as beneficial for the public sphere.

Europe is currently characterised by a new type of work life where dual-career adaptations are more common along with increased requirements for flexibility. Responsibility for care is becoming the normal situation for working people. The stereotype of the husband as the main breadwinner is in decline in Europe and is gradually being replaced by ideals of active fathering and equal sharing of care responsibilities (Brandth and Kvande 2003, Holter 2003, Puchert et al. 2005).

At the same time Europe is facing huge demographic challenges, which make care an even more important topic. These challenges are related to family reconciliation and fertility, but also to health care and care for elderly people. It is neither desirable (from a gender-equality perspective) nor probable (from the perspective of ongoing changes) that care maintains the traditional female bias.

In some parts of Europe we can see positive changes among men: their private wishes, obligations and attitudes are undergoing great change, but work life is not keeping pace. Men still live in a state of preparedness for their jobs, women in a state of preparedness for the home (Lilleaas 2003). Hegemonic and traditional gender role models are still effective among men and women, in partnerships and, most of all, in the work sphere (Puchert et al. 2005).

EU-research (e.g.: Work Changes Gender, cf. Puchert et al. 2005) shows that male employees are more family- and care-oriented than earlier. However, development trends

in the post-industrial society appear to support the fact that some groups of men still are attracted to the breadwinner model. Many men let their jobs take precedence over the rest of their life. There are many reasons why men still linger in the sphere of work life. Men's strong identification with their work seems to be a cultural and symbolic solution that has its roots in traditional man's ideals where the father was the breadwinner. Men in general work more overtime compared to women. The breadwinner conduct can be understood as a structural phenomenon that is maintained in society and work life. The breadwinner model refers to deep-rooted masculinity and gender standards.

We have in this project chosen to focus on work life. In particular, we look at how work life affects men's opportunities to practise caring masculinities and examine ongoing shifts in men's work environment in Europe. We also focus on how the work environment interacts with changing masculinities and how this affects opportunities for gender equality. The project places emphasis on organisational cultures, and more specifically on the role of internal innovators in the process of gender changes.

Even though we start in the labour market and inside the companies, we see the work sphere and the private sphere as deeply inter-related. Changes in the labour market will necessarily affect the private sphere. This project aim to acquire more knowledge of what causes gender equality to remain only an ideal rather than something the managers put into action. With the intervening in companies and in the dialog with experts and innovators, the project aims to initiate change and encourage managers to move from an idealistic gender-equality discourse to a more action-oriented practice.

## ***1.2. National reports***

This report is one of five national reports. These national reports provide a brief introduction to the social conditions in each partner country before the analysis of the workplace studies.

Each of the five national partners has carried out qualitative workplace studies in two different companies, one private and one public. In these studies we have interviewed male employees and managers with emphasis on three main topics. These are their private lives, their experiences pertaining to work and their ideas concerning organisational measures for balancing work and private life.

The national reports describe the findings from those studies and suggest possible measures that can be developed on the organisational level within a company. The innovative aspect of this project is the most important one. Our main goal is to help provide good guidelines for what companies can do in this area.

In addition to the national reports there is a report on the European dimension of the project, written by adviser Mari Teigen at the Institute for Social Research in Oslo. This report compares the findings from the five national reports.

A website has been set up, where you will find more information on project partners, our final conference and links to the different reports. When the guidelines are developed, you will also find these posted online ([www.caringmasculinities.org](http://www.caringmasculinities.org)).



## **2. Conditions of the Labour Sphere**

### **2.1. Legislation on Work Conditions**

#### **2.1.1. Part time**

Since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2001 the law on part time work and temporary employment (TzBfG) does apply in Germany. With this the legislation explicitly follows the aim of expanding part time work in all fields of professions and leading positions. Core elements of this law are a general right to part time for employees on the one side, but on the other it is forbidden to penalise part time workers in internal actions and decisions (e.g. concerning promotion, salaries etc.).

However, to claim for part time work is linked to different requirements: Only those employers who have got more than 15 employees have to fulfil the legal regulation. Apart from that a desired decrease of working time and its new arrangement can be refused because of company reasons. Company reasons are legally defined as a significant disturbance of organisation, of the work cycle or safety within the company, it can also refer to the development of disproportional high costs for the employer.<sup>1</sup>

This regulation of part time work is meant to incorporate the interests of employees and employers and acts on the assumption of a partnership between these two groups in their understanding of employment law. They are supposed to find a consensual solution in questions of working time arrangements which are sensible for all parties (BMWA 2005, p.6).

#### **2.1.2. Working time**

Legal regulations on working time are to be found in the Working Time Law (ArbZG). In general, the daily amount of working time must not be more than eight hours. An extension of working time up to ten hours is possible, but there has to be a compensation during the following six months in such a way that the average amount of working time in this period is not more than eight hours per day. In addition employees are entitled to rest for a period of time, which has been fixed in advance: This is at least 30 minutes during a working period of six to nine hours and at least 45 minutes if the working time is more than nine hours. In principle there must be a rest period of at least eleven hours between two working days.

#### **2.1.3. Company Leave because of Care for Sick Children**

In Germany the claim for company leave because of caring for a sick child is bound to different premises and according to legal work or tariff regulations and its duration it exists in paid and unpaid form.

In case a doctor attests the sickness of a child and its need for attendance, which can not be done by any other person or is not reasonable, and this case is not regulated by any work contract or agreements on tariffs, then the employee has the right to *paid* leave. This is at

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<sup>1</sup> In corresponding legal proceedings the jurisprudence stated that the employer has to explain and substantially prove which are the premises of the internal company reasons that count out the right to part time work. Regarding the organisational reason the employer has to undertake reasonable efforts to carry out the right to part time work by re-organisation and re-distribution of work. Regarding the financial reason the cause and the increase of the costs as well as the conditions out of which the disproportion arises has to be well-founded. (Viethen/Scheddler 2002, p.9).

least the case when the amount of time is not proportionally significant (normally five days).

To get an *unpaid* leave employees have to deliver a medical report on the child's sickness and need for attendance as well. As further conditions it must be stated that any other person living in the same household is not able to look after the child and that the child is younger than 12 years or handicapped or needy. There are clear legal regulations on the duration of an unpaid leave:

Concerning parents:

- per child and parent 10 working days maximum per legal year
- with more than one child not more than 25 working days altogether

Concerning single-parents:

- per child 20 working days per year
- with more than one child not more than 50 working days altogether

With a claim for unpaid leave (and lacking claim for paid leave) the compulsory health insurance gives a sick pay to the insured persons. This is also the case when a child is in need of care and attendance because of an accident at the kindergarten, day care center or at school as well as when it got injured on the way there or back home.

For the attendance and care of severely ill children an extended claim for leave exists. Depending on the neediness for care an unlimited unpaid leave until the age of twelve is possible (BMFSFJ 2005, p.20 et seq.).

## ***2.2. Legislation on Parental Leave***

### **2.2.1. Parental leave as unpaid leave**

With the parental leave employed mothers and fathers have after the birth of a child the right to limited unpaid leave. Since 1986 the parental leave (former educational holiday) is legally regulated in the federal child benefits law (Bundeserziehungsgeldgesetz, BerzGG).

In combination with the financial support of the child benefits the parental leave should contribute to the option “that one parent can become devoted to the attendance and education of the child in its first phase of life which is significantly important for its later development. With this more freedom of choice is created between activities for the family and for employment for mothers and fathers. The educational power of the family will be strengthened, its educational achievements are appreciated by the community“ (BT-Drucks. 10/3792, p.1).

Aiming at a better compatibility of family and labour “*the federal child benefits law has been changed several times. The leave period of ten month was enlarged to three years in 1992 and it was connected to dismissal protection for the first time. The latest regulations from Jan 1st 2001 contained further crucial changes, which were explicitly meant to stimulate fathers to participate more than before in active family work.*” (BT-Drucks. 14/3553, p.2; auch BT-Drucks. 12/1495, p.13)

With the current regulation both employed parents are free to choose who will take parental leave and on which period of time the particular leave takes place; every parent is entitled to three years parental leave from the child's birth to the age of three, independent from how the other parent makes use of his/her parental leave.

With the former legal regulation only one parent could take parental leave, even if both parents were employed; apart from that the unemployment of one parent forfeits the claim for parental leave automatically. Considering the low labour force participation rate of women compared to men, their lower income and their higher rate of part time work in Germany, this regulation led to a cementation of traditional gender stereotypes; only 1.5% of the fathers took parental leave (Vaskovics/ Rost 1999).

A further reorganisation of parental leave, that could make it more attractive for fathers, is the possibility to take up to twelve months of leave any time before the child's eighth birthday (up to now it could have been taken only until the third birthday of the child). For this the permission of the employer is necessary.

Corresponding to the dismissals protection during the parental leave a claim for returning to the former working place after the parental leave always exists. According to the concrete labour contract a resettlement can be possible under certain conditions, when an equivalent working place is guaranteed. Particularly a decrease in financial income would be inadmissible.

### **2.2.2. Part time work during Parental Leave**

Since the reorganisation of the parental leave regulation in companies with more than 15 employees there exists a legal claim for part time work for up to 30 hours per week during the period of parental leave. With this the former interconnection of parental leave to the abandonment or minor continuity of employment breaks away and becomes more friendly to fathers (before now only 19 hours of part time work per week were possible) under the given circumstances of the labour market. But this legal claim does not apply unlimited, like the general regulation of part time work in the TzBfG. Employers can refuse a desire for part time work when "urgent company causes" conflict with it. Compared to the regulation in the TzBfG, in which already "company reasons" (compare paragraph 2.1.1.) are sufficient to reject a desire for part time work, parents with a desire for part time work within the period of parental leave have an advantaged legal status towards their employers (BMFSFJ 2004, p.120).

If an employer dismisses an application for part time work, the employee can get unemployment benefits during parental leave while the parent is registered at the employment service and available for a part time job of 15 to 30 hours per week.

Alternatively the parent can work with another employer or as self-employed up to 30 hours per week, if the former employer agrees to this. In case the employer disagrees an allowance can only be refused within four weeks in written form because of urgent company reasons.

### **2.2.3. Parental allowance (Elterngeld)**

After the Parliament election in September 2005 the new government parties CDU/CSU and SPD decided in their coalition contract the implementation of new parental allowance

as from January 1st 2007. Since then details of this regulation are quite controversial, even within the ruling parties. In May 2006 the coalition committee agreed on central issues of the new parental allowance, the final bill was published in June 2006.

The new parental allowance fulfil two central functions: On the one hand it replaces the subsidy for parents (Erziehungsgeld- see paragraph 3.1.1.) which was paid before and support parents with minor or no income with a fixed basic amount of 300 Euro during a period of up to 14 months (the subsidy for parents of 300 Euro could have been received over a period of 24 months). On the other side the new parental allowance function as a temporary salary substitute for those parents who decide to take a leave or work part time after child birth.

