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Activating Fathers in Conservative Welfare States?

Evidence on outcomes in Germany and Austria

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Background

- family policy modernisation reforms in conservative welfare states
 - earlier re-commodification of women
 - increasing fathers participation in family work
- *puzzle* of policy outputs (e.g. Henninger and von Wahl 2010; Mätzke and Ostner 2010; Blum 2012)

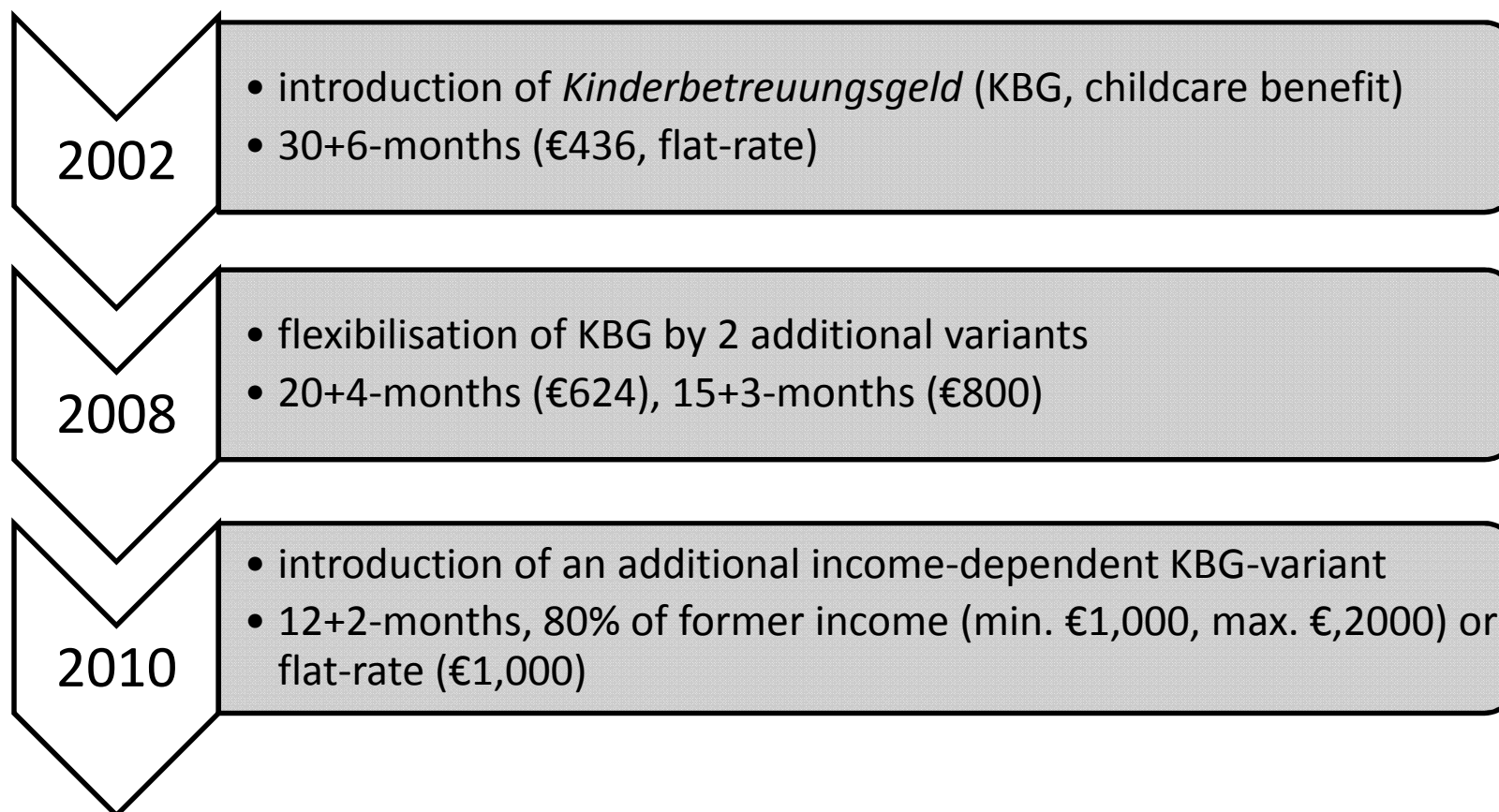
 ***here: focus on outcomes* of 'activating-fathers'-reforms**

