

20th

EECERA annual conference
Knowledge and voice in Early Childhood:
Who knows, who speaks, who listens?
Birmingham, UK 6th -8th September 2010

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From research to action:

A comparison of recent research in Austria, Germany and Norway

Presentation on the 20th. EECERA annual conference, 6.9.2010, Birmingham/UK.

Abstract

What status can be given to gender balance in the ECE work force in various European countries? Recently major research studies have focused on men and gender balance in ECE. On the basis of research the author sheds light on difficulties regarding research on gender issues in the ECE work force.

In a first part, statistics from Austria, Germany and Norway are analyzed. A closer look reveals that cross-county-comparisons need a differentiated view on regional factors, providers structures and vocational backgrounds of male and female workers.

In the second part, some outcomes of major research projects in Austria and Germany are analyzed. The presentation discusses similarities and differences between the results and the situation in the two countries. The different studies use various samples, methodologies and methods, including quantitative and qualitative data.

It is analyzed whether differences in outcome have to be understood as "cultural" in the context of the different ECE systems in the two countries, and/or are related to the different research paradigms and methods that were used.

The author concludes that cross-country-comparisons have to refer to different educational backgrounds and institutional structures. Moreover, researchers need to analyse effects of their own theories and personal attitudes on research strategies, processes and results.

elementar research project

Innsbruck University, Faculty of Education, Austria

web: <http://www.uibk.ac.at/ezwi/elementar>

Coordination office Men in Kitas

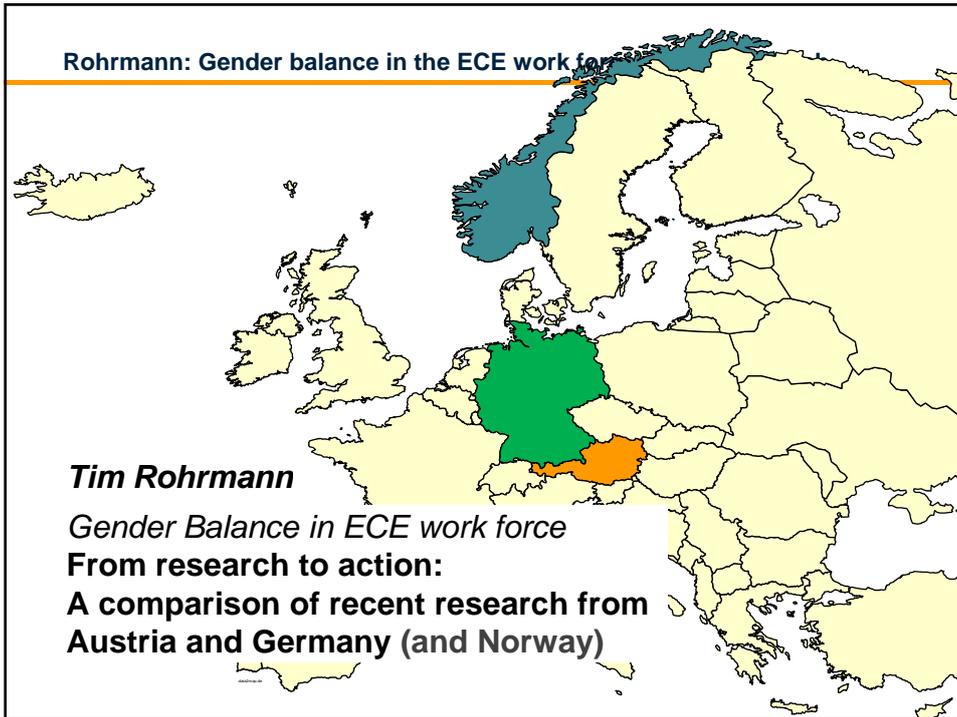
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Gender Balance in ECE work force

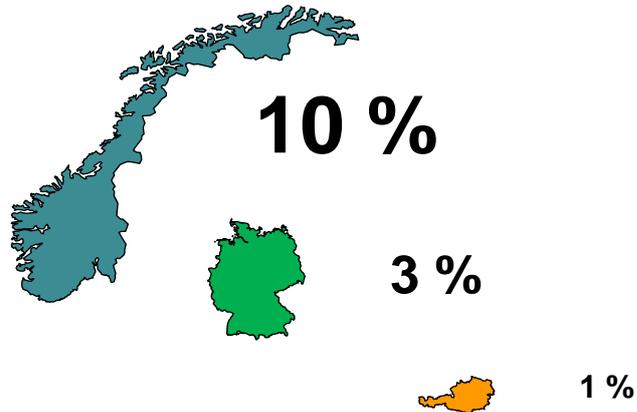
From research to action:

A comparison of recent research from Austria and Germany (and Norway)

