

Reconciliation Strategies and Practices in Male-dominated Companies

Results of the Case Studies

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Case Studies at Company Level

- Case studies were conducted in **10 male-dominated companies** (a selection of large, medium and small companies in different regions of Austria focused on industry and production)
- The case studies are mainly based on **qualitative interviews** with male employees (fathers), employers/managers, HR managers and works counsellors (45 interviews in total).
- The case studies provide a sustainable basis **for the development of reconciliation strategies addressing male employees**, providing answers to the questions:
 - What obstacles exist in the implementation of reconciliation strategies addressing men?
 - What is needed to overcome these obstacles?
 - Which strategies have already been set to support the reconciliation for male employees?

Company Overview

Company	Company Size (employees)	Sector	Province
Brimatech	7	Market Analysis Airline Industry	Wien
JIPP.IT GmbH	14	IT	Steiermark
Malerei Nutz	14	Painting Company	Niederösterreich
Schloffer	40	Carpentry	Burgenland
Weichenwerk Wörth	130	Metal Industry	Niederösterreich
Münze Österreich	206	Minting	Wien
RHI- Leoben	300 (ww 8.000)	Refractory Industry	Oberösterreich
Mondelez	307 (ww 104.000)	Food Industry	Vorarlberg
ÖBB-Produktion	5.975 (ÖBB 40.000)	Railway	Wien
ÖBB-Rail Cargo	73 (ÖBB 40.000)	Railway	Wien
Cisco	155 (ww 72.000)	IT	Wien

Results of Company Case Studies: Parental Leave

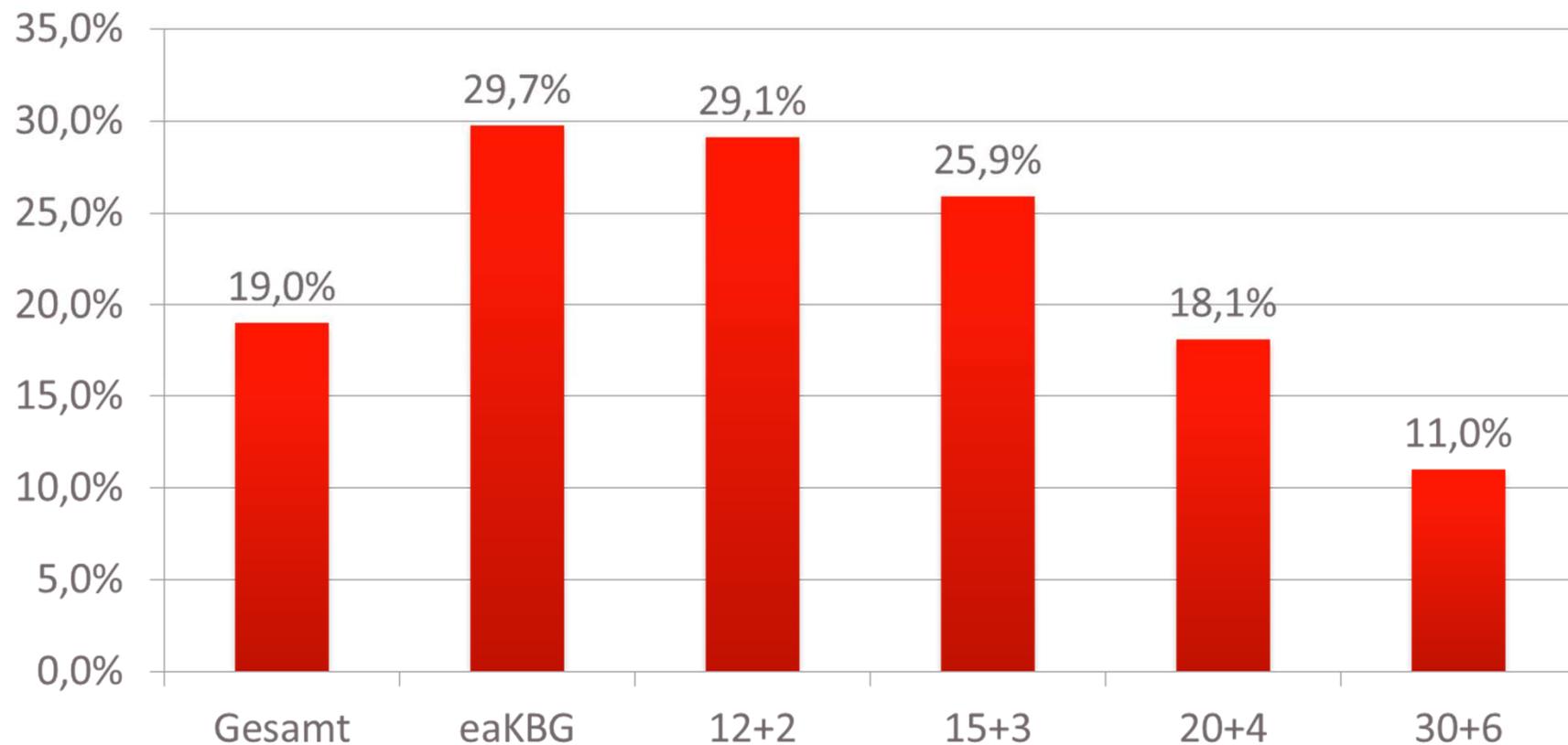


*Why and how do the surveyed firms support parental leave?
Which possibilities and constraints are evident?*