Path-breaking 'activating-fathers'-reform in Germany

- former model: *Erziehungsgeld* (childcare benefit)
 - 24 months, € 307 (flat-rate)

- 2007: introduction of the *Elterngeld* (parental benefit)
 - 12+2-months
 - 67% of former net income
 - min. € 300, max. € 1,800

Incremental ,activating-fathers'-reforms in Austria



Situation prior to the reforms

- very low take-up rates of fathers in parental leave
 - **Germany:** in 2006, only 3.5% of fathers took parental leave (RWI 2008)
 - **Austria:** in 2006, fathers' share among KBG-recipients was only about 3.5%

Germany: Data from federal statistical office

Development of *Elterngeld* recipients

	female	male
2007	86.3%	13.7%
2008	82.3%	17.7%
2009	81.4%	18.6%
2010	80%	20%
2011	79.2%	20.8%
2012 (2 nd quarter)	78.1%	21.9%

Source: Federal Statistical Office

Germany: Patterns identifiable from official statistics for 2010 (Destatis 2011)

- high differences among the German *Länder*
 - from 14.1% in Saarland to 32% in Saxony
- 75.2% of fathers only take 2 partner months; 92.4% of mothers take 10-12 months
- mainly at two points in time: directly after birth (29.2%) or after 12 months (21%)

Germany: Studies focusing on explanations

- **Reich (2010, *Microcensus* data)**
 - mother's employment increases likelihood of father to go on leave
 - young fathers *less* likely, middle-aged fathers *more* likely to go on leave

- **RWI (2008, own survey)**
 - higher education of father increases likelihood of shared leave
 - main reasons *not* to take leave due to financial/job-related reasons

- **Schober (2012, SOEP panel data on couples)**
 - indirect effect through mother's labour market participation: negative on maternal child care time and positive on paternal child care time

Austria: Official monthly data

Recipients of KBG in July 2012

	female	male	variant <i>currently</i> received by...
all variants	95.03%	4.97%	
30+6	96.40%	3.60%	...63.7%
20+4	94.2%	5.80%	...22.04%
15+3	90.97%	9.03%	...3.68%
12+2 flat-rate	88.4%	11.6%	...2.45%
12+2 wage replacement	90.2%	9.8%	...8.15%

Source: Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth

Austria: More telling data

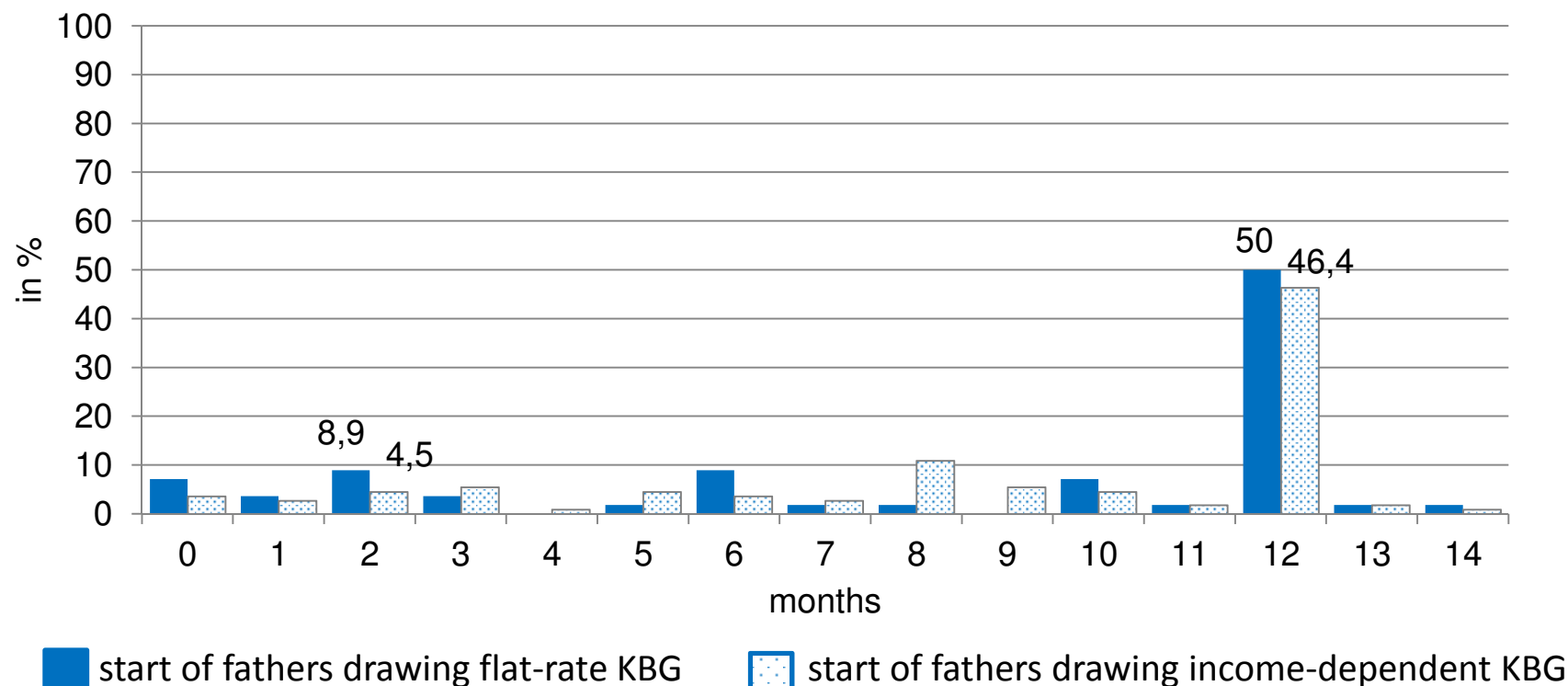
	fathers participation in ended cases...	variants taken in July 2010 by... (only <i>first</i> year)	variants taken in July 2012 by... (only <i>first</i> year)
all variants	??		
30+6	12,03%	...57.15%	...46.89%
20+4	19,08%	...25.53%	...26.11%
15+3	28,18%	...7.06%	...5.76%
12+2 flat-rate	30,01%	...2.5%	...4.9%
12+2 wage replacement	26,11%	...7.75%	...16.34%

