



Federal Ministry for  
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,  
Women and Youth



# Gender equality policy for boys and men in Germany

A dossier on a cooperative gender equality policy



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## Preface

In order to achieve a cooperative gender equality policy, the perspectives of girls, women and mothers as well as of boys, men and fathers need to be taken into consideration. At the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, we believe that a gender equality policy for men should not constitute the opposite of a gender equality policy for women. They are not conflicting ideas, but rather two sides of the same coin. In order to achieve cooperative gender equality in the long term, both must be taken into account.



To us, the inclusion of boys and men in gender equality policy means introducing a needs-based policy that promotes equal opportunities for all people in our country.

We are currently working on this by developing an interdepartmental of an interdepartmental gender equality strategy and through the EU Council Presidency, where we have made gender equality policy one of the two key focuses.

The expectations placed on men in the world today are manifold and complex. On the one hand, men are expected to be emotionally open and understanding, yet simultaneously also strong and “masculine”. They need to be successful in their careers, but also actively participate in family life and make an equal contribution to bringing up their children in their role as loving, caring fathers. In light of these various demands, men often feel overwhelmed and struggle to openly raise their concerns, as their own concept of life does not permit them to do so. This reluctance to address concerns can often be attributed to their own upbringing or a traditional male role, which has prevailed over many generations.

In order to achieve true gender equality, women and men require a coordinated gender equality policy that facilitates an optimal balance between work and family for both men and women in their daily working lives and care obligations.

Particularly boys and men stand to gain far more than the loss of perceived privileges from gender equality. This dossier underlines our serious commitment to this topic and highlights that we are not turning a blind eye. It is the first of its kind to specifically address and broach the issues faced by men. The various sections illustrate current and future challenges, and open new perspectives and horizons for strong, self-confident and self-determined men and a modern society, in which partnership is not merely a term, but an actively experienced way of life.

I hope you find this policy insightful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Franziska Giffey". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Franziska Giffey

Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth



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# Summary

Progress in gender equality requires boys' and men's engagement. With this in mind, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (hereinafter also referred to as the Federal Ministry for Gender Equality or BMFSFJ), is currently pursuing a cooperative gender equality policy that directly involves boys and men with its own implementation strategy. This policy forms the central focus of this dossier, which addresses men in a triple role:

1. As agents of change: Boys and men also have their own concerns when it comes to gender equality; they want to live freely and well, beyond gender clichés, realise their potential and interests and enjoy relationships on equal terms.
2. As allies and partners of gender equality and women's emancipation: Even though boys and men may suffer from masculinity norms, they still remain structurally privileged. Gender equality policy has to account for historical context. It needs to demand boys and men to question their well-established privileges and support the gender equality concerns of women in solidarity.
3. As partners in an alliance for diversity and social justice: Gender equality cannot be regarded as achieved if only the most privileged men and women have the same rights and privileges. Cooperative gender equality policy involves boys and men working towards social justice and *equality for all genders*.

## Foundation: the empirical analysis

The first section of the dossier provides an assessment of the circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men in Germany at present, on the basis of the latest available information. It covers six topic areas: Education and career choice, labour market and employment, division of labour and family models, health and satisfaction, community engagement and volunteering, and criminality and violence.

The data highlights the fast pace at which traditional perceptions of masculinity and gender roles are changing in Germany. As a result, the gap in the employment rate between women (74 per cent) and men (82 per cent) is narrowing. The structural change in the labour market is offering men a range of new opportunities, which they are hesitantly yet nonetheless increasingly taking advantage of. Previously overlooked male care contributions – for example, caring for relatives, in particular amongst men over the age of 70 – are finally receiving recognition. Expanding notions of masculinity have also helped to shine a light on violence suffered by men. Furthermore, the knowledge that one-sided notions of masculinity present a risk to health has made its way into mainstream society.

At the same time, the assessment draws attention to strong forces of inertia. Traditional clichés stubbornly prevail in employment histories as does unequal pay. The gender pay gap remains at

21 per cent, placing Germany in second to last place in the entire EU. Men remain focused on their careers and dedicate less time to childcare and household chores than mothers. However, by now, 40 per cent of all fathers entitled to paternity leave take time off – a growing trend.

But 80 per cent of these men choose to take the shortest amount of eligible leave (two months). Two-thirds of all children in Germany would like to spend more time with their fathers. Many men themselves report that they aspire to achieve a better balance and to take something very personally view increased gender equality as a win: It makes sense from a financial point of view (86 per cent), would benefit relationships (82 per cent), lead to more equity (83 per cent) and work to the advantage of both genders (81 per cent). Only ten per cent of men in Germany view men as sole breadwinners. 82 per cent think that both men and women should work after starting a family (11 percentage points more than in 2007). However, in reality, this tends to remain an aspiration. Men still commonly encounter open and concealed resistance to their desire to work part-time and achieve a better work-life balance. To add to this, male vulnerabilities and victimisation experiences are often swept under the carpet. Male-specific approaches in prevention and healthcare are in just as short supply as support and counselling services tailored to men for a variety of issues and crises in life.

## Horizon: the 4x4 gender equality strategy for boys and men

In order to counter these simultaneous contradictions, the BMFSFJ views an expanded gender equality strategy for boys and men as urgently required; this will be deduced and discussed in the second part of this dossier. It will operate on two axes of action. The cross-sectional task is to pay special attention to particularly vulnerable groups.

The BMFSFJ wants to ground the **first axis of intervention** “equal opportunities” in sound and

proven concepts. This entails: Breaking down gender stereotypes and providing structural incentives to promote diversity and create equal opportunities regardless of gender, social class or migration or educational background. Projects on this axis that have achieved tangible success to date are “Boys’Day”, the “Klischeefrei” initiative and the “meinTestgelände” gender portal, for instance. The professional development of work with boys and men that reflects on gender also demands further support.

On the **second axis “fair distribution”**, the BMFSFJ intends to encourage new approaches aimed at accelerating the concrete redistribution of burdens and resources between genders. In this regard, an emphasis will be placed on the programmatic message: Gender equality means extensive adoption of the fair-share principle in both work and family life, the economy and society.

All unpaid work must be borne by both genders in equal measure. The BMFSFJ wants to inspire new momentum in this regard.

### The two strategic approaches are:

- The phase surrounding the birth of a child – decisive for gender-equality – should be systematically used to help fathers get involved from the very beginning and develop skills for baby and childcare at a similar speed to women.
- Fatherhood has to be promoted in companies and the opportunities afforded by digitisation should be used to increasingly turn fathers’ engagement in care into a matter of course.
- Male engagement in care – both for themselves (male health and self-care) and for others (care for relatives, neighbours and other contributions to societal cohesion) – are to be promoted to a greater extent.

In doing so, the Federal Ministry for Gender Equality thus implements a gender equality policy for boys and men that equally promotes diversity and freedom, sustainability and equality – holding boys and men accountable as agents of this change.

# 1

## Introduction

In Germany, 86 per cent of people view the realisation of equality between women and men as particularly important for the social cohesion of society. So, why do we still have a long way to go when it comes to achieving gender equality?

Gender equality is a complex matter, it can't simply be "decreed". To think this is possible would be to oversimplify the issues at hand. The multi-faceted notion of equality is determined by how people behave, how families organise themselves, how men and women divide work amongst themselves: All of this cannot be simply explained by individual tendencies and decisions. Social, economic and political values and framework conditions play a significant role in these factors – and sometimes lead to rather contradictory results.

A look at the current state of gender equality therefore requires an understanding of a dual field of tension: on the one hand, a field of tension between individual people/families and their surrounding structures/framework conditions; on the other hand, a field of tension between dreams and reality, between attitudes and actual daily practice. This preliminary remark is key to releasing individual people and families from the excessive demand of bearing sole responsibility for the realisation of true gender equality.

As political reality shows: Progress in gender equality can only be achieved through the interplay of people and their surrounding structures. At the same time, it remains a lengthy process, whereby many sub-processes interact with different dynamics and changing trendsetters. Prof. Andrea Maihofer, from the Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Basel, summarises her diagnosis of the present situation as "a paradoxical concurrence of persistence and change".<sup>1</sup> This aptly describes the current situation in Germany.

A tremendous shift in attitudes has occurred within the space of a few decades: Gender hierarchies and discrimination on the basis of gender are now shunned by the large majority of the population. "The previously unquestioned complementary distribution of work has given way to the demand for equal distribution of household chores and gainful employment: 91 per cent of 20 to 39-year-olds in Germany feel that both parents should participate in childcare, with 81 per cent sharing the opinion that both should be equally responsible for providing the household income. Even though the actual division of labour in Germany is relatively far from achieving equitable ratios, a new concept has nevertheless been established – a new idea of what is 'proper' –, which juxtaposes the notions from the 50s and 60s

1 Maihofer, Andrea (2007). Gender in Motion: gesellschaftliche Transformationsprozesse – Umbrüche in den Geschlechterverhältnissen?: eine Problemskizze. In: Grisard, Dominique; Häberlein, Dominique; Kaiser, Anelis & Saxer, Sibylle (Eds.): Gender in Motion. Die Konstruktion von Geschlecht in Raum und Erzählung. Politik der Geschlechterverhältnisse, pages 281–315. Frankfurt am Main: Campus-Verlag

and has increasingly overshadowed outdated ideas.”<sup>2</sup> Change is palpable at this level.

The aspect of persistence (status quo, gridlock) refers to the fact that actual living conditions change at a much slower pace. For example:

- The 82.4 per cent employment rate for men still remains higher than the 74 per cent rate for women, despite a continual reduction in the difference between genders. Women are significantly more often to be found in part-time employment than men. Women are disproportionately represented in the services sector, men in industry and agriculture.<sup>3</sup>
- On average, men earn significantly more than women. In 2018, the gender pay gap in Germany of 21 per cent was above the EU average of 16 per cent.<sup>4</sup> In the EU, only Estonia has a larger pay gap.
- Only some 40 per cent of fathers entitled to paternity leave take time off. Eighty per cent of those who do so elect to only take off the lowest entitlement of two months (with 92 per cent of women typically taking 10 to 12 months of parental leave).<sup>5</sup>

As a rule, the following applies: Masculinity – key word: toxic masculinity – is noticeably coming under scrutiny. Despite this, “masculine” behaviour – at least with regard to the strong focus on achievement and employment – remains engrained in society.

In order to achieve freedom of choice, framework conditions in society, the economy and politics must no longer revolve around traditional models of familial work distribution. It needs to be acknowledged that the promotion of male “care contributions” is a resource so far underestimated and is not utilised enough with regard to solving a range of urgent challenges faced by society and on the labour market. The stipulation of both the German Basic Law (Art. 3, para. 2) and the Lisbon Treaty (Art. 3, lit. 3, para. 2)<sup>6</sup> can be easily summarised: as the task to distribute all resources and burdens, and all paid and unpaid work fairly, that is fifty-fifty, between the genders.

The large majority of people in Germany want to live their lives in equality and flourish free from the constraints of gender.<sup>7</sup> They want to achieve equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of their gender. Gender equality policy therefore builds on a solid social agreement. In Germany, equality is more than simply an abstract target figure – it is a cultural value. Gender equality policy therefore has not only the ability but also the duty to turn constitutionally stipulated gender equality targets into reality, by naming cultures and structures that promote gender stereotyping and encouraging the transformation thereof.

The strings of a violin can only sound when fixed at both ends. In a similar vein, justice in gender relations can only be achieved if both women and men do their part. The fairness principle is consequently a cornerstone of the gender equality policy of the Federal Ministry for Gender Equality.

2 Henry-Huthmacher, Christine (2014). Familienleitbilder in Deutschland, page 20. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. <http://library.kas.de/GetObject.ashx?GUID=88cfea3b-dd05-e411-9d2b-005056b96343>

3 Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2019). Die Arbeitsmarktsituation von Frauen und Männern 2018. Blickpunkt Arbeitsmarkt. <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statischer-Content/Arbeitsmarktberichte/Personengruppen/generische-Publikationen/Frauen-Maenner-Arbeitsmarkt.pdf>

4 Statistisches Bundesamt (2020). Gender Pay Gap 2018: Deutschland eines der EU-Schlusslichter. <https://www.destatis.de/Europa/DE/Thema/BevoelkerungArbeitSoziales/Arbeitsmarkt/GenderPayGap.html> (Accessed on: 3 May 2020)

5 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Press release no. 22, 28 May 2019. [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/Zahl-der-Woche/2019/PD19\\_22\\_p002.html](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/Zahl-der-Woche/2019/PD19_22_p002.html)

6 The European Union “combats social exclusion and discrimination, and promotes social equality and social protection, the equality of women and men, solidarity between generations and the protection of children’s rights.”

7 Henry-Huthmacher, Christine (2014). Familienleitbilder in Deutschland. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. <http://library.kas.de/GetObject.ashx?GUID=88cfea3bdd05e4119d2b005056b96343>

The new interdepartmental gender equality strategy of the Federal Government also specifies the corresponding targets.

This dossier features the corresponding implementation strategy with an emphasis on the target group of boys and men. It takes a deep look at the life circumstances of boys and men.<sup>8</sup> It poses questions on the challenges, issues, vulnerabilities and needs of boys and men. But it also investigates their tasks, duties, contributions, and responsibilities. For gender equality policy for boys and men does not constitute a men's rights policy, which pits the life circumstances of genders or certain gender groups against each other. Instead it forms a necessary complement to women's policies, aimed at the same objective through independent contributions: Making diversity normal, desirable and liveable.

The path ahead remains long. Traditional masculinity standards – in particular the critical importance of focusing on achievement and employment in men's lives – still prevail. Choosing a career in social, educational, or care sectors still constitutes a major hurdle for boys. At the same time, men are modernising their self-image, they get more involvement as fathers in everyday life and take on more household chores compared to their forefathers. However, as they still are not free from career expectations, many men are struggling to achieve a balance. This dossier demonstrates these fields of tension and attempts to do justice to the large diversity of men and their circumstances.

## How is the dossier structured?

Section 2 provides a quick introduction to the topic of men, masculinities and the policy for men.

Section 3 uses recent data to illustrate the current situation of boys and men in Germany. What challenges do they face? What do they desire? Which groups of men are particularly affected? The results are supplemented and illustrated by highlights of previous projects and commitments for boys and men.

Section 4 develops a framework model for the future gender equality policy for boys and men.

Section 5 outlines an agenda for the current and future policy for boys and men and how this can be successfully integrated into a cooperative gender equality policy in Germany.

Section 6 gives boys and men a compass to show them how to further develop their masculinities in a diversified society in line with the times.

The entire dossier is infused with the conviction that political engagement of boys and men does not “only” serve to promote progress in gender equality; it forms an essential aspect of societal cohesion, economic prosperity, solidarity between generations and safeguarding our livelihoods.

.....  
8 “When is a man a man?” Herbert Grönemeyer asked in a pop song back in 1984. The gender equality policy for boys and men is committed to an inclusive approach: It addresses all people who consider themselves boys or men. However, a deeper look into the needs and challenges faced by boys and men with a trans and/or queer/non-binary/gender-fluid gender identity goes beyond the scope of this publication.

# 2

## Men, masculinity, policy for men

“One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.” This renowned phrase by Simone de Beauvoir applies in equal measure to boys and men. Growing up, a boy, too, learn how to “properly” be a man. Since boys are made into men, it does not suffice to simply “let boys be boys”. There is no such thing as a “pure” boy who is not influenced by his culture and society. “Being a boy” and “being a man” always develop and occur within social circumstances.

The technical term for this is male socialisation. It denotes the process of a boy becoming a man in close interaction with his environment and himself. The objective is the capability to act as a man in society, and social recognition as such.

For societal cohesion, it is necessary that we learn to feel that we belong to a group and that we act accordingly. Male socialisation becomes problematic when the desire for recognition as boy and man means not being able to live as one actually wants.

Lothar Böhnisch and Reinhard Winter are pioneers in the research of male socialisation in the German-speaking world.<sup>9</sup> They suggested summarising the process of becoming a man as the appropriation of seven principles:

- Externalisation (Masculinity is ... not engaging with your own inner world);
- Power (Masculinity is ... wanting to dominate yourself and others);
- Silence (Masculinity is ... not speaking about your feelings/emotions);
- Soleness (Masculinity is ... getting by without help);
- Distance from one own’s body (Masculinity is ... neglecting your own body, cutting out body signals and “using” your body as a tool);
- Rationality (Masculinity is ... warding off and depreciating feelings);
- Control (Masculinity is ... having everyone and everything under control).

Following these principles leads to “denial of the self”,<sup>10</sup> to a profound distancing of the man from his “reality” combined with experiences of emptiness and helplessness.

Intellectual discussions on this topic have progressed in the years since Böhnisch and Winter wrote these principles. The question was broached as to of how male socialisation can be characterised as more development-friendly and resource-rich. Research also looked into how the majority of men actually turn out to be great guys, despite being squeezed into such tight restraints of masculinity.

9 Böhnisch, Lothar & Winter, Reinhard (1993). Männliche Sozialisation. Bewältigungsprobleme männlicher Geschlechtsidentität im Lebenslauf, pages 128 ff. Weinheim/Munich: Juventa

10 Ibid. page 25

These big questions do not need to be definitively answered in order to be capable of acting in favour of gender equality. It is safe to say:

- Male socialisation is a real thing. Being a boy and man is something that is learned. The learning steps exacted always go hand in hand with power structures and maintaining a position of dominance.
- There are exigencies for men concerning masculinity. We all, men and women alike, share social orientational knowledge of what “masculinity” is. These social convictions feel more natural than they truly are.
- Masculinity exigencies create norms and hierarchies. “Strong competitive behaviour”<sup>11</sup> is typical amongst boys. This fuels the rather strange, yet extremely influential assumption among men that there is a kind of masculinity pecking order, whereby it is crucial that a man is ranked as highly as possible and views those below him with scorn. (Or, when that is not attainable: To get in the best possible books of those ranked higher than oneself.)
- Men want to live up to masculinity exigencies – and finally always have to fail. The exigencies

are simply too high and contradictory to be met. Being a man, is therefore, intertwined with a constant feeling of not quite being good enough.

- Male socialisation thus standardises and limits development and diversity. For the majority of men do not want to risk appearing “unmasculine”; they prefer to switch to autopilot and act as is expected of them. Many lose their connection with themselves. This is the reason why, for instance, many men struggle to articulate their feelings or to accept help.
- Male socialisation “justifies” social inequalities and gender hierarchies by giving men the illusion that they are the centre of the world, entitled to privileges and allowed to govern. This leads to a lot of pain and anger – and continues to contribute to indefensible inequalities.

These observations particularly apply to men who conform to the statistical norm for heterosexual, white Cis men (comparative description can be found in the following box).

### Genderfluid and pansexual?! An attempt to clarify terms<sup>12</sup>

It is no easy task to maintain an overview on the terms used in gender issues. The most important task in this regard is to carefully distinguish between three dimensions and questions.

#### Dimension 1: How much is gender contingent on biology?

The differentiation between sex and gender is key for discussing gender issues to ensure that cultural gender norms are not rashly perceived as prescribed by nature and non-fluid (which they are not, as gender research shows).

#### Dimension 2: Which gender do I feel I belong to?

The visible gender body and subjective gender identity are the same for the majority of people. Men with male gender characteristics and that identify as men are referred to as Cis men. The term “Cis” is derived from the Latin for “on this side of”. Body and identity are in agreement. The addition of “Cis” makes it clear that this perceived self-evident notion is, in fact, not self-evident, even if it does conform to the statistical norm.

11 BMFSFJ (2013). Jungen und ihre Lebenswelten – Vielfalt als Chance und Herausforderung. Bericht des Beirats Jungenpolitik, page 226.

<https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/94086/725638d3f89fd2c0ebcb86e694dd48b6/jungen-und-ihre-lebenswelten-bericht-beirat-jungenpolitik-data.pdf>

12 For more information see: <https://www.regenbogenportal.de/glossar/>

People with female gender characteristics who identify as male are referred to as trans men. Their body and identity are not in agreement. The body is female, but their experience is male – as is clear.

In contrast, many – particularly young – people do not want to, or are unable to obviously assign their gender (or let themselves be assigned) as either male or female. They accordingly do not clearly express their gender identity along cultural gender lines, instead often electing to describe themselves as non-binary or gender-fluid.

On the other hand, the term intersex does not pertain to the difference between body and identity, but instead to a non-clear gender body (independent from the gender identity).

### **Dimension 3:** Which gender am I sexually attracted to?

Sexual orientation (who am I attracted to?) should not be confused with gender identity (how do I feel?). Heterosexual men are attracted to women, whilst homosexual men are attracted to men. Bisexuals are interested in both men and women. Pansexuals do not connect sexual attraction to the gender of the person. Asexuals typically feel no or little attraction that they would like to act out sexually.

The term queer is used in a variety of ways, however often as a collective term for all those who do not correspond to the statistical norm. The English acronym LGBTIQ\* (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersexual, Queer and the so-called gender star as a symbol for and show of respect for gender diversity) is also widely used in this context.

These questions and correlations preoccupy university research on gender and masculinity as well as specialists working with boys, men, and fathers. The latter emerged relatively simultaneously throughout the German-speaking world as a result of the early men's movement in the 1980s. At the beginning, the central issue was how men could react "well" to the emancipation of women. At this time, this question had already developed two sides and perspectives: a (pro-) feminist one ("How can men support women and their emancipation?") and an emancipatory one ("How can we, as men, free ourselves from the constricting and pathogenic masculinity exigencies and make our own independent contributions to just relations between genders?"). This clear link between pro-feminist and emancipatory motivational

forces under the umbrella of a progressive men's movement served as a model internationally.

On this basis, a diverse range of work with boys, men, and fathers has been developed in Germany over the last three decades. Private, religious, and state institutions have created a network that offers men support and guidance in a variety of life circumstances, although it is by no means as close-knit everywhere as required. Facilitating access to a diverse and well-grounded range of services for counselling, education and guidance in every region is, therefore, also one of the key tasks for a modern gender equality policy for boys and men. However, such a network can have a much further-reaching impact.

“Men are setting out and on their way”, the BMFSFJ stated in 2007. “As a result, they are not just responding to the challenges of the women’s movement, but they are also demanding an independent and just as effective gender equality policy for men to ensure that attention is also paid to the concerns, needs and disadvantages of men in society.”<sup>13</sup> This finding was verified in 2015: 60 per cent of men agreed with the statement that gender equality policy does “not adequately address the needs and concerns of men”,<sup>14</sup> with young men disproportionately voicing their agreement with this statement.

Sixty-five per cent of men support the claim that “gender equality policy is just another guise for the advancement of women.”<sup>15</sup>

This shows the key fields of tension between which gender equality policy for boys and men is moving: Is the policy about siding with boys and men; liberation from gender norms; (re-)education; or emancipation?

