

Working Time Policy in Germany and Work-Life Balance

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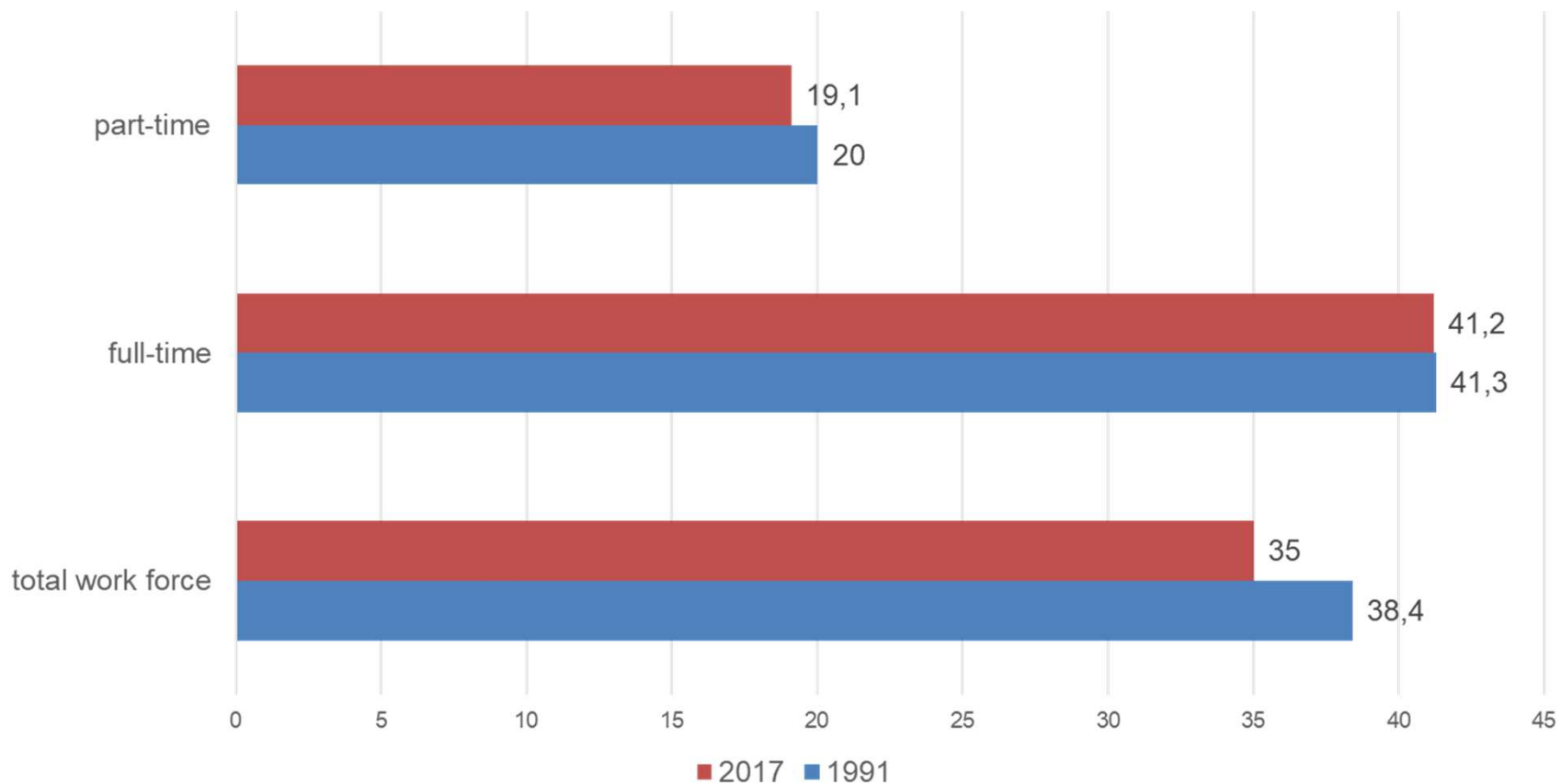
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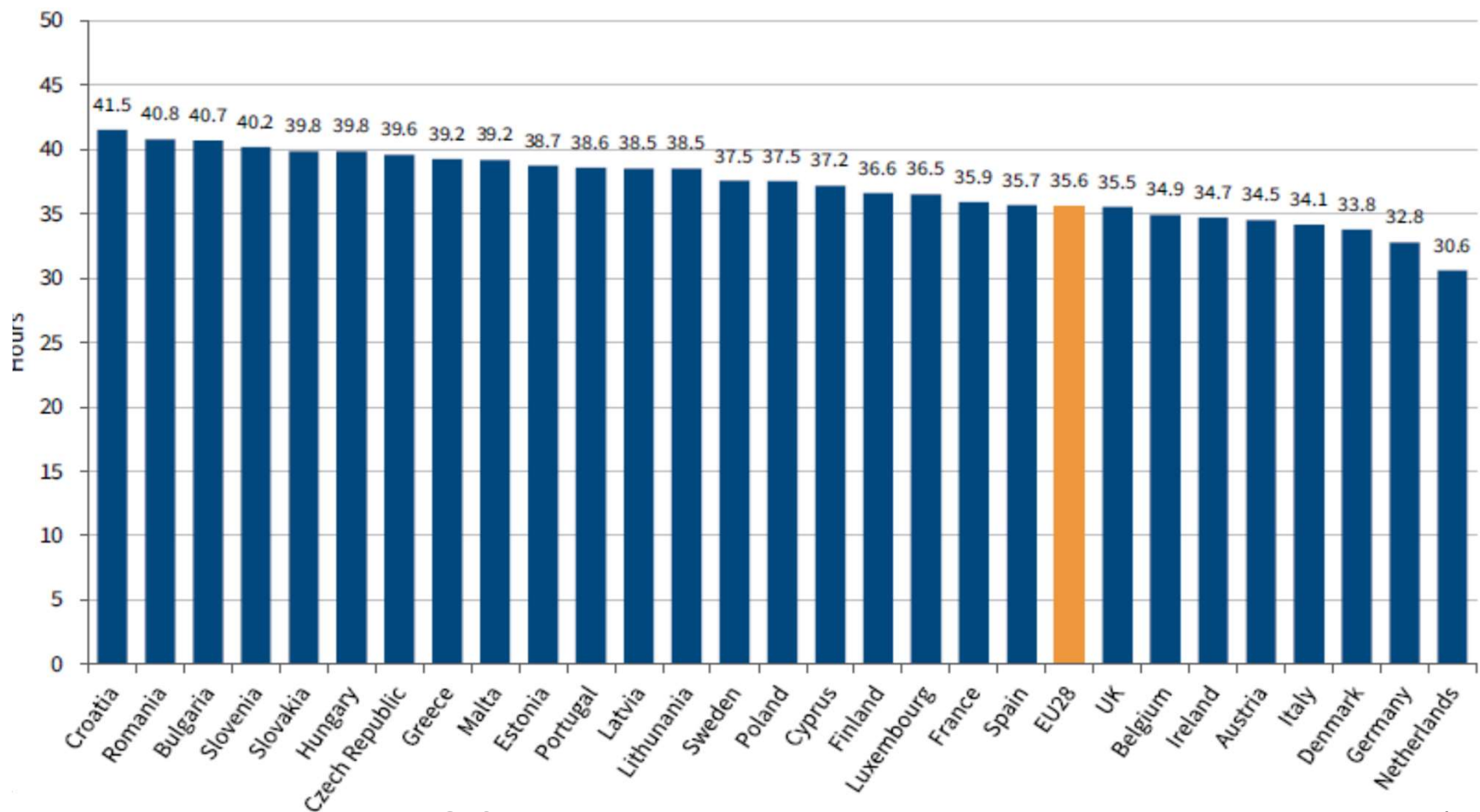
Agenda