The details of the parental allowance:

- During a period of 12 months the parental allowance replace 67% of the former lump sum net earned income (maximum 1,800 Euro per month) of those who resign or cut back labour because of child care.
- two additional months are reserved for the other partner in the case he or she resigns or cuts back labour because of a child (comparable to the "father months" in other European Countries) so that the maximum duration of parental allowance is 14 months.
- single parents can take the whole 14 months of the parental allowance
- the regulations of the parental leave are not affected by the new parental allowance; part-time work up to 30 hours is possible
- the overall budget of parental allowance can be divided or stretched over a period of two years

From a perspective of gender equality policies there is room for hope that the implementation of the new parental allowance will create real freedom of choice in questions of child care between employed mothers and fathers.<sup>2</sup> The explicit reservation of two month parental allowance for partners creates an additional stimulation for fathers to take parental leave and undertake caring tasks in the family.<sup>3</sup>

In comparison to middle- or high-income families, minor- or no-income families are disadvantaged by the new parental allowance. The old subsidy for parents guaranteed at least 300 € for a period of two years, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007 on, they will have by using the possibility to stretch their whole budget only 150 € per month.

## ***2.3. Statistics on Employment***

### **2.3.1. Labour Market Integration and Part Time Work of Women and Men<sup>4</sup>**

In 2005 the German active labour force rate<sup>5</sup> of women was 59.3% and therefore

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<sup>2</sup> In August 2005 a representative survey (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2005) with men up to 44 years old asked among other things for the perceived reasons why so few men take parental leave. With 82% there was a financial criterion at the top: "Mostly the loss of income is much higher if the fathers stays at home". Second with 74% came the fear of disadvantages at the work place. In addition job-related ambition and a traditional family image got a 55% rating, and the fear of playing a special role as a "father in parental leave" had an important role with 45%.

<sup>3</sup> According to a current study of the Ministry of Family Affairs (BMFSFJ 2005) only 4.9% of employed fathers make use of parental leave.

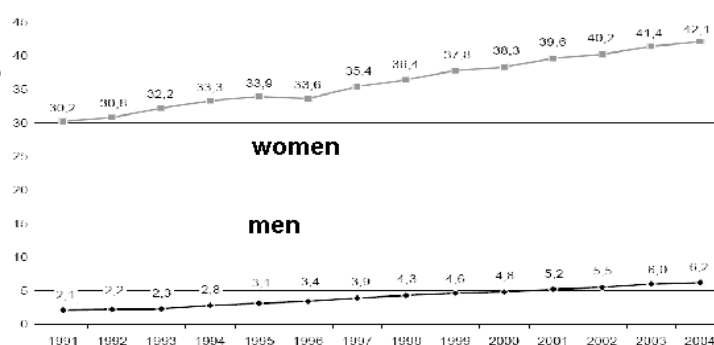
<sup>4</sup> Data base: Federal Agency of Employment, Eurostat, DJI 2005b.

<sup>5</sup> The active labour force rate expresses the share of employed women and men respectively in the corresponding female and male population group (in contrast the activity rate

significantly lower than the active labour force rate of men with 71.1%. But compared to the corresponding data of 1991 it becomes clear that the difference between the rates has definitely decreased. In 1991 the active labour force rate of women was still 57% and showed after a short decrease in 1997 a tendency to increase; in the same year the active labour force rate of men was still 78.4% and it fell continuously with a low of 70.1% in 2004. This development was accompanied by highly increasing unemployment. In 1991 the unemployment rate of men increased from 5.4% to 13.4% in 2005 (West Germany 11.3%; East Germany 21.3%). The unemployment rate of women increased from 8.3% in 1991 to 12.7% in 2005 (West Germany 10.7%; East Germany 19.7%), which is a comparably lower increase. In 2004 it stayed below the men's rate for the first time with 11.7%. So the reduced offer of labour opportunities since the middle of the 90's were for the account of men and led to an adjustment between active labour force activity rates and unemployment rates of women and men.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure: Part time work rate of employed women and men in Germany 1991 to 2004 (in percent; no self-employed included) (DJI 2005b, p.114)**

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt 2005,  
Data base: Mikrozensus



But the interpretation of this development and its evaluation from a political gender equality perspective is not as unequivocal as the existing data might appear. On the one hand it must be acted on the assumption that the real activity rate of women is lower, because significantly more women than men are interested in working but without having undertaken the registration as unemployed person. On the other hand the increasing activity rate of women is accompanied by an increase of the part time work rate.<sup>7</sup> While in 1991 the part time work rate of women was only 30.2%, it continuously went up to 42.1% in 2004. The part time work rate of men increased during the same period of time from 2.1% to 6.2% and thus remained at a comparably low level.

Asking part time workers for their reasons of choosing this kind of employment, clear differences between East and West and women and men emerge. In the East part time work is accepted by the majority because no similar full time jobs are available (this is true for 57% of part time working women and 46% of men). In contrast for 63% of part time working women in the West the chief motives are personal and family duties. Only 13% of part time working men in the West share this reason.

Parallel to the enlargement of part time work the number of other working forms increase which differ from traditional standard work conditions. First of all this means weekend work, night employment and shift work, where men are employed more often than women. Regarding minor (geringfügig) employment, another field that becomes more important, a reverse picture of gender relations is shown. Especially among those workers, who

contains also the unemployed).

<sup>6</sup> For Germany the extreme differences in the employment rates between the Federal States in West Germany and those in the former East Germany are remarkable. In 2004 in the former East (referred to as "New States") it reached 19.5% as annual average for the acquisitive women, 20.6% for men, 8.4% for women in the West and 10.3% for men.

<sup>7</sup> The part time rate expresses the percentage share of part time workers in all employed populations (without self-employed).

exclusively hold down minor employment, women are significantly overrepresented. Especially young people are hit by short-term employment, young women just like young men.

### **2.3.2. Employment of mothers and fathers**

Even though the amount of employed mothers decreases, the decrease of secure jobs for fathers and the simultaneously increasing interest of fathers in active family work (Zulehner/Volz 1998), it can surprisingly not be stated that fathers are willing to reduce their work when a child is born. While children still influence the employment activity of women in a negative way (in 2004 women without children had an activity rate of 77% while the rate of mothers was 63.5%), the activity rate of men with children is even higher than of those without children (88.3% compared with 77.8%). The slight decrease of the activity rate of men with children from 90.8% in 1996 to 88.3% in 2004 is rather a trace back to the general reduction of occupations than to a stronger orientation of fathers towards families. The decrease of the active labour force rate of men without children is almost identical and therefore supports this interpretation.

### **2.4. Statistics on Wages for Men and Women**

The income of women in Germany is at least 20% lower than the income of men, while the working time is almost the same. In terms of the aim of the EU to adjust the incomes of men and women, Germany, together with Austria and Great Britain, ranks at one of the last positions among the EU-states (DJI 2005b, p.150).

A comparison between East and West also shows significant differences concerning the earned income: Women in East Germany receive on the average 92% of the income of men and get much closer to equality between men and women than women from West Germany. They receive only 76% of the income of men (each with full time employment). The process of transformation in East Germany which developed after the Unification, brought unemployment especially to lesser skilled employees. Because of this those women who could have stayed in employment are much more skilled than women in West Germany and earn higher incomes.

Because of women's high part time work rates and the low part time rate of men the earnings of employed women in West Germany are *all in all* much lower than those of men. In East Germany the differences in income are not that dramatically high, because the part time work rate of women is much lower there. In West Germany the lower active employment of women influences their earned income much more than the disadvantageous income relation in full time employment.

Among part time employees the income relation between women and men is much more favourable for women than among full time employees. In 2002 the annual gross salary of women who work less than 18 hours per week was 122% of the income of men with the same occupational conditions. With a part time employment of more than 18 hours weekly women in Germany reached 96% of the men's wages.

There are manifold reasons for this favourable income relation for women: Qualified women strive for working life much stronger than lesser skilled women. In case they have children they rather tend to take part time employment rather than women with lower

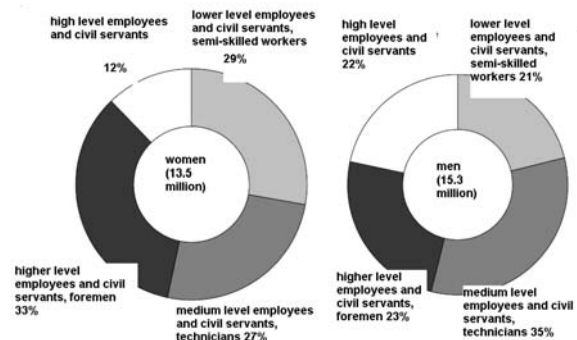
salaries because the former look at their financial scope. With this higher-income earners are overrepresented among those women who work part time. For the group of part time working men a contrary proportion is assumed. Therefore it can not be argued as a discrimination of men.

## 2.5. Statistics on Leadership and Boards

Dividing employed women and men into their different hierarchical company positions as shown in the figure below, a horizontal gender segregation of the German labour market appears: In low and middle positions women and men are to be found in almost the same proportions, but on the top level there are only 12% women and 22% men.

**Figure: Employed women and men (without self-employed and apprentices) in their company positions in Germany 2004**

(DJI 2005b, p.131)



In the survey for the Mikrozensus<sup>8</sup> 2004 were only 21% women among those employees who described themselves as “Top leaders” with widespread managerial tasks (e.g. directors, business managers). Eurostat declares a proportion of 26.4% female managers among all managers in 2005.

To be promoted in the internal hierarchy the principle of seniority is still crucial. This means that chances for occupational advancement are tied to company affiliation and personal age. Family based interruptions of the occupational continuity in the lives of women and problems of re-entry into the labour market are important factors to explain the still distinct vertical segregation of the labour market. If the proportion of female top leaders is correlated to the amount of children then this proportion decreases when the number of children grows.

Women manage to become top leaders rather in small and medium-sized enterprises of the service sector and public sector. Concerning the executive boards and governing bodies of the 30 major enterprises in the German traditional “old economy” the share of women is only one percent for the level of executive boards and eight percent for the level of governing bodies. In reference to the 30 major enterprises of the IT-sector the proportion of women in executive boards and governing bodies is 4% each.

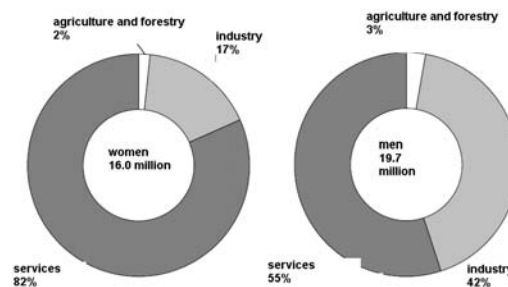
That overcoming this vertical segregation is of importance for the aim of equal opportunity was shown in a study by Krell und Ortlieb (2003). They proved that companies which have a high proportion of women in their management more often undertake actions to foster equal opportunities for women and men than enterprises that have a low proportion of women in management.

<sup>8</sup> Mikrozensus is the largest annual survey of households in Europe, it surveys approximately 830,000 persons and 390,000 households.

## 2.6. Statistics on Gender-Specific Types of Employment

Analysing fields of employment of women and men on a horizontal level it becomes clear that these fields are still not balanced even though the labour force participation rate of women increased. Still many specific careers for women and for men exist in which one gender clearly dominates in terms of quantity. According to the Mikrozensus eight of ten employed women are occupied in the service sector. Regarding men it is only every second one (54%). Only 17% of women work in the industry sector, while there are still 43% men. The field of agriculture and forestry possesses only minor value for both genders.