Gender equality policy for boys and men faces a fundamental challenge in this regard: Historically speaking, men are the privileged gender who have secured a disproportionately large share of rights, power and resources for themselves. If we leave the past behind and concentrate on the current situation, we see men as the challenged gender, whose earlier supremacy is increasingly (and rightfully so) being called into question, while the outlines of new concepts of less toxic masculinities are still blurred. The large extent of diversity and inequality within the group of men themselves is only slowly being recognised and acknowledged. We are at a threshold: What previously was the case no longer holds true, but the new way has also not entirely taken over.

In this transitional phase, gender equality policy addresses boys and men in differentiated way: Yes, boys and men remain privileged to this day as they profit from unequal gender relations and, for instance, receive more pay for the same work. However, they are also negatively affected, as they themselves are subject to masculinity norms and unequal gender relations – and, for example, forced to “sensibly” assume the role of the breadwinner as a result of the wage gap, even if this goes against their wishes.

Gender equality policy needs to do justice to this complexity. Of course, it would be simpler to just view men as either perpetrators or victims. This either-or way of thinking is neither fair nor does it lead to solutions when it comes to gender issues. Germans are also fed up with this black and white way of thinking with regard to gender politics.<sup>16</sup> Gender equality policy has to pay more attention to the concurrence of contradictions: Men are, in equal measure, privileged, restricted, and isolated by masculinity norms. Gender equality policy has to handle these issues fairly. It does this by taking boys and men and their different tasks seriously in the gender-political development process:

- Boys and men are agents of change – because they also have concerns about gender equality, want to live freely and well, realise their true selves, conduct relationships on equal terms, follow their desires and they also want to love. For this reason, gender equality policy cannot remain a call for justice, but asks boys and men for their own views in a gender-equal society – and supports them on their path.

13 BMFSFJ (2017). Männer-Perspektiven – Auf dem Weg zu mehr Gleichstellung?, page 8. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/115580/5a-9685148523d2a4ef12258d060528cd/maenner-perspektiven-auf-dem-weg-zu-mehr-gleichstellung-data.pdf>

14 Ibid. page 43

15 Ibid. page 50

16 Ibid. page 7f.

- Boys and men are supporters of gender equality and women's emancipation – because they must bear responsibility for their “patriarchal dividend”<sup>17</sup> (not in the sense of original sin!). Cooperative gender equality policy, therefore, deems it necessary and reasonable that boys and men support the emancipation of women, stand back, make sacrifices and sometimes simply “just pipe down”.
- Boys and men are partners in a bigger alliance – since gender equality cannot be achieved if only the most privileged men and women enjoy the same rights and privileges. Cooperative gender equality policy gets boys and men involved in the process for achieving social equality and *equality for all genders*.

## Conclusion

An effective gender equality policy for boys and men moves within various fields of tension: It needs to be independent and subordinate to a

larger whole. It needs to both empower and restrict men. It needs to promote contemporary role models and keep an eye on those allegedly left behind. It must appeal to the vast majority of heterosexual, white cis men and accommodate the concerns of all men who are “different” in one way or another.

In this demanding conflict situation, gender equality policy for boys and men has to promote social discourse, trigger change, ask uncomfortable questions and overcome familiar certainties. It needs to do so in a cautious and respectful manner, in recognition of the past, directed to a future in which all people can do and achieve what they do best and/or most aspire to do regardless of their gender.

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth pursues these guiding principles in its daily work. They also form the basis of this dossier.

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17 Connell, Robert/Raewyn (2000). *Der gemachte Mann. Konstruktion und Krise von Männlichkeiten*, 2. edition, pages 100 ff. Opladen

## 3

## Current circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men: An assessment

Before the guiding principles and gender equality policy with a focus on men can be explained in more detail, it is important that certain facts are established in this regard. Section 3 combines statements on the current life circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men in six topic areas: education and career choice, labour market and employment, division of labour and family models, health and satisfaction, community engagement and volunteering, and criminality and violence. These covers important – but certainly not all – experiences of boys and men.

The red thread of this section is to be the claim to base the core gender-political challenges faced by boys and men on the most recently available data – and to show these in a condensed form. On a qualitative dimension, the emphasis is placed on the key question of which gender-specific challenges boys and men encounter in today's world. On a quantitative dimension, the key question is how resources and burdens are distributed between genders or certain gender groups.

Gender equality is a highly important matter to the German population. The majority of men, too, call on the state to pursue an active gender equality policy:<sup>18</sup>

- Seventy-nine per cent of all men find gender equality crucial for societal cohesion. This

figure is even higher amongst men under 50 years of age.

- Only 16 per cent of men in Germany believe that gender equality has been achieved in Germany. 84 per cent are of the opinion that there is still room for improvement.
- For 80 per cent of men, it is no longer a question of whether gender equality policy is necessary, but rather how it should be designed. Men are also progressive in this regard: The majority call for an active and forward-going gender equality policy aimed at achieving social, moral and economic justice between women and men in society. The large majority of men in Germany also view it as a personal win: because gender equality within partnerships is often economically sensible (86 per cent), benefits the partnership (82 per cent), creates more equality (83 per cent) and entails advantages for both genders (81 per cent). Only a small minority (10 per cent of men in Germany) think that men should remain the breadwinners. On the other hand, 82 per cent are of the opinion that, even after starting a family, both men and women should work (11 percentage points more than in 2007).<sup>19</sup>

In short: Men also see it as their mission to help achieve gender equality as stipulated by the constitution and acknowledge the potential and opportunities that they can benefit from, too.

18 BMFSFJ (2017). Männer-Perspektiven – Auf dem Weg zu mehr Gleichstellung? Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/115580/5a9685148523d2a4ef12258d060528cd/maenner-perspektiven-auf-dem-weg-zu-mehr-gleichstellung-data.pdf>

19 Ibid.

## 3.1 Education and vocational choice

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*The level of educational achievement in Germany is constantly improving. However, girls progress a lot quicker than boys. Boys from socio-economically disadvantaged and lower-educational social backgrounds are particularly vulnerable in this regard.*
- 

*Attending nurseries and pre-schools, prevents children from families with a lower-educational background from losing their connection to the education system before starting school. Boys stand to benefit from this in particular. However, children from disadvantaged social backgrounds are (more) rarely afforded these opportunities.*
- 

*Career choices are still strongly influenced by gender stereotypes. These stereotypes give boys another opportunity to make up for a disadvantaged education, but this is not without its gender-political and economic issues.*

Education plays a crucial role in professional development, financial success and participation in society. A fair distribution of educational resources and achievements between genders is consequently both a criterion and measuring stick for successful gender equality. When looking at the category of boys and men, it also needs to be closely examined whether the numbers and facts surrounding the idea of boys as the “losers in the education system” add up.

### Pre-school education

We begin learning from (at the latest) the moment we are born. Our initial years on the planet lay the

foundations on which we stand for our entire lives. Unfortunately, this also means that unequal pressures and educational opportunities also make a deep impact from as early as the moment we are born. This explains why, for instance, three-year-old children from well-educated families have a vocabulary twice as large as children from families with lower educational backgrounds.<sup>20</sup>

The 2018 Educational Report from the Federal Government<sup>21</sup> distinguishes three risk situations that influence the development of a child’s competencies: lower-qualified parents or those from a lower educational background (education-based risk situation), parents in precarious employment or who are unemployed (social risk situation), and a family income under the poverty risk threshold (financial risk situation). Twenty-four per cent of children in Germany are affected by at least one of these three risk situations. At 49 per cent, the risk for children from a migration background is double that of children without a migration background (whereby this value has decreased by 6 percentage points since 2006).<sup>22</sup>

As educational status and the financial situation of families have an impact on the development and learning opportunities of children, day-care facilities play a decisive role in the facilitation and support of educational opportunities (especially language skills). Studies have shown that attending high-quality day-care facilities has a positive impact on a child’s development and acquisition of skills.<sup>23</sup> However, the children that could benefit the most from this are under-represented in the statistics.<sup>24</sup> Figure 1 depicts this statement using the variable of migration background.

20 Cited from BMFSFJ (2016). Gleiche Chancen durch frühe Bildung. Gute Ansätze und Herausforderungen im Zugang zur Kindertagesbetreuung, page 7. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/112554/a73b1eb50d3b49105e13eb2213501581/gleiche-chancen-durch-fruehe-bildung-data.pdf>

21 Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung (2018). Bildung in Deutschland 2018. Ein indikatorengestützter Bericht mit einer Analyse zu Wirkungen und Erträgen von Bildung. <https://www.bildungsbericht.de/de/bildungsberichte-seit-2006/bildungsbericht-2018/pdf-bildungsbericht-2018/bildungsbericht-2018.pdf>

22 Ibid. page 38

23 Biedinger, Nicole & Becker, Birgit (2010). Frühe ethnische Bildungsungleichheit: Der Einfluss des Kindergartenbesuchs auf die deutsche Sprachfähigkeit und die allgemeine Entwicklung. In: Becker, Birgit & Reimer, David (Ed.). Vom Kindergarten bis zur Hochschule. Die Generierung von ethnischen und sozialen Disparitäten in der Bildungsbiographie, pages 49–79. Wiesbaden: Springer VS

24 Cited from BMFSFJ (2016). Gleiche Chancen durch frühe Bildung. Gute Ansätze und Herausforderungen im Zugang zur Kindertagesbetreuung, pages 8 and 9. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/112554/a73b1eb50d3b49105e13eb2213501581/gleiche-chancen-durch-fruehe-bildung-data.pdf>

Figure 1: Day-care rate for children under 6 years of age<sup>25</sup>

	Children under 3 years of age		Children between 3 and 6 years of age	
	Without migration background	With migration background	Without migration background	With migration background
East Germany (incl. Berlin)	60 %	26 %	100 %	73 %
Germany overall	42 %	21 %	100 %	81 %

Why are the children who would most benefit from day-care facilities the ones who have least access to them. The availability of places, costs and the geographical accessibility can pose extremely high obstacles to overcome for parents from a lower educational background.<sup>26</sup> In order to combat this inequality, the BMFSFJ launched the federal programme “Frühe Bildung: Gleiche Chancen – Große Schritte für kleine Füße” [Early Education: Equal Opportunities – Big Steps for Small Feet].<sup>27</sup>

Boys – regardless of age, care level and migration background – tend to profit from day-care facilities more than girls.<sup>28</sup> However, the differences are low and not surprising, considering boys are slightly disproportionately represented amongst newborns.<sup>29</sup> The data does not provide any indication of systematic discrimination against girls.

Day-care facilities can be contradictory in terms of gender equality. On the one hand, they promote equal opportunities (with regard to migration backgrounds and gender); yet, on the other, studies and practical experience have proven that nurseries and other day-care facilities are entities that convey and reinforce gender stereotypes. In this way, “the notion of good childcare still

strongly revolves around the housewife form of femininity”.<sup>30</sup> For example, an empirical analysis of the spatial arrangement of 20 day-care centres found that it “largely cements traditional gender perceptions. That is to say, the spatial positions (...) are arranged in such a way that the stereotypical feminine activities are prioritised and clearly separated from the stereotypically male domain. Whilst a handicraft area can be found in all nurseries, a workshop area is only found on the odd occasion and is always in a different area to the handicraft area, with no clear indication of how often it is used. This clear spatial separation is also evident for doll houses and construction play areas. Moreover, in role-playing, household situations rule supreme, while settings based on careers, for example, are hardly ever found.”<sup>31</sup>

Similarly, a study on the situation of men in day-care facilities found that role expectations and behaviour patterns of pre-school teachers are shaped by stereotypes. Men are consequently more often responsible for the “wild boys”, scuffle and jostle more, assume more responsibility for home technology, sports and exercise.<sup>32</sup> Action is required to counteract these processes, to work towards improved gender balance amongst teaching staff and also to achieve reflection in the treatment of gender stereotypes.

25 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Betreuungsquote von Kindern unter 6 Jahren mit und ohne Migrationshintergrund am 1. März 2018. Version: 11. February 2019. <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Soziales/Kindertagesbetreuung/Tabellen/betreuungsquote-migration-unter6jahren-aktuell.html>

26 Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration (2013). Hürdenlauf zur Kita: Warum Eltern mit Migrationshintergrund ihr Kind seltener in die frühkindliche Tagesbetreuung schicken. [https://www.stiftung-mercator.de/content/uploads/2020/12/SVR\\_Huerdenlauf-zur-Kita\\_Juni\\_2013.pdf](https://www.stiftung-mercator.de/content/uploads/2020/12/SVR_Huerdenlauf-zur-Kita_Juni_2013.pdf)

27 See <https://www.fruehe-chancen.de>

28 Statistisches Bundesamt (2020). Statistiken der Kinder und Jugendhilfe. Kinder und tätige Personen in Tageseinrichtungen und in öffentlich geförderter Kindertagespflege am 01.03.2019, pages 47 ff.

29 Statistisches Bundesamt (2020). Lebendgeborene in Deutschland nach Jahr, Monat und Geschlecht. GENESISOnline (Accessed on: 21 March 2020)

30 Nentwich, Julia; Vogt, Franziska; Tennhoff, Wiebke; Schälén, Stefanie (2014). Puppenstuben, Bauecken und Waldtage: (Un)Doing Gender in Kinderkrippen. Eine Studie im Rahmen des Nationalen Forschungsprogramms 60 (Gleichstellung der Geschlechter), Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse (Langform), page 2

31 Ibid.

32 Cremers, Michael; Krabel, Jens; Calmbach, Marc (2015). Männliche Fachkräfte in Kindertagesstätten. Eine Studie im Auftrag des BMFSFJ, pages 43 f.

To summarise: The example of early education highlights the issue that runs throughout this entire assessment: Gender-specific challenges must also be considered in conjunction with other challenges. Familial background, in particular the education and employment status of parents, is particularly relevant in this regard. Children from single parents, from families with a lower educational background and from migration backgrounds are disproportionately impacted. In this regard, however, it must not be forgotten that

these factors may be linked to an increased, but in no sense inevitable, likelihood of unequal educational achievements.

### School education

The way in which people benefit from their school education changes over time. Figure 2 illustrates the current level of education amongst the population in Germany (data from 2018).

Figure 2: Education level of the working age population (population in private households according to school leaving certificate achieved 2018)<sup>33</sup>

	Men (all)	Women (all)	Men 25–35 years	Women 25–35 years	Men 25–35 years with migration background	Women 25–35 years with migration background
Still in school education	3.7 %	3.5 %	0.3 %	0.2 %	0.5 %	0.2 %
Lower secondary school leaving certificate	30.1 %	29.1 %	19.4 %	13.1 %	23.0 %	17.0 %
Leaving certificate from a polytechnic secondary school	6.4 %	6.8 %	–	–	–	–
Intermediate secondary school leaving certificate	21.1 %	25.3 %	27.2 %	29.2 %	19.7 %	21.0 %
Higher education entrance qualification	34.3 %	30.8 %	48.1 %	53.5 %	46.0 %	51.6 %
No information on the type of qualification attained	0.2 %	0.1 %	0.1 %	0.2 %	0.5 %	–
No general education school leaving certificate	4.0 %	4.1 %	4.2 %	3.6 %	9.5 %	9.4 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,841,000 = 100 %</b>	<b>35,936,000 = 100 %</b>	<b>5,355,000 = 100 %</b>	<b>5,025,000 = 100 %</b>	<b>460,000 = 100 %</b>	<b>416,000 = 100 %</b>

<sup>33</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Bildungsstand der Bevölkerung (3.3.1 Bevölkerung in Privathaushalten nach allgemeinbildendem Schulabschluss 2018)

### 3 Current circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men: An assessment

A glance at the entire population conveys a balanced picture. However, this snapshot hides two significant trends:

- First, it is important to note that, historically, the education level of the population is on the rise as a whole – measured on the basis of the highest school leaving certificate attained. Only 18.3 per cent (men 25.4 per cent, women 12.5 per cent) of the generation to which today’s pensioners belong, attained a higher college qualification or university degree. In the generation of the 25- to 35-year-olds it is already one in two. Thus, the generation effect is significantly stronger than the gender effect.
- Secondly, it also needs clarifying that the educational advantages of older men and younger women are cancelling each other out – hiding existing gender differences. In the current generation of over-55s, men generally exhibit a higher formal education level than women. This imbalance is not just less pronounced in lower generations but has since taken strides in the other direction. This becomes clear when taking a closer look at today’s 25- to 30-year-olds (see Figure 2).

In the cohort of 25- to 35-year-olds, 53.5 per cent of young women have received a degree from a college or university. In comparison, 48.1 per cent of men in the same age group have attained this education level. This under-representation of men amongst graduates

(–5.4 percentage points) contrasts with the over-representation of men (+6.3 percentage points) amongst lower secondary school graduates.

These differences also exist in the same age group for those with a migration background.<sup>34</sup> At 5.6 percentage points, the relative gender difference remains almost identical. The difference between genders (with regard to the highest formal educational qualification achieved) is, therefore, more significant than the difference between people with or without migration background.

Comparable correlations also apply to failure to achieve at school, measured on the basis of the dropout rate (number of students who leave the school system without a general educational qualification), as illustrated by Figure 3. Simply looking at the entire population overlooks the difference between genders (4.0 per cent to 4.1 per cent). However, we are also witnessing an opposing trend in this regard: The number of girls dropping out of school is sinking, while it is increasing amongst boys. Those with a migration background are significantly more susceptible to dropping out. Young girls from a migration background aged between 15–25 have a significantly lower likelihood of dropping out of school than their male classmates of the same age (5.8 per cent to 7.9 per cent).

34 Definition according to the Federal Bureau of Statistics: “A person has a migration background if they, or at least one of their parents, were born without German citizenship. People from a migration background include, specifically, all foreigners, (late) emigrants and naturalised citizens. Likewise, this includes people who were born with German citizenship but at least one of their parents is a foreigner, (late) emigrant or naturalised citizen.”

Figure 3: School dropouts by gender (in percentage of the population without a general educational school qualification)<sup>35</sup>

	Men (all)	Men with a migration background	Women (all)	Women with a migration background
15–25 years	4.0 %	7.9 %	2.9 %	5.8 %
25–35 years	4.2 %	9.5 %	3.6 %	9.4 %
35–45 years	4.5 %	10.8 %	4.6 %	11.8 %
45–55 years	3.9 %	12.9 %	3.9 %	15.0 %
55–65 years	3.8 %	14.2 %	3.9 %	16.7 %
65 years and over	3.6 %	21.4 %	4.7 %	27.1 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.0 %</b>	<b>12.0 %</b>	<b>4.1 %</b>	<b>13.7 %</b>

This poses the uncomfortable question of whether this statistical snapshot veils an accelerated trend to the detriment of the educational achievements of boys. It is possible to interpret the results of the recent 2018 PISA study<sup>36</sup> in this manner. They confirm a traditional imbalance between genders: Boys are better at calculations and girls are better at reading. The gap for calculations is, however, smaller, and shrinking quicker than the gap for reading.

However, with a differentiated consideration, the data supports the assessment of educational research and the practise of youth work, that boys are in no way the blanket “losers in the education system”. That is not to say, however, that there is not a certain group of boys with fewer educational opportunities and achievements than girls of the same age. This group comprises boys from lower educational familial backgrounds and disadvantaged social backgrounds, in which boys with a migration background and/or who foster traditional notions of masculinity are over-represented.<sup>37</sup>

Some boys who have less educational resources turn out to be “resilient in education” and compensate for their initial disadvantages by a strong

commitment, for instance. A certain number of boys resolve these tensions by reinterpreting academic hard work and achievement as uncool and unmanly. This consolidates feelings of self-worth, strengthens identity and sometimes also their reputation in their peer group. This coping mechanism is obviously only capable of achieving short-term “success”. In this context, the study *The Role of Men in Gender Equality*, published by the European Commission in 2012, indicates that boys find it hard to look for support when they are having difficulties with academic performance standards, as they force them to come into conflict with the prevailing notion of masculinity in the male peer group. “Above all, boys from socio-economically marginalised backgrounds [follow] patterns of masculinity that are characterised by the rejection of intellectual engagement, which prevents subsequent academic success.”<sup>38</sup> The school system still very much fails to take these correlations between academic success and concepts of masculinity into consideration. Uli Boldt – himself a teacher – agrees with the fundamental statement: “The link between problems caused by boys and the problems boys face is far too rarely discussed.”<sup>39</sup>

35 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Band 3 Bildung, Bildungsstand der Bevölkerung: Bevölkerung in Privathaushalten nach allgemeinbildendem Schulabschluss 2018, page 88

36 OECD (2019). PISA 2018 Ergebnisse (Band I) – Was Schülerinnen und Schüler wissen und können. OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/b5fd1b8f-en.pdf>

37 Ibid.

38 Scambor, Elli; Wojnicka, Katarzyna; Bergmann, Nadja (2012). *The Role of Men in Gender Equality European strategies & insights*. Prepared for European Commission, DG Justice Unit D2 Gender equality, page 30. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publicationdetail//publication/f6f90d59ac4f442f-be9b32c3bd36eaf1>

39 Boldt, Uli (2005). *Ich bin froh, dass ich ein Junge bin. Materialien zur Jungenarbeit in der Schule*, page 7. Hohengehren: Schneider

### 3 Current circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men: An assessment

Root cause analysis of the increasing educational challenges faced by certain groups of boys in comparison to girls is a sensitive matter. It can lead to a comparative observation based on the paradigm that one gender benefits at the expense of the other. This direct interplay simply does not exist in reality.

An example from educational grants: Girls and women are more likely to profit from grants provided by the Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG), as highlighted in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Educational support: Funding received through BAföG in 2018<sup>40</sup>

	Men	Women	Overall
Funding during school education	82,492	126,565	209,057
	39.4 %	60.6 %	100 %
Funding during university studies	234,634	283,041	517,675
	45.3 %	54.7 %	100 %

tackles challenges faced by boys and girls (more specifically, certain groups of boys and girls). For instance, teaching blocks in gender-separated groups can be beneficial for all, as proven by experiences with sex education.

A comparative view could, therefore, lead to the conclusion that girls and women receive funding at the expense of boys and men. However, a qualitative view rather results in the understanding that the disproportionate funding of girls and women is required in order to ensure equal opportunities. Naturally, it remains to be observed and evaluated whether this assumption holds or remains true, that is if the academic challenges faced by boys are increasing both quantitatively and qualitatively increasing.

The slogan “feminisation of schools” deals with a notion that the educational challenges faced by boys could be attributed to the lack of male teaching staff or an over-representation of female teaching staff. However, this is a technically questionable approach to a statistically correct statement.