Source: Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth

*special statistical evaluation (December 2011) of ended KBG cases

Austria: Evaluation of the 12+2-variants by Rille-Pfeiffer/Kapella (2012)

- When and for how long do fathers go on leave?



Questions: “ How many months does/did your partner receive KBG?” and “At what age of the child does/did your partner start drawing the KBG?”

Reasons for fathers participation in KBG (Rille-Pfeiffer/Kapella 2012)

My partner participates, because...	n (262)	%
... equal sharing is important for us in our partnership	43	16,4
... he wants to help me with the households	12	4,6
... he wants to spend more time with the child / be an active father	140	53,4
... he wants to take up stronger his role within the family	19	7,3
... he earns less than I do	12	4,6
... he wants to support me in my employment / enable me to work	9	3,4
... he wants to take a time off the job	7	2,7
... he is in a transitory stage / the KBG was an option to bridge that	2	0,8
... other reasons	13	5
No answer	5	1,9

**Question: What was the main reason for your partner to participate in the *Kinderbetreuungsgeld* take-up?
(own translations)**

Reasons against fathers participation in KBG (Rille-Pfeiffer/Kapella 2012)

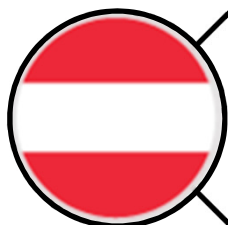
My partner doesn't participate, because...	n (505)	%
...I want to take over childcare myself	70	13,9
...this is not his job	7	1,4
...of financial reasons	124	24,6
...it would be detrimental to his career	145	28,7
...he cannot achieve acceptance for that at his employer	72	14,3
...he is not confident with having the responsibility for a child	1	0,2
...other reasons	63	12,5
No answer	23	4,6

Question: What was the main reason for your partner not to participate in the *Kinderbetreuungsgeld* take-up?
(own translations)

Germany and Austria in comparison



- 'activating-fathers'-reform rated successful
- quite good knowledge already on causalities



- 'activating-fathers'-reform had impact
- 'incremental reform process': complex *outcomes*
- further research needed on causalities

- similar countries, similar developments and causal links?!

Conclusions: What do the two cases tell?

- further confirms hypothesis on relationship between leave design and fathers' participation
 - e.g. highest fathers' participation with Austria's shortest KBG variant
- would be interesting to compare in most-different-case design
- importance of companies' 'family-friendliness'
 - main obstacles to men taking leave are *job-related*



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Thank you for your attention!

Pleased to receive any feedback, questions, remarks...
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