Main questions

- **Whom are we talking about?**
- **Who is listening, and which voices are heard?**
- **Different systems – similar problems?**
- **Similar results – different interpretations?**

Proportion of male workers



Proportion of male workers

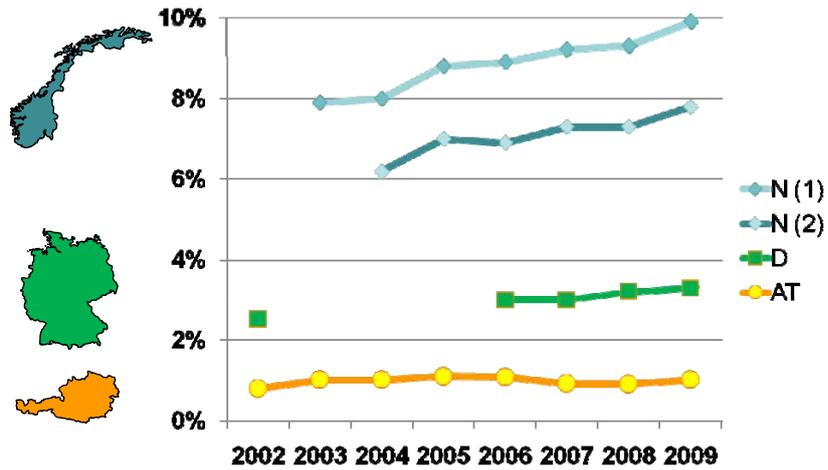


- Strong support for gender equality and father's engagement in society
- Strategies and projects for increasing the proportion of male workers

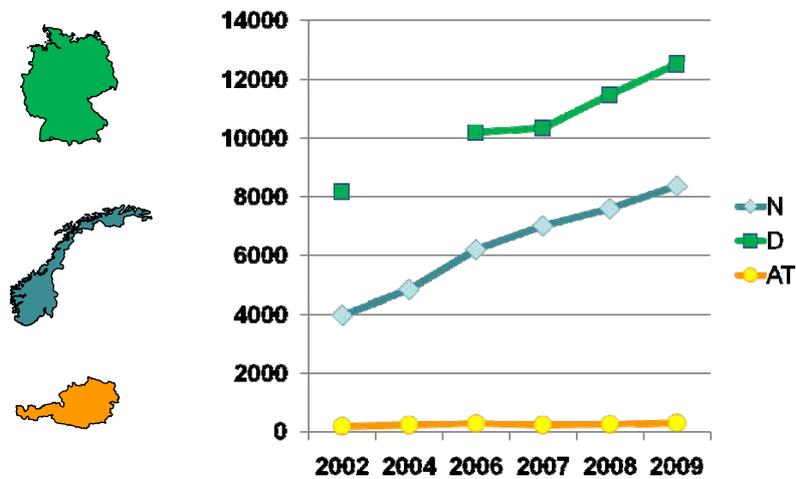


- Vocational decision at early age
- Access to vocational training in ECE for males only since 1981

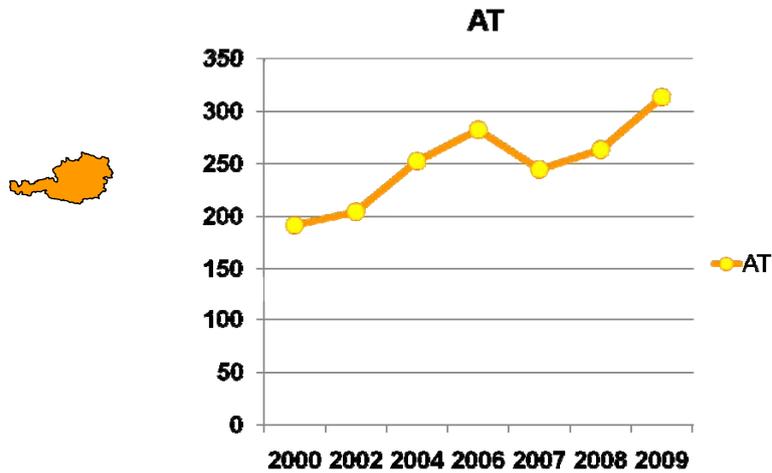
A closer look to statistics (1)