- Duration of weekly working time
- Working time wishes
- New Approaches in working time policy
 - Collective bargaining agreements with options for employees
 - the Bridge Part-Time Act with full-time return option
- Flexibilisation of working time: more time autonomy?
- Conclusion

Average working hours per week, 1991 - 2017



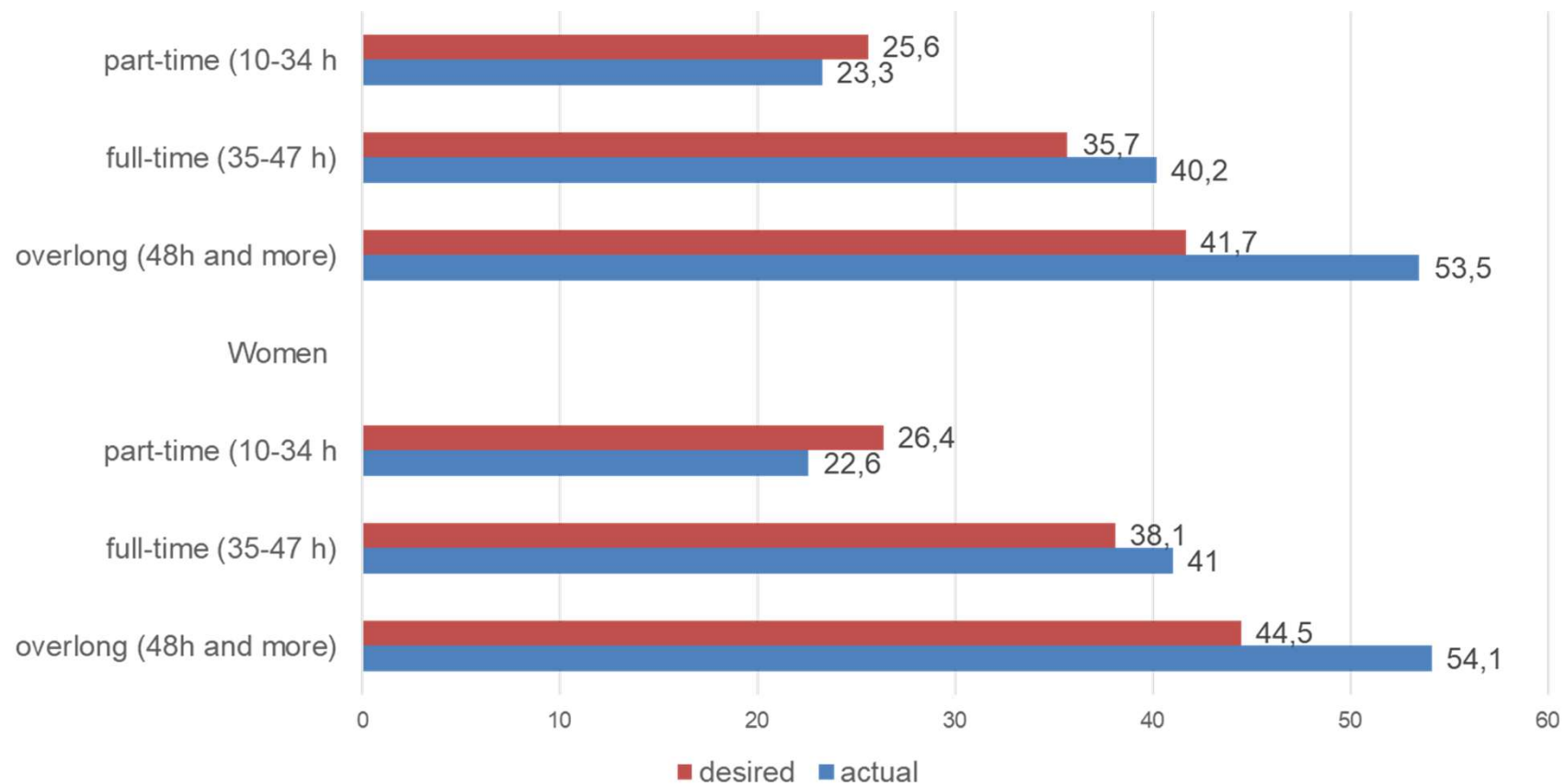
Average weekly working hours for employees by country, 2015