**Figure: Employed women and men according to economy sectors in Germany 2004 (in percent)**  
(DJI 2005b, p. 126)



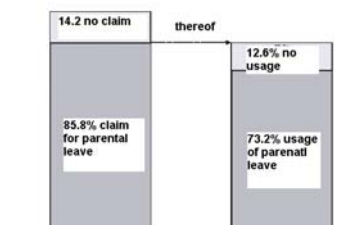
## 2.7. Statistics on Parental Leave

According to the results of a representative survey on the impact of the new regulations about parental leave and part time work during the period of parental leave for employees and employers (BMFSFJ 2004), as a start 85.5% of those households which had a child after January 1<sup>st</sup> 2001 are on principle entitled to parental leave in 2003.<sup>9</sup> Out of this group of households in fact 85.3% make use of their claim. The share of mothers who take parental leave represents 95.1% in these households, the remaining 4.9% account for fathers in parental leave.<sup>10</sup>

**Figure: Claim for parental leave and unsage of parental leave (referring to households)**

(BMSFSJ 2004, p. 12) <sup>11</sup>

Source: Representative survey 2003, n=725



With the re-regulation of this law the minor proportion of the 1.5% of fathers who make use of parental leave should have been increased (BT-Drucks. 14/3553, p.2). Taking this into account the figure of 4.9% in 2003 can be regarded as a remarkable increase, even though the number of fathers who take parental leave is still extremely low compared to Scandinavian countries.

The new regulation about part time work during the period of parental leave in enterprises with more than 15 employees was seen as an important support in making use of it, as more than 50% of the fathers in the study said (in contrast to 32.8% of the mothers). But with the analysis of the survey and additional case studies it became clear that other factors have much more impact on the decision of fathers. Fathers make up almost sole use of

<sup>9</sup> Those households are entitled in which at the time of birth giving at least one parent is employed and able to make a claim according to §15 Bundeserziehungsgeldgesetz (Federal Law on Educational Benefits) (cf. chapter on Parental Leave)

<sup>10</sup> Because it was not possible to present results about parental leave duration and its starting point of time for fathers, the rate of 4.9% of fathers taking parental leave must not be overestimated (DJI 2005b, p.313).

<sup>11</sup> Claim for parental leave: At least one person per household is entitled according to § 15 BerzGG.

Usage of parental leave: At least one person per household makes use of parental leave.



parental leave when both partners earn approximately the same amount of money or the mothers gain higher salaries. Only for some exceptions ideational reasons (very positive attitudes towards family and children) or the occupational situation of the father (e.g. limited satisfaction with career) were determining factors in the decision for a usage of parental leave of the father (BMFSFJ 2004, p.21).

Even after the re-regulation of parental leave in Germany traditional models of parental leave still dominate: In 60.1% of couple households that take parental leave the father remains employed and carries on working unmodified while the mother quits for a certain period of time. In 32.2% of couple households that make use of parental leave the mother is employed for at least half a year during the period of parental leave (predominantly part time work) while the father works full time.

For non-traditional forms of division of labour in couple households with children only that form is relevant in which father and mother take parental leave at the same time or temporarily shifted or work at the same time or temporally shifted. It is 4.7% among those households that take parental leave. Only in 0.2% of the cases the father takes parental leave and is unoccupied while the mother works full time (BMFSFJ 2004, p.15).

## 2.8. Statistics on Flexible Working-hours

Source:  
BMFSFJ  
2004, 21,  
n=1,738  
(employees  
without those  
on parental  
leave)

Forms of flexible times. Employees with children and caring duties			
	Percentage of respondents making use of the respective working time model		
	Total %	Women %	Men %
<b>Flexi time</b>	43	40	48
<b>Over hours account</b>	61	61	60
<b>Other working time accounts</b>	11	9	14
<b>Time agreements in working groups</b>	33	39	25

Working time accounts are relatively new in German organisations, and developed – since the 1990s - mainly as an instrument to adapt working hours to companies requirements (cf. BMFSFJ 2004, p.21; Seifert 2001). Like the older instrument of flexitime they can also be used to adapt working hours to family commitments. According to a study in 2003, employees often make use of these forms in order to adapt work to family life (wherever applicable):

Casual use of forms of flexible times to adapt working time to family life (2003)			
	Total %	Women %	Men %
<b>Flexitime</b>	93	94	92
<b>Over hours account</b>	89	91	88
<b>Other working time accounts</b>	52	48	51
<b>Time agreements in working groups</b>	82	81	83

Although the table gives no conclusion on the frequency of use, it is but remarkable that men and women give approximately the same answers.

The differences are higher related to professional status: All forms of flexibility are distinctly more frequently used by leading and medium level employees than by workers (BMFSFJ 2004, p.21 et seqq.).

## **3. Conditions of the Non-labour Sphere**

### **3.1. Family Law**

#### **3.1.1. Subsidy for parents (Erziehungsgeld)**

The subsidy for parents was instituted in 1985. From the beginning on, it was not considered a compensation for wages, but a financial remuneration for the merit of raising children and a financial incentive. Ever since then, the subsidy for parents is paid independently from former remunerative employment to all mothers and fathers who devote themselves to personally taking care of a child.

If a certain margin of income is not exceeded, a fixed amount is granted for a limited period. From its introduction in 1985 until the year 2000, this amount was fixed at 600 DM (307 €) per month. By several amendments to the law, the subscription period was extended from ten months (in 1985) to the current 24 months.

By the amendment of January 1st, 2004, the amount was rounded down to 300 € for a period of 24 months. Furthermore, the reform included the lowering of the income limits during the child's first six months.

The subsidy will be abolished as a proper family supporting tool with the implementation of the new parental allowance at the 1st of January 2007. The new parental allowance will provide, comparable to the subsidy for parents a basic financial support for parents with minor or low income with an amount of 300 €, but only for a period of maximum 14 months instead of 24 months (see paragraph "parental allowance" above).

#### **3.1.2. Child allowance (Kindergeld)**

The child allowance is paid monthly in the form of a tax reimbursement according to the law on income tax, irrespective of the income. It is graded according to the number of children. Since January 1st, 2002, it amounts to 154 € per month for the first, second, and third child each, and to 179 € per month for the fourth and further children each.

Child allowance is paid for all children until the age of 18, and for children in the process of education or without job training until the age of 27. For unemployed children, child allowance is paid until they are 21. Persons who are not able to earn a living for themselves due to a handicap are paid child allowance without time limit. Child allowance for children older than 18 is eliminated if the child's income exceeds 7,680 € (salaries and other emoluments). It is paid to the person who is in charge of the child (BMFSFJ 2005, p.10).

### **3.2. Statistics on Reproductive Arrangements**

The birth-rate in Germany is with 1.34 children per woman one of the lowest in Europe (average 1.46 children). The most family intense time of the population is between the age of 35 to 44. More than every second person (57%) of this age still lives in a traditional form of family; i.e., she or he is married and has at least one child. 10% of this age-group is not married but has family duties. Nevertheless the percentage of single parent households increased to 20.5%.

Even though the family is still the dominant way of life in Germany, there is an obvious gap between the wish for children, and effective parenthood. From the people from an age of 18 to 44 not having children, only 24% of the men and 21% of the women do not want to have children. The average number of children 20 to 34 year old women want to have is 1.7.

The average age of marriage of women and men is rising, as the average age of women having their first child. In 2003 women got married with an average age of 29, men at 32. Women have in 2003 their first child at an age of 29.4. The percentage of women having their first child at an age over 40 is increasing as well; in 2003 there were 3.9%.

For women in the western part of Germany there is a clear correlation between their education-level and their motherhood. The higher the education-level the higher the percentage of women not living together with children in the same household in an age form 35 to 39.

The traditional norm of a couple-relationship in which the man is older, better qualified and has got a better position in the labour sphere gets less important. For only half of the couples in the western part of Germany correspond to this norm, in the eastern part only 40%. Together with the difficult situation on the German labour market, the model "Full-time working father, and non- or part-time working mother" loses its normative power as well.

The rate of divorce increases slowly but continuously. Today, more than every third marriage gets divorced.

### ***3.3. Statistics on Education Amongst Women and Men<sup>12</sup>***

In today's Germany, girls on average start school earlier than boys and they repeat school terms less often (2.5% of the girls; 3.4% of the boys during the school term 2003/2004) and attend grammar school (Gymnasium) more often. Conversely, boys attend secondary schools significantly more often than girls (Hauptschulen).

Tests on school accomplishments show that girls' average a higher level of accomplishment in language-related subjects. The differences in favour of the boys regarding maths and sciences are comparatively small.

The (Fach-)Abitur – the qualification required for entry to universities and universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen) is, in the meantime, reached most frequently by young women coming from the East German Bundesländer (31%). It is acquired least frequently by young men from both East and West Germany (21%). In 2003, 30% of the female German school-leavers, but only 22% of the male school-leavers left school with a (Fach-)Abitur. In 2003, 10% of the German and 23% of the non-German young men left school without any kind of qualification. Comparatively few young women found themselves in the same precarious situation: only 6% of the German, but 15% of the non-German female pupils left school without any qualification.

The educational system is still gender-segregated. Almost 60% of the students at the Berufsschulen (vocational schools of the dual system [i.e. job training at a company + vocational school]) are young men. In contrast, young women represent the larger share of students at the Berufsfachschulen (vocational school, no dual system, i.e. no parallel training on the job in a company) (just under 60%) and at the public health care schools (80%). For example, men represent only 18% of job trainees in the care for the elderly, and 5% in child care. This signifies a gender segregation regarding the choice of jobs. Young women are more often trained for service-related jobs, young men are more frequently

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<sup>12</sup> See DJI 2005b, p.17-90 et seq..

trained for jobs in industrial production.

In today's Germany, the share of women and men starting university is almost the same (in 2003, the women's share was 49.5%). Similar to the training on the job, the choice of subjects shows gender specific differences. Most female students choose languages, cultural and social studies, male students study engineering sciences. The second and third most frequent choices are, for both women and men, law and economy. Since 1991, engineering sciences became less important for female students, whereas languages and cultural studies grew more important.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of the balance when starting university, the women's share is comparatively low when it comes to the higher stages of the academic career; in the academic term 2003/2004, they represented 38% of the Ph.D. students, got 22% of all post-doctoral lecture qualifications (Habilitationen), and held 13% of the professorships. Regarding the distribution of the different professional qualifications of Germans according to gender and age, it becomes evident that most persons in all cohorts have absolved some kind of job training (eine Lehr- oder Anlernausbildung). In the older cohorts, more men than women hold university (and Fachhochschul-) degrees, and more women have not reached any professional qualification at all. The situation among persons younger than 30 is quite different: more women than men have achieved a (Fach-) university degree.

Altogether, women from West Germany participate less in professional development (Weiterbildungsmaßnahmen) than men; in the eastern part of Germany, women participate at the same rate. As most of the persons attending professional development are full-time employees, the lower participation of women is also connected to the fact that they work part-time, minor employed (geringfügig beschäftigt, i.e.: earning less than € 630 per month), or do not work when having and raising children – particularly in West Germany. As while employed women participate in professional development mostly if they live without children, men's participation in professional development increases parallel to the number of children they have. In West Germany, women participate less often in professional development with an increasing number of children; in East Germany, their professional development quota increases with an increasing number of children.