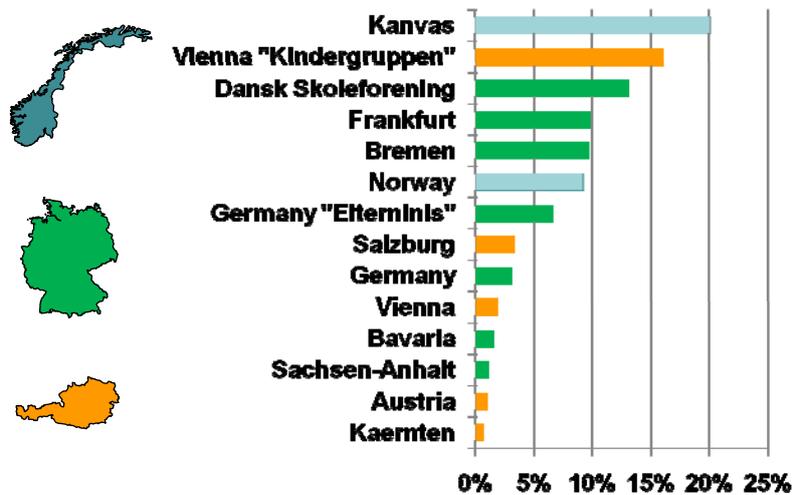
A closer look to statistics (2)



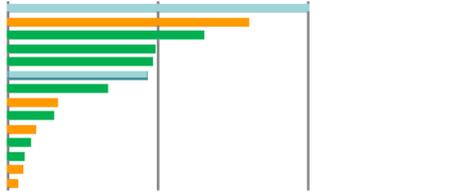
A closer look to statistics (2a)



A closer look to statistics (3)



A closer look to statistics (3)



Regional factors and providers strategies are probably more important than effects of national systems

Vocational background of workers

Whom are we talking about?

Vocational background of workers



- > 65% of male and 80% of female workers are qualified workers („Erzieher“ or higher)
- 26% of male workers, but only 6% of female workers are volunteers or interns



- ca. 50 % of male and 36% of female workers are low-qualified assistants
- specific law and administration for ECC's with alternative pedagogical approach



- pre-school teachers with high school degree: 20% of male, 27% of female workers
- 62% of male workers and 55% female workers are low-qualified assistants

From research to action (and vice versa)



- Action plan on gender equity
- Recruitment teams in every county; national coordination
- Evaluation sheds critical light on goals and measures



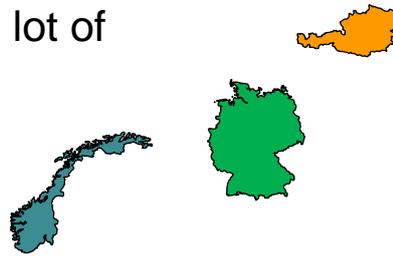
- Coordination office for men in Kitas (ECCs), funded by the Ministry of Family Affairs
- European Social Fund (ESF) model projects
- Qualification programs



- No political / administrative actions yet

Conclusions (1)

- „The“ men in ECE don't exist
- Different national systems can explain cross-country-differences in male engagement in ECE
- Still ... there are a lot of similarities!



Recent research: Two major studies

-  • Full survey of male students and male workers in ECEC with questionnaires
- Semi-structured interviews with male and female workers all over the country
-  • Group discussions with male and female students and workers
- Focusing on regions with high proportion of male workers
- Representative study: phone interviews with leaders, provider's officers, parents

Recent research

- Different research strategies
- Different theoretical backgrounds
- Still ... similar results



Similar results, e.g.

- Listening to the voices of men can make a difference
- Men introduce a different range of activities and ideas to ECCs
- Male and female educators can mutually learn from each other
- Suspicions of men as potential child abusers are a problem for many men
- All agree: ECE work needs better pay and more appreciation in society



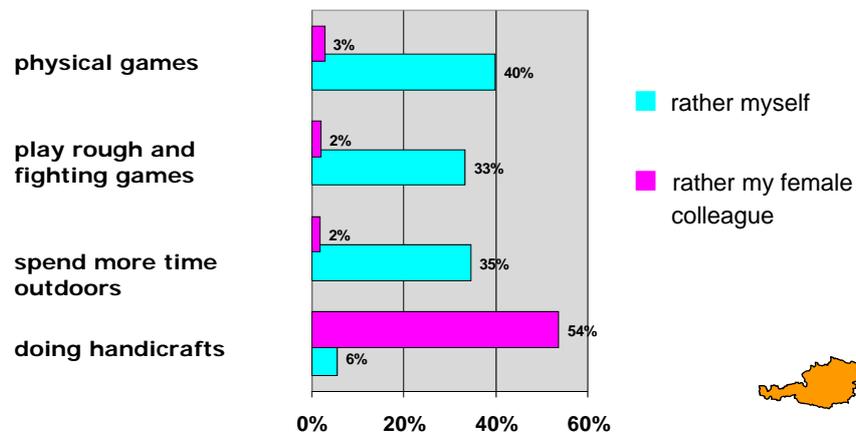
Different interpretations of similar results

Men prefer sports and physical activities with children

-  Both men and women appreciate this
- Focus on sports and physical activities could attract more men to the profession
-  Most women know about the importance of physical activities
- Gender-stereotyped activities have to be problematised