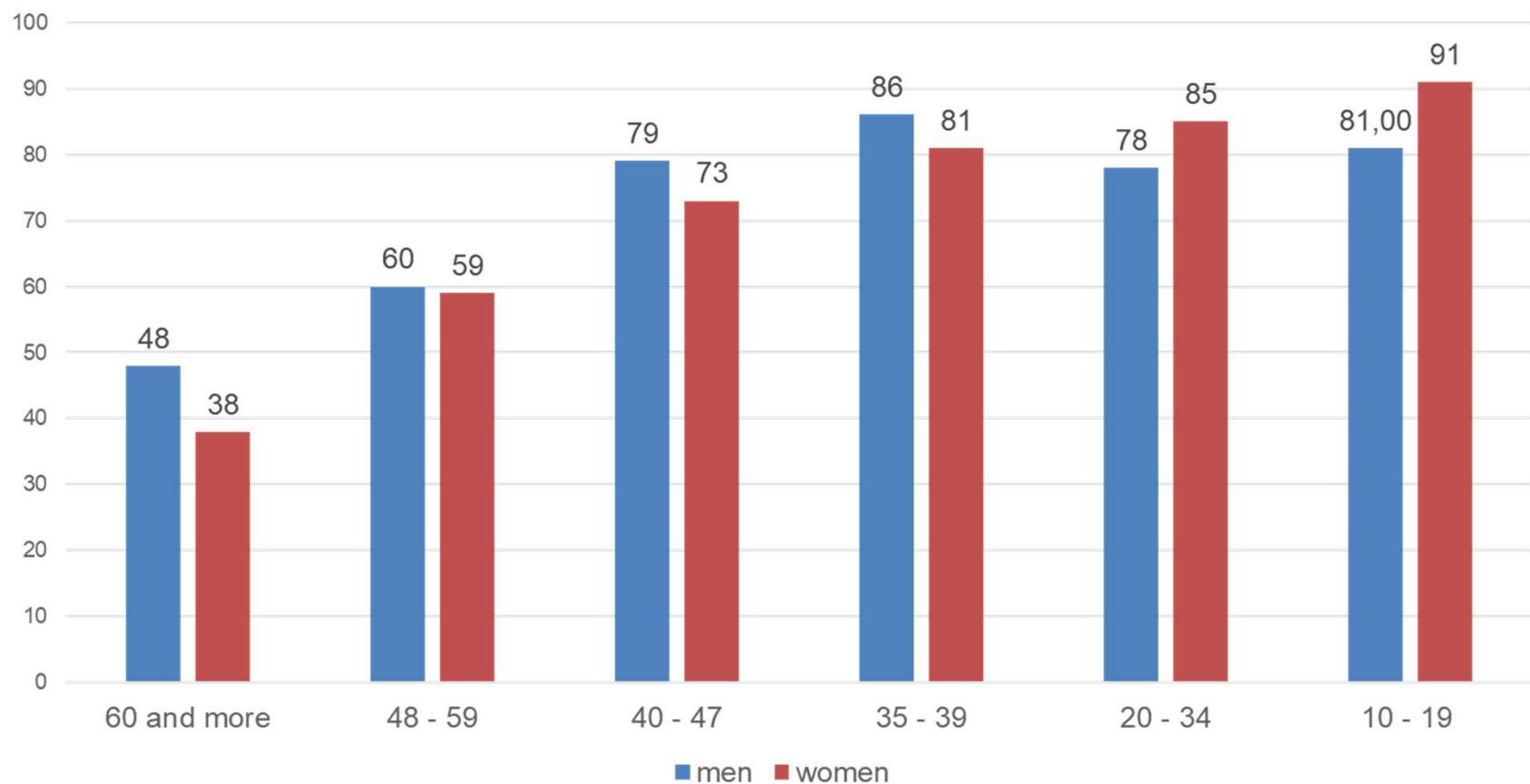
Why better work-life balance?

- Wishes of employees
 - Duration of working time
 - Distribution of working time: time autonomy
- Equal job opportunities for men and women
- Shortage of labour
- Employer branding