Example of teaching methods: In contrast to boys, girls prefer to cooperate rather than compete.<sup>41</sup> “Girl-friendly” teaching methods are, therefore, in no regard methods that “inevitably” discriminate against boys. On the one hand, certain boys – those who struggle to deal with conventional standards of masculinity and the prevailing competitive dynamics – can also benefit from these methods. On the other hand, the decisive factor is less often the methods used per se, but rather the conscious application thereof. Broadly speaking: Boys and girls benefit in equal measure from a school that reflects genders and sensitively

As the facts stand: One third of teaching staff in Germany is male. This single figure camouflages the large differences between the various stages of education. As a rule, the following applies: The number of male teaching staff increases with the age of pupils and students, the level of social recognition and the salary level. At nursery school level, 96 per cent of teaching staff are female (OECD average: 97 per cent), at primary level it is 87 per cent (83 per cent), at lower secondary level 67 per cent (69 per cent), at higher secondary level 55 per cent (60 per cent) and at tertiary level 39 per cent (44 per cent).<sup>42</sup> Figure 5 illustrates how the extreme imbalance in teaching staff at nursery school and primary level is subsequently balanced out by the high percentage of male teaching staff at higher secondary level (primarily vocational schools) and at tertiary level.

40 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Volume 3 Bildung, page 110

41 OECD (2019). PISA 2018 Results (Volume II) – Where All Students Can Succeed, page 162 ff. OECD Publishing, Paris, [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/pisa-2018-results-volume-ii\\_b5fd1b8f-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/pisa-2018-results-volume-ii_b5fd1b8f-en)

42 Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder (2019). Internationale Bildungsindikatoren im Ländervergleich, page 116. [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressekonferenzen/2019/Bildung/heft\\_bildungsindikatoren\\_laendervergleich.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressekonferenzen/2019/Bildung/heft_bildungsindikatoren_laendervergleich.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

Figure 5: Gender distribution of teaching staff in 2017, by educational level (in percentage)<sup>43</sup>

	Men	Women
Nursery school level	4.2 %	95.8 %
Primary level	12.7 %	87.3 %
Secondary level I	33.3 %	66.7 %
Secondary level II	45.5 %	54.5 %
Tertiary level (bachelor/master)	60.7 %	39.3 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.5 %</b>	<b>66.5 %</b>

At nursery school and primary level, it remains highly unlikely for a child to be taught by a male teacher. However, this is not problematic due to the fact that a higher percentage of male teaching staff would not lead to better school results for boys; at least this statement could not be confirmed in the majority of studies.<sup>44</sup> The low male quota is an issue, but predominately because it limits the number of male contact persons in a child’s life. This reduces the likelihood that boys and girls will be introduced to diverse forms of masculinity – and consequently learn how large the range of different men and real-world masculinities really is.

An unfortunate situation for all. Experience from work with boys shows that boys confront the lack

of real-life role models by instead looking up to “virtual heroes”, such as actors, athletes, game characters, etc. This is not particularly helpful when it comes to developing a realistic image of masculinity. Boys also learn that careers in education (or working with people in general) are “women’s jobs”. This makes it harder for boys to envision themselves as future teachers or to want to work in education. It also adds fuel to the cycle in which (future) male teaching staff increasingly see themselves in the position of an “exotic minority” – and need to find a way to deal with this. Particularly those young men who are more interested in the job itself and not in the privileges linked to the exotic status (for instance, being sought-after on the labour market), do not necessarily want to do this.<sup>45</sup> This is one of the reasons why the dropout rate of men in jobs that are not gender-stereotypical is disproportionately high.<sup>46</sup>

To conclude: “Neither boys nor girls are a uniform group, and boys are not at a general disadvantage in education. The biggest differences can be observed not between boys and girls, but between children with or without a migration background and from different social classes.”<sup>47</sup>

43 Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder (2019). Internationale Bildungsindikatoren im Ländervergleich, page 117. [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressekonferenzen/2019/Bildung/heft\\_bildungsindikatoren\\_laendervergleich.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressekonferenzen/2019/Bildung/heft_bildungsindikatoren_laendervergleich.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

44 Faulstich-Wieland, Hannelore (2011). Werden tatsächlich Männer gebraucht, um Bildungsungleichheiten (von Jungen) abzubauen? In: Hadjar, Andreas (ed.). Geschlechtsspezifische Bildungsungleichheiten, pages 393–415. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag

45 Informative overview on the topic: [https://www.gew.de/fileadmin/media/publikationen/hv/Hochschule\\_und\\_Forschung/Ausbildung\\_von\\_Lehrerinnen\\_und\\_Paedagogen/Zukunftsforum\\_Lehrer\\_innenbildung/190228\\_MaennerInsGrundschulamt\\_2018\\_A4\\_171218.pdf](https://www.gew.de/fileadmin/media/publikationen/hv/Hochschule_und_Forschung/Ausbildung_von_Lehrerinnen_und_Paedagogen/Zukunftsforum_Lehrer_innenbildung/190228_MaennerInsGrundschulamt_2018_A4_171218.pdf)

46 Zum Beispiel zur Drop-out-Problematik von Männern in der Berufslehre: Rottmann, Benno (2017). Sozialisation von Jugendlichen in geschlechtsuntypischen Berufslehren, pages 118 ff. Opladen: Budrich UniPress

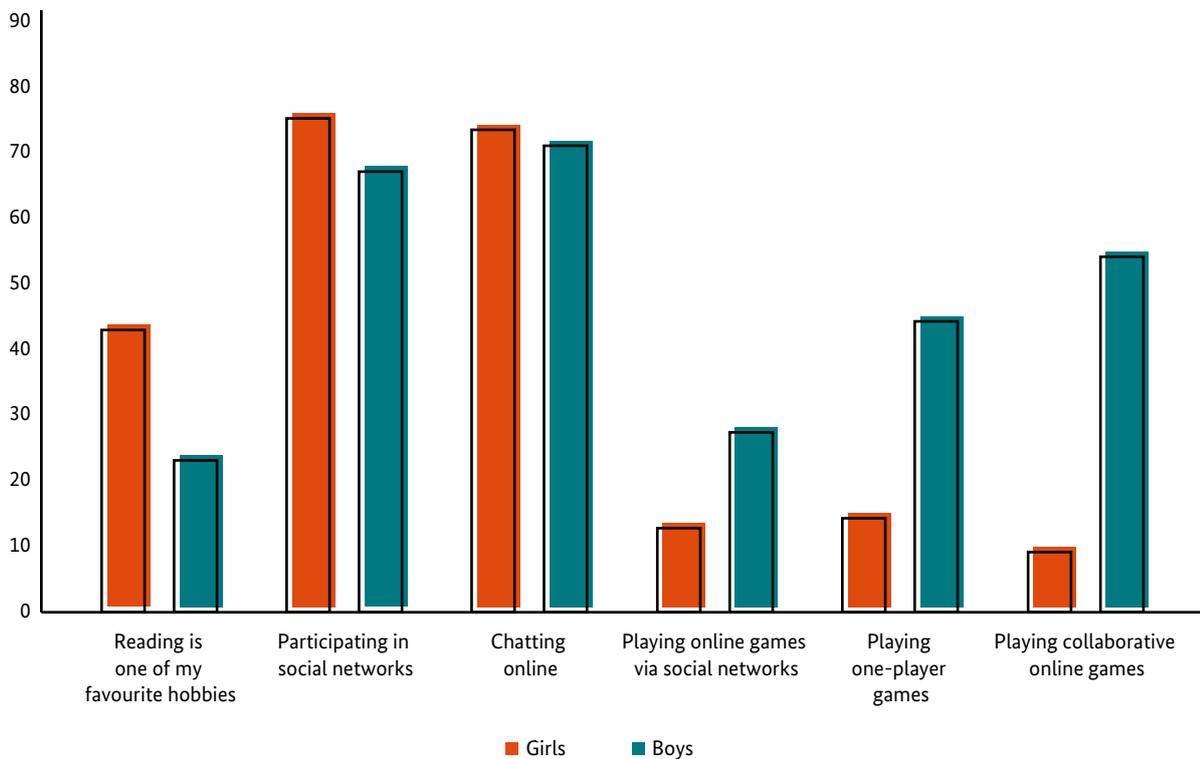
47 BMFSFJ (2013). Jungen und ihre Lebenswelten – Vielfalt als Chance und Herausforderung. Bericht des Beirats Jungenpolitik, page 43. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/94086/725638d3f89fd2c0ebcb86e694dd48b6/jungen-und-ihre-lebenswelten-bericht-beirat-jungenpolitik-data.pdf>

### Choice of career and degree

Teenage boys and girls have different interests. Figure 6 illustrates how 15-year-olds in the OECD region spend some of their free time.

Something both boys and girls equally enjoy (and over two thirds of them do so on a daily basis) is using social media. An activity clearly preferred by boys is gaming (alone or in groups, and on- or off-line).

Figure 6: Gender gap in reading and ICT hobbies of 15-year-old students (in percentage of students engaging in the following activities every day or almost every day; OECD average; all differences between girls and boys are statistically significant)<sup>48</sup>



### Jerome and the Pummelfee

*On the annual “Boys’Day”, over 30,000 boys get introduced to new occupations in more than 7,000 companies*



Ben (12) has been waiting for this day for weeks. Marvin (13) is only getting involved so he can miss school. Collin (11) joins his mother at her job in a retirement home: “We handed out tablets and

measured blood sugar levels. I watched insulin injections and saw how my mum washed someone.” Marek (11) went to a nursery for the day. “I found it great fun as I love playing with, and helping chil-

<sup>48</sup> OECD (2019). PISA 2018 Results (Volume II) – Where All Students Can Succeed, page 162. OECD Publishing, Paris, [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/pisa-2018-results-volume-ii\\_b5fd1b8f-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/pisa-2018-results-volume-ii_b5fd1b8f-en)

dren.” Jerome spent his “Boys’Day” in a women’s apparel boutique called Pummelfee. “It was a great experience. I even got to assist two of my teachers who coincidentally walked into the shop. They said I provided great advice, and purchased some new clothes to take home.” Domenic visited a veterinary practice: “I was ‘lucky’ to be there on that day, as a dog and two horses were castrated right at the start of the day. Lots of cats and dogs were vaccinated and blood was taken. At the end of their treatment, each dog received a treat, even the ones that bit. All in all, it was not a day for those with weak nerves!”

Romy Stühmeier is also looking forward to when the campaign day rolls around. “Boys’Day” has taken place on a day in March or April throughout Germany since 2011. In 2019, 7,400 companies participated and over 32,500 work experience opportunities (11,400 with access to disabled people) were offered. Ninety-four per cent of boys who participated found the day “good” or “excellent”. Since 2011, “Boys’Day” has reached an incredible 290,000 boys.

Graduate educationalist Stühmeier is the project head behind “Boys’Day” and also has the privilege of accompanying the Federal Minister for Family Affairs on visits to selected institutions. “These visits are a big deal for both the boys and the institutions.” Even without a high-ranking visit, “Boys’Day” still leaves a lasting impression. “It’s always a lovely sight in nurseries and primary schools, for example. The children get really excited about the boys’ visit and immediately monopolise them”, she explains with a smile.

The concept behind “Boys’Day” is just as simple as it is fascinating. Boys continue to mainly enter the same 20 occupations that require formal training from a total of 326 that are recognised at present and are thus under-represented in a number of occupations. This particularly applies to growing professions: in social work, healthcare, household services and education. However, career choices are

dictated by a number of influential factors. So parental preferences, peer recognition or the image of a job are linked to perceived professional opportunities, salary and other framework conditions, such as the ability to enter part-time employment at a later point in time. However, researchers agree on one point: Preconceived notions about certain occupations and familiarity with a professional field are relevant, and are factors that can be influenced. This is where “Boys’Day” comes in: It offers boys the chance to dive into the realities of working life for a half or an entire day in a simple and accessible manner.

“Boys’Day’ is an initiative day that fosters experiences”, explains Romy Stühmeier, “and both the boys and employers stand to benefit from this. These experiences replace fantasy and fears with real experience at all levels. And that’s how clichés are broken.” Companies can learn what it takes to ensure that working in mixed teams functions in a way that makes their commitment profitable. In turn, the boys learn not to base their own future on gender stereotypes but instead to ask themselves questions such as: What can I do? What do I want to do? What do I need to achieve fulfilment and happiness in my future career? Surveys clearly show: Neither pay nor reputation are the key decisive aspects for boys. Job satisfaction (85 per cent), security (75 per cent) and equal opportunities for women and men (66 per cent) were the most highly valued factors.

Does “Boys’Day” have a long-lasting impact? Is it more than simply a flash in the pan, a nice change to everyday school life? Romy Stühmeier knows that statistics are on her side: “Men are increasingly entering jobs in care and education. In teaching, for instance, one in five teaching staff are now men. The trend is clearly positive and growing. I can’t imagine that we could achieve this dynamic without programmes such as ‘Boys’Day’”

### 3 Current circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men: An assessment

This concurrence of shared and different preferences and interests is also visible when it comes to career choices. Figure 7 shows the gender distribution in apprenticeships and degree subjects. It clearly indicates the extent to which degree and

career choices remain influenced by gender stereotypes. In technical terms, this circumstance is discussed under the heading “horizontal gender segregation”.

Figure 7: Gender distribution in apprenticeships and degree subjects (in percentage)<sup>49</sup>

	Men	Women
<b>Apprenticeship</b>		
Civil engineering	98.9 %	1.1 %
Building construction	98.7 %	1.3 %
Plumbing, sanitation, heating and air conditioning engineering	98.6 %	1.4 %
Metal construction and welding technology	97.4 %	2.6 %
Extensions and drywall construction, insulation, carpentry, glazing, shutter and blind installation	97.1 %	2.9 %
Food sales	15.9 %	84.1 %
Home economics and consumer advice	10.6 %	90.4 %
Legal advice, jurisdiction	7.6 %	92.4 %
Sales of pharmaceutical and standard pharmacy products, sanitary and medical equipment	7.1 %	92.9 %
Medical or clinical assistant	2.2 %	97.2 %
<b>Degree subject</b>		
Engineering	76.4 %	23.6 %
Sport	60.8 %	39.2 %
Maths/sciences	51.9 %	48.1 %
Legal, economic and social sciences	43.0 %	57.0 %
Agriculture, forestry and nutritional sciences, veterinary medicine	41.0 %	59.0 %
Art/art history	37.3 %	62.7 %
Medicine/healthcare sciences	33.3 %	66.7 %
Humanities	32.9 %	67.1 %

Why is this an issue in the first place? If nature has fairly distributed skills and talents between the sexes – as is assumed to be the case in gender research – any gender inequality experienced at work or during studies should be viewed as nothing more than a waste of the talent of those who elect not to enter their desired occupation by

virtue of the fact that they are supposedly the “wrong” gender. In economic terms, this is referred to as the suboptimal allocation of educational resources. If 73 per cent of 14–17-year-old boys claim to “support consistent gender equality both at work and in the private sphere”, this could also be taken as an indication that boys also do not

49 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Band 3 Bildung, page 101 and 105

wish to remain stuck in careers that are typical for their gender.<sup>50</sup>

The mechanisms behind choosing a career are complex. An individual's own desires and interests must be taken into account in addition to professional considerations (with regard to the future labour market outlook and opportunities for promotions, for instance) and personal perspectives (such as reconciliation of work and family life). The preferences and values of parents and attachment figures (particularly same gender peers) also have a strong impact on the career selection process, alongside cultural conceptions (such as importance and reputation attached to a career), and gender norms.

However, these factors do not produce hard borders between occupational fields. Neither are there legal restrictions any longer, only permitting members of a certain gender to practice a profession. In addition, change is in the air: 59 per cent

of young males questioned as part of a recent SINUS survey stated that their parents would support them if they chose to become a teacher/carer (74 per cent for women).<sup>51</sup> At the same time, 24 per cent of male survey participants (14–20 years old) claimed they would feel uncomfortable if their friends found out they wanted to pursue a career in child day-care or care.<sup>52</sup> This illustrates that gender stereotypes prevail and ensure that certain professions are almost exclusively practised by members of one gender. At this point, it is beneficial to take a closer look at the example of male nursery school teachers. This example is interesting for a variety of reasons: It shows how powerful the impact of gender norms can be on the career selection process, as the percentage of men in this profession is extremely low. It also illustrates that this can be changed, as each year 10 per cent more men are joining the profession (with the growth starting at an extremely low initial level, see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Educational professionals in day-care facilities (incl. interns, voluntary social service and others)<sup>53</sup>

	Percentage of men	Increase compared to prior year
2007	3.1%	
2008	3.3%	+10.4%
2009	3.4%	+8.3%
2010	3.6%	+14.3%
2011	3.8%	+10.1%
2012	4.2%	+14.9%
2013	4.5%	+13.8%
2014	4.8%	+15.2%
2015	5.2%	+12.4%
2016	5.4%	+8.6%
2017	5.8%	+11.0%

50 BMFSFJ (2013). *Jungen und Männer im Spagat: Zwischen Rollenbildern und Alltagspraxis*, page 156. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.delta-sozialforschung.de/cms/upload/grafiken/artikel/jungen-und-Maenner-im-Spagat.pdf>

51 BMFSFJ (2020): „Kinderbetreuung und Pflege – attraktive Berufe?“ (Sinus-Jugendbefragung)

52 Ibid.

53 Please refer to <https://de.statista.com/infografik/14678/maennliche-paedagogische-fachkraefte-in-kitas/> (entry dated 13 July 2017, accessed on: 16 December 2019)

### 3 Current circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men: An assessment

In this case, the increase in the percentage of men working in day-care centres can be attributed to the model projects “Mehr Männer in Kitas” [More Men in Early Childhood Education and Care] and “Quereinstieg – Männer und Frauen in Kitas” [Career Change – Men and Women in Early Childhood Education and Care]. Both initiatives were funded by the BMFSFJ with money from the European Social Fund (ESF). The objective was to increase the percentage of men working in early-childhood education – on the basis of additional EU-wide efforts. It became clear during the first project that a lot of men are interested in work in day-care centres. The fragmented training landscape throughout Germany and the low

earning potential were considered hindrances with regard to joining the profession. These findings led to an adjustment of the funding requirements for the second model project.

Key findings from both initiatives were taken into consideration in further measures introduced by the Federal Ministry for Gender Equality. One positive effect in this regard was the abolition of fees in vocational training colleges catering for future nursery school teachers. These initiatives also indicate that the gender balance in the working world can be changed – even if this requires targeted measures and a deep breath.

#### **“We have also discovered much tenderness and care – particularly amongst boys who find themselves in challenging circumstances”**

**What can the education system do to promote boys and gender equality?** A research project funded by the BMFSFJ is helping to shed light on this question.

The challenges faced by boys when making education and career choices is an important topic for the BMFSFJ. In order for political actions aimed at achieving gender equality to work as intended, certain interrelations need clarifying: How are notions of masculinity formed, imparted and called for in educational institutions?

How do these notions impact academic success and career choice? What needs to be done to expand the diversity of masculinities experienced in everyday life?

Jürgen Budde is a professor at the Institute of Educational Sciences at the University of Flensburg and director of the Centre for Research on Education, Instruction, School and Socialisation (ZeBUSS). He is currently head of an inter-disciplinary research project (2017–2021) studying these issues.

**Professor Budde, what is the academic viewpoint on the notion that boys are disadvantaged by the current education system?**

“This idea is not tenable. When it comes to performance, we don’t need to worry about the talented Gymnasium (approx. “grammar school”) students,

for example. But there are specific problem groups. Boys with little economic, cultural and social capital often encounter difficulties. However, referring to these boys as “problem boys” doesn’t help at all, it can instead worsen social exclusion. We need to deepen our understanding of these challenges. This requires looking at both their social position and their subjective experiences of male socialisation. With a strong emphasis on competition and rivalry, male socialisation can cause boys to behave in a way that is destructive both to themselves and others.”

**Does science not succeed in painting a more varied picture?**

“There’s a clear need for explanation. The importance of a differentiated analysis quickly becomes apparent when studying this topic scientifically. I therefore find it surprising that this notion of boys as losers in the educational system has been revisited time and time again over the past 20 years. It’s clearly still a talking point – even if it’s not true.

This is, in part, attributable to research itself. There are indeed some research findings and experience reports. However, researchers primarily either work with large surveys or do small-scale analyses in very specific educational areas of activity. We still haven’t gained a coherent view of educational practices, concepts of masculinity and the academic successes of boys in pedagogic settings. That’s where we are hoping to close the gap.”

***What precisely are the objectives of your current research project?***

“We’re hoping to form a contemporary and empirically well-grounded educational theory on masculinity. In order to succeed, we are working together in a team of researchers with extensive knowledge in a range of fields. We are looking at the educational path of boys by carefully examining the different educational establishments – from nurseries to secondary schools.”

***Can you reveal any initial results at this stage?***

“We are currently just working on systematising the results from the first sub-projects. Certain trends have already become apparent. For instance, we’ve observed contradictory concurrences in educational contexts. Masculinity is continuously shaped both by teaching staff and boys themselves. At the same time, we are steadily observing a phenomenon that can be referred to as “undoing gender”: Situations where gender hardly has a bearing. In addition, there has been a visible expansion of the notions of masculinity. One example is the growing openness of boys to caring. Another example is how boys interact with each other. This often contrasts with the stereotype of scuffling and jostling boys. There’s also a lot of tenderness and care – especially amongst so-called problem boys.”

***Does it become of more or less important for boys to receive recognition as “real boys” in the course of their educational careers?***

“There’s no general answer to that question. Being shamed for “unmanly” behaviour time and again plays a significant role – both humiliation by teaching staff and other boys. This devaluation affects boys differently, with certain boys particularly bothered by it and others less so. However, it remains a constant aspect throughout their educational career. To put it simply, gender plays a far more important role in the construction of identity and status in primary school. In Gymnasium, this occurs more on the basis of performance.”

***Do you understand those who question what all of this work will ultimately bring to society?***

“Yes, I can completely understand why people may question the importance of our work. Our findings and statements are not directly targeted at individual teaching staff, but primarily at our educational and societal structures. We want to reach those who govern our educational systems. It’s them we want to show how these systems must be designed to further gender equality and overcome outdated notions of masculinity. I think it’s great that the BMFSFJ supports a research approach that dares to ask these questions in a broad sense.”