Selection and self-selection stabilise women's and men's domains in professional education. Apparently, companies decide more often in favour of applicants who correspond to the dominating gender among a professional guild. Simultaneously, women and men take decisions about the choice of professions that reproduce the gender segregation on the labour market.

### ***3.4. Statistics of Child Care***

#### **3.4.1. The legal foundations of child care**

The German Grundgesetz (basic constitutional law) determines the active encouragement and aid of families as a major sociopolitical task. The legal basis of the youth welfare deriving from this principle are codified by federal law in the eighth Sozialgesetzbuch (code

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<sup>13</sup> Eurostat Statistics (2006): Women's share in sciences, mathematics, computer sciences: 33.4%; humanities and art: 64.9%.

of social law); the Sozialgesetzbuch also codifies the legal frame for the aid of children in day care institutions and day care in terms of aims, tasks and functions. The concrete design and form of this legal frame is to be defined by the executive Bundesländer and local authorities (Kommunen).<sup>14</sup>

Since January 1st, 2005, the arrangements for the encouragement of children in day care and day care institutions were modified and completed by the law on upgrading day care for children in a quality-oriented manner and adjusted to childrens' and parents' needs. This amendment was the legislator's reaction to the German child care situation that was considered insufficient by a vast majority. Research on child care has shaped the notion of "care crisis". In spite of the legal entitlement to a place in kindergarten that children older than three have until they start school<sup>15</sup>, the Länder and local authorities in West Germany did not pursue consequently the necessary upgrading of the care institutions. Not even the quantity is sufficient (DJI 2005, p.20).

In contrast to a classical legal right, the entitlement to a place in kindergarten lacks individual suability so far in Germany. The text of the law says in § 24 art.1 SGB VIII that the responsible bodies of public youth welfare are supposed to work towards the development of a supply corresponding to the needs. But for methodological reasons, it is not possible to determine a well-defined notion of "needs"<sup>16</sup>; in the end, it is a political decision with considerable room for manoeuvre on the part of the youth welfare offices as to how the 'needs' are defined and when the needs are considered to be satisfied<sup>17</sup> (DJI 2005, p.218). This explains the widespread misinterpretation that the fulfilment of needs is actually a "voluntary benefit".

The new version of § 24 SGB VIII does not change anything about the principle of the necessity of an assessment of the needs as a condition for the entitlement to a place. The constitutive difference from the former arrangement is the concretisation of the notion of "needs" by newly introduced minimum criteria (Mindestkriterien): places have to be reserved at least for children whose both parents are or whose single parent is employed or about to take on a job, are participating in professional development, go to school or university or are particularly dependent of aid by day care or child care institution. This concretisation produces a higher obligation for the local authorities, but however, only for a small group of children. The law obligates the local authorities to guarantee the supply of child care after October 1st, 2010. It is limited by the fact that additional places are not only to be created in day care institutions, but also in private child care. Here, a 70:30 relation is envisaged.

For an international comparison, it is important to point out that German child care institutions in day nurseries (Krippe), kindergartens and after-school care institutions (Hort) are subject to financial contributions. The costs incurring for parents are normally

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14 The child and youth welfare as a sub-area is liable to public welfare of the legislation both of the Bundesländer and of the Federal Republic, according to § 74 art. 1 N° 7 Grundgesetz.

15 Since January 1st, 1996, § 24 SGB (Strafgesetzbuch) VIII is implemented, guaranteeing children from age 3 on until they start school a place in kindergarten.

16 See chapter 13.1 Definition: 'Needs and wants' in children and youth welfare, in: DJI (2005), pp.216-218.

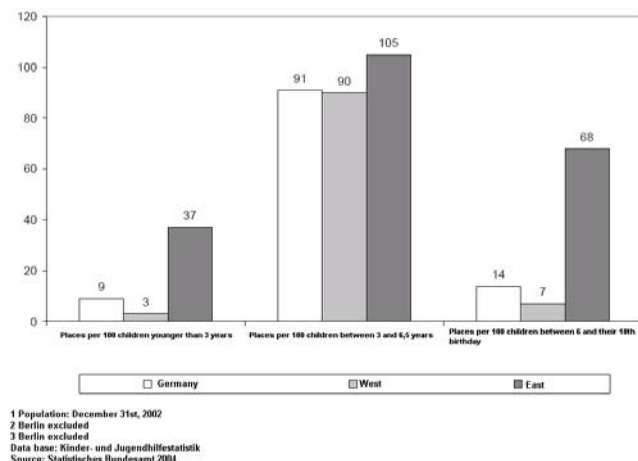
17 A comparison between the assessments of persons in charge in the youth welfare offices of the different local authorities considering the fulfilment of needs and the according place-child-relation shows that the estimation that a need is fulfilled does not necessarily correspond to an "objectively" huge place-child-relation. Some youth welfare offices consider a need fulfilled if the place-child-relation is low; while other youth welfare offices' assessments are quite the opposite.

depending on the income.<sup>18</sup> In cases of hardship, they can be taken over by the youth welfare office in charge.

### 3.4.2. Data on the different institutional forms of child care

It is necessary to take a close look on the institutional child care system in Germany in order to assess it. The differences between the age cohorts and the regions are considerable. 15 years after the reunification, the differing concepts of child care in West and East Germany are still obvious. In the GDR, public education started from the age of one year, while in the western Bundesländer, public education of children under 3 years in day care institutions is still exceptional.

**Fig.: Places in child care per 100 children according to age cohorts in Germany and split for West and East Germany 2002 (by %)** (DJI 2005b, p.323)



In a next step, a closer look will be taken on the child care situation in the respective institutional child care institutions.

#### Kindergartens

For children from the age of 3 years until they start school, the care system at their disposition is much more complete than for the other age cohorts. To begin with, on January 1st, 1996, a general entitlement to a place in kindergarten was introduced in West Germany. Additionally, after the reunification in 1990 until 1998, the West German Bundesländer increased their supply of places by 35%. The place-child relation is set on an average of 90% for this age cohort in West Germany, and of 105% in the new Bundesländer. These figures, impressing at a first glance, are to be assessed critically. In West Germany, only 24.2% of all kindergarten places are full-time places that normally guarantee attendance until max. 5pm. Unflexible opening hours often collide with a full-time or part-time employment of the childrens' parents. In the new Bundesländer, parents still benefit from the well-expanded child care system instituted before the reunification: 97.6% of the kindergarten places are full-time places (DJI 2005b, p.324).

#### Day nurseries

Institutional child care for children younger than 3 years shows a significant lack of capacities. The german place-child-relation has been remaining stable for years on a low level of less than 10% and is therefore the lowest in all age cohorts. Nevertheless, the supply varies considerably between East and West Germany and between Bundesländer and Stadtstaaten (City States). For only 2.7% of West German children in this cohort of

<sup>18</sup> In the Bundesland of Berlin, the range of monthly expenses (meals excluded) is between 15 € for a half-day place respectively 25 € for a full-time place for parents with a monthly income of up to 1,875 €, and 203 € respectively 405 € for parents with an income exceeding 6,755 € per month.

age, places in day care institutions are available, compared to 37% in the eastern Bundesländer. Most of them are full-time places. Itemised by Bundesländer, the range goes from 2.0% respectively 2.1% in North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria to 44.8% in Brandenburg and 56.6% in Saxony-Anhalt. The City-State of Berlin (35.8%), Bremen (10%) and Hamburg (13.1%) provide a relatively high degree of supply compared to the Bundesländer (Flächenstaaten) in West Germany (DJI 2005, p.110).

### **After-school care institutions**

Considerable shortage is also to be found in the care of children between the ages of 6 and 14 years in after-school care institutions. The insufficient results of the PISA education survey led to a systematic expansion of full-time schools, but the traditional half-day school is still the most frequent kind of school. As a consequence, employed parents often have considerable compatibility problems.

As for the day nurseries' place supply, large differences show up between the old and the new Bundesländer. Altogether, 22.4% of the pupils in the new Länder (Berlin excluded) and only 3.1% of the old Länder (Berlin excluded) can benefit from after-school care. In the West German Länder (Berlin excluded), 80.6% of these places are full-time places, 74% in the new Bundesländer. Nevertheless, care institutions that are not run by the child and youth welfare or official welfare partners, p.ex., privately organised pupils' centres (Schülerläden), do not enter these statistics. Additionally, the comparatively high share of pupils attending full-time schools in the new Bundesländer, in Thuringia and in Saxony above all, does not enter the statistics, which leads to a certain falsification of the representation of the degree of supply (DJI 2005, pp.143 et seq.).

## **3.4.3. Data on non-institutional forms of child care**

### **Public day care for children**

The law on expansion of day care (TAG, Tagesbetreuungsbaugesetz) legally tied down day care for children as a supply coequal to institutional supply and fixed a state-run aid. Day care means that a child is taken care of during the day respectively during a part of the day by a day care person. "Day care for children" is a collective term comprehending different forms of care, distinguishable by the place of care (in the day care person's household, at the child's parents' place, in a care centre), by the employment status (self-employed, minor employed, employed full time with benefits [sozialversicherungsspflichtig beschäftigt]), or by the qualification of the day care person and by the kind of procurement. Besides the public child care arrangements procured and subsidised by youth welfare offices, there is a 'grey' domain of privately organised day care for children.

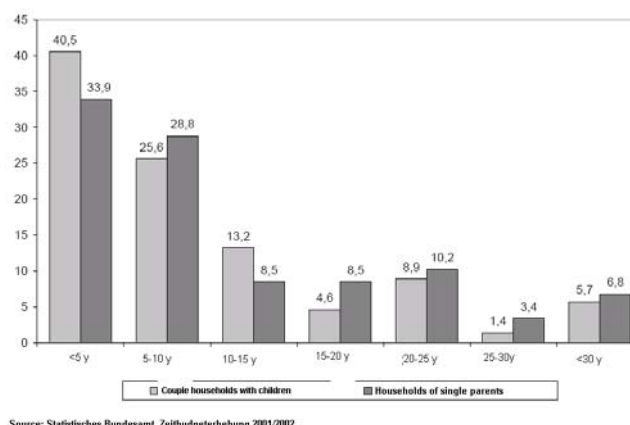
Statistical data is only available for the domain of public day care, excluding specifications on age patterns of the children in charge. According to this data, approximately 68,000 children were in day care in 2002, a noticeable increase of altogether 37,000 children in 1995 and 54,000 children in 1999. Assuming that half of the children are younger than 3, the quota of public day care was 1.5% for this age cohort. Regarding an institutional quota of 3% in the old Bundesländer, the 1.5% are a small, but nevertheless significant value. The quota of children aged 0 to 10 years taken care of by public day care persons represented 0.68% in West Germany and 0.57% in East Germany in 2002 (DJI 2005, pp.156 et seq.).

### **Informal child care**

A comparison between the employment quota amongst mothers with children younger than 3 and the share of children in this age cohort in public care institutions makes clear that other informal kinds of child care (e.g., by relatives, friends and neighbours) occupy a central position in the German child care system. This applies to a greater extent to the old Bundesländer. However, the data on these forms of child care is incomplete. An analysis by

Fendrich/Schiller (2004), based on data from the federal statistics office's time budget survey (Zeitbudgetstudie des Statistischen Bundesamtes) shows that nearly 80% of the households in which both parents are employed and that include a child younger than 3 years make use of informal aid to child care. In households that include only one employed person and children under 3 that have to be taken care of, the usage of informal help amounts to 61%. The weekly amount of usage hours of informal child care permits the conclusion that it is primarily needed to close temporal gaps between family-internal care arrangements and institutional care.