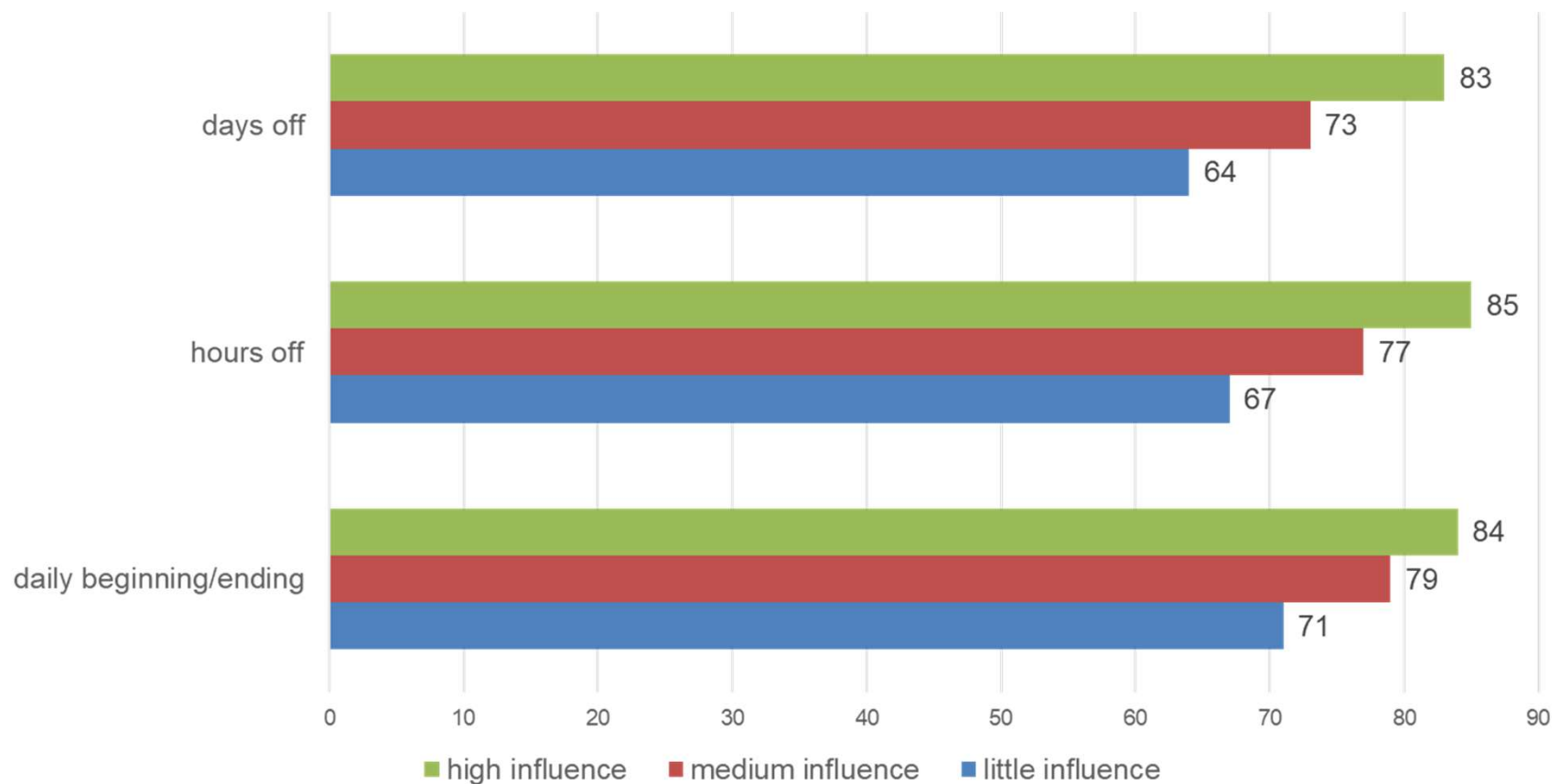
Actual and desired working hours, in hours, 2016



Working time and satisfaction with work and family, 2015, in%



Influence of flexible work scheduling on work-life balance, 2015, in%



Thesis

Flexible working hours provide opportunities to improve the work life balance.

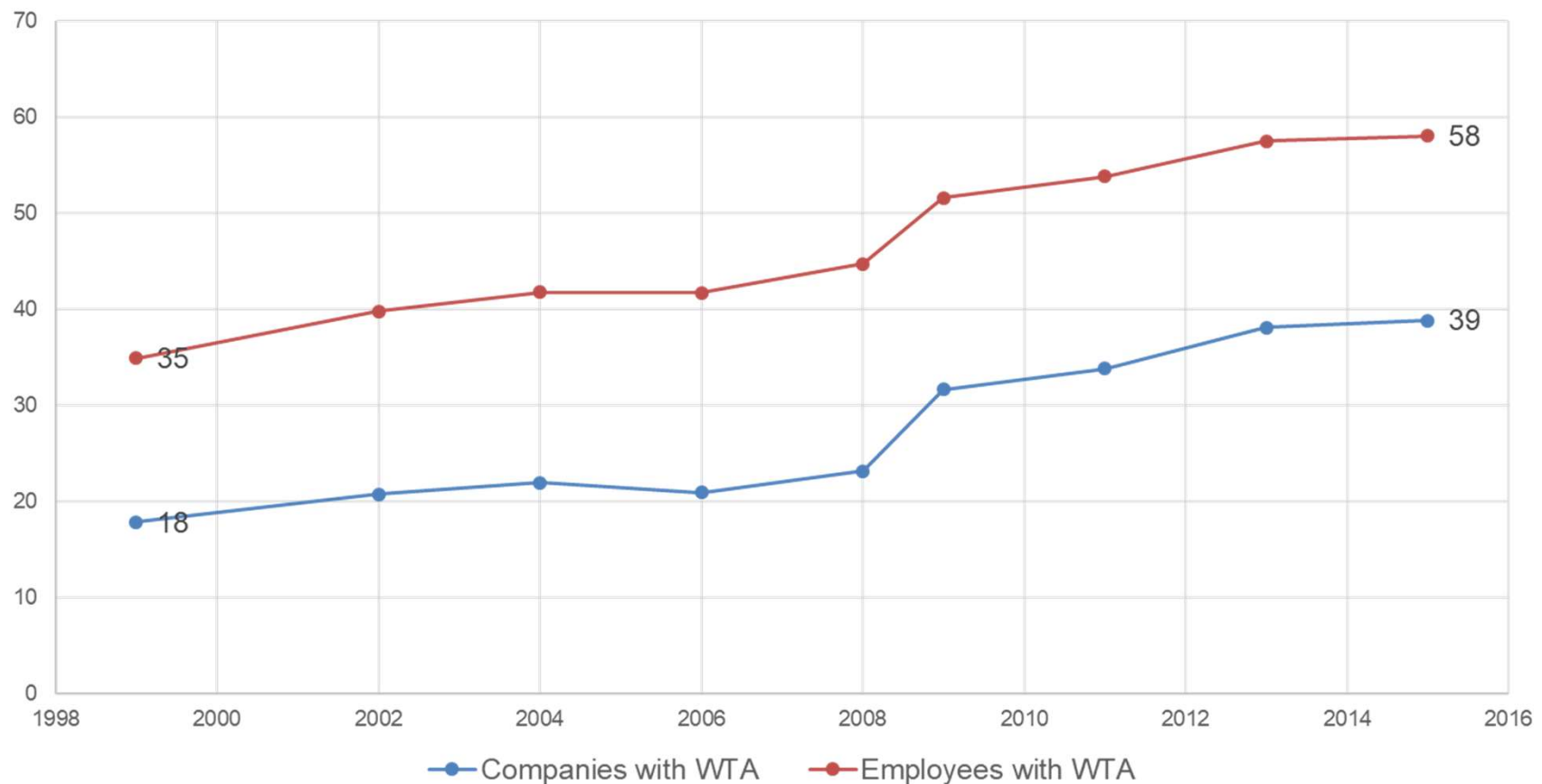
Central forms of flexible working time are:

- Time accounts
- Working lifetime accounts
- Options to shorten working hours

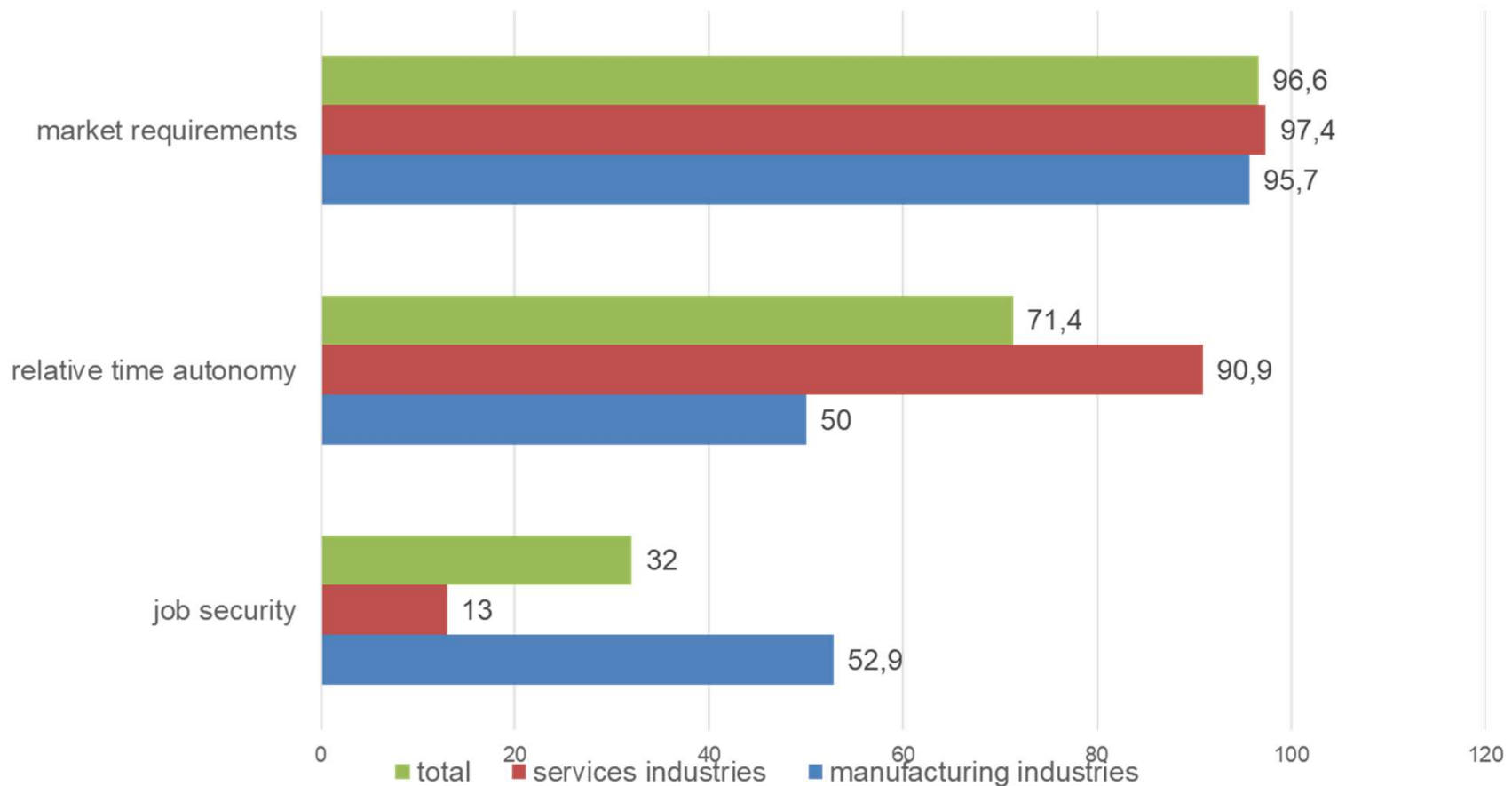
Central features of current working time policy

- Flexible working hours: time accounts
- Long-term / lifetime time accounts
- Options to shorten working hours
- Mobile work / home office
- Parental leave