## 3.2 Labour market and employment

-  *The employment rates of men and women are noticeably converging. However, despite this, career stereotypes and the wage gap persist.*
-  *Men are faced with particular obstacles due to the structural change in the labour market. Many do not (yet) tackle these.*
-  *More men than women are unemployed. Those with lower qualifications are affected hardest. In this group, one in ten men are unemployed.*

Men like to achieve, and to achieve a lot. Rainer Volz and Paul M. Zulehner highlight the importance of gainful work in their ground-breaking study “Männer in Bewegung” [Men in Motion]: “Anthropologically speaking, work and careers are an excellent way to not just produce a work but also your own identity. In this regard, work is important for everyone, both women and men. Male work, however, demands public visibility. Work is, therefore, closely linked with performance, and thus with gaining recognition and self-worth. In our culture, masculinity equates to a form of compulsion to achieve.”<sup>54</sup>

### Labour market participation

The majority of the working age population in Germany earns their living from their own gainful employment (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Labour market participation and predominant means of subsistence in 2018<sup>55</sup>

	Gainful employment	Unemployment benefit and other social benefits	Pensions and assets	Relatives
Men (only working population)	89.8 %	4.6 %	3.0 %	2.6 %
Women (only working population)	84.8 %	4.8 %	2.8 %	7.7 %

The number of women in employment has significantly increased in the years between 2005 and 2018 alone.

In this period, the relative difference to the male employment rate halved for women at the age when families are typically started (between 25 and 35 years old) (see Figure 10).

<sup>54</sup> Volz, Rainer & Zulehner, Paul M. (2010). Männer in Bewegung, page 52. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/94250/432c5ee6fad9208628ba6b9bd3301a9f/maennerinbewegungdata.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Volume 13 Arbeitsmarkt, page 360

Figure 10: Percentage of gainfully employed persons, by gender and age 2005–2018<sup>56</sup>

	2005	2010	2015	2018
Men between the age of 15–65	71.2 %	75.9 %	77.7 %	79.6 %
Women between the age of 15–65	59.5 %	66.0 %	69.8 %	72.1 %
Difference	-11.7 %	-9.9 %	-7.9 %	-7.5 %
Only men between the age of 25–30	74.0 %	78.5 %	80.4 %	82.5 %
Only women between the age of 25–30	65.2 %	72.3 %	75.4 %	76.7 %
Difference	-11.2 %	-6.2 %	-5.0 %	-5.8 %
Only men between the age of 30–35	84.6 %	86.8 %	88.2 %	88.9 %
Only women between the age of 30–35	66.4 %	72.6 %	76.2 %	77.1 %
Difference	-18.2 %	-14.2 %	-12.0 %	-11.8 %

Over one in four mothers in the old federal states (former West Germany) and one fifth of mothers in the new federal states (former East Germany) are not employed (voluntarily or involuntarily) (see Figure 11). In contrast, two in every ten mothers in the old federal states and four in every ten mothers in the new federal states are working full-time. These differences between the federal states are lower amongst men, but still exist: Fathers in the new federal states are slightly less likely to be in full-time employment and more likely to work part-time than their counterparts in the old federal states.

Generally speaking, the percentage of men working part time is lower amongst fathers than among men without children. This is surprising, as daily fatherly care commitments are increasingly corresponding to the wishes of parents and society (see also 3.3). For instance, 59 per cent of men under the age of 29 are of the opinion “that a father should reduce his working hours in order to spend more time with his children.”<sup>57</sup> In reality, however, this change is more commonly witnessed in increased engagement on evenings and weekends, not through a reduction in workload. Only 20 per cent of men with underage children working part-time stipulated childcare as the reason for working part-time.<sup>58</sup>

56 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Volume 13 Arbeitsmarkt, page 366

57 BMFSFJ (2017). Männer-Perspektiven – Auf dem Weg zu mehr Gleichstellung? page 22. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/115580/5a9685148523d2a4ef12258d060528cd/maennerperspektivenaufdemwegzumehrgleichstellungdata.pdf>

58 Keller, Matthias & Kahle, Irene (2018). Realisierte Erwerbstätigkeit von Müttern und Vätern zur Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf, page 63. [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Methoden/WISTA-Wirtschaft-und-Statistik/2018/03/realisierte-erwerbstaetigkeit-032018.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publication-File](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Methoden/WISTA-Wirtschaft-und-Statistik/2018/03/realisierte-erwerbstaetigkeit-032018.pdf?__blob=publication-File)

Figure 11: Employment rate of parents and non-parents in the old and new federal states (own calculation of percentages)<sup>59</sup>

	Childless (old federal states)	Parents (old federal states)	Childless (new federal states)	Parents (new federal states)	Germany
<b>Men</b>					
In full-time employment	71.9 %	86.7 %	66.2 %	82.0 %	76.6 %
In part-time employment	8.2 %	4.6 %	10.2 %	6.9 %	7.2 %
On parental leave	0 %	0.4 %	0 %	0.5 %	0.15 %
Unemployed	3.8 %	2.2 %	6.2 %	3.8 %	3.6 %
Inactive persons	16.0 %	6.0 %	17.2 %	6.8 %	12.4 %
<b>Women</b>					
In full-time employment	49.2 %	20.5 %	49.4 %	39.9 %	37.6 %
In part-time employment	26.1 %	49.0 %	24.4 %	34.0 %	35.3 %
On parental/maternity leave	0.3 %	3.8 %	0.3 %	4.5 %	2.0 %
Unemployed	2.6 %	2.2 %	4.2 %	4.6 %	2.8 %
Inactive persons	21.7 %	24.5 %	21.2 %	17.4 %	22.4 %

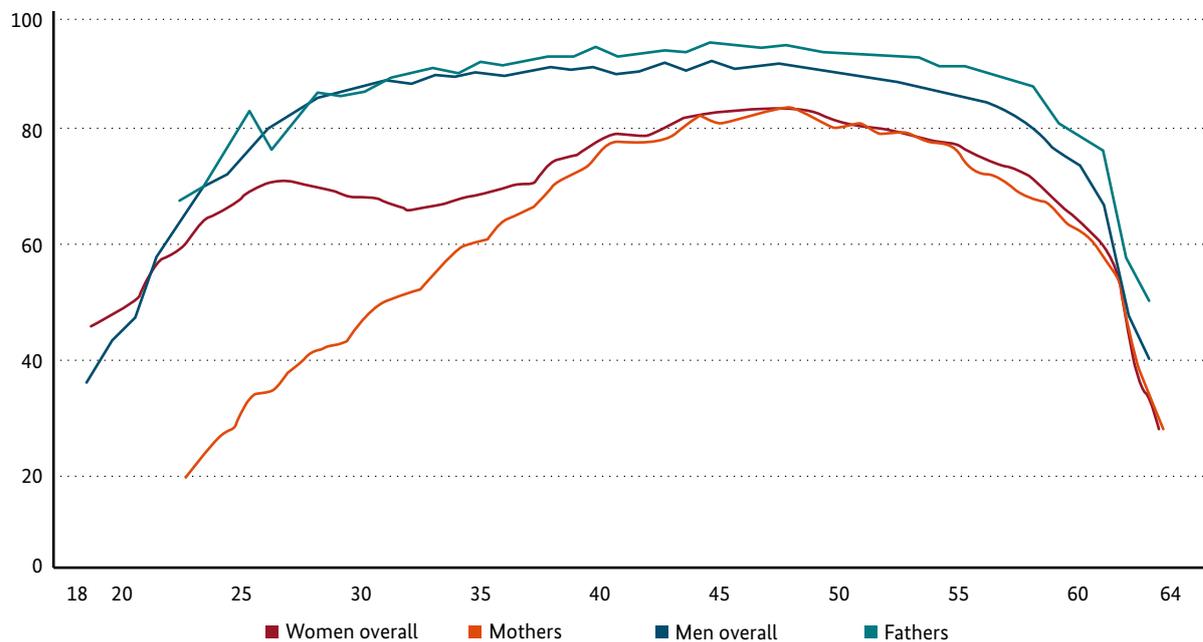
Figure 11 highlights the impact that starting a family has on the employment rate of women and men: Mothers tend to work part-time after starting a family and increase their hours as their children grow up. Career breaks attributed to starting a family have shortened since the expansion of childcare services and the introduction of parental benefits. Today, almost two thirds of mothers are back in work by the time their youngest child is two years old.

Increasing numbers of mothers with small children working part-time employment tend to do so with longer hours.<sup>60</sup> By the age of 40–45, their employment rate is just as high as that of women without children. Parenthood has much less impact on men’s careers, as illustrated by Figure 12. On the contrary: Over their course of life, fathers work more than men without children.

59 Keller, Matthias & Kahle, Irene (2018). Realisierte Erwerbstätigkeit von Müttern und Vätern zur Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf, page 56 f. [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Methoden/WISTA-Wirtschaft-und-Statistik/2018/03/realisierte-erwerbstaetigkeit-032018.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publication-File](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Methoden/WISTA-Wirtschaft-und-Statistik/2018/03/realisierte-erwerbstaetigkeit-032018.pdf?__blob=publication-File)

60 BMFSFJ (2020). (Existenzsichernde) Erwerbstätigkeit von Müttern – Konzepte, Entwicklungen und Perspektiven. Monitor Familienforschung, Edition

Figure 12: Age-specific employment rates<sup>61</sup>



At the same time, part-time work is also gaining popularity amongst men – even if only at a very slow pace and at a low level. Nonetheless, between 1992 and 2017, the percentage of men working part-time (of the entirety of those employed) has increased fivefold from 2.2 per cent to 11 per cent.<sup>62</sup> Of the 17.5 million employed men subject to social security contributions, 1.9 million are currently employed on a part-time basis.<sup>63</sup>

We are, therefore, observing the concurrence of tradition and modernisation on the labour market: The drop-in employment after starting a family affecting unilaterally women persists. What is new, however, is the constant growth in the employment rate of women, which increasingly prevails even after starting a family.

Section 3.3 will further elaborate on this: Couples in Germany are moving closer towards a modern dual-earner/dual-career model,<sup>64</sup> where both parties do both gainful and family work. Despite receiving a facelift, the traditional breadwinner model remains popular. In couples with children in Germany, women generate 22 per cent of the total household income on average. In Denmark, this figure is 42 per cent.<sup>65</sup>

### The wage gap

Outdated wage inequality still persists, as illustrated by Figure 13. However, as shown in the diagram, the wage gap between East and West Germany is larger than the one between men and women.

61 BMFSFJ (2020). (Existenzsichernde) Erwerbstätigkeit von Müttern – Konzepte, Entwicklungen und Perspektiven. Monitor Familienforschung, Edition 41

62 Wirtschafts und Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut WSI (2018). Teilzeitquoten nach Elternschaft und Alter des jüngsten Kindes. Hans-Böckler-Stiftung. <https://www.wsi.de/de/zeit14621teilzeitquotennachelternschaftundalterdesjuegstenkindes201714741.htm> (Accessed on: 14 February 2020)

63 Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2019). Die Arbeitsmarktsituation von Frauen und Männern 2018. Blickpunkt Arbeitsmarkt, July 2019, page 10. <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statistischer-Content/Arbeitsmarktberichte/Personengruppen/generische-Publikationen/Frauen-Maenner-Arbeitsmarkt.pdf> (Information source: Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit)

64 Gornick, Janet & Meyers, Marcia K. (2001). Building the Dual Earner/Dual Carer Society: Policy Developments in Europe. Working Paper Nr. 82, prepared for the “Rethinking Social Protection” conference, January 26–28, 2001, Harvard University Center for European Studies, Cambridge MA. <http://aei.pitt.edu/9143/1/GornickMeyers.pdf> (Accessed on: 3 May 2020)

65 OECD (2016). Dare to Share – Deutschlands Weg zur Partnerschaftlichkeit in Familie und Beruf, page 154. OECD Publishing Paris. [https://read.oecdilibrary.org/socialissuesmigrationhealth/daretosharedeutschlandswegzurpartnerschaftlichkeitinfamilieundberuf\\_9789264263420de#page1](https://read.oecdilibrary.org/socialissuesmigrationhealth/daretosharedeutschlandswegzurpartnerschaftlichkeitinfamilieundberuf_9789264263420de#page1) (Accessed on: 12 June 2020) This information pertains to couple households with children whereby the woman/mother is between 25 and 45 years old.

Figure 13: Average gross salary of employees in the old and new federal states in 2018<sup>66</sup> (marginal employment not included in part-time employment)

	Gross monthly salary	Paid weekly working hours
<b>Old federal states</b>		
Men in full-time employment	EUR 4686	39.2 hours
Women in full-time employment	EUR 3792	38.8 hours
Difference	+ EUR 894	+0.4 hours
Men in part-time employment	EUR 2386	26.2 hours
Women in part-time employment	EUR 2141	24.7 hours
Difference	+ EUR 245	+1.5 hours
<b>New federal states</b>		
Men in full-time employment	EUR 3413	39.6 hours
Women in full-time employment	EUR 3262	39.4 hours
Difference	+ EUR 151	+0.2 hours
Men in part-time employment	EUR 2095	28.8 hours
Women in part-time employment	EUR 2129	29.3 hours
Difference	+ EUR 35	-0.5 hours
<b>Comparison between the old and new federal states (men only)</b>		
Difference between those in full-time employment	+ EUR 1,273	-0.4 hours
Difference between those in part-time employment	+ EUR 291	-2.6 hours

The wage gap in favour of men is one of the influences that can explain why couples select working models that are not necessarily the ones they would prefer.<sup>67</sup> Various factors impact on the wage gap, such as the reduction of the amount of time dedicated to gainful work by many women due to taking on unpaid care tasks (particularly after starting a family), lower wages in professions and industries with high percentages of female employees and the under-representation of women in management positions. In 2018, the unadjusted gender pay gap in Germany was 21 per cent. After Estonia, this figure is the second highest in the European Union and lies signifi-

cantly above the EU average of 16 per cent.<sup>68</sup> Approximately three quarters of this difference can be attributed to the aforementioned structural causes. The remaining quarter (around 6 per cent) corresponds to the adjusted gender pay gap, that is the unexplainable lower pay for work performed by women despite comparability of jobs and qualifications.<sup>69</sup> It is important to note that the gender wage gap already exists at career entry level; it significantly increases, however, around the age of 30 when people start families. In contrast to the employment rate (see Figure 13), this gap does not close until retirement.

66 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Volume 14 Verdienste und Arbeitskosten, page 392

67 BMFSFJ (2016). Partnerschaftliche Vereinbarkeit – Die Rolle der Betriebe, pages 10 and 16 ff. Berlin: BMFSFJ <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/111772/7d469846de04a813ea5ba506c63a71f4/partnerschaftlichevereinbarkeitdielerolenderbetriebedata.pdf>

68 Statistisches Bundesamt (2020). Gender Pay Gap 2018: Deutschland eines der EU-Schlusslichter. <https://www.destatis.de/Europa/DE/Thema/BevoelkerungArbeitSoziales/Arbeitsmarkt/GenderPayGap.html> (Accessed on: 3 May 2020)

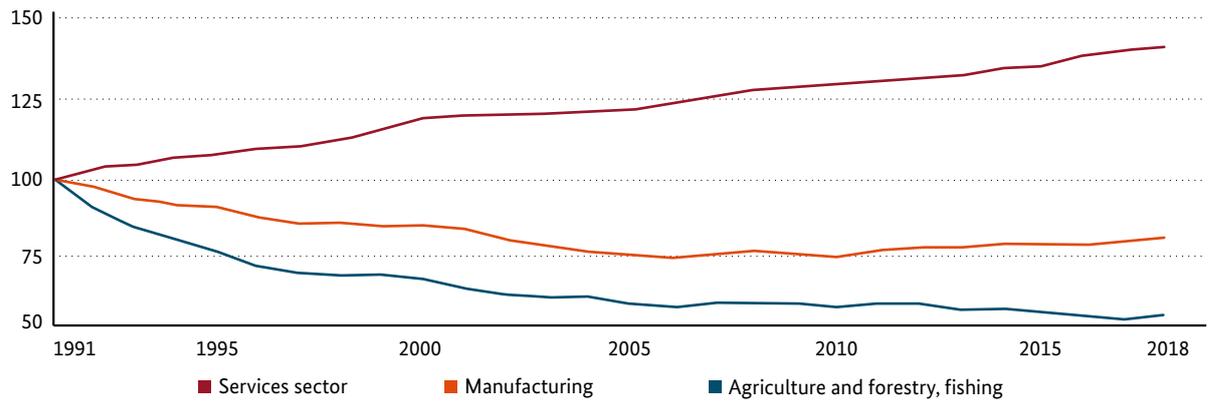
69 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Press release no. 098 dated 14th March 2019. [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2019/03/PD19\\_098\\_621.html](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2019/03/PD19_098_621.html)

## Transformation of the labour market

The structural changes of the labour market are particularly affecting men, as many jobs in the classic male domain of manufacturing and agriculture are being lost. By contrast, the service

sector is growing and requires skills commonly regarded as “feminine” (for example, verbal, social and emotional skills).

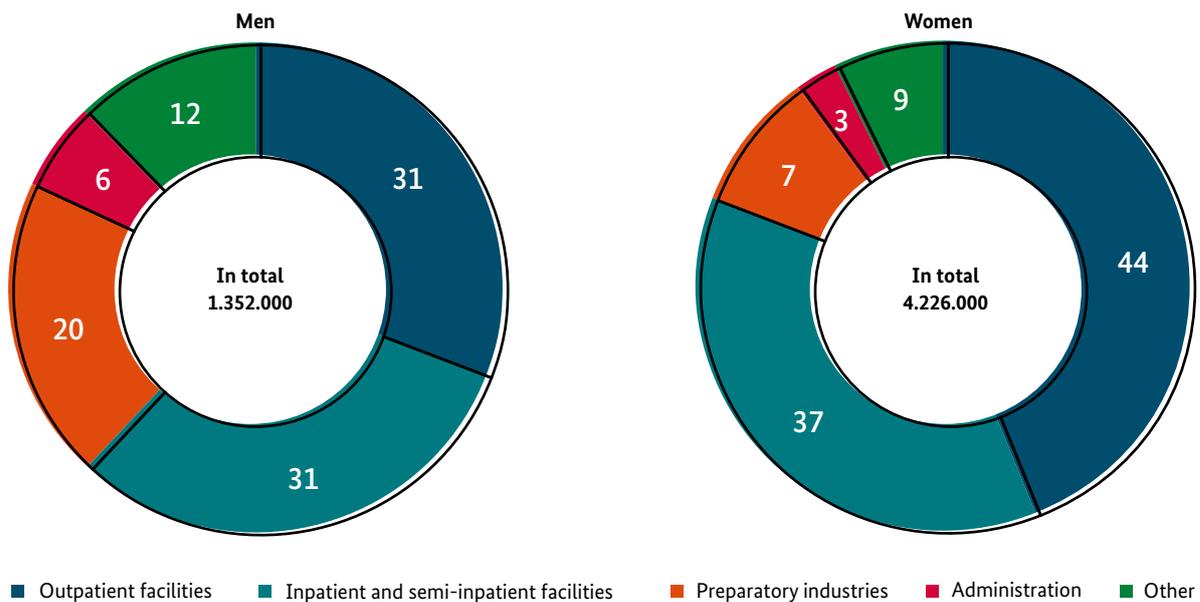
Figure 14: Employment by economic sector (in percentage)<sup>70</sup>



The fact that working with and for people has historically been perceived as an activity better suited to women raises the barriers for men looking for careers in growing industries such as healthcare, for example. Only 24 per cent of all

healthcare employees are male – and even amongst those the majority are engaged in gender-typical work such as administration and management.

Figure 15: Healthcare employees, by institution and gender in 2017 (in percentage)<sup>71</sup>



70 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Band 13 Arbeitsmarkt, page 360

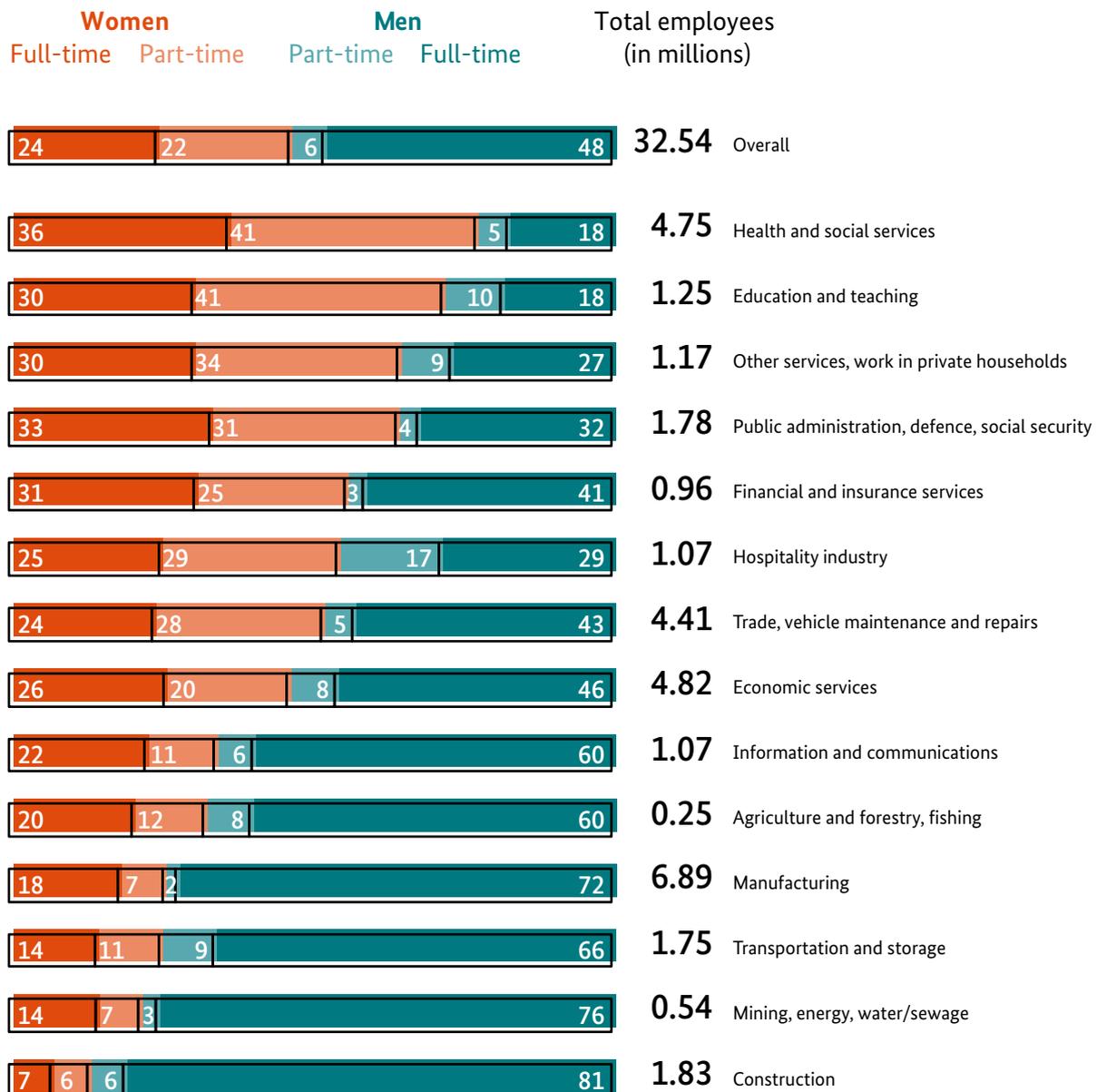
71 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Band 4 Gesundheit, page 129

### 3 Current circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men: An assessment

This underrepresentation is not just detrimental to men whose future careers are obstructed by gender stereotypes, it is also a major economic issue. Germany requires increasing numbers of care professionals to care for the ageing population and answer to changing perceptions of intergenerational solidarity.