**Fig.: Weekly amount of hours of usage of informal child care (in %)**



Nevertheless, the importance of informal care supplies should not be underestimated. 16% of the couple-run households and 20.4% of the single-parent households make use of more than 20 hours of informal child care per week. These numbers correspond to a need for half a place in kindergarten that is not met by the present institutional supply.

### **3.5. Statistics on Women and Men in Political Positions<sup>19</sup>**

Men and women might not have the same amount of influence in politics. Nevertheless, ever since the 1980's, it has begun to be taken for granted that women obtain top positions in politics. Today, this applies to all political domains and regards the womens' share in ministries, in chairmanships respectively in executive committees, and the mandates of the members of the Bundestag.

#### **3.5.1. Women and men in the Bundestag and in the Federal Government**

Amongst the 614 members of the 16th Bundestag<sup>20</sup>, 194 (31.6%) are women, 420 are men. It was only with the election of the 11th Bundestag in 1987, when the share of women among the members of the Bundestag amounted to 15.4%, that the 10%-limit (10%-Marke) was exceeded for the first time since 1949. During the following elections, this percentage increased continuously up to 32.2% in the 15th Bundestag.

Among the 16 members of the federal government, presently six are women (37.5%). Angela Merkel is the first female Chancellor ever since the foundation of the Bundesrepublik. Comparatively to the development in the Bundestag, the increase of the women's share in the Federal Government started only in 1987. The first female minister was elected in 1961, and until 1987, there was at no moment more than two female ministers in the federal government. In contrast, other political top positions continue to

<sup>19</sup> See DJI 2005b, 342-384; <http://www.bundesregierung.de>; <http://www.bundestag.de>

<sup>20</sup> The elections for the 16th Bundestag took place on September 18th, 2005.



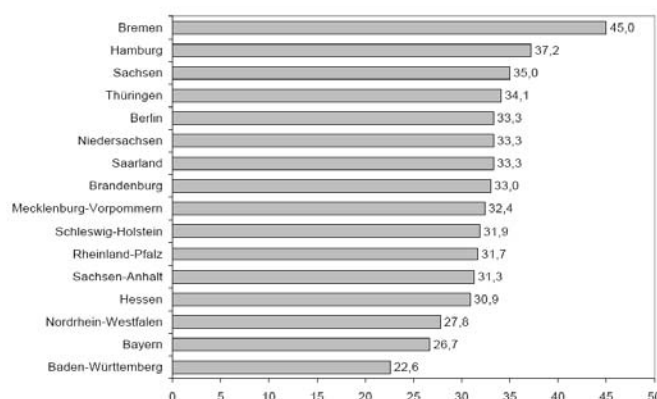
be dominated by men.

### 3.5.2. Women in the Länder parliaments

The development of the share of female members in German Länder parliaments increased just about as quickly as in the Bundestag. In the mid-nineties, it appeared as if women were better represented in the Länder parliaments of Berlin and the eastern Bundesländer than in the West, but the following figure shows that meanwhile, the women's share in Germany altogether adds up to 33 % on average. This means that presently, there is no difference between the women's share in the Länder parliaments and in the Bundestag.

**Fig.: Women's share in the German Länder parliaments 2005 (in %)**

Source: Web sites of the Länder parliaments, furthermore:  
<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landesparlament>, July 2006.



## 3.6. Statistics on Time Use

### 3.6.1. Distribution of gainful employment/education and household activities

In Germany, men spend an average of 3:35 hours on gainful employment and education; which equals 40% more than women (2:05 hours). In contrast, women spend an average of 4:11 hours of their daily time budget on household activities: approx. 40% more than men (2:21 hours)<sup>21</sup>. The only household domains in which men spend an equal or larger amount of time than women are: gardening, small construction works, small repairs. Women use most of their household-spent time on cleaning, maintenance and food preparation; men on shopping and errands and, like women, on cleaning and maintenance.

### 3.6.2. The division of labour in couple households with and without children

The time budget surveys effected by the Statistisches Bundesamt in 1991/92 and in 2001/02 allow to comprehend how much time women and men with and without children spend on paid and unpaid<sup>22</sup> work and what changes have appeared.

As expected, employed women and men living in couple households with children perform significantly more unpaid work than couple households without children. Here, the main part of the additional unpaid work is accomplished by the employed mothers, who do

<sup>21</sup> These time survey data include all interviewees, irrespective of their employment status. If only employed persons are inquired about their use of time, the results are as follows: Employed women spend 3:52 hours on work and education and 3:11 hours on household activities. Employed men use 5:05 hours on work and education and 1:52 on household activities (Eurostat Zeiterhebungsstudien 2006).

<sup>22</sup> "Unpaid work" includes work in the household and in the family, informal help for other households, volunteer work and the time used for commuting to and from this work.

nearly twice as much unpaid work as the employed fathers. The employed mothers' time budget for gainful work reflects the high rate of non-employment and part-time work amongst mothers.

Comparably, the time budget surveys prove a stronger professional commitment by fathers compared to men who don't have children, according to surveys on gainful employment. Gainful employment and unpaid work being considered at the same time, the daily work contingent for fathers adds up to 8:23 hours, compared to 7:24 hours for men without children. Thus, fathers have considerably less time at their disposal for regeneration and leisure than men in a childless household. In couple households with children whose both parents are employed, fathers spend even more time on work (8:23 hours) than mothers (8:11) (see: Gille/Marbach 2004, pp.92 et seq.).

## 4. Selected Companies

According to FOCUS design, the selected two organisations were:

1. a private one, EnerCom (pseudonym), and
2. the public Umweltbundesamt (UBA) – The Federal Environment Agency.

Different reasons made it attractive to research these two:

Our contact people were very open towards FOCUS, and both organisations showed positive reactions to our topic.

But they also differ from each other in many ways beyond being private or public.

EnerCom gave us the chance to study an industrial global player with a progressive human resources concept. We wanted to understand more of their strategy of “Managing Diversity” and its relation to gender and care.

UBA, as a body of the federal administration, was always subject to gender equality policy (which is, in Germany, to a lesser extent the case at private companies). Moreover, UBA like many bodies of German public administration has been undergoing a process in Gender Mainstreaming (GeM), and it was interesting to get to know how this changed gender relations and the situation of men.

*Note: The following is not a representative benchmark on gender equality, because data and interview sample only give too small a base. However, it goes beyond a heuristic model on gender, care and work-life balance in organisations, providing insight in the structural context and giving recommendations to achieve an equality and care-oriented workplace culture.*

*Also, we researched institutional practices, and individual attitudes. To test interaction and individual practices, it would in addition be necessary to conduct observations and focus-group interviews*

### 4.1. Short Presentation of the Companies

#### 4.1.1. Private company: EnerCom

EnerCom plc is an internationally operating energy company, active in 26 countries with a headquarter in Western Europe. Numerous mergers made it one of the sector's world leaders according to turnover.

In Germany, the company runs its business under the label Deutsche EnerCom AG. It is leading in the domestic fuel stations and lubricant market. Worldwide, the company employs about 100,000 people, in Germany about 10,000. EnerCom holds one of the largest refinery systems in Germany and also deals with natural gas, electricity and regenerative energy. At EnerCom, the company seniority is 16.9 years on average.

#### 4.1.2. Public organisation: Umweltbundesamt (UBA) – The Federal Environment Agency

UBA's mission statement presents the organisation as follows:

*“The Federal Environment Agency is the scientific environmental authority under the jurisdiction of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), responsible for the most diverse range of topics.”*

UBA's tasks are the investigation, description, and assessment of the environment “in order to determine adverse impacts for humanity and the environment.” Beyond research, public information or advice and consulting (of German governmental, but also of regional

and private bodies) are core tasks of the organisation.

The agency was founded in 1974. Located in Berlin (with some smaller dependencies all over Germany), the central organisation of UBA moved to the Saxony-Anhalt town of Dessau in 2005. This move, as explained below, is a major topic in the work-life of all of the interviewees, and seems to have concrete impacts on the whole organisation.

UBA has 758 female and 602 male employees

## **4.2. Key Informants**

### **4.2.1. EnerCom**

Representatives:

- *EnerCom 1* (male)
- *EnerCom 2* (male)
- *EnerCom 4* (female) (internal expert for informal background talk)
- One man of this level is married and a father of two children, the other is not married and does not have children.

Employee:

- *EnerCom 3* (male)
- The informant is married and a father of two children.

### **4.2.2 UBA**

Representatives:

- *UBA 3* (2 female representatives)
- *UBA 4* (male)
- *UBA 5* (female)
- The male informant is married and a father of two children.

Employee:

- *UBA 1* (male)
- *UBA 2* (male)
- *UBA 6* (male)
- Two of the informants are married with two children each, one is not married and a father of one child.

## 5. The Workplace Study

### 5.1. Gender and Care – Structures, Instruments, and Processes<sup>23</sup>

#### 5.1.1. EnerCom

##### Gender situation and pro-equality institutions

According to FOCUS questionnaire responses<sup>24</sup>,

- about a quarter of Deutsche EnerCom AG employees are women,
- 394 female and 190 male employees work part time,
- 314 have a temporary work contract, including trainees,
- top management level (which is the board): no women,
- middle management level: 13 women, and 111 men,
- first management level: 217 women, and 1112 men.

EnerCom is located in a segment traditionally dominated by men. The figures clearly show this, but this perspective is confirmed also from inside:

*“Petroleum has always been a men’s business, that makes it difficult. When the first female trainee entered the refinery, her integration was totally obstructed.”*  
(EnerCom 1)

Meanwhile, women are well accepted – not at least because of their ‘social qualities’:

*“Women often settle disputes, and temper men’s language.” In general women are ‘different’ from men, according to EnerCom 1, “and they enhance the work environment.”* (EnerCom 1)

At EnerCom, the topic of gender and gender equality is in the field of activity of the works council and the department for diversity. The department’s policy follows the approach of Managing Diversity, a Human Relations strategy to represent the variety of peoples’ backgrounds and habits, according to sex, age, religious background, colour/race/ethnicity etc. From the mission statement of the diversity department:

*“We want to be known internally and externally as an employer and partner of choice for all, as a company with an inclusive culture in which a global workforce contributes and realises its individual and collective potential to deliver outstanding business results. Across the world, EnerCom wants to be seen as a company that hires the best talent available based on each individual's ability to do the job. We are proud of our achievements, but focused on our challenges and aspirations for a robust, inclusive meritocracy.”*

Among the instruments and institutional techniques for the implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies are: external care service for relatives, health care service, working time models, trainings, mentoring networks, as well as division representatives for the

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<sup>23</sup> More interviews could have been carried out at UBA, and due to the fact that UBA is a federal agency, it is subject to public gender equality policy. Thus, the amount of information between EnerCom and UBA as represented in the text differ a lot.

<sup>24</sup> Some figures are hidden to maintain anonymity.

communication and implementation of diversity. Control of success is conducted e.g. by the annual People Assurance Survey – PAS. EnerCom intranet provides a diversity toolkit available for employees through the intranet, training courses and instruments for self-evaluation.

Beyond different other (mutual) mentoring programs, “Women Mentoring” aims at the support and development of high potentials of women.

