

A Strategy for Securing Sustainable Future Care and Productivity Potentials in an Ageing Society A European Comparison

Carers' perspective

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on behalf of

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Aims of the study and selected research questions

Analysis of individual reconciliation conflicts and strategies of family carers in four European countries

- What conflict- and stress-situations between work and care are typical among carers?
- What strategies do carers use to manage conflict and stress situations?
- What factors (e.g., qualification level) influence the reconciliation of work and care?
- Which kind of support at the public, company or societal level is most efficient from the carers perspective?

Methodology

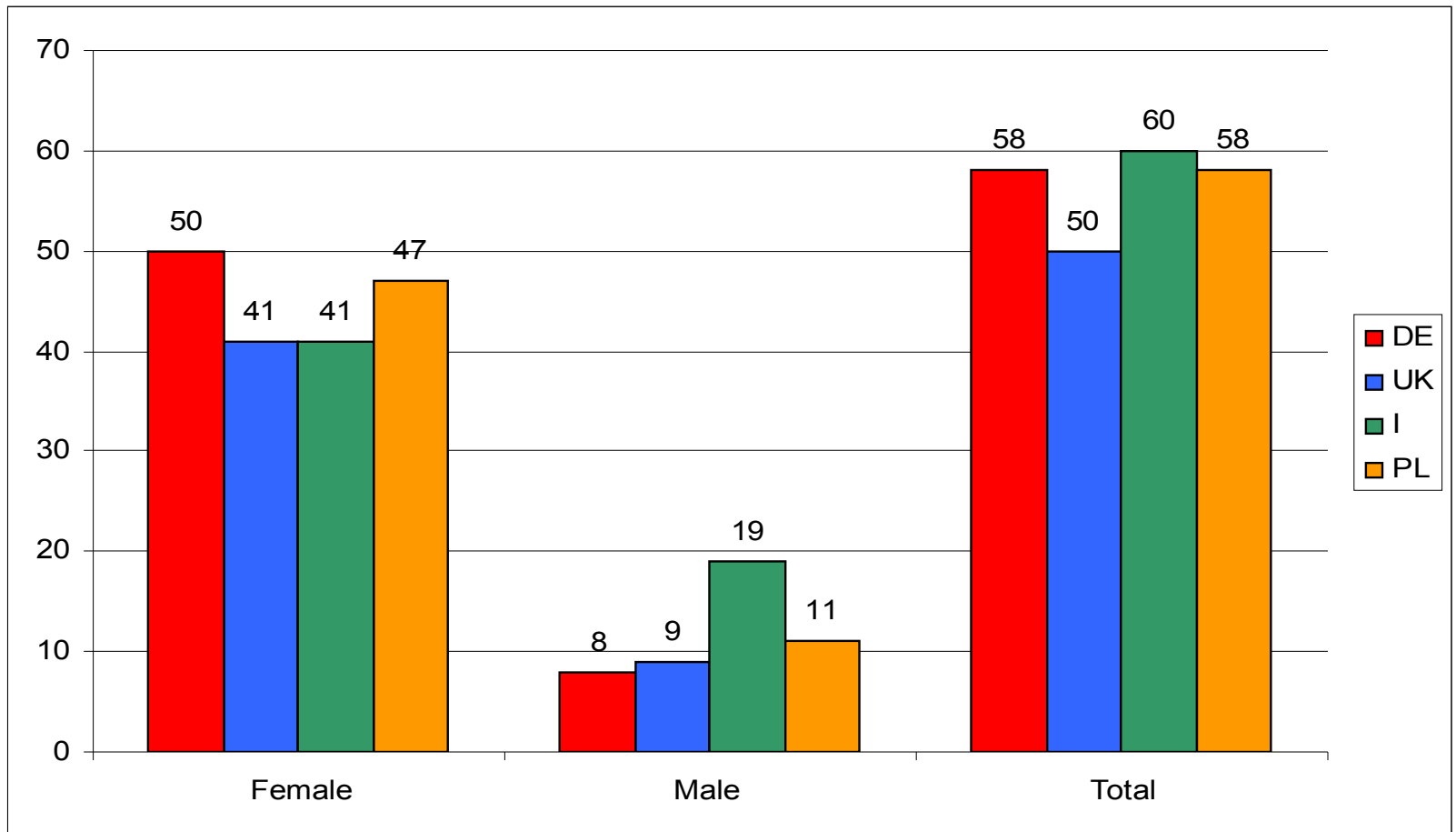
- Topic-guide interviews with 60 employed family carers in each of the four participating countries
- Definition of Working Carer: Working at least 10 hours per week, whilst also caring at least 10 hours a week
- Transcription of all interviews
- Computer assisted evaluation by qualitative content analysis



Sample (N=226)





	Couple both working	Couple one working	Single	Total	Total
High level of education (ISCED 4-6)	DE = 21 UK = 11 I = 11 PL = 18	DE = 12 UK = 10 I = 03 PL = 05	DE = 08 UK = 13 I = 10 PL = 17	41 34 24 40	139
Low level of education (ISCED 0-3)	DE = 08 UK = 06 I = 16 PL = 11	DE = 04 UK = 03 I = 10 PL = 03	DE = 05 UK = 05 I = 10 PL = 04	17 14 36 18	85
Total	DE = 29 UK = 18 I = 27 PL = 29	DE = 16 UK = 14 I = 13 PL = 8	DE = 13 UK = 18 I = 20 PL = 21	58 50 60 58	226
Total	102	50	72	226	