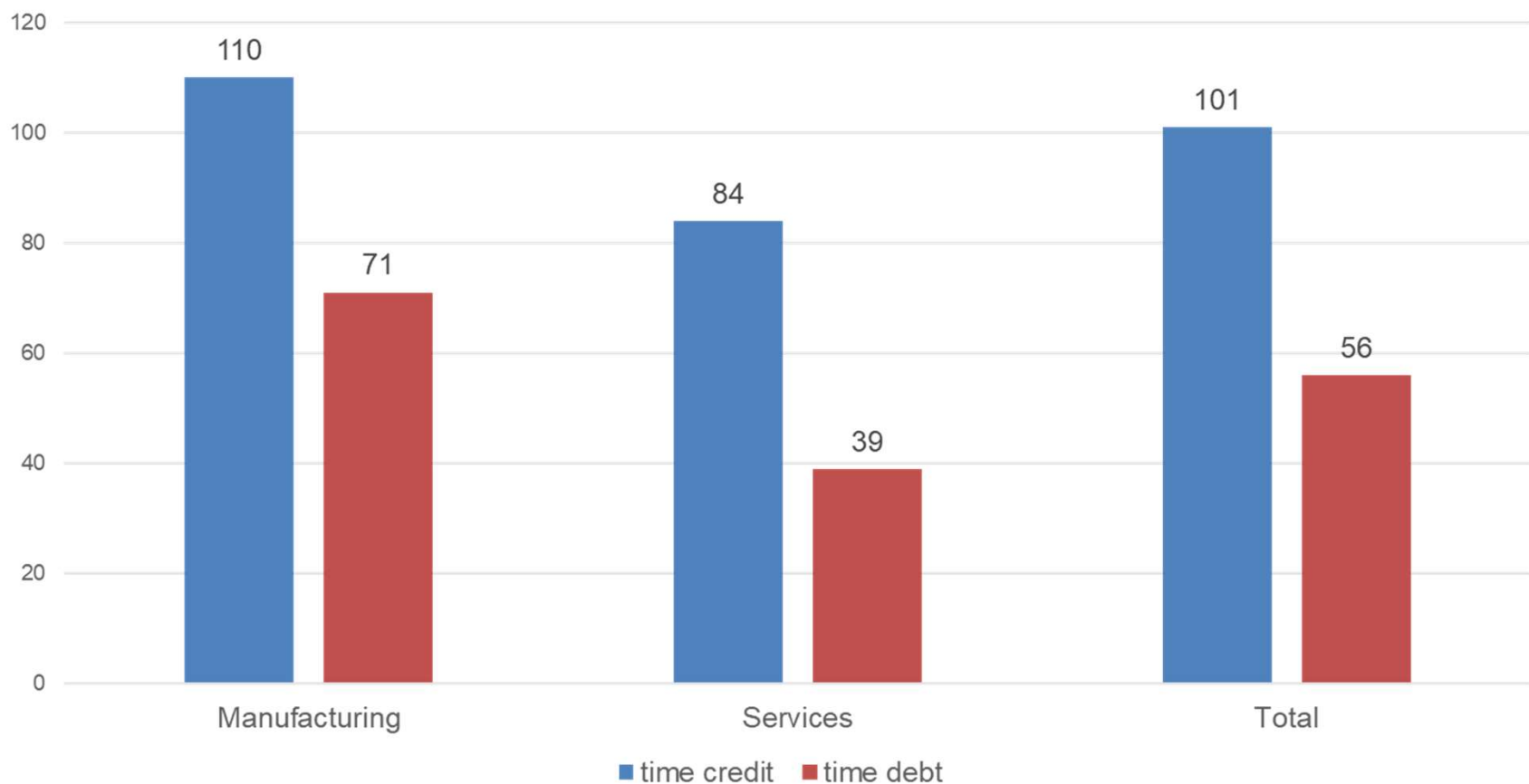
Development of working time accounts (WTA), ratio in %



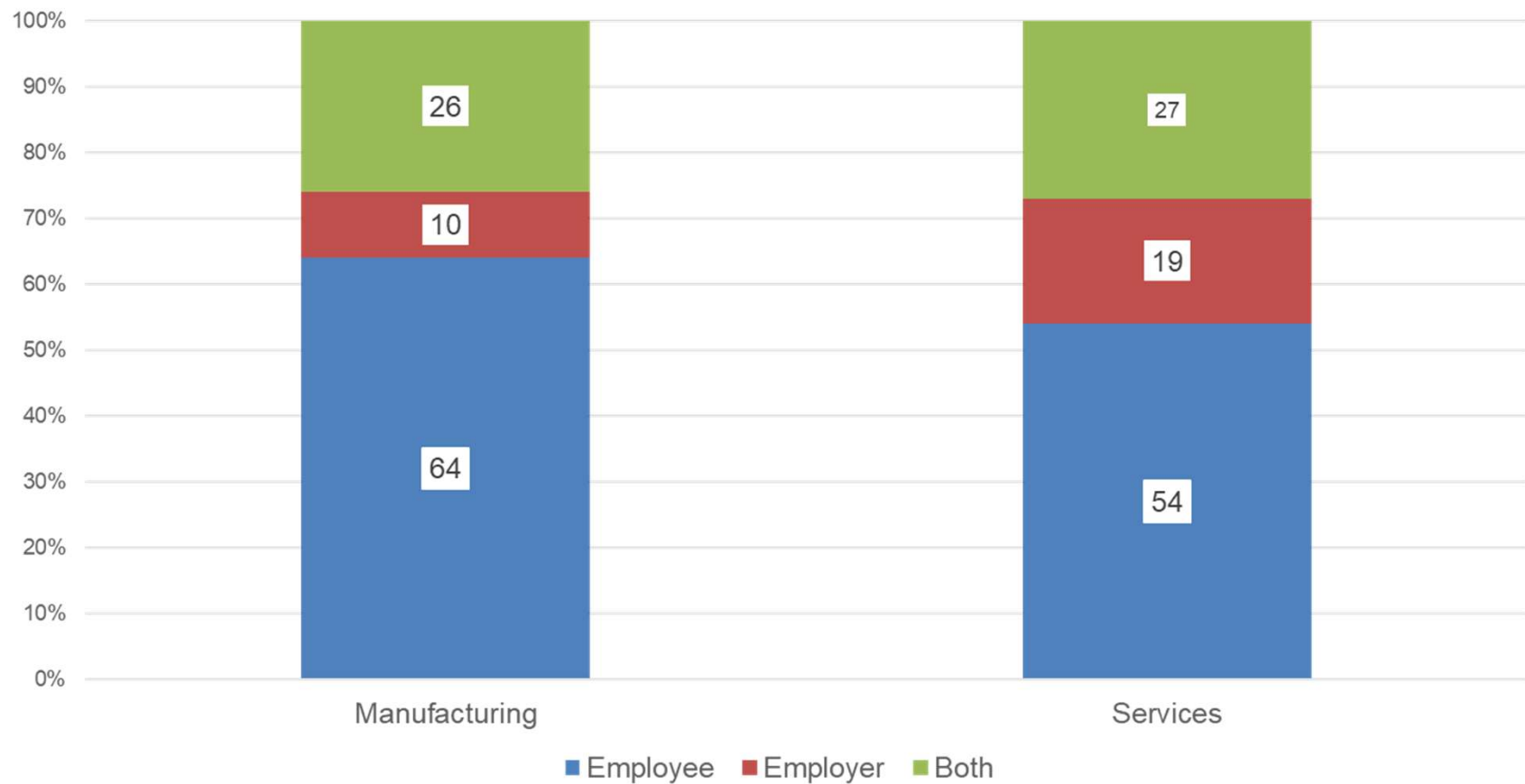
Aims of working time accounts, in %, multiple nominations