Male professional potential remains a resource that is all too often overlooked. This also applies to other professions such as teaching and education. Figure 16 demonstrates how significantly gender stereotypes continue to influence the professional world (horizontal gender segregation).

Figure 16: Horizontal labour market segregation – employees subject to social security contributions (15- to 65-year-olds), by industry, gender and working hours (in percentage)<sup>72</sup>



<sup>72</sup> Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2019). Die Arbeitsmarktsituation von Frauen und Männern 2018. Blickpunkt Arbeitsmarkt, July 2019, page 12. <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/StatischerContent/Arbeitsmarktberichte/Personengruppen/generischePublikationen/FrauenMaenner-Arbeitsmarkt.pdf> (Information source: Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit)

Children are also susceptible to these stereotypes. “6-year-olds already believe that boys are simply better at working with robots and computers. When girls participate in courses on programming, they start to develop an interest in the topic and feelings of self-efficacy”, reveals the report on the recent PISA study.<sup>73</sup>

The German Federal Employment Agency soberly commented: “There’s hardly any indication of a

fundamental change in the priorities of men and women, at least not at the level of skilled workers. This conventional pattern is also mirrored in the careers and jobs selected by the 1.3 million trainees employed and subject to social security contributions in June 2018. As usual, the majority of male trainees continue to work in mechanical engineering and vehicle technology jobs, whilst the majority of women can be found in healthcare occupations and office jobs.”<sup>74</sup>

#### “There’s an urgent need for action”

***Boys as carers, nursery teachers or social workers? Why not? The “Klischeefrei” [Cliché-free] initiative is taking aim at the root problem to promote true freedom of choice when it comes to choosing a career.***

Freedom of choice is of huge importance in liberal societies – and it is often a misconception. Freedom of choice cannot just remain a theoretical concept. It has to facilitate a real choice between equivalent alternatives. This equivalence is often missing due to the subliminal effect of cultural and structural preferences.

For example: In theory, every boy and girl is free to choose their own profession. However, practical experience shows that both genders rarely have the courage to do so. It takes a significant amount of courage for a 14-, 15- or 16-year-old boy to come forward and say: I want to become a teacher because I enjoy it and am good at it.

That is not to say many boys do not aspire to do this. However, they often worry about the skewed opinions of their peers, their parents’ reaction and the lack of understanding from their teachers. Career guidance may also have discouraged them. In all of these cases, certain reservations come into play which do not necessarily even have to be vocalised. Nevertheless, they cause a theoretically unlimited freedom of choice to be restricted to a small pool of career options perceived as appropriate for boys.



Initiative zur Berufs- und Studienwahl

These preconceptions act to the detriment of gender equality and the labour market, and, perhaps most significantly, the affected youths themselves. The “Klischeefrei” initiative aims to put a stop to this.

In contrast to projects such as “Boys’Day”, the “Klischeefrei” initiative does not work with young people directly, but rather with those who influence their educational and career choices. “And who does that not encompass?” asks project head Miguel Diaz, adding, “Our initiative starts in day-care centres. Of course, we don’t just waltz in and ask 4-year-old boys whether they have ever considered a career as a teacher when they’re older. Instead we encourage teachers to practice and promote a culture of openness. We’ve created a nursery package with examples from everyday life, that they can work with.”

However, that is just a small part of the work Miguel Diaz and his team do. In addition to the groundwork, there is no shortage of structural and background work as well as networking to be done. Regular meetings are held with both of the sponsoring ministries, experts, associations and public authorities.

73 Master, Allison; Cheryan, Sapna; Moscatelli, Adriana; Meltzoff, Andrew N. (2017). Programming experience promotes higher STEM motivation among firstgrade girls. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, Volume 160, August 2017, pages 92–106

74 Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2019). Die Arbeitsmarktsituation von Frauen und Männern 2018. *Blickpunkt Arbeitsmarkt*, July 2019, pages 12–13 <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/StatischerContent/Arbeitsmarktberichte/Personengruppen/generischePublikationen/FrauenMaennerArbeitsmarkt.pdf> (Information source: Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit)

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This way, since its foundation, the “Klischeefrei” initiative has established stable partnerships with more than 270 companies, organisations and committees – from small nurseries to large employers’ associations. “Last year, we organised an evening reception at the Haus der Deutschen Wirtschaft [joint seat of the Confederation of German Employers’ Associations, the Federation of German Industries, and the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce]”, recollects Diaz. “The support we received from the highest societal levels was impressive. It’s clear that this work is subject to a high level of recognition. I’ve been working on this issue for a long time now and I’ve never experienced so much support for the topic.”

There must be those who criticise the initiative or those who maybe even suspect manipulation? “As in, that we are carrying out some kind of re-education mission? We’re yet to encounter this insinuation. It’s, of course, not the case. We want to promote the potential of young people – free from gender identities”, claims Diaz. “I experience how

important this task is on a daily basis around every corner. When there are roadworks in front of my house:

It’s all men. Then I go to the doctor: apart from the doctor himself, it’s all women. Our working world is just as influenced by gender clichés as ever. These role restrictions continue to narrow the range of career choices and life planning, at times affecting men more than women. There’s an enormous need for action.”

Isn’t it just a question of time until gender equality arrives at the workplace? Maybe we just need to be more patient to attain gender equality? Miguel Diaz shakes his head. “Gender clichés have become quite open, permeable, yes. But similar movements have existed throughout history without actually leading to equality in gender relations between women and men. And that has to be our goal, ultimately: To reconcile gender equality and justice, economics and prosperity, freedom and development.

Gender distribution in professional hierarchies (vertical segregation) also remains stereotypical.

Although women are now more likely to be employed as skilled workers, this is not mirrored at management level. Men are still almost exclusively the only gender represented at the top of the career ladder. In the 2017 financial year,

the percentage of women with positions on the management boards of all companies that fall under the field of application of the law on the equal participation of women and men in managerial positions in the private sector and in public services (FüPoG) was 7.6 per cent. This figure has only increased by 1.4 per cent since the law entered into force in 2015.<sup>75</sup>

Figure 17: Vertical labour market segregation – gender distribution by qualification/position (in percentage)<sup>76</sup>

	Men (full-time and part-time)	Women (full-time and part-time)	Difference
In a managerial position	12.8 %	7.8 %	+5.0 %
Prominent skilled workers	22.3 %	20.9 %	+1.4 %
Skilled workers	43.0 %	47.7 %	-4.7 %
Semi-skilled workers	15.4 %	14.3 %	+1.1 %
Unskilled workers	6.5 %	9.2 %	-2.7 %

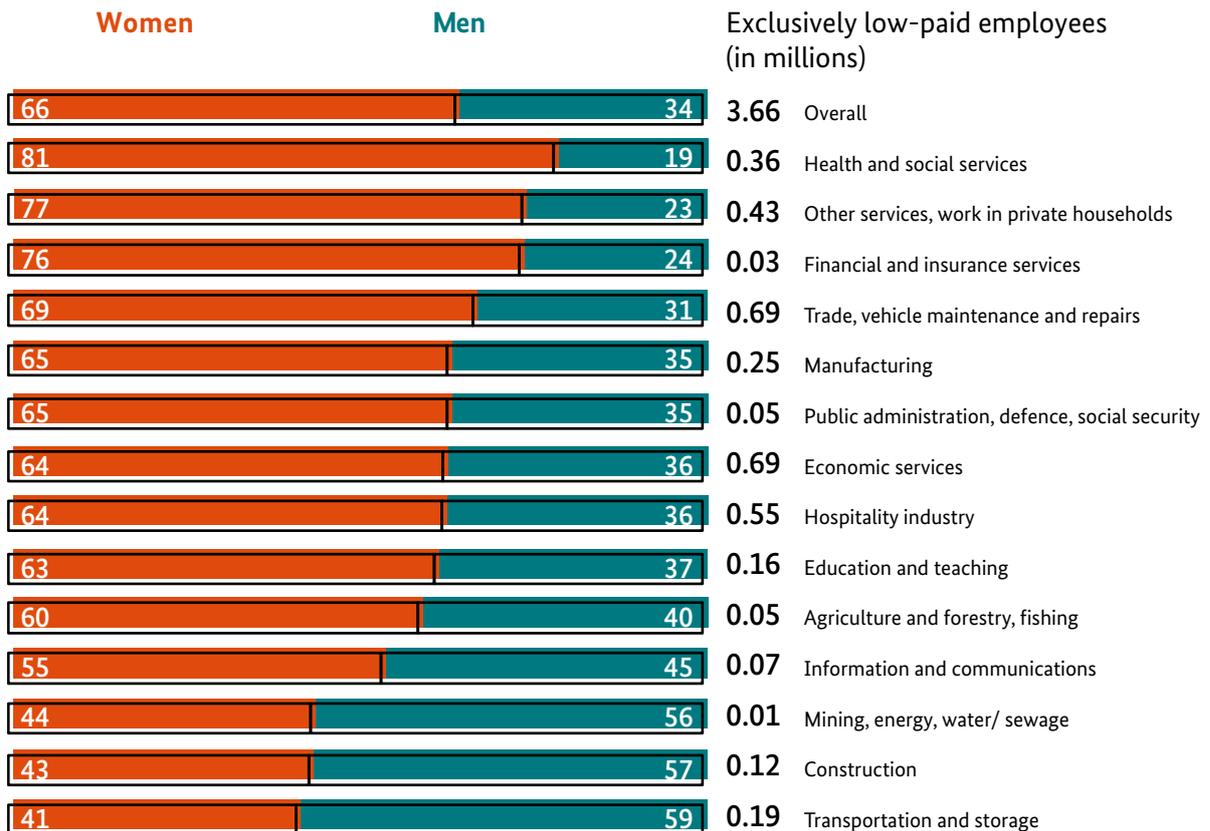
<sup>75</sup> Source: Quarterly information. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/aktuelles/alle-meldungen/freiwilligtutsichwenignurfestevorgabenwirken/156456>

<sup>76</sup> Wirtschafts und Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut WSI (2019). Vertikale Segregation des Arbeitsmarkts 2019 (Based on data from the Federal Statistical Office, quarterly survey of earnings). Hans-Böckler-Stiftung. <https://www.wsi.de/de/erwerbsarbeit14617vertikalsegregationdes-arbeitsmarktes14843.htm> (Accessed on: 14 February 2020)

## Precarious work

Men and women are both affected by precarious working conditions. Women constitute the majority of workers in marginal employment (see Figure 18).

Figure 18: Exclusively marginal employees (15 to 65 years), by industry and gender<sup>77</sup>



Men (3.9 per cent) are more often affected by unemployment than women (3.0 per cent). This figure is significantly higher amongst less qualified men (10 per cent), whereby the relative difference to less qualified women (7 per cent) remains the same. At mid-qualification level, the unemployment rate for men was 3.2 per cent in 2018 (2.4 per cent for women), and 1.8 per cent for highly-qualified men (1.9 per cent for women).<sup>78</sup>

People with a migration background are affected by unemployment twice as much as people without a migration background.<sup>79</sup>

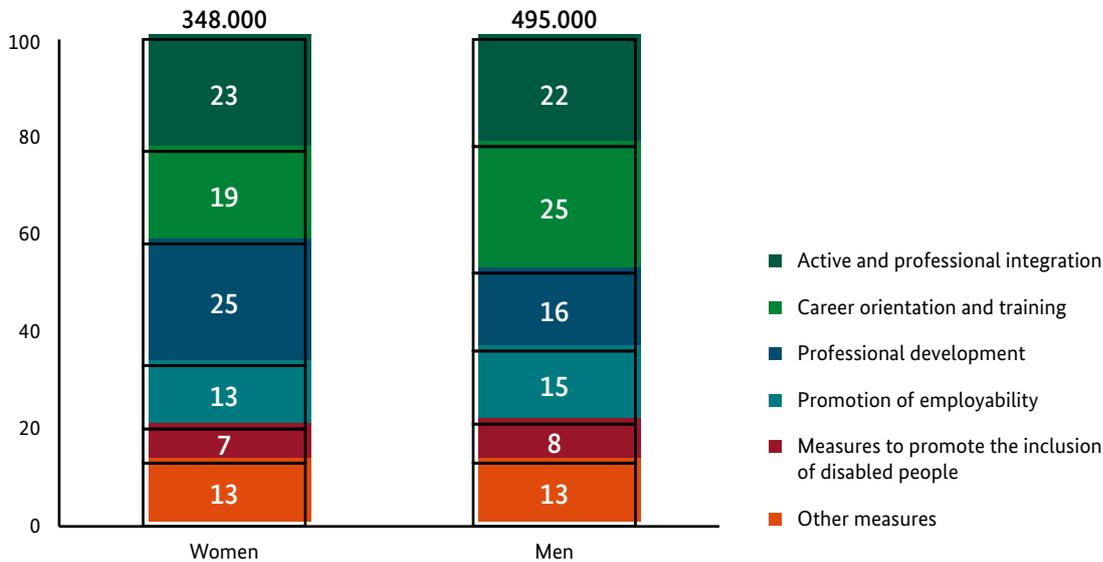
At the same time, men are more closely taken into account in labour-market political measures than women – more closely than their quantitatively higher vulnerability to unemployment would justify.

77 Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2019). Die Arbeitsmarktsituation von Frauen und Männern 2018. Blickpunkt Arbeitsmarkt, July 2019, page 15. <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statischer-Content/Arbeitsmarktberichte/Personengruppen/generische-Publikationen/Frauen-Maenner-Arbeitsmarkt.pdf> (Information source: Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit)

78 Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder (2019). Internationale Bildungsindikatoren im Ländervergleich, page 54. [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressekonferenzen/2019/Bildung/heft\\_bildungsindikatoren\\_laendervergleich.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressekonferenzen/2019/Bildung/heft_bildungsindikatoren_laendervergleich.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

79 Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2019). Arbeitsmarktintegration ist Kernaufgabe. Entry from 5 February 2019. <https://www.bmas.de/DE/Themen/Arbeitsmarkt/Arbeitsfoerderung/foerderungsmigranten.html>

Figure 19: Allocation of labour market support measures, by gender in 2018 (in percentage)<sup>80</sup>



### 3.3 Division of labour and family models

-  *Only one quarter of people in Germany live together in a family with children.*
-  *On average, both parents in families work the same amount of time – but not on the same tasks. Men remain focused on their careers and dedicate less time to childcare and household chores than mothers.*
-  *Two-thirds of all children in Germany would like to spend more time with their fathers. Many men themselves would like to achieve a better balance in this regard. However, there are a range of complex reasons that often prevent this from happening.*
-  *Families in East Germany live in a more egalitarian way than those in the old federal states.*

The British sociologist Esther Dermott defines paternal involvement as being engaged and being concerned.<sup>81</sup> In an ideal world, gender equality would be achieved if fathers and mothers were equally as engaged and concerned. Where does Germany stand in this regard?

#### Population development

Since 1970, the number of deaths in Germany has outpaced the number of births. In 2017, 931,000 people died and 784,000 children were born – two-thirds of them to married parents (65.2 per cent) and one third to unmarried parents (34.8 per cent).

The percentage of out-of-wedlock children is continually growing – from 7.2 per cent in 1970<sup>82</sup> to 35.5 per cent in 2016.<sup>83</sup> This figure remains slightly higher in the new federal states, whereby the differences are increasingly converging. An international comparison shows that the percentage of children born out of wedlock is sharply increasing throughout Europe. A particularly high

<sup>80</sup> Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2019). Die Arbeitsmarktsituation von Frauen und Männern 2018. Blickpunkt Arbeitsmarkt, July 2019, page 12. <https://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/StatischerContent/Arbeitsmarktberichte/Personengruppen/generischePublikationen/FrauenMaennerArbeitsmarkt.pdf> (Information source: Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit)

<sup>81</sup> See Dermott, Esther (2003). The 'Intimate Father': Defining Paternal Involvement. Sociological Research Online, 8(4). <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.5153/sro.859>

<sup>82</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Volume 2 Bevölkerung, Familien, Lebensformen, page 33

<sup>83</sup> Eurostat (2019). Marriage and divorce statistics. Version: 24 June 2019 (data for 2016). [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/Marriage\\_and\\_divorce\\_statistics#A\\_rise\\_in\\_births\\_outside\\_marriage](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/Marriage_and_divorce_statistics#A_rise_in_births_outside_marriage)

percentage of children born out of wedlock has been reported in countries with progressive gender-equality policies (for instance, Sweden with 54.9 per cent, Denmark with 54.0 per cent, Norway with 55.7 per cent compared to the EU average of 42.5 per cent).<sup>84</sup>

Since the mid-1990s the birth rate in Germany has been rising again. As a result, the average fertility rate is almost 1.6 children per woman today. The age when women have their first child is also on the rise, at just under 30 years at present (29.8 years).<sup>85</sup>

80.7 per cent of children in Germany are born to parents who both possess a German passport, 5.3 per cent to parents who both possess a foreign

passport, and 14.0 per cent are born to binational partnerships.<sup>86</sup>

There is a significant difference in the age structure between the populations with and without a migration background in Germany. The part of the population without a migration background is strongly over-represented in the age cohort over 50. Asylum seekers significantly bring down the age of the age structure. Amongst them are particularly high numbers of children and young men.

However, the age structure can vary significantly depending on the home country. Figure 20 demonstrates why asylum seekers cannot simply be defined as “young men without a family”.

Figure 20: Refugees in Germany in 2018 by home country, percentage of men and average age (men and women)<sup>87</sup>

	Overall	Thereof men	Average age
Syria	551,830	64.3 %	25.8 years old
Afghanistan	213,935	66.8 %	24.8 years old
Iraq	187,480	60.7 %	26.3 years old
Iran	68,530	64.1 %	34.2 years old
Russian federation	64,670	47.6 %	39.7 years old
Turkey	60,015	59.5 %	38.3 years old
Eritrea	59,930	69.7 %	25.6 years old
Kosovo	47,275	53.3 %	37.8 years old
Serbia	39,230	51.3 %	32.5 years old
Ukraine	37,425	46.6 %	52.0 years old

It is obvious: There is a relatively large group of asylum-seeking men whose integration into society and the labour market requires special efforts. The “Movemen” project,<sup>88</sup> sponsored by the BMFSFJ, which ran until the end of 2018, contributed to building bridges in this regard.

The integration of those taking refuge in Germany in 2015 was a gratifying success. “Entry into gainful employment is taking place (...) at a quicker speed than witnessed with refugees in the past and the employment rate is increasing in line with the length of time spent in Germany, leading to

84 Eurostat (2019). Marriage and divorce statistics. Version: 24 June 2019 (data for 2016).

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplainedindex.php/Marriage\\_and\\_divorce\\_statistics#A\\_rise\\_in\\_births\\_outside\\_marriage](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplainedindex.php/Marriage_and_divorce_statistics#A_rise_in_births_outside_marriage)

85 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Band 2 Bevölkerung, Familien, Lebensformen, pages 35 and 36

86 Ibid. page 37

87 Ibid. page 50

88 See <https://movemen.org/de/>

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the projection that at least 50 per cent of this group will be gainfully employed within 5 years of moving to Germany at the latest.”<sup>89</sup> Male refugees can build on more previous work experience and higher career aspirations than women from the same cohort.<sup>90</sup>

#### Marriage, partnerships, family

The 82 million people in Germany live in 41 million households. Therefore, on average, exactly 2 people live in every household. This figure was still 2.3 people per household 30 years ago.

At the same time, the number of single households is continually increasing. In 2018, 42 in every

100 households were inhabited by a sole occupant. By contrast, the conventional normal family of two children and two parents is a relatively uncommon life model in reality. Only one in every ten households in Germany follow this model.<sup>91</sup>

There are significant differences between genders when it comes to education and living situations. Notably, 55.5 per cent of all 25–45-year-old men compared to just 42.4 per cent of all 25–45-year-old women are single. In the entire population, 34.9 per cent of men are single compared to 25.6 per cent of women. This difference can be explained in part by the fact that men are typically at least two years older than women when they get married and start a family.<sup>92</sup>

Figure 21: Population above 18 years old living in private households, by age group and marital status 2018 (in percentage)<sup>93</sup>

	Single	Married (living together)	Married (living separately)	Divorced	Widowed
<b>Men</b>					
Under 25	98.0 %	1.5 %	0.6 %	–	–
25–45	55.5 %	38.5 %	2.6 %	3.3 %	0.1 %
45–65	19.1 %	63.8 %	3.6 %	12.1 %	1.3 %
> 65	5.4 %	73.3 %	2.4 %	7.0 %	11.7 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>34.9 %</b>	<b>52.1 %</b>	<b>2.7 %</b>	<b>7.1 %</b>	<b>3.2 %</b>
<b>Women</b>					
Under 25	94.0 %	5.1 %	0.7 %	–	–
25–45	42.4 %	49.2 %	2.3 %	5.6 %	0.4 %
45–65	12.1 %	64.4 %	3.0 %	15.3 %	5.1 %
> 65	4.2 %	47.9 %	1.6 %	9.0 %	37.4 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>25.6 %</b>	<b>50.5 %</b>	<b>2.2 %</b>	<b>9.5 %</b>	<b>12.2 %</b>

89 Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (2019). Arbeitsmarkt Aktuell. No. 3/July 2019, page 4

90 Ibid. page 5

91 Ibid. page 59

92 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Daten zu den Eheschließungen und dem durchschnittlichen Heiratsalter Lediger. Version: 14 August 2019 <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/GesellschaftUmwelt/Bevoelkerung/EheschliessungenEhescheidungenLebenspartnerschaften/Tabellen/eheschliessungenheiratsalter.html>

93 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Volume 2 Bevölkerung, Familien, Lebensformen, page 60

The extent to which the higher percentage of single men (34.9 per cent compared to 25.6 per cent of women) is the result of a conscious decision against entering into a partnership or against the institution of marriage, or to what extent this can be attributed to those who become “involuntary singles”, otherwise known as involuntary celibates (incels), remains to be investigated. This question is relevant from a gender

perspective as certain members of this group tend to regard the non-existent, no longer existing, unfulfilled and/or unfulfillable desire for a relationship as a consequence of female emancipation. Arguably an opinion that is only a few steps away from an anti-feminist way of thinking. Networking in pertinent internet forums also creates considerable potential for social issues. More research is needed on this topic.

