



## **Reconciling employment and elderly care within the “adult worker model”: typical arrangements of caring sons**

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13th Annual ESPAnet conference “The lost and new worlds of welfare”

3-5 September 2015, Odense/Denmark

Stream 13

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1. The project: background, research gap, questions, method
2. Results
  - Caring Sons with and without reconciliation problems
  - Perceived burden of caring sons
  - Typical care arrangements and networks
3. Discussion: the “male earner-carer model“ as a role model?



Source: berufundfamilie GgmbH

# 1. Background: Caring men in Germany in numbers



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TNS Infratest Sozialforschung 2011

- In 2010 **28 %** of the **mainly responsible care-givers** were men
- Since 1998 the share of **caring sons** has doubled

Rothgang et al. 2012

- Men above the age of 16, who **care for at least 1 hour per day**:  
1.471.525 (**35 %**) in 2010

# 1. Research gap

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Previous research focussed above all

- either on the reconciliation of work and care of women
- or on caring men, who are not/no longer active on the labour market

# 1. Research Interest

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- Focus on men who reconcile work with care for their elderly relatives
- Questions:
  - Under which conditions and how do men, who are still active on the labour market, care?
  - What are typical care arrangements and coping-strategies of care-giving men?
  - What are implications of the “adult worker model“ in a Conservative Welfare State like Germany for the realm of elderly care?

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# 1. Research Interest

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Needs of the care recipients

Labour law and company measures

Care arrangements with men reconciling work and care

Familial and social networks

Professional services

# 1. Method: Company Case Studies



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## Selection of Companies

- 11 companies of different sizes and sectors describing themselves as care-giving sensitive

## Method: Qualitative, semi-structured interviews

- 44 men and 25 experts from works councils and human resources departments of the companies, fully transcribed and analysed by “theme centered coding” (Schmidt/Hopf 1993) with MAXQDA software

## 2. Results: Sons between gainful employment and care

- 24 caring sons are the primary carers
- 15 caring sons provide at least 14 hours of care, accommodation and assistance per week.
- The same number of sons simultaneously or successively cares for more than one relative.
- The range of caring activities is broad and includes body care (13) as well as dementia care (16), household care (25), administrative tasks and dealing with public authorities (30), medical care (31) and personal assistance (34).
- The care share of the sons was rated low in 24 cases, medium in 10 cases, and high in 3 cases.



## 2. Results: Employment-related reconciliation strategies

Changes at the workplace due to care tasks	
Working time reduction	6
Change in working time arrangement	2
Early retirement (block model)	1
Family caregiver leave	1
Change in job profile	1

## 2. Results: Employment-related reconciliation strategies



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- Strong orientation towards gainful employment: 30/37 sons continue to work full-time despite caring
- above all use of informal agreements or flexible working time models
- **Men tend to organise care around their (full-time) employment while women organise employment around the need for care**
- **26 of 37 men state that they do not suffer from problems of reconciling employment and careing**

## 2. Results: Reconciliation problems

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- Structural obstacles resulting from the type of professions activity
- Difficulties with colleagues and superiors
- Ignorance of employees' problems/support denied by company

## 2. Results: Perceived burden/stress of caring sons

- Lack of regeneration
- Worrying about the relative (e.g. in cases of Dementia)
- Own health impairments caused by the care situation
- Family conflicts (e.g. between brothers and sisters)

## 2. Results: Typical arrangements and networks

- 36 of 37 sons have either formal or informal support
- Most frequent informal support:
  - wife/partner (21)
  - mother (5), brother (5), father (5), sister (2)
  - neighbour (3)
- Most frequent formal support:
  - Care service (23)
  - Short term care (17)
  - Personal emergency response system (8)
  - Support service (7)
  - Household aid (6)
- There was a transfer to residential care in 13 of 37 cases

### 3. Discussion: the “male earner-carer model” as a role model?

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#### To sum up

- The contribution of gainfully employed sons to the support of their relatives is greater than often perceived
- Sons organise their care activities around their gainful employment
- The majority of the sons state not to have reconciliation problems, although they are severely burdened by accompanying circumstances of the care situation

### 3. Discussion: the “male earner-carer model” as a role model?

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#### **Really, no problem to reconcile work and care?!**

- Men’s strategy is made possible because wives and partners constitute an available familial resource which, it can be assumed, caring daughters do not have the same degree of access to
- Sons usually have an extensive helper network and seem to have less difficulty with referring their relatives to residential care
- The “male earner-carer model” is often based on health risks and a lack of free time and regeneration

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

MORE INFORMATION AND PRESENTATIONS:  
[WWW.PROJEKT-MAENNEP.DE](http://WWW.PROJEKT-MAENNEP.DE)



# Sample of Companies and Extent of Elderly Care-sensitive Measures

No.	Size	Sector	Extend of Measures	Evidence of Application Problems
1	Large company	Industrial, private	High	Yes
2	Large company	Industrial, private	High	No
3	Large company	Services, public	High	No
4	Large company	Services, public	High	No
5	Large company	Services, public	High	Yes
6	Large company	Industrial, private	High	Yes
7	SME	Industrial, private	Medium	No
8	SME	Services, private	Medium	Yes
9	SME	Industrial, private	Medium	No
10	SME	Industrial, private	Low	No
11	Large company	Industrial, private	Low	No

# Company level support measures

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- 11/11 offer a flexibilisation of working time
- 10/11 provide information on elderly care (services)
- 9/11 nominate an (internal or external) “care counsellor”
- 6/11 provide sensitising measures for management
- 5/11 offer home office or telework
- 3/11 provide cash(-based) benefits