Gender workshops aim on “effective communication and cooperation” between women and men, and the criterion of “gender” was the first one to introduce diversity in applicants pools.

A very positive institutionalised aspect is the “code of conduct”, which includes not only statements against sexual harassment, but concrete examples and explanatory texts on posters visible in the organisation’s corridors.

In general, EnerCom sees diversity as a,

*“... key process to unlock human potential across the organisation. When we speak about diversity (...) we do not speak about a project with a beginning and an end, but about a journey in our way of thinking, behaving and building our future.”*

However, although the diversity concept includes sex/gender aspects - sometimes even in a prominent way - according to figures and interviews, EnerCom gives the impression of a male dominated organisation. The male labour orientation is widely unquestioned. “Being a househusband would not be my way,” high level manager EnerCom 1 refers to a friend who left the workplace for a while.

### **Working time models and reconciliation**

Standard weekly working hours are 37.5, but managers have “functional“ hours, meaning they do not have fixed working hours, but work as much as needed.

EnerCom shows different instruments for working time flexibility:

- With own children, employees can make use of special company leaves
- Telework
- Flexitime, working time accounts, overtime account, and home offices
- “Fulltime light“ model (=> 93%, which means more holidays)
- Male colleagues are supported when staying home for sick children

There is no right for part time beyond the legal framework, but the mentioned instruments already provide care-positive and pro-balance options. It only seems that the existing tools and structures should be exploited in a better way and that this also depends on a change in people’s attitudes (see below).

There are no examples of fathers’ leaves, only some few having taken parental part time. Also, at EnerCom management, but even down to the level of working group leaders over performance and over time seem quite normal (which is shown and discussed with more detail in the following paragraphs).

### 5.1.2. UBA

#### Gender situation and pro-equality institutions

According to FOCUS questionnaire responses,

442 female and 463 male employees work full time,

314 female and 141 male employees work part time

147 female and 91 male employees have temporary work contracts

- top Management (incl. board): 2 women, 5 men
- middle management: 3 women, 15 men
- first management level: 36 women, 61 men

According to the gender representatives, in terms of equality, the differences between single departments are striking. The department for the analysis of environmental chemicals for example successfully tried to bring women into leading positions. This worked by mentoring programmes, consulting, and training. On the other hand, the new emissions trading agency is mostly working with such high deadline constraints, that overwork is quite a standard here, which negatively affects gender equality (UBA 3, more on work life (im)balance: see below, §2.).

UBA's department for gender equality is closely affiliated to the vice president. Two female gender representatives run the department. The following operating instruments have been mentioned:

- in terms of communication: newsletter and intranet space for information
- the office is available for support
- projects and working groups on human resources, flexible working time regulations, etc.
- consultation of the employment services, training on working time, health, education, operational safety

Many topics are seen to be related to gender policies. The core of gender policies, named in the Gender Equality Plan 2001-2005, is to,

*“... step by step include gender specific perspectives in all activities and decisions of the agency, and to focus on obstacles, which are in the way towards an effective equality of opportunities on all levels and in all divisions” (UBA-GAP 2001: 5)*

UBA has, in the last years, been undergoing a process of GeM. As we were told, in the beginning gender was not a “top issue”, but more like something which had to be done due to formal regulations (UBA 3).

Since the red and green government and the implementation of GeM in bodies of the federal administration, the situation improved, as in networking and mutual support with other governmental authorities, or in the exchange of concepts and instruments. According to one of the gender representatives, there was mutual scepticism both inside the organisation, and of the representatives themselves, since,

*“... we had to overcome our inhibitions to venture out of our niche with the project. But it proved that some got more involved after we gave some concrete examples for the impact of gender.” (UBA 3)*

Most colleagues, however, seem to keep an “observation” status. Many need more help with orientation, the representative said.

Gender hierarchies are obviously still existing: the top leaders are still only men, and changes on management slowly emerge on the levels beyond. Both in leading management and in the core business, research, women are highly underrepresented.

In the GeM process, one central topic is a gender impact assessment to check and analyse gendered effects of the UBA's all day work, or research applications. The three years project was only a starting point. The next step will be the implementation of a gender coordinator (on a 50% job). For researchers at UBA, it is possible to work on gender topics as a regular part of their work. This is possible with the instrument of cost-benefit calculation. Gender is seen as a part of UBA's "product range". (UBA 3)

According to the gender equality representatives, equality and gender matters meet a comparably good environment, not at least because the (male) leaders are interested. In May 2006, UBA received the certification of the national Work Family Audit<sup>25</sup>, which can also be seen as a result of many pro-reconciliation changes in recent years. Flexible working time models have been developed and implemented in the last few years, telework and special support structures for parents are being implemented. For example, special bureaus are provided, where parents can work while occasionally bringing their children along. These are meant to help parents through emergencies.

But in spite of all those measures, in UBA gender and moreover masculinity questions have been and are still more or less exotic: In the GeM process (which the representatives estimate is successful, and "which boosted the topic of gender all through the organisation", UBA 3), some few men were involved or interested. The steering group organized workshops by which the topic was spread through the organisation and met growing interest also by men, but still the process is a bit of a "feminine one". One of the representatives saw some lack of information about men's issues and talked about demands of consultation on that issue.

Many steps have already been taken towards gender equality - at least towards the analysis of inequality and towards pro-equality action plans. But it is very obvious, that the gender discourse and action plan is determined by the spirit of a "fostering women"-discourse. This is an understandable effect of years of work on improving the situation of women in the labour sphere. However, the role and interests of men in achieving equality and the potential male actors are only mentioned in two sentences describing the aims: career disadvantages of both women and men, and obstacles against reconciliation of both fathers and mothers should be corrected. (UBA-GAP 2001: 6)

### **Working time models and reconciliation**

The standard 100% working times at UBA is 39 (normal employees) or 40 (civil servants) hours per week, with a daily maximum hours limited to 10 hours (plus 2 hours break).

UBA offers different options of flexibility:

- The service time model: all UBA departments have to ensure public and in-house availability by minimum one person from 9-16.00h (Friday 9-15.30), which gives the opportunity to collectively decide on individual working time. Part time: it used to be possible to chose between 10% steps (half days); due to a better coordination, this was changed into 20% steps. Part time is possible up to the 3rd level, from the 2nd level only in case of illness.

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<sup>25</sup> The Audit "Beruf und Familie" is initiated and conducted by Hertie Foundation, and supported by the Federal Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth . It evaluates organisations under the perspective of family awareness, and offers instruments and development strategies to foster reconciliation in organisations.



- UBA offers 120 telework places for up to 50% of the working hours. Because of limited overall availability, applicants for this are rated, based on a credit system according to social criteria (children, care for sick relatives, etc.).
- As a major reason to promote flexibility, a UBA manager emphasised the agency's move from Berlin to Dessau. This made it important to look carefully at the conditions of work. With 80% of the employees commuting, flexibility became a top issue. Also, it became a task to stay attractive for researchers, which had been easier in Berlin:  
*"We see that Dessau is not so attractive for good, internationally renowned, and experienced manpower. The place of Berlin had been dramatically more beneficial. So we will have to find strategies to be attractive for researchers in this region, e.g. by offering working conditions which positively differ from other employers."*  
 (UBA 4)

So reconciliation and working time flexibility is part of a human resources strategy. The same goes for the issue of gender equality:

*"There must be reasons why employees are highly identified with our organisation, which we measured and learned from research. This is due to the topic of environment, but also due to the organisation, the culture, the interaction, the mission. Gender equality, reconciliation, all these things are part of this. There is nothing better for an employer than having employees who are highly identified."* (UBA 4)

The process towards the service-time model is not a quick one. Many colleagues still have to get used to it:

*"Employees still tend to be very present, and from a certain level on, working time flexibility is going down. If people are used to it, they stay in the office, and the service time model is just in the implementation phase. For many people it was a big step to be involved in the working time of their colleagues, to communicate. For many it is still not too positive, practically."* (UBA 5)

It is a question worth discussing more in-depth, how gendered working time structure and gender hierarchies are connected to the organisational work and life relations.

### **5.1.3. Comparative reflection**

Both companies, however different the angles, show efforts to promote equality and conditions of reconciliation, either by programs promoting women (e.g. via mentoring) or by working-time conditions like flexi-time models, telework, part time and parental or sick leave options. The conditions in public services are far better, so the variety of instruments and the level of self-determination give carers less obstacles in UBA.

For both companies, pro-equality and inclusive options lie in the context of human resources (HR) strategies. This is obvious for a corporate organisation like EnerCom, but also a UBA leader mentions the strategic impact of equality and reconciliation.

The diversity perspective of EnerCom provides options for pro-equality regulations also in terms of gender matters, and beyond. In fact, it bears great potential to widen the perspective to even more dimensions of individual difference than just gender, and especially to move beyond simple "sex counting", as which gender mainstreaming is often misunderstood. For the issue of work-life balance and care the differences within a sex group (like age, race, sexual orientation etc.) are highly significant. If it is applied in a gender-aware manner, the diversity approach offers a chance to promote care as an aspect

of diversity, which it is, at least for men.

However, in both organisations men stay invisible in terms of gender (which is not unusual, see Gärtner 2005), and they are hardly recognized under the aspects of equality, diversity, and care.

This goes also for the UBA, which in general provides very good gender equality and reconciliation options, flexible time regulations, and where we find examples of men taking father's leave or parental part-time. But even here, as we saw from interviews and from the gender action-plan, men seem to be regarded as an interesting but 'mostly unknown' sex group.

This invisibility of men in organisations is partly due to the very fact that they are still the 'standard gender' in most areas of working life, and therefore are not perceived as a specific (gender) group at all – and do not perceive themselves as such.<sup>26</sup> The still dominant masculine leader, breadwinner and over-performer models, even if for many they are not reality, are closely connected to this invisibility.

Also, we learned that the culture of leadership is most relevant for the equality status in an organisation:

*"Why do women not want to become leaders in our organisation? That has a lot to do with the culture of leadership, with the model of leaders. This model tends to benefit a particular kind of people."*

*What would you say is the type of people to get to the top of your organisation?*

*"That is not too easy to tell, but the type of person that normally makes it to the top is a workaholic. On the lower level the range of types is bigger." (UBA 5)*

Leading managers, EnerCom 1 as well as UBA 4, emphasize the importance of fostering women in management positions.

*"Women need to be pushed – they would never apply for a job they are not 100% qualified for. Men do that all the time." (EnerCom 1)*

They tend to overlook, however, that there are structural reasons for the vertical segregation, which cannot be changed just by the effort of an individual.

The same is true for the fact that still very few fathers take father's leave, which is the other side of the coin. As we mentioned above, father's leave is practically unknown at EnerCom, which is a bit different at UBA. Here, we had talks to several men having taken father's leave.

## **5.2. Work-Life Balance and the Culture of Over-performance**

The following chapter tries to reconstruct and reflect the picture we received from the talks mainly, but not only, with leading managers in both organisations. It revealed a work culture which in many ways contradicts the care-positive message we also got.

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<sup>26</sup> "While women have been obscured from our vision by being too much in the background, men have been obscured by being too much in the foreground." David Morgan, quoted from: Brod 1987, p.41.