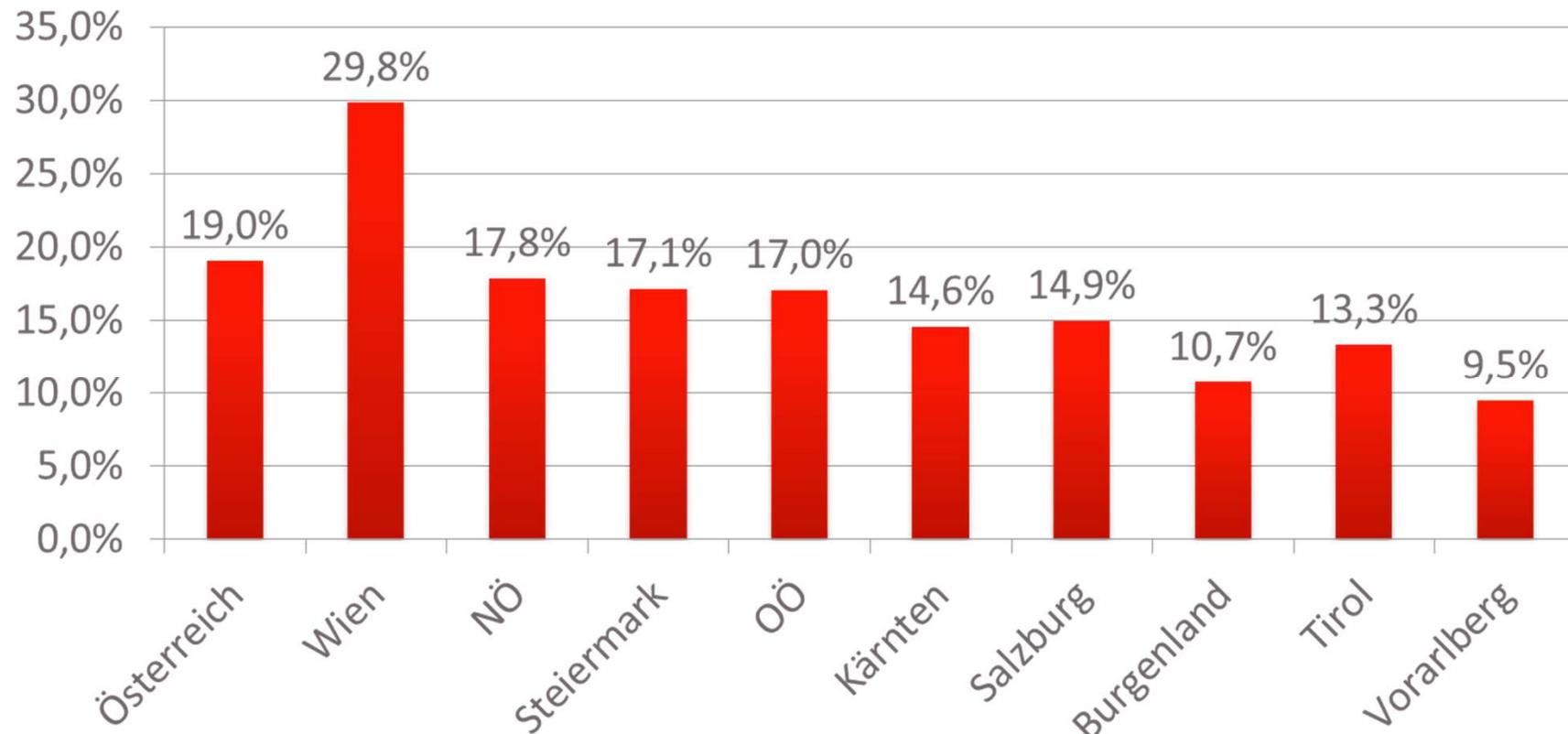


L&R Sozialforschung

Father Participation in Childcare Allowance (12.5.2016)



Father Participation in Childcare Allowance According to Province (12.5.2016)



Reasons For The Support of Reconciliation Strategies – From the Management Perspective



“It has become cool for daddies to stay at home.”