#### An umbrella organisation with a certain appeal

*The Federal Forum Men is an association for boys, men, and fathers – and a partner organisation of the BMFSFJ.*



The wide storefront of Reginhardstraße 34 in Berlin would perhaps appear more in line with a pharmacy, the earlier function of the building. For the past year, this building has housed the organisation of an entirely new form of first aid. “Bundesforum Männer – Interessenverband für Jungen, Männer und Väter” [Federal Forum Men – Interest Association for Boys, Men and Fathers] it says above the entrance. “Sometimes curious passers-by spontaneously poke their heads in to find out what exactly we’re doing here,” explains managing director Dag Schölper with a smile. However, walk-in customers are not the primarily targeted clientele of this association. The Federal Forum Men team functions more like the beating heart of civil society engagement in gender equality for men in Germany, both on a practical and a political level, with far-reaching arteries connecting experts, decision-makers, and interested parties and providing them with a knowledge base.

Health and selfcare, reconciliation of family and work, subjection to violence: By funding the project “Männer im Wandel” [changing perceptions of men], the Federal Government paved the way for the Federal Forum Men to increase public and expert awareness of the key equality concerns of men for its duration between 2017 and 2020. “German Basic Law demands gender equality. In this regard, the following questions need to be asked with regard to boys and men: Where are they stuck in role expectations? Where can they benefit from an improved

quality of life and development facilitated by gender equality?,” explains Dag Schölper.

The Federal Forum often works on these issues behind the scenes – where foundations are laid, opinions are formed, and decisions are made. This groundwork would hardly be possible to finance without the support of the BMFSFJ.

Mr Schölper, what exactly is it that you do? You don’t have to ask the Managing Director twice. He vividly illustrates a vast array of activities, explaining the association’s participation in the independent advisory board “Reconciliation of Care and Career” – and the need to increasingly press on with the notion that care for relatives can and will increasingly be provided by men in the future. He speaks of networking events for specialists working with boys and men – and the importance of establishing how the professionalism, legitimacy and networking-capabilities of this relatively new field can be improved and of the collaboration with the German Forum for Crime Prevention – and the significance of the question of what men require when they find themselves in precarious life circumstances to ensure they do not become criminals.

The “Movemen” project was a particular highlight, as it addressed male refugees and opposed the fear associated with the image of a “young foreign man” with concrete encounters.

“Among other places, we went to Cottbus with our project “Männlichkeit und Flucht” [Masculinity and Exile], at a time when neo-Nazis chased down refugees”, recalls Schölper, he himself a father of two. “That was certainly not without its highly dramatic moments.” Specialists from the Federal Forum Men enabled locals to meet male refugees in the town centre as part of a day of publicity for the project. Over 100 people openly and emphatically accepted the invitation with interest and sought to converse with the male refugees. “I found it extremely remarkable and moving.”

**männerberatungsnetz.de**  
Beratung für Jungen, Männer & Väter

The Federal Forum manages to reach the general public thanks to its expertise, which is increasingly

requested by media representatives. A service available for every man is the counselling map on the website [www.maennerberatungsnetz.de](http://www.maennerberatungsnetz.de). This site features the whole spectrum of counselling services for men – from A to Z. Entering a post code and desired counselling topics generates results for suitable local services in a few simple steps.

As indispensable as this support is for each individual, the Federal Forum Men clearly insists that individuals do not bear sole responsibility for progress in gender equality. “Tangible, structural changes are also required: For example, we need to make it clear, that the issue of wage equality doesn’t solely pertain to women. It also affects men: wage differences lead to other differences within relationships and also limit men’s freedom of choice.”

The growing reluctance of men to get married is, last but not least, important from a development perspective: Three-quarters of men over 65 years are married. They benefit from this bond in terms of health and socially (for example, higher subjective satisfaction with regard to health and a lower risk of depression) and have a significantly lower risk of premature death.<sup>94</sup> In contrast, it can often be difficult for single older men to successfully juggle self-care, household chores and a social life. If this group expands in the future, the state will encounter a number of new issues related to their support.

## Life and family models

In the age group between 15 and 65, a total of 8.8 million fathers and 10.7 million mothers live together with minor children.<sup>95</sup> The number of unmarried parents continues to rise, whereas the

number of single parents<sup>96</sup> and divorcees is subject to fluctuation, but is not generally going up.<sup>97</sup> 20 years ago, twice as many women as men applied for a divorce. In recent years, this gender gap has continued to diminish.<sup>98</sup> In 2017, 52 per cent of divorces were applied for by the wife, 42 per cent by the husband and 7 per cent by both parties.<sup>99</sup> In 2018, approximately 121,000 minor children were affected by the divorce of their parents.<sup>100</sup>

It is becoming increasingly common that both parents want to continue caring for their child and share childcare after a divorce, meaning that fathers want to retain responsibility for the upbringing of their children. Numerous studies show that active paternal participation in care and upbringing activities and a strong father-child-bond have a positive impact on the development of a child.<sup>101</sup> The government is tasked with dismantling structural barriers and creating the

94 Robert-Koch-Institut (2014). Beiträge zur Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes. Gesundheitliche Lage der Männer in Deutschland, page 170. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

95 Keller, Matthias & Kahle, Irene (2018). Realisierte Erwerbstätigkeit von Müttern und Vätern zur Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf, page 57

96 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Band 2 Bevölkerung, Familien, Lebensformen, page 67

97 Ibid.

98 Statistisches Bundesamt (2018). Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Statistik der rechtskräftigen Beschlüsse in Eheauflösungssachen (Scheidungsstatistik) und Statistik der Aufhebung von Lebenspartnerschaften. Fachserie 1, Reihe 1.4, page 13

99 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Volume 2 Bevölkerung, Familien, Lebensformen, page 63

100 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistik rechtskräftiger Urteile in Ehesachen (Scheidungsstatistik) 2018

101 BMFSFJ (2018). Väterreport 2018, page 11. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/127268/2098ed4343ad836b2f0534146ce59028/vaeterreport2018data.pdf>

political framework conditions to promote continuing care and relationships following separation and divorce. Fathers who engage in organisations for those affected by separation and divorce (for instance, [www.vaeteraufbruch.de](http://www.vaeteraufbruch.de)), view these tasks as incomplete and criticise the unequal treatment of fathers by legislature and judiciary. They call for alternating custody as the standard after separation and divorce (shared parenting).

For the group of working-age men, the percentage of those in part-time work is significantly higher amongst the childless (13.3 per cent) than of men with children under 15 (8.0 per cent).<sup>102</sup>

The general increase in the number of men in part-time work (see 3.2) only accompanies

increased family involvement by men to a certain extent; four out of five men list other reasons for working part-time (for instance, lack of full-time employment opportunities as dictated by the labour market).<sup>103</sup>

It is worth noting that in the new federal states, in more than one third of all two-parent families, both parents work full-time – more than double the figure compared to the old federal states. The traditional breadwinner model, with the woman not even working part-time, is far less common. In the old federal states, a quarter of all couples with minor children still adhere to this model – despite the fact that 82 per cent of all men in Germany agree with the statement that both partners in a partnership should work.<sup>104</sup>

Figure 22: Minor children in couple families, by labour market participation of the parents (in percentage)<sup>105</sup>

	Germany overall	Old federal states	New federal states
<b>Both parents working</b>			
One parent working full-time, one working part-time	47.2 %	49.4 %	36.5 %
Both working full-time	17.8 %	14.4 %	34.1 %
Both working part-time	2.3 %	2.0 %	3.2 %
<b>One parent working</b>			
One parent working full-time	23.1 %	24.9 %	14.7 %
One parent working part-time	3.6 %	3.5 %	4.1 %
<b>Neither parent working</b>			
Neither parent working	6.1 %	5.8 %	7.4 %

Figure 23 illustrates the division of labour within families in relation to gender-equality attitudes.

102 Keller, Matthias & Kahle, Irene (2018). Realisierte Erwerbstätigkeit von Müttern und Vätern zur Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf, page 57

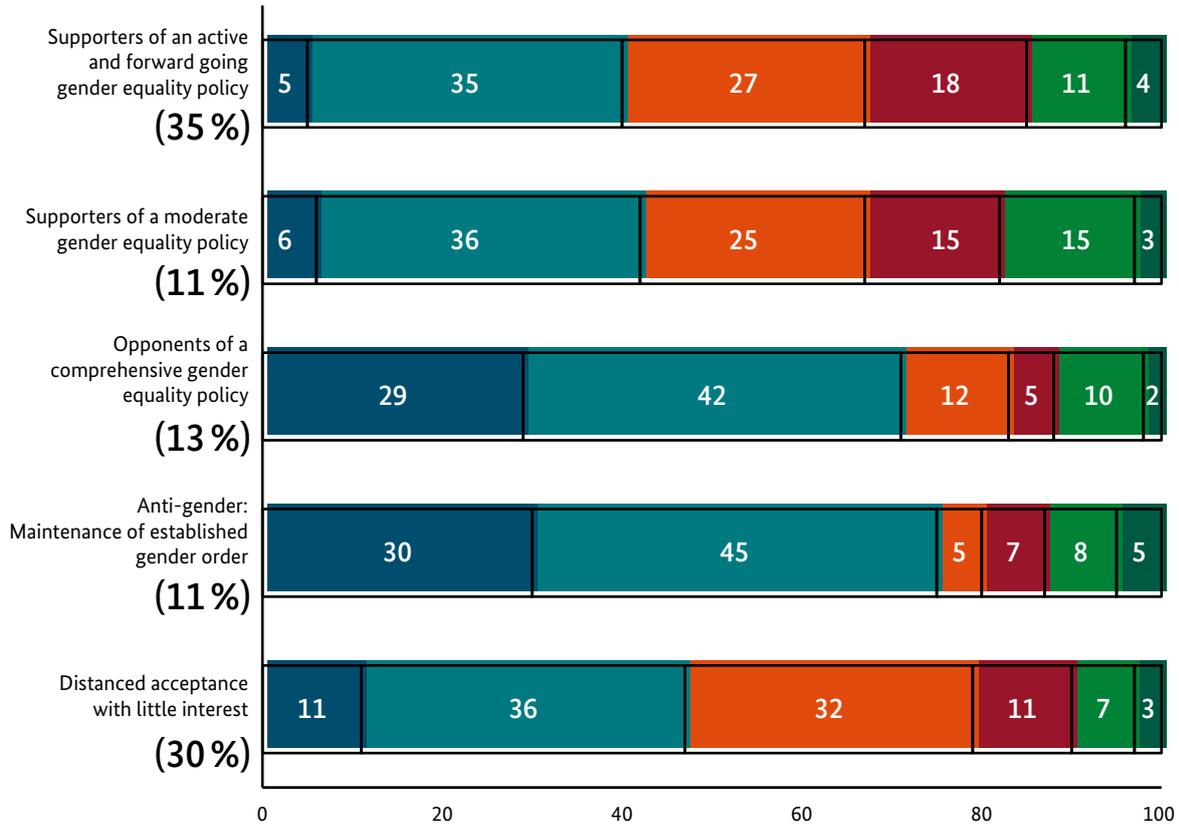
103 Ibid. page 63

104 BMFSFJ (2017). Männer-Perspektiven – Auf dem Weg zu mehr Gleichstellung?, page 20. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/115580/5a-9685148523d2a4ef12258d060528cd/maennerperspektivenaufdemwegzumehrgleichstellungdata.pdf>

105 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Volume 2 Bevölkerung, Familien, Lebensformen, page 68

Figure 23: Practised division of labour within the family and gender-equality attitudes (in percentage)<sup>106</sup>

**Practised role model of men with partners**



- Partnership in which the man is the primary earner and the women focuses on housework and childcare and does not work: **Strict traditional separation of roles**
- Partnership in which the man is the primary earner and the women focuses on housework and childcare and works to earn a little on the side: **Partially traditional separation of roles**
- Partnership in which the man and woman earn an equal income and split household chores and childcare: **Equal professional and private separation of roles**
- Partnership in which the man and woman complete the same amount of household chores and childcare, even if one partner earns significantly more: **Equal separation of roles in the household**
- Partnership in which **careers take priority for both partners**
- Other

Thirty-five per cent of men working full-time and 14 per cent of men working part-time (all of them with children in the household) claim not to have enough time for their family.<sup>107</sup> The assumption that the male desire to spend more time with his

family is mere lip service falls short. In addition to barriers in the work place and cultural ones, it is also important to note that the division of labour within families is the product of a complex negotiating process influenced by individual

106 BMFSFJ (2017). Männer-Perspektiven – Auf dem Weg zu mehr Gleichstellung?, page 57. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/115580/5a-9685148523d2a4ef12258d060528cd/maennerperspektivenaufdemwegzumehrgleichstellungdata.pdf>

107 Ibid. page 73f.

preferences and financial scope, but also – substantially – by the power dynamics within a couple, political framework conditions and incentives.<sup>108</sup>

Parallel to the diminishing traditional (sole) breadwinner model the use of external childcare is on the rise, in line with the changed conceptions and desires of men and women.<sup>109</sup> Almost one quarter of children between the ages of 0 and 3 in the old federal states (24.6 per cent) and almost half of children in the new federal states (47.5 per cent) attend day-care facilities. This gap almost disappears for children between 3 and 6 (91.9 per cent to 93.6 per cent).<sup>110</sup>

Ninety-five per cent of all fathers with a child at nursery school age view day-care facilities as an “enabling entity that families require to enable women and men to earn the same income.”<sup>111</sup> In reality, the increasing use of external childcare enables women to spend more time at work – but it does not make fathers any less career-focused.

The Federal Institute for Population Research has made the following comment on this issue:

“The internal contradictory expectations placed on fathers – on the one hand to fulfil the role of

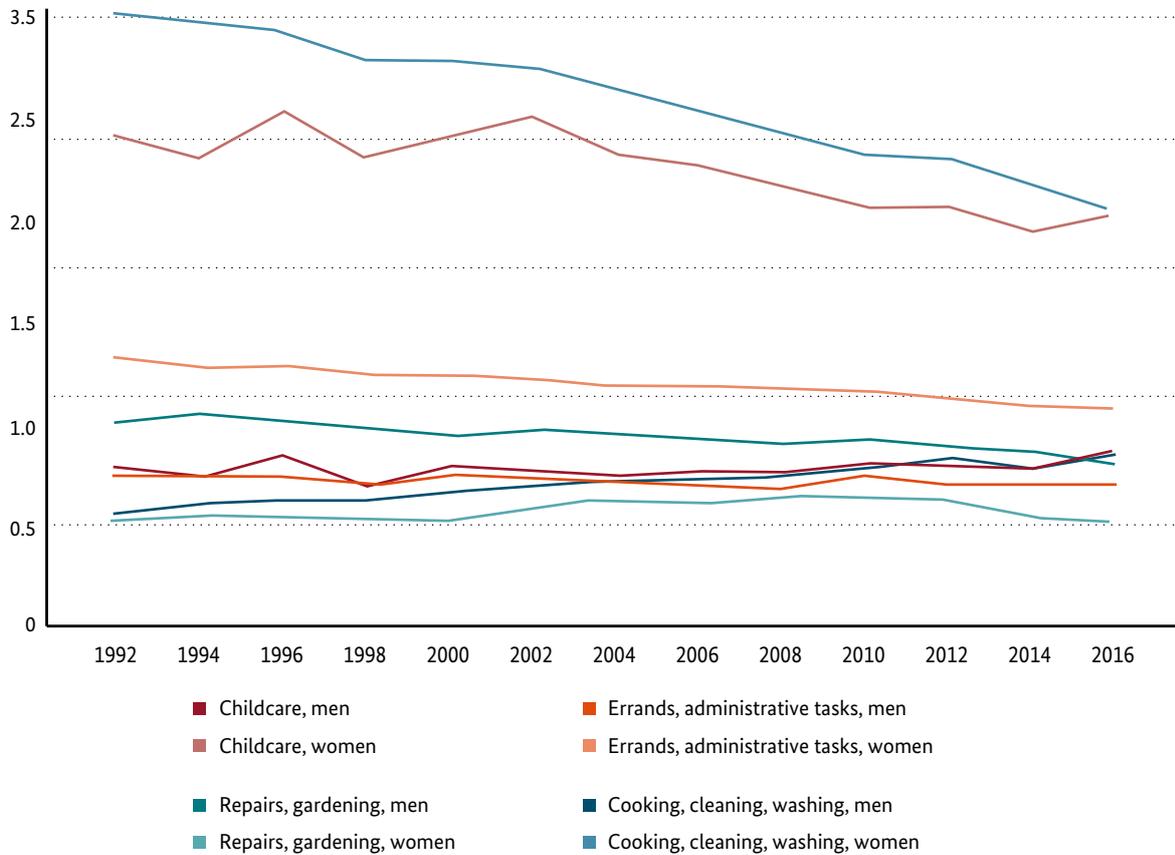
the family breadwinner and on the other hand to be an equal and present carer of his own children (...) – leads to inner conflicts and insecurity in young men, which can even lead to the refusal of having children. Especially young fathers struggle with the pressure to square the circle. The problem of reconciling work and family is not just limited to mothers nowadays, it also affects fathers.”<sup>112</sup> It needs to be emphasized that both women/mothers and men/fathers are subject to contradictory role expectations.

Figure 24 illustrates the development in the distribution of unpaid work between men and women in the past 25 years.<sup>113</sup> The dotted line represents the contributions made by women and the solid line represents contributions made by men. At a glance, one thing is clear: Motherly time expenditure has decreased: by one hour per day for housework and half an hour per day for childcare. In contrast, the engagement of fathers has remained relatively unchanged. They continue to dedicate their time to providing for the family rather than caring for the family. (As previously stated: In the male self-image – as experts working with men report – career orientation is not an expression of personal self-realisation, but of their responsibility as fathers).

- .....
- 108 Boll, Christina & Beblo, Miriam (2013). Das Paar – eine Interessenseinheit? Empirische Evidenz zu partnerschaftlichen Aushandlungsprozessen, page 38. Hamburg: Hamburgisches Weltwirtschaftsinstitut HWWI. [http://www.hwwi.org/fileadmin/hwwi/Publikationen/Studien/FES\\_Das\\_Paar.pdf](http://www.hwwi.org/fileadmin/hwwi/Publikationen/Studien/FES_Das_Paar.pdf)  
See also: Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2015). Weichenstellungen für die Aufgabenteilung in Familie und Beruf. Untersuchungsbericht zu einer repräsentativen Befragung von Elternpaaren im Auftrag des Bundesministeriums für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend. <https://www.ifdallensbach.de/fileadmin/studien/Weichenstellungen.pdf> (Accessed on: 12 June 2020)
- 109 Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2019). Veränderungen der gesellschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen für die Familienpolitik. Befragungen im Rahmen der demoskopischen Begleitforschung des BMFSFJ. Allensbach am Bodensee. [https://www.ifdallensbach.de/fileadmin/Ifd/sonstige\\_pdfs/Rahmenbedingungen\\_Bericht.pdf](https://www.ifdallensbach.de/fileadmin/Ifd/sonstige_pdfs/Rahmenbedingungen_Bericht.pdf) (Accessed on: 12 June 2020)
- 110 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistiken der Kinder und Jugendhilfe 2019. <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Soziales/Kindertagesbetreuung/Publikationen/Downloads-Kindertagesbetreuung/tageseinrichtungen-kindertagespflege-5225402197004.pdf>, Q1
- 111 BMFSFJ (2017). Männer-Perspektiven – Auf dem Weg zu mehr Gleichstellung?, page 13. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/115580/5a-9685148523d2a4ef12258d060528cd/maennerperspektivenaufdemwegzumehrgleichstellungdata.pdf>
- 112 Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung (2017). Familienleitbilder – Alles wie gehabt? Partnerschaft und Elternschaft in Deutschland, page 22. Berlin: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung. [https://www.bib.bund.de/Publikation/2017/pdf/Familienleitbilder-Alles-wie-gehabt-Partnerschaft-und-Elternschaft-in-Deutschland.pdf?\\_blob=publicationFile&v=2](https://www.bib.bund.de/Publikation/2017/pdf/Familienleitbilder-Alles-wie-gehabt-Partnerschaft-und-Elternschaft-in-Deutschland.pdf?_blob=publicationFile&v=2)
- 113 For more information, please see: OECD (2016). Dare to Share – Deutschlands Weg zur Partnerschaftlichkeit in Familie und Beruf, page 154. OECD Publishing Paris. [https://read.oecdilibrary.org/socialissuesmigrationhealth/daretosharedeutschlandswegzurpartnerschaftlichkeitinfamilieundberuf\\_9789264263420de#page1](https://read.oecdilibrary.org/socialissuesmigrationhealth/daretosharedeutschlandswegzurpartnerschaftlichkeitinfamilieundberuf_9789264263420de#page1) (Accessed on: 12 June 2020)

### 3 Current circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men: An assessment

Figure 24: Time dedicated to unpaid work on working days by men and women (in hours per day)<sup>114</sup>



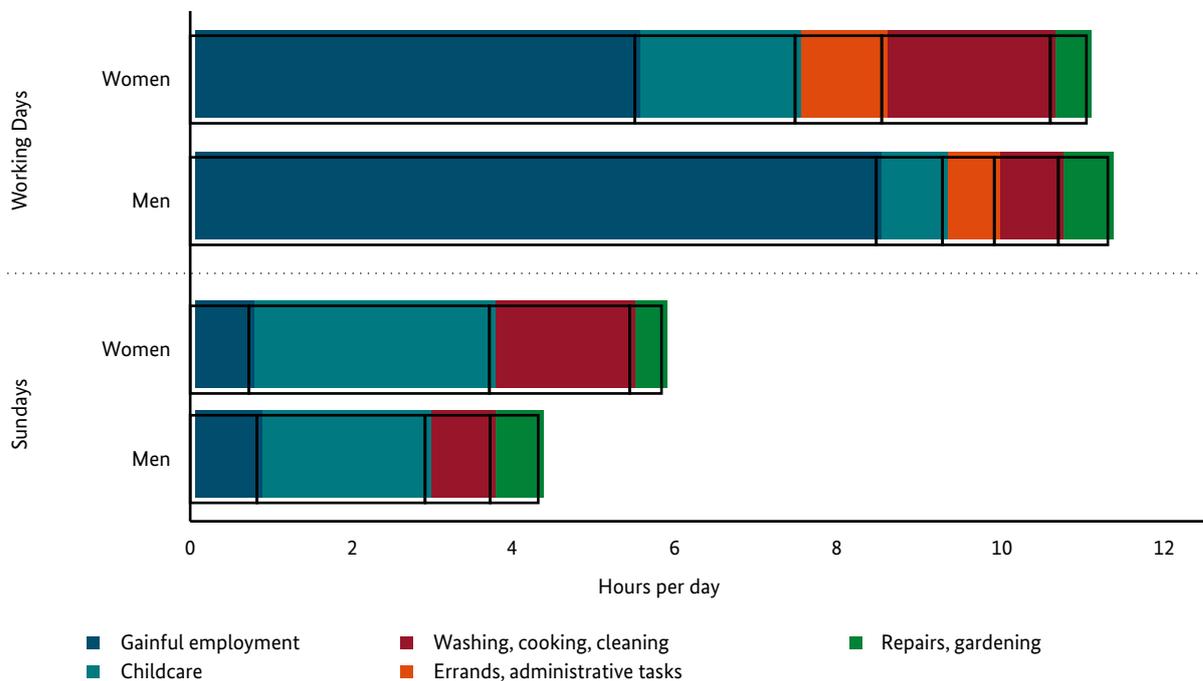
Note: Confidence intervals are not shown for reasons of clarity; the mean difference in the individual areas of activity is statistically significant.