### 5.2.1. “Always available”

Imbalance of work and life, on the “objective” level, leads to an unequal distribution of work and resources. This is obviously to be seen in vertical segregation (not only by gender, but normally by other criteria of diversity and social inequality like ethnicity/race, class background, religion and so on). Furthermore, time requirements of leading positions tend to exclude women – and, as has been pointed out recently (Puchert et al. 2005), also many men. In addition, it affects other employees and the whole management culture:

*“It is sometimes hard to see leaders here – for the others. Because this workaholic tendency does not make leadership look attractive in UBA. And some of them expect the others to work the same way, as other leaders as employees. For example, I know a leader sending work orders on Sunday nights, which have to be complied with on Monday mornings. He just does not notice that he applies his standard on others. And he is no exception. That appears even more often.” (UBA 5).*

At EnerCom we met similar statements: *“You are viewed in a positive light if you show that you are working a lot, this is still the model.”* (EnerCom 1) This model is expressed in the way one leader works, by sending internal e-mails on Sunday nights.

*“I told him: ‘Please send them only on Mondays. Mondays are normal work days, Sundays are not.’ It’s imposing high pressure on the colleagues. The example a chair person gives is definitely important.” (EnerCom 1)*

A different topic is insecurity and change. All the interviewees in EnerCom seemed to have accepted a highly insecure perspective on employment. We frequently received quotations saying: “Nothing stays the same forever!”

We assume this creates pressure and stress to some extent – and it probably reproduces the culture of over-performance. In that way, insecurity as well is “anti-care”, because care requires reliability and continuity.

On the level of management culture we see a clear tendency that “career means over-performing”. This is very much represented for example in the questionnaire answers of EnerCom: Managers from a particular level onward do not have fixed time regulations, but work “functionally” (see 5.1.1.2). EnerCom 1 honestly mentions that structural overwork is a precondition of the career. In his beginnings at a different company, he worked “on three continents a week”. Talking to his former boss when trying to shift more time towards his family life, he “got” the weekends, but also the claim: “But during the week you are mine!” (EnerCom 1)

It is important to see that there are people – all of our interviewees – in both organisations who are aware of pressure and its negative effects. Beyond the preparedness to change, work pressure still determines work culture, at least on higher levels. Those who are prepared to better environmental conditions, even if they are leaders themselves, seem to hit a snag. The given structure they find themselves in, all the more in a private company facing competition, limits their range of changing action. This is less true for the top leaders, but even here we find harsh structural limits. An equally strong limitation seems to lie in the attitude of the people involved. EnerCom 1 stresses, that change needs to take place in people’s minds, otherwise it does not take place at all.

### 5.2.2. Across the border and over the limits? Over-performers and “globalised managers”

Höyng and Puchert (1998) call the type of leading manager, whose life is structured by work nearly without exception, the “over-performer” (“Übererfüller”, 267-71). This type works hours over average, often until midnight, and his position requires a high performance (rewarded by power and wage). Although problems in terms of private and family contacts or health occur, “for men in leading positions the working atmosphere and their own social needs are an important dimension of their work.” (270).

We find this type of man predominantly in management positions, which was confirmed by our sample. But also on the lower levels it is not uncommon, depending very much on the organisational culture, and the pressure put on the employees.

The main criteria of over-performing are working time (quantitatively) and work identification (qualitatively). We found that overtime is quite common also on lower levels. By contrast, the over-identification is typical for the leading figures - they emphasised the importance of their work and position -, whereas the male employees (EnerCom 3, UBA 1 and 2) showed ambivalencies towards their work. The following examples show especially this qualitative aspect of over-performance. In fact, this aspect might even be the more subtle, and thus more difficult one to overcome. This gives us a couple of questions and hints for the debate on care, self-care and gender.

The workplace of EnerCom 2 is located in three European cities - and also in between:

*“You always find an airport lounge where you can work. My residence and contract work place is C-Town. I am travelling two or three days a week, I can sleep at home two days. For special deadlines or meetings I work on weekends, but in return I take time for private matters if I need. I could not figure out my working hours. Sometimes you are at a party where you talk or fix some business matter. I read a lot about psychology. But that makes it hard to tell what is work and what is spare time.”*

*Is there something you are doing in the spare time, which is not actually work?*

*„(10 seconds break) Yes, that is family, actually (...) What I always enjoy is a glass of wine and a book. That can also be the book on organisation development.”  
(EnerCom 2)*

The overlapping of work and spare time – in terms of time, locations, actions and contents, but also interests – seems to be typical for the over-performing manager type. But moreover, EnerCom 2 is living a “globalised” business life in different regular offices and places all over Western Europe, including different private places. This is not necessarily negative or a hint for a “bad balance”, although it makes it even more difficult to distinguish between work and non-work. But it shows, like Höyng and Puchert emphasize, that for these men, to a high extent, work is life, and even temporary spaces (or buffers) between both spheres are hard to find.

The globalised business traveller, focussed around the different work places, is not just a “men only” type, but to some extent crossed the sex lines. Lothar Böhnisch pointed out, “that the post-fordist type of the ‘abstract worker’ does not necessarily coincide anymore with masculinity. Capital today is ‘looking’ for its social form across the male and female world – and leaves the decision of how to arrange this to the men and women in their life

worlds ('Lebenswelten').” (Böhnisch 2003, 33)

The following example of UBA 4 shows the construction of a de-located double career marriage:

*“My wife, as the chair of a business court, has a job of high responsibility. So we lead independent professional lives - in local distances, which may even increase in the coming times. That means we will have a virtual centre of life somewhere, but we do not have any problem with that! Both of us are highly recognized figures in our professional environment.” (UBA 4)*

The traditional self-construction of “belonging together by living together” here seems to have changed into a model of “belonging together by autonomy”. However it seems, that “being successful”, shown by acknowledgement, is a precondition of this model working.

This is important for FOCUS, because the extension of the former male model of externalisation onto both genders gives us relevant questions for the role of care and self-care under new social circumstances.

Here, as well, many personal desires and wishes are acted out in business:

*“What makes my professional life? It is a lot of communication, social networks. When I am travelling this region for the UBA, most is transferred via personal contact. I really like what I am doing, having contacts, talks, networking in a permanently changing way. Beyond that it is a great pleasure to successfully finish projects. If this is not possible in five days but six, so what? I do not suffer from this. Others would suffer terribly staying at the office nearly every Sunday, I do not.” (UBA 4)*

In this context, UBA 4 also says: “I cannot really tell what I do at which time at home, it is still too irregular.”

### **5.2.3. On health and self-care**

On the subjective level, it is important to research how people feel about working a lot, but also to go beyond. The link to self-care may be obvious – how (and when) does one become aware of physical and emotional imbalance? For EnerCom 2, this question is both a matter of professional and personal interest:

*“I really care for physical signals. A colleague of mine was sleepwalking and broke her ankle. Can a signal be clearer than that? I feel some tension and visit the gym to stretch more. And when my masseuse says ‘Well, good that you notice, others would not necessarily’, that gives me a good feeling that I can rely on myself.” (EnerCom 2)*

This also gives a hint of the “normal”, but often hidden overwork culture, which is a structural obstacle towards self-care. Here, the topic of health could be seen as a door opener to link men and self-care to the work place – and thus positively influence the culture of leadership:

*“One cannot say that self-care is a main issue, that would be a long way to go. But at the moment sick leaves are under discussion, and public services show high rates of time lost due to illness. We have to ask: Does this kind of work make us sick? And what are my means to maintain my health, and, as a leader, that of ‘my people’. That would be a link to care inside the organisation, the responsibility of leaders for their staff. Health is a major topic for all, so this could be a door opener.” (UBA 5)*

Research on men's health has pointed out for years that there is a deep-rooted neglect and non-perception of their bodies in many men. Without this, the prevailing overwork culture would not exist. This overall pattern is not easy to change, but there are also positive examples in recent years which show that men are increasingly open to this topic, making it a key for change in gender issues.

However, it is not entirely sure if promoting a "men's health discourse" to help focus on work-life balance really works on all levels. The "globalised manager" does not tend to see health as his major problem. This might be lack of self-care, or enough of it, either because he really feels happy with his life or just because he is able to transform his economic capital into health. Even if sex differences in life expectancy are still striking, a recent paper clearly shows the connection between life expectancy and income groups. Men earning less than 1,500 €/month statistically die at 71.1 years of age (women: 78.4), men in the group > € 4500 live 80.0 years (women: 87.2). (Lauterbach et al. 2006)

### **5.3. Strategies for Care and Their Limits**

How do men willing to care for children manage to do this under the conditions of the organisational cultures shown above? What are their strategies and where are the limits?

#### **5.3.1. Carers in the structure of over-performance**

UBA 6 and EnerCom 3 do a lot of overtime work, between 5 to 10 hours weekly on average. *"Overtime is an unwritten law"*, EnerCom 3 explains.

UBA 2 states, that, *"Normally you cannot take all days in lieu for all the long hours you worked."*

And as well, telework can lead to an expansion of work, which is a usual experience for himself. This danger connected with flexibilisation is also seen by the management (UBA 4).

The culture of over-performance also creates pressure, which is particularly dramatic in exceptional situations. UBA 6, who already had taken parental leave for his first child, could not repeat it with his second one:

*"In spite of good conditions at UBA in general, I did not find the courage to do it again. It was during a vacancy in my department, and I was supposed to get a promotion. I was sure I should not; it was in the logic of the matter. Not explicitly, but it would have created the classical competition (...) In a way, I regret it, because I had less contact to the second child."*

*What does your family expect from you?*

*"Of course more than I can give at the moment. And there is, potentially, a conflict in this situation. At the moment my wife has to bear two-thirds of the household commitments. And she is there when the kids are sick. But our aim is to get a balanced situation, so I am confident that I can meet the expectations better. And I want that, too." (UBA 6)*

Here we see a very common, and dangerous pattern: care is yet another part of over-performing. Many men, including some from our sample, take their caring responsibilities as just another task to handle, thus staying within their usual habit to function, to fulfil expectations, and to be dutiful, regardless of what it means for their own recreational needs. This might lead to a good performance as, say, a father, but it does not lead to a

better work-life balance in the long run. UBA 6 is aware of this problem and stresses that caring is also in its own interest.

Overtime in some positions and departments is compensated by flexible working hours, which helps with child care. Examples of this include bringing the kids to kindergarten or for cases of emergency. Men find situations where it is possible to reconcile job and family, sometimes due to leaders and colleagues who react carer-positively:

*“I guess that is more difficult in other jobs, but with EnerCom this works fine. From my friends I know this is often more difficult (...) Last year we had an important meeting, and it was difficult to fix a common date, but then my daughter had a surgery. My supervisor understood, but I am not sure if everyone would have reacted that positively.” (EnerCom 3)*

If we carefully summarise, we can discover the following patterns of carers in an environment with over-performance tendencies: employees have to handle overwork and to meet double demands (both of the family and the job). They strain themselves and often fail in attempts of reconciliation. But also, the interviews revealed individual options of flexibility, and compensation offers, at least in cases of need. This might, however, depend on the supervisor and the culture of the department, and perhaps work as an exception of the cultural substructure of over-performance.

In the following paragraph, we show a common strategy to deal with situations where people (or society and organisations) cannot meet the requirements of care and reconciliation.