- **Personal reconciliation strategies and values of management:** many have experienced a partner-like based division of childcare themselves or have previously had negative experiences in other companies
- **Employee need is on the rise**
 - Change of gender-specific role division
 - Once one employee takes parental leave or parental part-time others follow the example. It is always useful to have good examples set.
- **Employer interest in employee well-being and satisfaction**
 - Especially in specialised professions
- **NOTE: When requested, parental leave is accepted however, it has to be as short as possible. In most firms no active information strategy exists.**



The Decision to Take Parental Leave –Employee Perspective

Why do fathers take parental leave:

- spending time with the family is now more highly valued
- financial argument (income related childcare-allowance)
- positive examples set in companies: colleagues and supervisors as 'lighthouses'
- length of parental leave: predominantly 2 months
 - The majority chooses income-related childcare allowance (12+2 months)
 - In rare cases one month more is taken without payment

“What I realised was that it’s not 100% objective when you take only a 2-month parental leave. It was more like being on an adventure holiday: 2 to 3 months and, on top of that, it was summer, that was not really reality. I think a 6-month leave would have been much more strenuous and that a 1-year leave is not as adventurous as a 2-month leave.”

Taking a longer parental leave of 6 months: only 2 cases

- **Case 1: couple takes 3 years parental leave in total (30+6 months)**

“I told them that I wanted to do that. They just had to look into who could do the work, if there were enough replacements (...), the colleagues think it is great, but most of them cannot afford it to do it themselves.”

“I didn’t want to work part-time, the problem is who then looks after the child, that would have been too complicated, too many logistics to deal with.”

- **Case 2: couple takes 2 years’ parental leave in total (24+6 months)**

“This model was the most lucrative for us, the 2 month-version was not interesting for me.”

“I talked with the boss already one year in advance and he meant, yeah, ok. Can’t do anything against it anyway.”

“It didn’t seem to matter to my colleagues. They said good for you; enjoy it!”

Decision Against (Extended) Parental Leave – Employee View

- **traditional family values** concerning the division of care-work between men and women (at employee, management and works council levels)
“I don’t know whether men are really into it, because you have to do everything the women usually do: cooking, cleaning, changing nappies.”
- **preference for child-care at home** (up to the age of 3)
- **financial aspects:** in most cases the male is the main wage earner, esp. when starting a family and often additional costs such as those of house building or apartment purchase etc. exist

Decision Against (Extended) Parental Leave – Employee View

- leading position in company
- project work makes absence difficult
- invisible border: max. 3-month absence from workplace → if longer replacement staff has to be organised
- taking part in childcare via reorganisation of working time (e.g. choosing early-morning shifts or doing home office)

“What causes employees to refrain from taking long-term leave is the fear of harming their careers. I think that is difficult for companies: to let someone go for 8 months and have him back again. And, to begin again where he left off is easier said than done; a lot of change takes place in a company in such a time. But I think there is not much difference between men and women. Women often prefer to stay at home with the child in their own interests, because their bond is somewhat stronger.”

“Daddy’s Month“ (Early Paternity Leave)

- **No regulations for daddy’s month in surveyed companies**
- **In general, it is seen positively** by employees “because especially in the beginning, everyone wants to be at home”.
- **Some take holidays** in the first weeks after the birth of their child
- **Preconditions for the employees:**
 - Legal provisions
 - including full payment or at least 50% payment
- **Management’s view:**
 - Rather negative – against legal provisions
 - should be covered by employee with regular holiday
 - “individual choice”

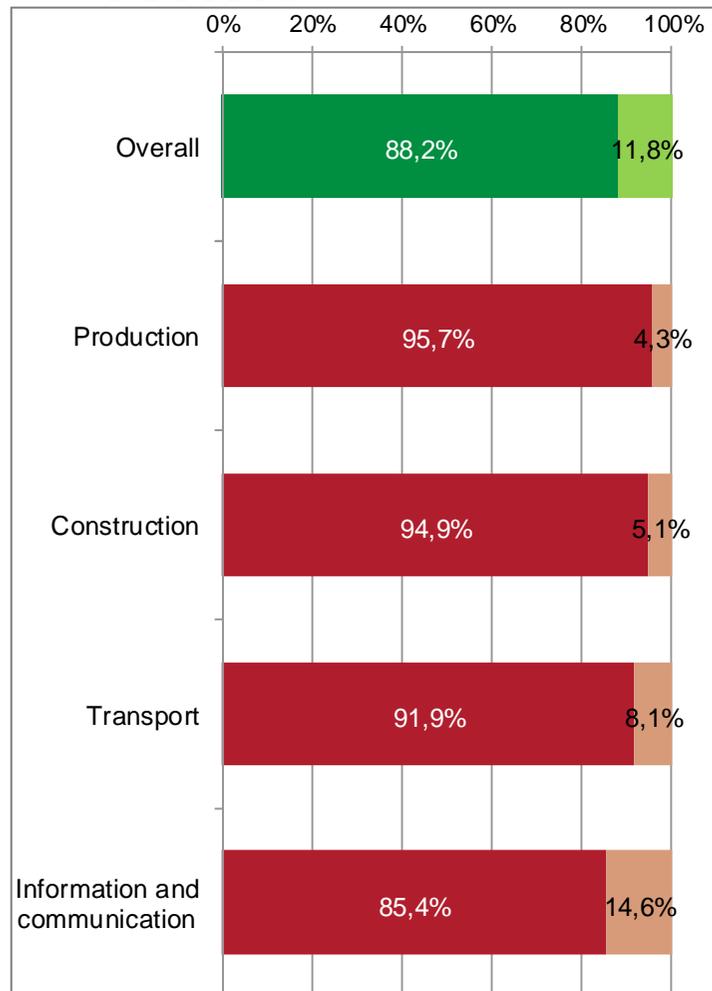
Results of Company Case Studies: Working Time