Men do not offset these inequalities on the weekend. Figure 25 illustrates that neither parent is lazy. However, the division of tasks is often dictated by gender – and includes notably more relaxation time for men. On weekdays, mothers and fathers work a total of approximately 11 hours per day, whereby fathers typically undertake more gainful employment and mothers take over more of the household and family work. When

there is no gainful employment on the weekend, the distribution of other work remains largely the same: However, men spend three times the amount of time on childcare on weekends than on weekdays (two hours and six minutes on Sundays, as opposed to 50 minutes on weekdays) – but, nevertheless, less than mothers (three hours on Sundays compared to two hours on weekdays).

114 Samtleben, Claire (2019). Auch an erwerbsfreien Tagen erledigen Frauen einen Großteil der Hausarbeit und Kinderbetreuung. DIW Wochenbericht 10/2019, page 142. [https://www.diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw\\_01.c.616021.de/19103.pdf](https://www.diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw_01.c.616021.de/19103.pdf)

Figure 25: Time use of men and women on working days and Sundays (in hours per day)<sup>115</sup>



Note: Care for the elderly was not included, as the number of cases and hours spent on this in the sample was very low; the v32 wave of the SOEP was used, as no information is included for Sundays in v33, n=2741.

Not all time-use studies take these traditional male contributions to household chores and family life (for instance, washing the car, repairing devices, mowing the lawn, etc.) into account. However, when they are accounted for, it can clearly be stated: When it comes to the participation of women and men in household and family work, there is an imbalance in all Western industrialised nations – even in the Scandinavian ones, the gender equality showcases.<sup>116</sup>

With regard to household chores, it is important to note that women tend to treat male participation in housework with more ambivalence than their engagement in childcare. Fifty-two per cent of women explicitly state that they find participa-

tion in household chores to be an undesirable quality in men. Conversely, 48 per cent of women have indicated they would like their partner to do chores.<sup>117</sup> Male contributions to housework accordingly remain a conflicting issue for many women. Some of them call for male involvement in a move towards gender equality and personal relief, whereas others tend to ward it off – possibly to secure their definitional power in this domain. Looking at the reluctance of men to participate in household tasks, it is relevant to note that inequality – which still remains quite strong – is not solely attributable to male reluctance, but is also due to how the relationship within a couple works. Despite this, the conclusion drawn by Wippermann gives us food for thought: “The

115 Samtleben, Claire (2019). Auch an erwerbsfreien Tagen erledigen Frauen einen Großteil der Hausarbeit und Kinderbetreuung. DIW Wochenbericht 10/2019, page 143. [https://www.diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw\\_01.c.616021.de/19103.pdf](https://www.diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw_01.c.616021.de/19103.pdf)

116 Van der Gaag, Nikki; Heilman, Brian; Gupta, Taveeshi; Nembhard, Ché; Barker, Gary (2019). State of the World's Fathers Report Vol III – Unlocking the Power of Men's Care. Washington DC: Promundo US. <https://mencare.org/resources/stateoftheworldsfathersunlockingthepowerofmenscare/>

117 BMFSFJ (2013). Jungen und Männer im Spagat: Zwischen Rollenbildern und Alltagspraxis, page 39. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.delta-sozialforschung.de/cms/upload/grafiken/artikel/jungen-und-Maenner-im-Spagat.pdf>

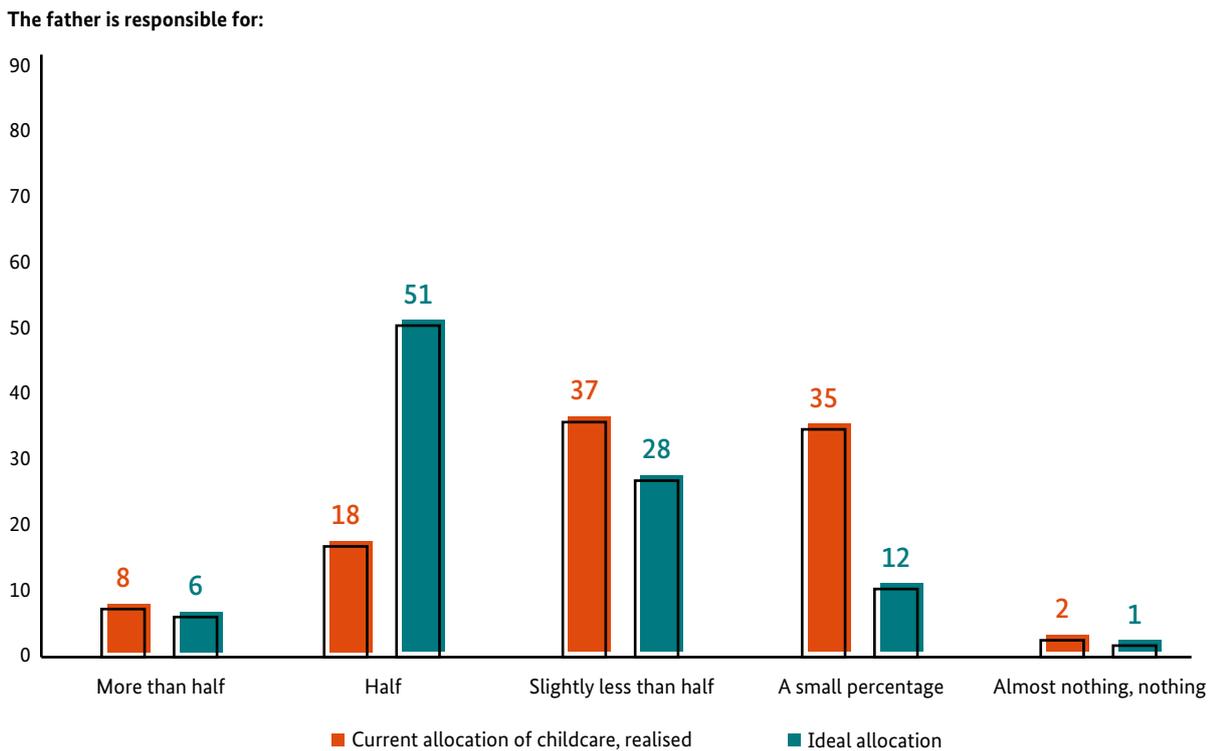
positively valued and aspirational image of the modern man is – amongst men – a family, but not a household, person.”<sup>118</sup>

### Fatherhood between dreams and reality

The expectations placed on fathers by society and their self-image have undergone a vast transformation in recent years. Nowadays, more than two thirds of the population expect fathers

to (also) care for their small children, be strongly involved in family life and support their partners. Seventy-two per cent of the population find it important, for example, that fathers look after their children when they are sick or take them to the doctor’s (compared with 66 per cent in 2015).<sup>119</sup> The majority of fathers themselves also want to be more active in this regard and take care of their children in everyday life, and not just fulfil the role of the family breadwinner. First and foremost, they want to – just as often as mothers – spend more time with their children. In reality, even though one in two fathers would like to take over half of the childcare responsibilities, only one in six actually achieve doing so (see Figure 26).

Figure 26: Fathers’ perception of realised and ideal allocation of childcare in the family (in percentage)<sup>120</sup>



118 BMFSFJ (2013). Jungen und Männer im Spagat: Zwischen Rollenbildern und Alltagspraxis, page 39. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.delta-sozialforschung.de/cms/upload/grafiken/artikel/Jungen-und-Maenner-im-Spagat.pdf>

119 Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2019). Veränderungen der gesellschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen für die Familienpolitik. Befragungen im Rahmen der demoskopischen Begleitforschung des BMFSFJ. Allensbach am Bodensee. [https://www.ifdallensbach.de/fileadmin/IfD/sonstige\\_pdfs/Rahmenbedingungen\\_Bericht.pdf](https://www.ifdallensbach.de/fileadmin/IfD/sonstige_pdfs/Rahmenbedingungen_Bericht.pdf) (Accessed on: 12 June 2020)

120 BMFSFJ (2018). Väterreport 2018, page 12. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/127268/2098ed4343ad836b2f0534146ce59028/vaeterreport2018data.pdf>

Nonetheless, 69 per cent of fathers claim that they are more engaged in the upbringing of, and care for, their children than fathers in their parents' generation – and see that as a personal gain.<sup>121</sup> The general population also thinks that today's fathers are far more engaged in family life. Seventy-two per cent of the population believe that fathers today are more involved in the upbringing of, and care for, their children than 10 to 15 years ago. Around half of the population know at least one father who took or is currently on parental leave. This development is overwhelmingly viewed as a positive one.<sup>122</sup>

The desire of fathers to spend more time with their children also corresponds to the wishes of the children: Whilst two thirds of children feel they spend an adequate amount of time with their mothers (64 per cent), only one third (34 per cent) are happy with the amount of time they see their fathers.<sup>123</sup>

The reason behind these differences between dreams and reality is relatively well researched and has been identified as a complex occurrence: personal convictions, gender stereotypes, barriers in the work place, and the legal framework all come into play.

Since time spent with family and time in gainful employment are closely interrelated, a reduction of working hours may pose a possible solution for fathers in order to spend more time with their children. Despite this, only 8 per cent of fathers work part-time (see also 3.2).<sup>124</sup> When asked, why they do not realise their wish to work part-time, fathers primarily state financial reasons (56 per cent) and the lack of a suitable position (46 per

cent). Other barriers often named are the fact that part-time work is uncommon amongst men (36 per cent) and that superiors object to men working part-time (34 per cent).<sup>125</sup> Specialists working with fathers in businesses also report the fear of working part-time minimising chances of promotion. "Since I started working 80 per cent, I've become 'a half-pint' to my colleagues," reports one father affected by negative experiences.<sup>126</sup>

In reality, abstract commitments of the employer towards a modern work-life balance policy seem to have less significance than concrete support from – or at least quiet acceptance by – colleagues (above all of the same gender) at the same level or direct superiors. With regard to the engagement of men in family work, the attitude of mothers also plays a key role: She can encourage the involvement of her partner by:

- Allowing space for the father-child relationship to flourish,
- letting the father spend time caring for the child on his own,
- keeping a critical distance from her own demands and standards,
- accepting the father's own independent approaches,
- appreciating his fatherly contribution without passing judgement, and
- allowing his paternal skills to develop at their own pace.

The phase surrounding the birth of a child is often a sensitive time with regard to the distribution of tasks within a family.<sup>127</sup> If fathers actively get involved from the outset and develop their own care abilities, the father-child relationship will be

121 BMFSFJ (2018). Väterreport 2018, page 11. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/127268/2098ed4343ad836b2f0534146ce59028/vaeterreport2018data.pdf>

122 Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2019). Veränderungen der gesellschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen für die Familienpolitik. Befragungen im Rahmen der demoskopischen Begleitforschung des BMFSFJ. Allensbach am Bodensee. [https://www.ifdallensbach.de/fileadmin/IfD/sonstige\\_pdfs/Rahmenbedingungen\\_Bericht.pdf](https://www.ifdallensbach.de/fileadmin/IfD/sonstige_pdfs/Rahmenbedingungen_Bericht.pdf) (Accessed on: 12 June 2020)

123 BMFSFJ (2017). Familienreport 2017 – Leistungen, Wirkungen, Trends, page 71. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/119524/f51728a14e3c91c3d8ea657bb01bbab0/familienreport2017data.pdf>

124 Keller, Matthias & Kahle, Irene (2018). Realisierte Erwerbstätigkeit von Müttern und Vätern zur Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf, page 56 f. [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Methoden/WISTA-Wirtschaft-und-Statistik/2018/03/realisierte-erwerbstaetigkeit-032018.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Methoden/WISTA-Wirtschaft-und-Statistik/2018/03/realisierte-erwerbstaetigkeit-032018.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

125 BMFSFJ (2016). Partnerschaftliche Vereinbarkeit – Die Rolle der Betriebe, page 16. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/111772/7d469846de04a813ea5ba506c63a71f4/partnerschaftlichevereinbarkeitdierolederbetriebedata.pdf>

126 Statement by one of a participant at an event for the "DER TEILZEITMANN" [The part-time man] campaign, which was launched in 2012 by the Dachverband Schweizer Männer und Väterorganisationen männer.ch [Umbrella organisation of Swiss men and fathers' organisations]

127 See also IfD Allensbach „Weichenstellungen“ und Retraditionalisierung nach der Geburt vor allem in Westdeutschland 2015

stronger in the long-term.<sup>128</sup> Conversely, a mother's trust in paternal skills does not just lighten the load at home but also significantly facilitates her return to work.<sup>129</sup> The opposite effect also plays a role: A mother's workload has been empirically identified as the most significant influencing factor on paternal involvement.<sup>130 131</sup>

This is why it is so crucial that new fathers are offered government funded Parental Allowance and parental leave so they can grow in this regard. Only one father in five took advantage of these opportunities when they were introduced in 2008, and since then this figure has risen to two in five.<sup>132</sup> However, as previously, men still take significantly less time off work than women (an average of 3.8 months compared to 14.2 months for women).<sup>133</sup> Correspondingly, only around a quarter of Parental Allowance are paid to fathers – a trend that is on the rise.<sup>134</sup> Thirty per cent of entitled mothers and 13 per cent of fathers elect to use ElterngeldPlus [Parental Allowance Plus].<sup>135</sup> International findings suggest that the amount of income replaced plays a key role in increasing the claimings of benefits by fathers.<sup>136</sup>

A research project from the University of Basel<sup>137</sup> describes the change in attitudes amongst men as a renouncement of the previous “ideal of the absent sole breadwinner” in favour of the new ideal of “active, present fatherhood”: “A manly life-style that revolves around work is not just promoted within society, but also tends to be the

aspiration of men themselves.” Do men become fathers because they want to have children or because they wish to start a family? In the first case this aspiration is typically fuelled by the desire for a father-child relationship. In the latter case “the focus tends to primarily lie on achieving a model family, which includes a wife and children. This aspiration is often the status of head of the family, typically considered a normal component of ‘adult’ masculinity and less about the child itself as an immediate partner in a relationship.” This distinction is important, as the two types of fathers have different motivations and need to be addressed differently.

It has emerged that notions of modern masculinity have expanded to include the facet of involved fatherhood. However, they have not fundamentally changed, expanded and stabilised in a transformed harmony. Instead, the intention to become a present father is more often simply added to all the previous requirements. The associated strain, overloading and inner contradictions are topics men and the media are now tentatively broaching. These contradictions may also explain a certain scepticism on the women's part whether men are serious about the fair distribution of family and household chores within the partnership. As a result, it is recommended that contemporary masculinity is viewed and promoted in a more overreaching and comprehensive way (see section 5).

128 BMFSFJ (2018). Väterreport 2018, page 17. Berlin: BMFSFJ.

<https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/127268/2098ed4343ad836b2f0534146ce59028/vaeterreport2018data.pdf>

129 Ibid. page 49

130 See Dermott, Esther (2003). The ‘Intimate Father’: Defining Paternal Involvement. *Sociological Research Online*, 8(4).

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.5153/sro.859>

131 Norman, Helen (2014). What makes fathers involved? Investigating the relationship between paid work and childcare in the UK. *Tagungsdokumentation zur 2nd International Conference on Men and Equal Opportunities 2014* in Wien, page 120

132 Statistisches Bundesamt (2020). Statistik zum Elterngeld – Beendete Leistungsbezüge Jahre 2013–2016

133 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Press release no. 22, 28 May 2019.

[https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/ZahlderWoche/2019/PD19\\_22\\_p002.html](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/ZahlderWoche/2019/PD19_22_p002.html)

134 Statistisches Bundesamt (2020). <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/GesellschaftUmwelt/Soziales/Elterngeld/Tabellen/zeitreihevaeteranteil.html> (As on: 19 March 2020)

135 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Press release no. 145 dated 11 April 2019.

[https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2019/04/PD19\\_145\\_22922.html](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2019/04/PD19_145_22922.html)

136 See also, for instance <https://mencare.org/whatwedo/advocacy/paidparentalleave/> or Scambor, Elli; Holter, Oystein G.; Theunert, Markus (2016). *Caring Masculinities – Men as Actors and Beneficiaries of Gender Equality*, in: *Documentation of the 3rd International Conference on Men and Equal Opportunities in Luxemburg 2016*, pages 27–37

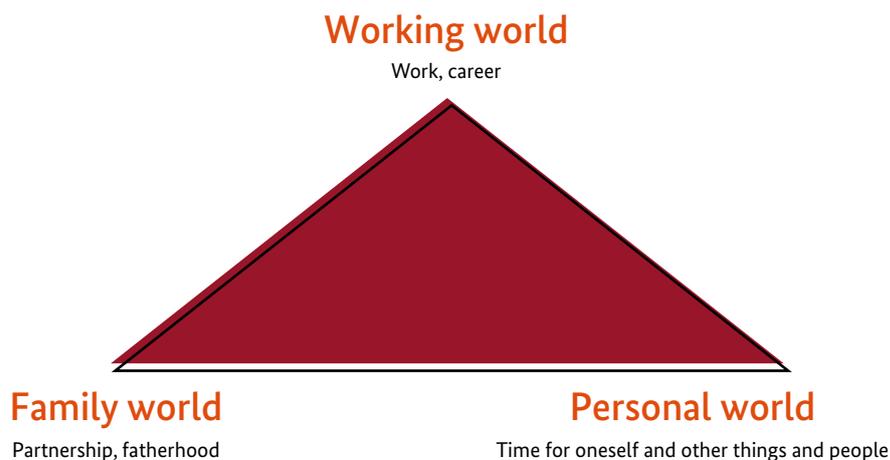
137 Maihofer, Andrea (2010). *Familiengründung und Kinderlosigkeit bei Männern. Bedingungen von Vaterschaft heute im Spannungsfeld zwischen alten und neuen Männlichkeitsnormen*. ZGS Diskussions-Papier Nr. 1, Zentrum Gender Studies, Universität Basel

In this regard, it is also important that reconciliation is not just understood as the fine balance between work and family, which is ultimately the promotion of a balance between two areas of work. “Men experience the new tasks and responsibilities for their families not just as a new source of happiness, but, at the same time, as pressure: Time pressure, income pressure, stability pressure, continuity pressure, organisational pressure, pressure to remain flexible for both their employer and family. Due to external necessities, they view themselves as increasingly under the rule of others with dwindling degrees of freedom in everyday life and a longing for a domain for their very own interests.”<sup>138</sup>

When consulting and supporting men, a compatibility triangle (see Figure 27) is often employed to

explain this predicament, which, in addition to work and family, also clearly encompasses aspects of a man’s personal life and time (friends, hobbies, time alone, etc.). The significance of a man’s personal life is often pushed to the side by men themselves and society. “Men’s personal sphere often is stunted in everyday life. (...) They pile all their energy into work and family life and forget that – beyond these two spheres – they need other people, places and time to fuel their inner fire.”<sup>139</sup> “With the help of this model, a man can, alone or in exchange with others, assess his personal situation. In doing so, he learns how much time and energy he uses up in the three spheres of life and which area he dedicates least time to. This snapshot enables him to see where the pressure is highest for him and how he would like to deal with it.”<sup>140</sup>

Figure 27: Life sphere triangle used for working with men<sup>141</sup>



138 BMFSFJ (2013). Jungen und Männer im Spagat: Zwischen Rollenbildern und Alltagspraxis, page 46. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.delta-sozialforschung.de/cms/upload/grafiken/artikel/Jungen-und-Maenner-im-Spagat.pdf>

139 Walser, Christoph & Wild, Peter (2002). Men’s Spirit, pages 39 und 40. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder Verlag

140 Ibid.

141 Darstellung nach Eidgenössisches Büro für die Gleichstellung von Frau und Mann (2012). Make it work. Männerprojekte für mehr Gleichstellung im Erwerbsleben, page 13. Bern. Source: <https://www.ebg.admin.ch/ebg/de/home/dokumentation/publikationenallgemein/publikationenarbeit.html#183602045> (Accessed on: 30 May 2020)

The “Gender Care Gap” project, sponsored by the EU,<sup>142</sup> has named the following influencing factors that promote an egalitarian division of labour between parents:

- Conscious decisions and negotiating processes;
- minimal difference in income before the birth of the first child;
- a relatively strong career-orientation of the mother;
- strong familial engagement by the father;
- significantly higher usage of care services, in particular of day-care facilities; and
- good conditions at work for organising gainful employment and care work.