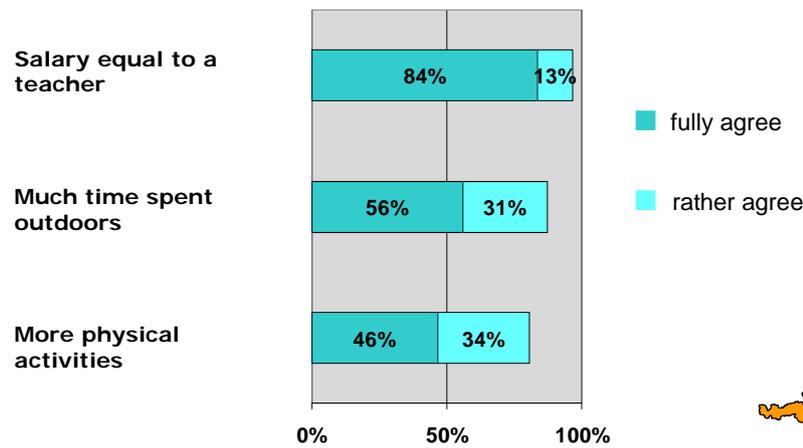


Similarities and differences in activities between male and female coworkers in the view of men

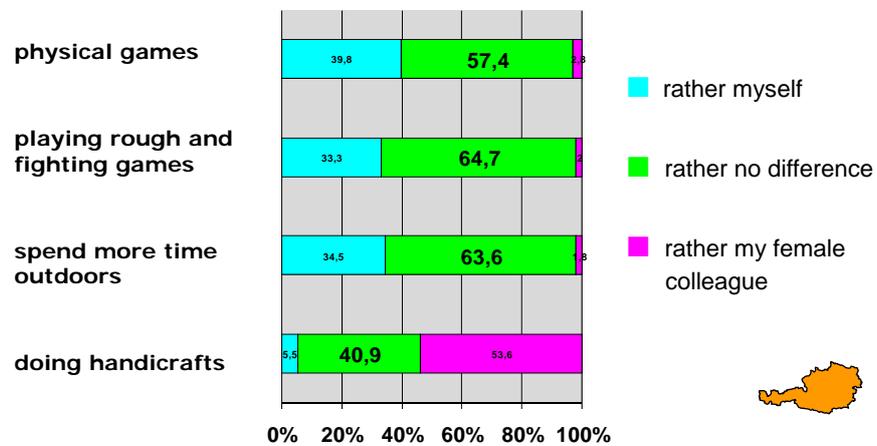




What would make work in ECE more attractive for you? The view of men

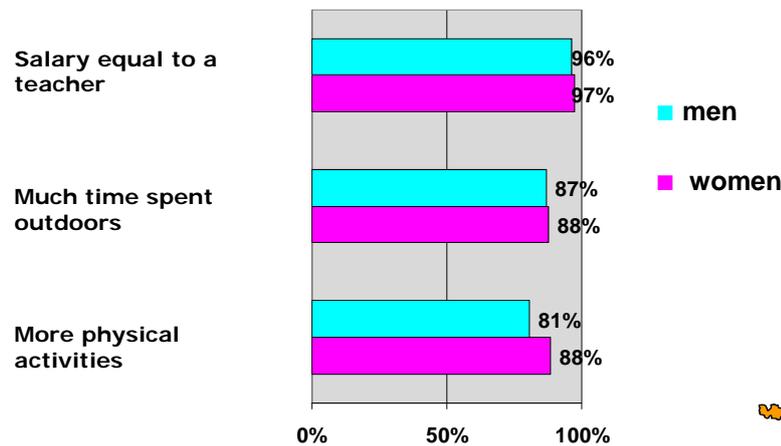


Similarities and differences in activities between male and female coworkers in the view of men





What would make work in ECE more attractive for you? The view of men and women



Contradictory conclusions

Men and women working together in ECC leads to...

- more gender-balance in activities
- reinforcement of gender-stereotyped behavior

Training on high school level...

- could probably attract more men to the field because of higher status
- is contrary to low-level-access programs for less qualified male workers, e.g. career changers

Low wages for ECE workers...

- are a major reason for the low proportion of men interested to work in ECE
- are no major problem of active male ECE workers

Conclusions (2)

- Interpretations of empiric results have to refer to different educational backgrounds and institutional structures
- Samples must be analysed carefully before attempts to generalise results
- Researchers need to analyse effects of their own attitudes on research strategies, processes and results

Resources

Cremers, Michael; Krabel, Jens; Calmbach, Marc; Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen & Jugend (Hg.) (2010). Männliche Fachkräfte in Kindertagesstätten. Berlin: BMFSFJ.

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Thank you for your attention!

elementar research project

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