### **5.3.2. “Care outsourcing” and the individualisation of work-life balance**

From our interviews we saw a controversial structure in terms of work-life balance: On the one hand, it is an important issue for the interviewees. Moreover, especially EnerCom 2 in an advanced way reflects upon balance, personality and work/non-work issues. But on the other hand, as mentioned before, the personal life style, most of all in the private company, is developed more or less in the over-performer manner. Even if leaders sound comparatively progressive, when it comes to realisation, the limitations by the given working structure are tight. Especially for men it is rather unusual, and not always approved by colleagues and superiors, to take part-time. It is telling, that 25% of the female, but only 4% of the male employees work part-time.

Work-life balance trainings at EnerCom focus on ways to “individually and flexibly deal with emotional pressure”. They also focus on individual behaviour, exercises, and strategies. In that perspective, balance means individualized reproduction of efficiency, and is not an issue of organisational culture and regulations.

Against this background, job sharing in higher management seems impossible:

*“I think, job sharing or part-time work is only possible up to particular levels. You have to put a lot of time and effort into communication and exchange of information to enable people to continuously settle a transaction. This is something you necessarily do with deputies, but not so intensively. You cannot make it a one-by-one case, that is hardly practicle. I really like to test a lot, but here I am somewhat reserved.” (UBA 4)*

This reproduces the exclusion of carers, especially of those who actively care for people in

the non-work sphere, like women (who have or want children), active fathers, and other carers. It helps to reproduce the gendered split between production (masculine) and reproduction (feminine), and thus privileges the hegemonic masculine model of leadership. It reproduces and eventually promotes traditional gender roles and imbalances, and also leads to a re-traditionalisation of couple arrangements.

As an effect, one of the major strategies to reconcile work and family is private networking, based or not on the extended families. This is more or less a traditional pattern, which is most obvious in the case of the mother-in-law caring for the children. It can, however, be replaced by “postmodern” arrangements like non-family networks of mutual support. The study provides examples of both. But it is a striking fact that reconciliation is individualised in the context of an over-performance culture.

Reconciliation by private networks is not easy, and it does not necessarily lead to balance: The family of EnerCom 3 regularly resorts to the parents-in-law living in the neighbourhood for help. This system, however, is a bit “inflexible”. Thus, our informant also makes use of professional childcare. All in all, he sees the caring matter as,

*“...a great challenge. Sometimes I get upset when friends say 'Well, that's not a problem'. I say, it is a problem - a challenge, but sometimes a problem; these are all everyday problems which you actually have to cope with.” (EnerCom 3)*



## 6. From Care-positive Attitudes Towards Caring Organisations: Good Practices and Recommendations

The previous chapter emphasised on the critique of organisations: an overwork tendency lead by over-performing managers, the “globalised manager”-concept building excluding “glass ceilings” (career barriers), leaving a question mark behind self-care, and the privatisation of balance and reconciliation issues. It is but important to stress encouraging stepping stones visible in the organisations to build up work-life balance. At the same time, we give recommendations how to go on improving the gender and caring situation.

### 6.1. Structure of Work

a) *“You are viewed in a positive light if you show that you are working a lot”<sup>27</sup>:*

The culture of overwork, in a most pronounced way on the management level, seems to determine the organisation in general by putting expectations and work load onto the employees.

In EnerCom, there is already an existing awareness of the problem and we find different leader role-models. The diversity department is highly sensitive towards work-life balance topics, and EnerCom leaders already had trainings on work-life balance.

The question is, how to transfer core competencies of the diversity department into the complete Deutsche EnerCom management, and how to continue with the process towards working structures as flexible and self-determined as possible? A concrete step could be to include particular “private demands” of employees into the work organisation of departments and working groups. UBA service time could be taken as a model here. In particular, caring tasks should be recognized more in regular working processes.

In UBA as well, decision makers (UBA 3, 4, and 5) are already aware of the problem of overwork, and departments in charge of Human Resources topics (like gender equality and HR development) are open-minded to link this problem with masculinity and care. Part time options in general are good, although options are missing from the third, at least the second management level on.

UBA here might learn from the work-life balance trainings experienced by EnerCom managers. It is important that leading managers change into pro-balance and care-positive actors. The “It’s okay, I love to work 65 hours”-attitude would not be a collective problem if it was not pushing (or keeping) an overwork culture, and putting work load on the colleagues. As long as the culture tends to be care-positive in attitudes, but, to some extent, anti-care in practice, a change is still necessary.

Also, methods to re-arrange leadership should be checked carefully. In our interviews we met the proposal to share single management tasks among different managers, e.g. personnel management and conceptual development or research management. It would not, as one UBA internal expert told us, be entirely necessary to load all the leading managers with all the leaders’ tasks.

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<sup>27</sup> Here, EnerCom1, as mentioned above, critically refers to a general image in management visible in different organisations.

b) Employers, and also single teams or departments, expect a high level of attendance, especially from group leaders or superiors. This demand obstructs working place and time flexibility – and it is, as well, an obstacle against care.

At EnerCom, we already met examples of exceptions, and in both companies, overtime is compensated (though not always completely, as we heard).

At UBA, the service-time model is implemented as a support for the great number of commuters. Also, telework is increasing and the discussion on modern workplace organisation now goes into the direction of even more models like mobile work. This can be seen as a best-practise example, although bearing the danger of even less differentiation between work and private life. EnerCom could in principle learn from these models of flexibility.

Improvements could be achieved by including communication about workload and non-work commitments into the work organisation. The employees need to be taken seriously in their needs and requirements – and usually they themselves are experts in creating flexible arrangements.

## **6.2. On Men and Care**

a) “Caring blocks careers”. Career requirements build glass ceilings for those who care, women as well as men. Both organisations show at least basic awareness about this. UBA can build on its gender and family change processes, which could make “care and men” a strategic issue. EnerCom’s diversity department could include “care” as a diversity criterion. Both organisations are aware that a good work environment is definitely important to build up and keep good teams.

Thus, including and promoting carers should not be based on a “reconciliation tolerance”, but more on a strategy

- to keep good employees, and
- to include in particular those who are able to take family responsibilities – which relates to professional competencies and resources.

*“It would be better if parental leave would be a career precondition, not an obstacle. Unfortunately it is the opposite way round. This has a lot to do with job losses and increasing workload for those who remain.” (UBA 6)*

b) Men frequently are not perceived as carers, nor as a particular (heterogeneous) social group which is important for the organisational culture and the work environment.

Gender sensitivity in UBA is closely linked to a policy promoting women. The GeM process and the Work Family Audit centre the care topic, and also the link to men and masculinity.

It is recommendable to take more seriously into account results of men’s studies, and to integrate methods of men-related gender trainings. Two target groups seem to be good for a start: fathers of younger children, and leading managers who want to reduce work. The main topics would then be: reconciliation, health and quality of life. Methodologically we would recommend to clarify the current work and life situation, to develop ideas to reconcile different spheres of life, and then to prepare a realistic plan adjusted to a balanced life perspective.

c) Concretely, the organisations could utilise the ideas, basics and instruments they already

have in a much better way. EnerCom's contractor, a professional family care-service, was unknown to one of the employees, although it would have been interesting for him. Men should be addressed directly, when supporting instruments are already there. Gender-neutral addresses are simply not sufficient to reach men, as long as the arena of family, children and care is still perceived as mainly female.

Carers often have their own ideas and strategies, like UBA 6, who was overloaded when his second child was born:

*“I plan to take parental leave when my kids go to school - and I have the right to save and transfer it until the kid is eight.” (UBA 6)*

This is possible by law now, and it is up to the organisations, at least to “allow” parents to leave – without career break-ups. Another step would be to directly encourage personnel to do so. A model of different life phases in terms of balance and reconciliation could be a good compromise for employees as well as for organisations.

d) More generally speaking, care for men is somewhat special. Usually understood as caring for children or sick and elderly relatives, we find that many men do care in their lives very differently. To mention but two examples: Many leaders on different levels naturally care for their colleagues, including talks about personal problems, without even recognising it as care. EnerCom 1 does this for example, when he installs a less pressuring time structure in the organisation. Thereby he opens up the space for more care options.

A second common way of care deployed by many men is the field of voluntary work, e.g. in associations, sports clubs, or charity organisations. Again EnerCom 1 is our example here, who is active in this field in addition to his childcare responsibilities and care for his sick parents. At EnerCom, this area even got an institutionalised recognition. There is a voluntary program, where employees can swap their workplace for a short time with working in an institution of social work, thus making a real-life experience in social care. These kinds of activities are not normally conceived as care. However, they reveal significant caring qualities of men, which should be taken seriously. They show a potential that easy to build on, transferable into private life as well as the workplace.

## 7. Close

On a structural level, tendencies towards gender equality and better caring conditions in Germany are visible: A growing labour market of women, legal offers to include fathers into parental leave, and reforms in labour law offering space for flexibility and thus work-family reconciliation. In particular, the extension of the parental leave period up to the eighth birthday of a child, and the introduction of parental allowance should be a basis for a better integration of men into childcare.

All in all, the German labour market, educational systems and organisations still show a significant vertical, and also horizontal, segregation. A lack of public childcare in West Germany, especially in terms of full-time places, and a significant lack of capacities for children younger than three years is still an obstacle towards gender equality.

While the share of part-time work among women increased on a high level, the rise of part-time work among men is still very low. Profound differences in career chances and income show serious demands for equality.

In the course of our survey, we found an open-minded atmosphere towards men and care in both organisations researched, as well as different instruments to enable care. If the transfer fails, it mostly seems due to the work and gender culture, or to the lack of a direct approach towards men. It was neither a surprise, nor are the researched organisations exceptional in not taking men profoundly and continuously into account when it comes to organisational culture, gender equality, or care and reconciliation.

Over-performance appeared as a determining factor in working culture, predominantly on higher levels, with probable consequences for the organisation in general. It interferes with the development of caring masculinities, in terms of self-care as well as in terms of work-family reconciliation.

On the other hand, working time models and strategies to improve structures and cultures of organisations in terms of diversity, gender equality and work-life balance point to a change in the lives of masculine workers which could potentially be groundbreaking.

But the study also approved the idea that looking globally at two different sex groups is still not enough to promote care and gender equality. Resources, requirements and aims of single departments and individual actors are of particular interest. The very diverse and changing life situations of individuals make continuous adjustments as necessary as the changing demands of the organisation. Here, organisational development aiming at care strategies could be helpful.

According to current social and demographic conditions, and also tendencies in family and gender policy, it is most probable that men will take over more and more caring tasks. Thus, it will be of great social importance - also in terms of organisations - to include men politically under the perspective of care.

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Fostering Caring Masculinities (FOCUS) seeks to examine and improve men's opportunities for balancing work and private/family life, and in turn increasing their ability to develop their role as caregivers in the home.

To reach this goal the project will focus on companies' framework conditions to perceive and include men as actors and target groups in equality policies.

This trans national project involves five countries:  
Germany, Iceland, Norway, Slovenia and Spain.

The project is funded through EU's Community Action programme to promote Gender equality between men and women. FOCUS is grounded in one of priority themes of the program, "the role of men in the promotion of gender equality, in particular the role of men and fathers in the reconciliation of work and private life".

FOCUS was initiated by the Norwegian Ministry for Children and Equality, co-funders of the project.

**For more information see [www.caringmasculinities.org](http://www.caringmasculinities.org)**



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