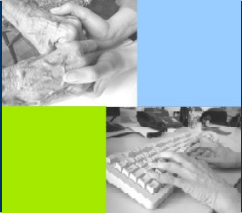
Gender of carers⁴







Conflicts and Benefits

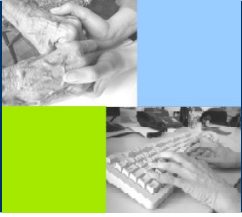
Conflicts at the work place

				
Problems to concentrate, decreasing productive efficiency, stress, tiredness, anxiety	x	x	x	x
Increasing days absent	x	x	x	x
Lack of understanding from line manager and colleagues	x	x	x	x
Career slump	x	x		x
Reduction of working hours	x	x		
Emotional overload of carers being employed as social workers			x	
Impossibility to attend training courses			x	
Got the axe, job loss	x			







Conflicts within the family





				
Too little time for own children/grandchildren	x	x	x	x
Carers in sandwich position - a lack of time for their children	x	x	x	x
Problems with partners and nuclear family	x	x	x	x
Problems with partners marital conflicts, resulting in separation, divorce			x	x
Numerous conflicts with siblings over care of a parent	x	x	x	x
Conflicts with the cared for	x	x	x	x

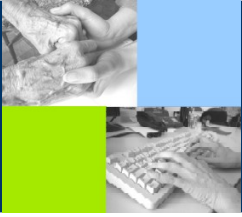


Conflicts regarding health and well being





				
Exhaustion, sleeplessness, tension, anxiety, stress	x	x	x	x
Physical conditions: musculoskeletal problems, shingles, cardio-vascular diseases, more susceptible to physical illness	x	x	x	x
Depression and behavioural changes		x		
Burn out - 18% of German sample	x	x		

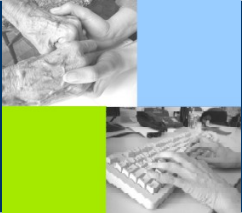
Own life/social life

				
General lack of time	x	x	x	x
"I don't have a life on my own any more"	x	x	x	x
Reduction of social contacts	x	x	x	x
Free time, leisure, own interests are missed out	x	x	x	x
No holidays	x	x	x	x







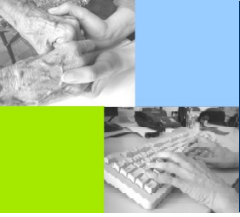
Financial situation

				
Reduction of working hours – salary and pension loss	x	x		
Unpaid leave			x	
Other financial strains lead to additional stress, e.g. property, mortgages	x	x		
Additional payments for support services	x	x	x	
Lack of time for additional work				x
No impact on financial situation (pension of older person was sufficient to cover the costs)				x



Benefits



				
Personal benefits – personal growth – new skills, also for professional work	x	x	x	x
Good relation to the cared for	x	x	x	x
New quality of life, new work-life balance	x	x		
Satisfaction: doing ones duty				x

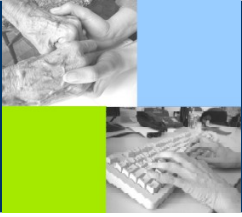


Strategies







Strategy: Changes at the work place





				
Formal policies (care leave, flexi time, etc.)	x	x		
Reduction of working time, abandonment of a leading position	x	x		
Using flexi time	x	x		
Self employment	x	x		x
Asking colleagues and line managers for help	x	x		
Sick leave	x			x
Working in late evenings				



Strategy: organising support





				
Family - family network	x	x	x	x
Inclusion of own children			x	x
Friends, neighbours		x		x
Professional support services (day care, care services)	x	x		x
Privately paid assistance	x	x		
Migrant care worker	x		x	
Nursing home	x	x		
Hospital as time out	x			

Strategy: caring for one self

				
Organising time out	x	x		x
Keep social contacts alive, emotional support from friends	x	x	x	x
Physical activities (sports)	x			x
Work as time out, "escape from care"	x	x	x	x
Professional / Psychological help				x

**Most important differences between
the countries**

Strategies: Important differences between countries

	Reduction of working hours, flexibility, self employment, care services, own family, private care assistance,
	Formal employment policies, reduction of working hours, flexibility, care services, family support
	Migrant Care Worker and family network, little strategies at the work place (private sphere should not interfere with work)
	Family members (and friends) always first source of support, Formal care services, informal support from workplace used rather hesitant, no formal support offers, self employment

Conclusions

- On the private level (family relations, personal conflicts, influence on health, etc) – there are many similarities between countries. Care for a relative seems to go along with similar conflicts and benefits in all countries.
- BUT: the institutional level (support services, working conditions, health care systems) - is where the greatest differences between countries occur

Thank you!

www.carersatwork.tu-dortmund.de/index.php