Threshold for time credit and debt, in hours



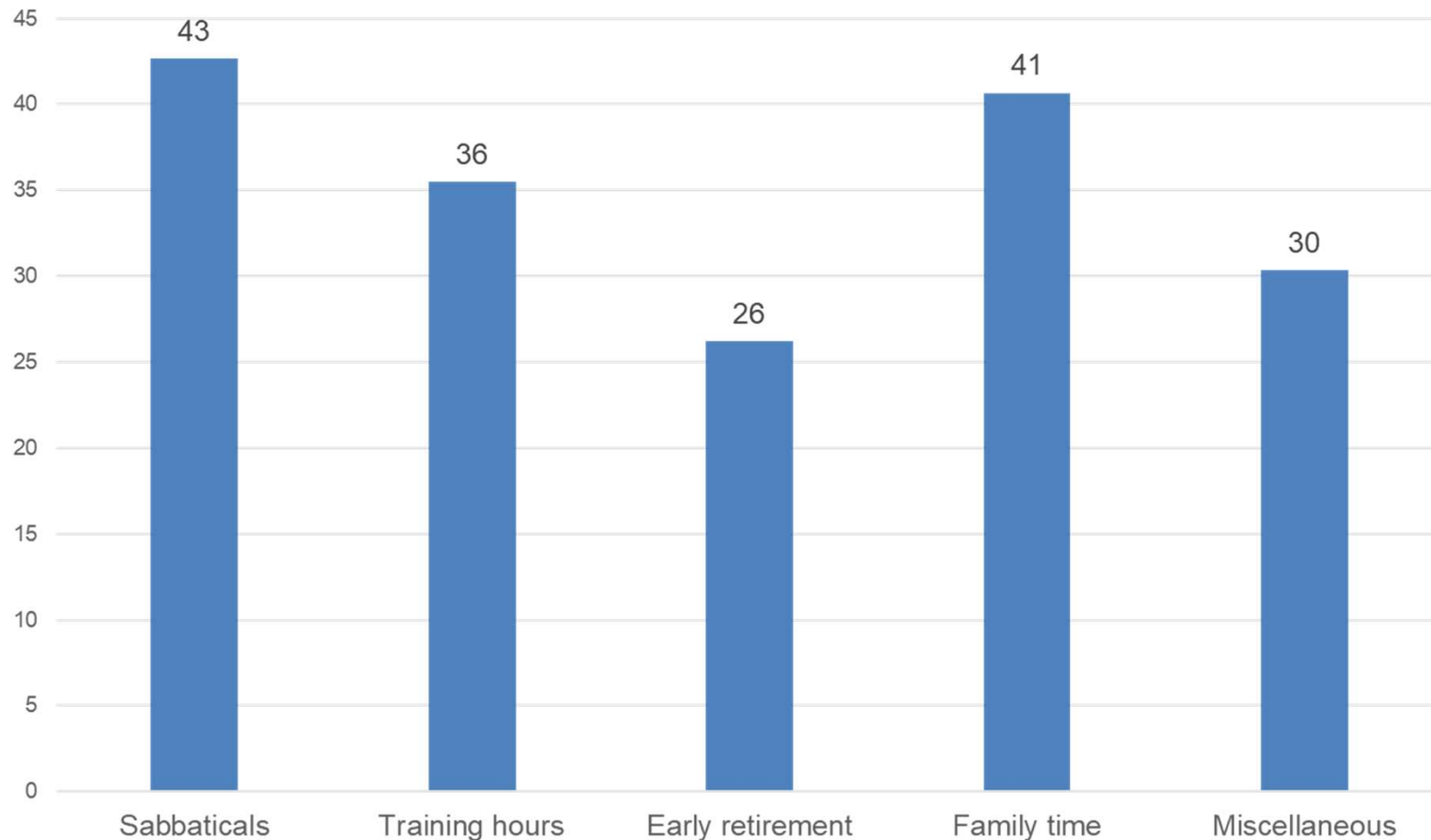
Disposal of time credit, 2015, in%



Flexi II-Act (2009): regulatory aspects

- company-based agreement
- written individual time account agreement
- individual saving credits for a biographically-oriented, flexible working life, for long-term full or partial time-out (sabbatical)
- early retirement
- further education
- parental leave
- nursing time

Use of time credit on long-term time accounts, 2016, multiple nominations, in %



Principles of new models of time flexibility

- Guaranteed options are the new principle of flexible working time organization
- New formula: more money or more free time for a limited period
- Options promote the change from uniform to individualized and differentiated working hours (paradigm shift).