*Why and how do the surveyed firms maintain working time models that support reconciliation of work and child-care?
Which possibilities and constraints are evident?*



Common Characteristics in Male-Dominated Sectors



- Above average full-time employment of men in male-dominated sectors: **male full time employment is around 95%** in ‚construction‘ and ‚production‘ (average 88%)
- **Nearly 0% part-time employment** of male employees **with children under 18 years** in male dominated sectors
- **High overtime**, especially in ‚information and communication‘ as well as ‚transportation‘ – more than 30% of male employees do regular overtime
- **Less reconciliation-friendly working time models** – like flexitime – in these sectors, often work shift and worktime models with fixed working times

Source: Mikrozensus-Arbeitskräfteerhebung Jahresdaten 2016; Red bar: male full-time, salmon bar: male-part-time

Focus on Working Time & Organisation of Work: Selected Results from Case Studies

“Reconciliation of work and family should not only be discussed as a ‘parental leave topic’ but should be discussed on a broader basis. How to incorporate flexible working time, the practice of uncomplicated going home when the child is hurt, ill, etc.”

- Reconciliation for men is discussed mainly as **issue of restructuring the working time for male employees** and avoiding discuss of the length of the working time (e.g. part-time)
- Interest of companies to change the **framework of full-time work** and to keep part-time work to a minimum, also parental part-time
- Some mention the aspect that **at least overtime should be avoided** for men in need of reconciliation-friendly working time

→ **different approach than reconciliation strategies for female employees which (at least in Austria) are based mainly on part-time work**

Reconciliation, Working Time & Work Organisation in Corporations in SME

“We discuss it with the managing directors, then we try to arrange it according to their needs and then the father gets his own working time model.”

“On Sundays, everyone informs each other whether and when he or she will be in the office or do home office. That works well.”

- The main strategy in SME is an **individual approach**: employees and employers try to find working times which accommodate the male employees with children (employee by employee) using, **trust-based working hours’, teleworking and/or a very flexible framework** (Monday to Friday between 6:00 and 22:00) at least for specific groups
- Medium-sized and larger companies do have **different working time models** (also for different groups of employees), stressing that **individual arrangements** are possible if necessary

→ **reconciliation strategies for male employees have greater priority but are strongly dependant upon individual arrangements**

Reconciliation, Working Time & Work Organisation in Corporations and Large Companies

“Perhaps it is annoying to some boards, but it is part of our CSR.”

- Reconciliation for male employees is often **part of ,other strategies‘**, like prevention of burn-out, equality policy, CSR etc.
- Each division has to find its own strategy as part of a broader company strategy – this results again in an **individual approach** depending on division management
- But: with more information and professional **support from HR** and a binding and **coordinated strategy**, e.g. the commitment to talk about reconciliation at every employee evaluation or team meeting

→ **more formal agreements and contracts, also in cooperation with the works council, in larger companies, but implementation is dependant on individual division manager**

Shift work in Focus

“In production, work is done in shifts. We arranged with our boss that part of us can begin at 6 a.m. in order to come home earlier. (...) That works well. (...) For me, the earlier I get home, the more time I have for my children.”

- **Adaptation of shift scheduling**
 - Regular evaluation of (male) employee needs
 - Evaluation of employee needs with ‚reconciliation need‘
 - **Adaptation of the shift itself**
 - adapt work start and finish times
 - establishment of part-time shift work or other specific shifts for those in need
 - establishment of other (temporary) working areas for those who can not work on shift without changing the existing shift
- **Focusing on specific work models in male-dominated sectors can be seen as a core challenge but also as a contributing success factor to reconciliation.**

For further information on the project see:

<http://maennerundvereinbarkeit.at/>