Legal claims

- Since 2001, the Part-time and Temporary Employment Act offers a right to change from full-time to part-time employment
- The so-called Bridge Part-Time Act, which came into force in 2019, offers employees the opportunity to switch from full-time to part-time for a limited period of time and to return to full-time

“Bridge part-time act” (Brückenteilzeit) 2019

- Entitled to limited part-time employment for one to five years
- Companies from 46 employees
- After 6 months of employment
- No indication of reasons
- Can be rejected for operational reasons
- Collective bargaining parties may agree on different rules

Collective agreements providing options (1)

- Chemical industry East-Germany: Options to reduce working hours from 40 to up to 32
- Metal industry: Options to reduce working hours for a period from 6 to 24 months to up to 28 hours

Collective agreements providing options (2)

- German Rail 2016: 6 days more holidays or 2.6% more money or weekly working time reduction
- German Post 2018: increase in wages (3% / 2.1%) or time off: 60/42 hours per year (additional 102 hours)

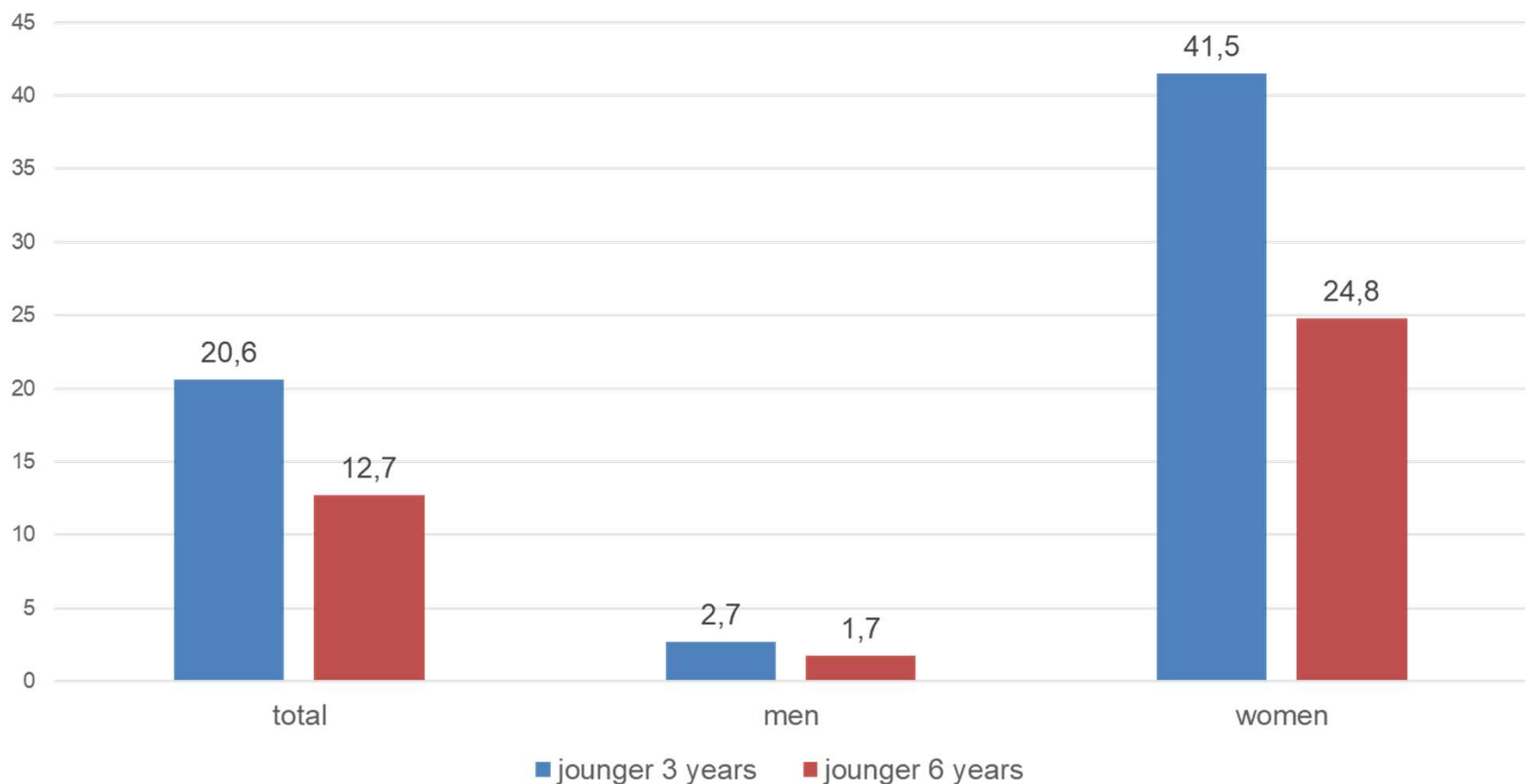
Parental leave

- Unpaid leave from work after the birth of a child until the child's third birthday.
- Up to 12 months of parental leave can also be transferred to the period between the child's 3rd and 8th birthday.
- Parental leave can be split between parents or can only be claimed by one parent.

Parental allowance

- Parental allowance is generally limited to twelve months immediately after the birth of the child.
- For partners the claim can be extended to a maximum of 14 months.
- Single parents are entitled to fourteen months

Parents' share of parental leave for all working parents, 2017



Homeoffice

- About 10% of employees work at least temporarily at home
- Theoretically for 40 % of all employees homeoffice would be possible
- Government is debating to introduce a right on homeoffice

Homeoffice

Employer

- Advantage
 - Higher productivity
 - Better work performance
- Disadvantage
 - Costs for equipment (laptop etc.)

Employee

- Advantage
 - Better work-life balance
 - More time autonomy
 - Less commuting time
- Disadvantage
 - Longer working hours
 - More stress

Conclusion

- Working time policy on work-life balance is a combination of statutory policy and collective bargaining policy
- Several statutory and collective agreements provided more scope to organise working time more flexibel and individually and to improve work-life balance
- Flexible working time schemes offer not only more time autonomy but also bear risks of greater time dependency: strong works councils are needed
- Time options help to reduce time discrepancies