Furthermore, “social norms have to be overcome, i.e. the societal notion that it is better for (small) children, for instance, to be cared for at home or that those in need of care should spend as much time as possible in their own homes; as well as gender stereotypes, for instance, that women are by nature better at providing care; and gender-specific ascriptions that, for example, women are responsible for caring for small children and doing housework, and men instead have to provide financial security for the family.”<sup>143</sup>

When this occurs, the benefits are tangible: “The equal sharing of responsibility for children between fathers and mothers has a positive effect on families and their well-being, and also benefits the development of a range of less tangible but nevertheless important social benefits, such as improved father-child bonding and more egalitarian gender norms over generations.”<sup>144</sup>

## 3.4 Health and satisfaction

 *Traditional notions of masculinity pose significant health risks. These gender-specific risks must also be approached from a gender-specific angle.*

 *Men from lower education backgrounds are disproportionately affected by health risks. But the risks faced by well-integrated working-age men are often overlooked.*

 *The transition into retirement can be a significant challenge for career-oriented men. Many master this transition and find new purposes in voluntary engagement or caring for their grandchildren.*

Eighty per cent of all medical expenses in Western industrialised nations are spent on non-communicable diseases (NCD): Cardiac illnesses, lung diseases, cancer, diabetes, rheumatism etc. A few risk factors have been identified as the main culprits behind these diseases. The key known factors are smoking, alcohol, unhealthy diet and lack of exercise.<sup>145</sup>

As a result of this connection between lifestyle and health risks, the latter are not randomly split between genders. Statistics on this topic highlight clear connections between disease incidence and gender-typical lifestyle factors – such as smoking and drinking, for example. Figure 28 illustrates the diseases, for which men are more likely to require

142 Gärtner, Debora; Lange, Katrin; Stahlmann, Anne (2020). Was der Gender Care Gap über Geld, Gerechtigkeit und die Gesellschaft aussagt. Einflussfaktoren auf den Gender Care Gap und Instrumente für seine Reduzierung, page 87. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/154696/bb7b75a0b9090bb4d194c2faf63eb6aa/gendercaregapforschungsberrichtdata.pdf> (Accessed on: 30 May 2020)

143 Gärtner, Debora; Lange, Katrin; Stahlmann, Anne (2020). Was der Gender Care Gap über Geld, Gerechtigkeit und die Gesellschaft aussagt. Einflussfaktoren auf den Gender Care Gap und Instrumente für seine Reduzierung. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/154696/bb7b75a0b9090bb4d194c2faf63eb6aa/gendercaregapforschungsberrichtdata.pdf> (Accessed on: 30 May 2020)

144 OECD (2016). Dare to Share – Deutschlands Weg zur Partnerschaftlichkeit in Familie und Beruf, page 16. OECD Publishing Paris. [https://read.oecdilibrary.org/social-issues-migrationhealth/daretosharedeutschlandswegzurpartnerschaftlichkeitinfamilieundberuf\\_9789264263420de](https://read.oecdilibrary.org/social-issues-migrationhealth/daretosharedeutschlandswegzurpartnerschaftlichkeitinfamilieundberuf_9789264263420de) (Accessed on: 12 June 2020)

145 Robert-Koch-Institut (2018). Internationale Zusammenarbeit im Bereich der Nichtübertragbaren Erkrankungen (Noncommunicable Diseases). [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Institut/Internationales/NCD/NCD\\_node.html](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Institut/Internationales/NCD/NCD_node.html) (As on: 18 December 2018, Accessed on: 15 February 2020)

inpatient treatment than women. The “ranking” highlights that certain health risks (such as prostate cancer) are inherently “male” for biological reasons.

Other health risks (such as alcohol addiction or lung cancer) are more closely associated with “typical male” behaviour – such as alcohol and nicotine abuse as stress-reducer and comforter.

Figure 28: Patients discharged from hospital after inpatient treatment in 2017 – difference between genders (in percentage)<sup>146</sup>

Diagnosis	Disease	Men	Women	Difference
C61	Prostate cancer	100.0 %	0 %	+100 %
C15	Oesophageal cancer	78.8 %	21.2 %	+57.6 %
C67	Bladder cancer	77.1 %	22.9 %	+54.2 %
F10	Alcohol	72.9 %	27.1 %	+45.8 %
F11-16/18/19	Drugs	74.8 %	25.2 %	+49.4 %
C22	Liver cancer	69.1 %	30.9 %	+38.2 %
C32-24	Lung cancer	63.7 %	36.3 %	+27.4 %
C16	Stomach cancer	63.5 %	36.5 %	+27.0 %
C19-21	Anal cancer	61.4 %	38.6 %	+22.8 %
E10-14	Diabetes mellitus	58.8 %	41.2 %	+17.6 %
...	...			
J09-11	Influenza	50.2 %	49.8 %	+0.4 %

Clear conclusions about gender-typical behaviour and coping mechanisms can be drawn not only from illnesses (morbidity) but also from causes of death (mortality). Figure 29 shows the most frequent causes of death in Germany. Although more women die from heart failure, also due to their higher life expectancy – 83.3 years for

women compared with 78.5 years for men<sup>147</sup> – men are disproportionately affected by heart attacks, atherosclerosis of the coronary arteries, and lung cancer. Here, too, the fact that in all age groups more men smoke than women (total population: 26.9 per cent of men, 18.8 per cent of women),<sup>148</sup> has tragic consequences.

146 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Band 4 Gesundheit, page 130 (Own diagram)

147 Lebenserwartung für 2018 Geborene. Source: [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Sterbefaelle-Lebenserwartung/\\_inhalt.html](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Sterbefaelle-Lebenserwartung/_inhalt.html) (Accessed on: 14 February 2020)

148 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Volume 4 Gesundheit, page 141

### 3 Current circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men: An assessment

Figure 29: Most common causes of death for men in 2016 (in percentage)<sup>149</sup>

#### Men

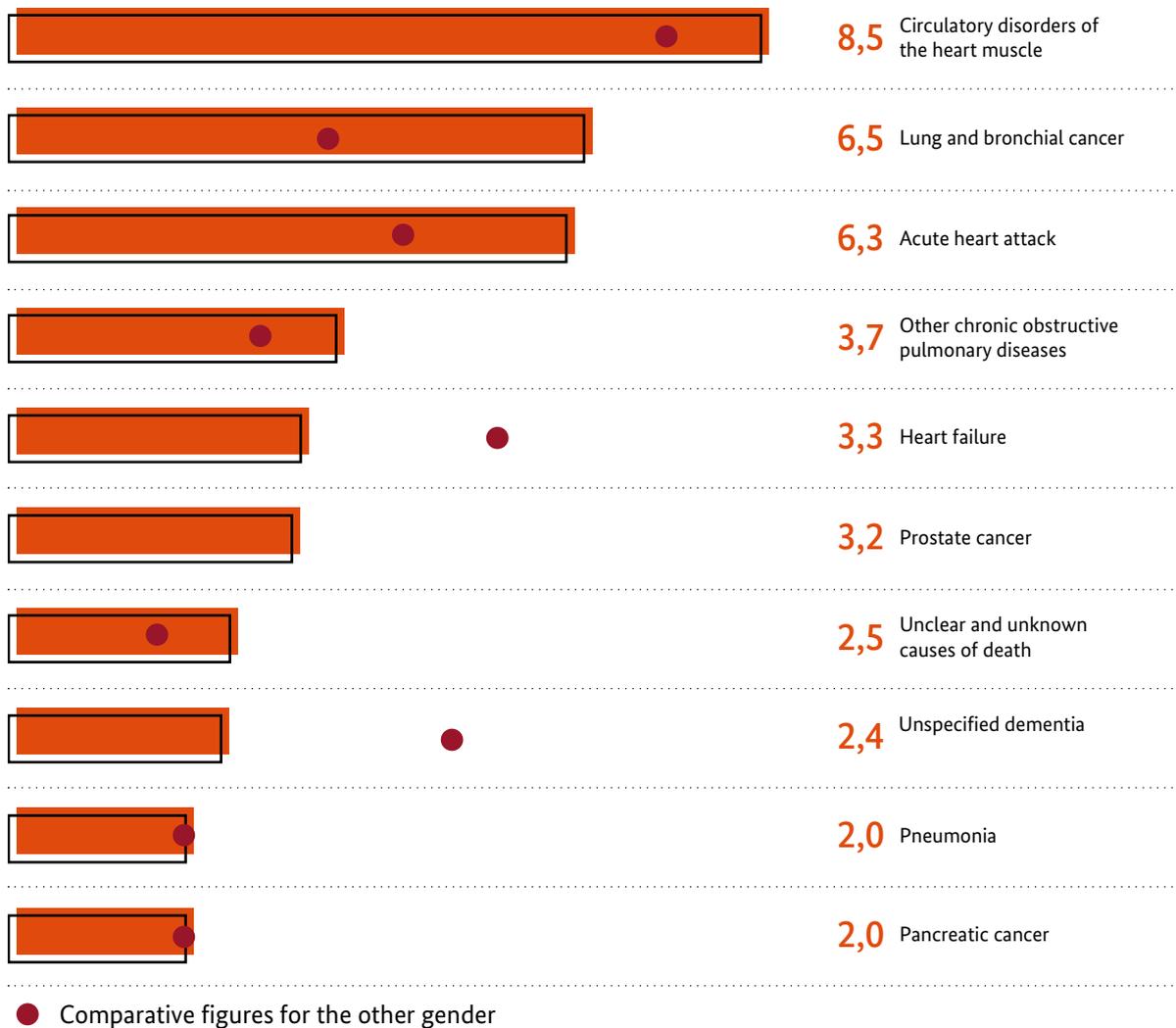


Figure 30: Direct medical expenses in 2015, by gender and age group (in million EUR and percentage comparison within the age group)<sup>150</sup>

	Men		Women		Difference
< 15 years of age	11,053	54.5 %	9,214	45.5 %	+4.5 %
15–30 years of age	9,537	40.8 %	13,838	59.2 %	-9.2 %
30–45 years of age	13,956	41.4 %	19,744	58.6 %	-8.1 %
45–65 years of age	45,205	48.9 %	47,249	51.1 %	-1.1 %
65–85 years of age	57,726	46.1 %	67,611	53.9 %	-3.9 %
> 85 years of age	11,193	26.0 %	31,881	74.0 %	-24.0 %
Overall	148,670	44.0 %	189,537	56.0 %	-6.0 %

149 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Volume 4 Gesundheit, page 129

150 Ibid. page 155

Despite specific health risks, men constitute an under-average burden on the healthcare system – explainable to some extent by the fact that they often wait longer before seeing a doctor.<sup>151</sup>

However, from this alone it cannot be concluded that men’s health behaviour is less of a strain on the economy than women’s. For this purpose, indirect medical expenses have also to be included. These encompasses the “resource losses” (i.e. the resulting economic losses caused by inability to work, invalidity and premature death) immediately attributable to illness and the intangible costs (pain, suffering etc.).

In order to provide gender-sensitive health protection and care, it does, of course, not suffice to analyse the statistical differences between the total population of men and women. Rather, a differentiated consideration is required that takes both gender-typical life circumstances and differences within gender groups, (for instance, salary, education, or cultural inclusion) into consideration. As a rule, the following applies: Precarious circumstances and low levels of education lead to health risks that interweave

with gender-specific challenges – not least due to the fact that gender stereotypes – as already described – strongly persist in these social spheres.

Here, instead of attempting to put the risks faced by men and women one against the other and asking: Which gender is worse off? The quantitative differences between the genders should make us analyse the situation deeper by asking: Which subgroups are particularly affected due to which causal relations? And which resources can be mobilised to prevent and combat illness? A gender-sensitive view is always a view that keeps vulnerabilities and resilience constantly on the radar.

Figure 31 illustrates the differences between men of different socio-economic status. Three groups were formed and asked how they assess their quality of life and health. The outcome was clear: Men with a lower status feel physically, mentally and/or functionally impaired almost twice as many days per month and they are four times more likely to report feeling they are in bad to very bad health in comparison to men with a high status.

Figure 31: Men’s self-perceived (health-related) quality of life and state of health, by socio-economic status (high/average/low)<sup>152</sup>

	With regard to my health-related quality of life, in the last 30 days, on xx days I was			I assess my state of health as ...	
	...physically impaired	...mentally impaired	...functionally impaired	average	bad to very bad
High	2.4 days	2.2 days	1.4 days	12.4 %	2.3 %
Average	3.9 days	3.1 days	2.7 days	20.0 %	6.1 %
Low	4.8 days	4.5 days	4.5 days	27.1 %	9.8 %

151 Abfrage GENESISOnline (Datenbank des Statistischen Bundesamts). (Accessed on 16 December 2019)

152 Robert-Koch-Institut (2014). Beiträge zur Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes. Gesundheitliche Lage der Männer in Deutschland, page 94. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

This correlation between status and health increases with age. The difference amongst 18- to 24-year-old men remains low. In this group, 95.3 per cent of the men with a high status reported a good or very good health condition, with a comparable figure of 90.7 per cent reported by those with a lower social status. This difference of “just” 4.6 per cent amongst young men contrasts with a difference of 35.3 per cent amongst 55- to 64-year-old men. In this older age group, only 42.2 per cent of men with a lower social status report a good or very good health condition, whilst this figure stands at 77.5 per cent amongst men with a higher social status.

We shall now illustrate some particular health aspects over men’s life course.

#### Boys and health

(See 3.6 for more information on boy-specific risk behaviour)

“You wimp!” [Du Lauch!]<sup>153</sup> has turned into a common insult amongst boys. It is often targeted at boys whose figure is regarded as too wispy. The male physique is increasingly being judged and that is not without its consequences. In a Swiss survey,<sup>154</sup> 79 per cent of boys aged between 13 and 17 reported being unsatisfied with their muscle mass. Fifty-four per cent of the boys reported that they actively work on achieving a muscular figure (of these, 90 per cent work out for this purpose and “only” 4 per cent use anabolic steroids as an “aid”).

This example shines a light on the fact that body shaming and body dysmorphic disorder have also become a reality faced by boys. In contrast to girls, boys do not typically view themselves as too fat, but rather as too thin. This has led to an increase in eating disorders amongst boys. In the entire population, approximately 40 in every 10,000 women and 4 in every 10,000 men develop anorexia nervosa over the course of their lives. Correspondingly, 100 women and 25 men per 10,000 develop bulimia nervosa.<sup>155</sup> In the past year alone, 80 men and 160 women (per 10,000) suffered from a binge-eating disorder. Comprehensive studies of the spread of eating disorders amongst boys remain few and far between in Germany. International studies and practical experience, however, show a clear upward trend and also estimate a high number of unrecorded cases of men with (both more and less severe forms of) eating disorders, that are not or falsely diagnosed.<sup>156</sup>

This under- or misdiagnosis can, on the one hand, be attributed to the gender-blind spots of health professionals, and, on the other hand, to the close link between sport and nutrition seen in boys. Medicine uses the term muscle dysmorphia to describe a “situation where a boy or man feels not to be muscular enough and consequently attempts to build up muscle. This negative view of their own bodies and striving for muscle often go hand in hand with intense negative feelings and emotions such as anxiety, a sense of inferiority, shame, self-depreciation and depression.”<sup>157</sup> And on top of this, there are eating disorders, which young men like to conceal through excessive training and an increasingly muscular body.

153 See [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lauch\\_\(insult\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lauch_(insult))

154 Schär, Marcel & Weber, Sonja (2015). *Gesundes Körperbild von Jugendlichen in der Deutschschweiz*. Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz: Arbeitspapier 35. [https://gesundheitsfoerderung.ch/assets/public/documents/de/5grundlagen/publikationen/ernaehrungsbewegung/arbeitspapiere/Arbeitspapier\\_035\\_GFCH\\_201508\\_Gesundes\\_Koerperbild\\_von\\_Jugendlichen\\_in\\_der\\_Deutschschweiz.pdf](https://gesundheitsfoerderung.ch/assets/public/documents/de/5grundlagen/publikationen/ernaehrungsbewegung/arbeitspapiere/Arbeitspapier_035_GFCH_201508_Gesundes_Koerperbild_von_Jugendlichen_in_der_Deutschschweiz.pdf)

155 Robert-Koch-Institut (2014). *Beiträge zur Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes. Gesundheitliche Lage der Männer in Deutschland*, page 66. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

156 For an overview on prevalence, emergence and treatment of various types of body-related disorders see:

[https://www.landesfachstelleessstoerungennrw.de/fileadmin/contents/Broschueren/Essstoerungen\\_bei\\_Jungen\\_und\\_Maennern.pdf](https://www.landesfachstelleessstoerungennrw.de/fileadmin/contents/Broschueren/Essstoerungen_bei_Jungen_und_Maennern.pdf)

157 Ibid. page 11

## meinTestgelände: an open platform and safe space

*The gender portal “meinTestgelände” [myTesting-Ground] provides an open platform for youths to discuss gender issues – and shows – particularly to boys and young men – how changeable the seemingly inalterable is.*

Johannes writes: “What is a boy? In my opinion, this isn’t hard to answer: every person who feels masculine, or as a boy/man. I think that there is no official document in this world that is more significant than the individual feelings of the person concerned. Every person is different and that’s what makes them perfect. I know it sounds like one of those silly phrases you hear at Sunday school, but it is still true.”

Tom asks himself why, as a young man, he feels restrained by gender roles when he talks to girls, although he doesn’t want that at all. Almost poetically, he concludes: “In male socialisation, femininity is viewed as fragile. Men are to protect it, like bubble wrap around a porcelain vase. Super Mario saves Princess Peach.”

### Why is there a need for meinTestgelände? What is the issue?

Claudia Wallner and Michael Drogand-Strud: “Boys and young men are not perceived and acknowledged enough – as individuals, in their grappling with the exigencies of masculinity and also during their growing up to be men. They do deal with gender relations and try to come to terms with them. But public attention usually only turns to boys and young men when they cause problems:

The gender portal [www.meintestgelaende.de](http://www.meintestgelaende.de) features hundreds of contributions from young people on any gender issue imaginable – often with surprising directness, sometimes witty and rarely dull.

The project is coordinated by Claudia Wallner and Michael Drogand-Strud. She is a doctorate in philosophy and is a graduate in pedagogics while he is a social scientist and Gestalt counsellor. Both are experts in gender-sensitive education, digital gender education, gender skills, and work with boys and girls. They jointly head the project “meinTestgelände”, including the web portal of the same name. We have asked them three questions:

violence, sexism, dominating behaviour. There is no public space where they can voice their concerns, thoughts and feelings on gender issues in all their diversity. That’s why they also lack the opportunity to actively help shape the public image of boys and young men – and thus to contribute to changing and broadening it. We hope to close this gap with our project ‘meinTestgelände’”

### What exactly does meinTestgelände do to help?

Claudia Wallner and Michael Drogand-Strud: “‘meinTestgelände’ gives boys and young men (in addition to all other genders) a space to publicly express their thoughts, convey their beliefs, and learn that they aren’t alone with these issues and stances. There is evidently a strong demand: Our website was visited 67,000 times in 2019.”

We’ve established this public platform in precisely the sphere where young people spend their time – and are providing it in the form of a website created by young people for young people. The special touch: ‘meinTestgelände’ exclusively publishes contributions from young people that we have neither edited nor commented on. The portal is



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intended to function as directly as possible. Young people simply submit their contributions to us and we take care of the rest. The format also appeals to young people thanks to its variety of participation options (songs, texts, videos, theatre pieces). Furthermore, we also connect the virtual world with personal meetings for boys and young men. This helps to make it more tangible: I'm by far not the only person who is engaged in these issues.

We also sensitise teaching staff to the concerns of boys and the importance of a gender-sensitive education. Our dedicated Facebook group 'geschlechtersensible Pädagogik' [Gender-Sensitive Education] has grown to 5,300 active members (as of April 2020)."

#### What are the most important experiences, findings and results so far?

Claudia Wallner and Michael Drogand-Strud: "The range of gender-related issues boys and young men deal with is extensive. Nevertheless, it's possible to make a few general statements.

Firstly: Boys and young men – contrary to popular opinion – want to express their opinions on topics of masculinity, provided the form and opportunities to do so are right and they are met with respect. They are also absolutely interested in girls' rights and gender relations in general.

Secondly: Boys and young men encounter a wide range of sometimes big issues with regard to societal, and sometimes also familial, expectations

of how they should act and be "as men". This often does not fit their self-image.

Thirdly: The structural dominance of men does not (necessarily and always) rub off on individual boys or young men, who often feel vulnerable and uncertain.

Fourthly: Trans\* boys and young men in particular need to fight for recognition as boys and men. All they aspire to is to belong.

Fifthly: Topics pertaining to boys and men rarely find public attention unless to point out problems or to scandalise."

Gender-specific preferences for certain sports are already present in childhood and youth. The Germany-wide "Study on the health of children and adolescents in Germany"<sup>158</sup> shows that 75.1 per cent of boys and 70.9 per cent of girls aged between 3 and 17 do sports. This difference is significant. Boys not only do more sports, but they often also do it for longer (62.8 per cent of boys for at least 90 minutes per week and 45 per cent for at least 180 minutes; 53.9 per cent of girls do at least 90 minutes and 31.4 per cent at least

180 minutes).<sup>159</sup> Football is the preferred sport of boys, followed by swimming and handball. Girls favour sports such as dancing and swimming. Boys generally engage in sports with a higher level of intensity and competitiveness than girls.<sup>160</sup> If their parents are sporting, educated and have a high income, and if there are sports facilities, play areas or public parks close-by, the likelihood of children and youths getting enough exercise increases.

158 Overview: <https://www.kiggs-studie.de/deutsch/home.html>

159 Cited in Krug, Susanne; Finger, Jonas D.; Lange, Cornelia; Richter, Almut; Mensink, Gert B. M. (2018). Sport und Ernährungsverhalten bei Kindern und Jugendlichen in Deutschland – Querschnittergebnisse aus KiGGS Welle 2 und Trends, page 7 ff. *Journal of Health Monitoring*, 2018 3(2). Berlin: Robert-Koch-Institut. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsJ/Focus/JoHM\\_02\\_2018\\_Sport\\_Ernaehrungsverhalten\\_KiGGS-Welle2.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsJ/Focus/JoHM_02_2018_Sport_Ernaehrungsverhalten_KiGGS-Welle2.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

160 Robert-Koch-Institut (2014). Beiträge zur Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes. Gesundheitliche Lage der Männer in Deutschland, page 98. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

There are also differences when it comes to nutrition: Boys between the ages of 11 and 17 consume significantly more sweetened soft drinks and less fruit and vegetables than girls of the same age. There is no difference between genders when it comes to sweets.<sup>161</sup>

Is the higher participation in sport amongst boys attributable to a stronger need for movement? One thing is for sure: According to the data of the survey on the health of children and adolescents (KiGGS) 6.5–8.5 per cent of the 3- to 17-year-old boys were diagnosed with ADHD by medical or psychological professionals (ADHD = attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). This is three to four times the figure for girls (1.9–2.3 per cent). The number of cases diagnosed is twice as high amongst boys from socio-economically disadvantaged families compared to those from privileged families.<sup>162</sup> It is unclear how far the increasing number of ADHD cases diagnosed is due to an actual increase in the condition, to an increased sensitivity of parents and teaching staff, or to a certain economic pressure exercised by the pharmaceutical industry.

If integration support for those with mental disabilities is taken as an indicator for the mental stress of children and youths, there are also clear differences between boys and girls:

Figure 32: Integration support for those with mental disabilities, by gender in 2017 (in percentage)<sup>163</sup>

	Boys	Girls	Difference
< 6 years	70.9 %	29.1 %	+41.8 %
6–9 years	76.2 %	23.8 %	+52.4 %
9–12 years	71.0 %	29.0 %	+42.0 %
12–15 years	71.8 %	28.2 %	+43.6 %
15–18 years	57.2 %	42.8 %	+14.4 %
> 18 years	57.2 %	46.9 %	+10.3 %
Total	69.3 %	30.7 %	+38.6 %

### (Adult) men and health

Men typically do more sports than women. This difference is particularly pronounced amongst 18- to 24-year-olds, where 59.3 per cent of men and only 48.3 per cent of women pay attention to sufficient physical activity in everyday life.<sup>164</sup> When they age, one in every two men become couch potatoes (Figure 33). In addition to age, educational level has impact on the amount of physical activity.

161 Krug, Susanne; Finger, Jonas D.; Lange, Cornelia; Richter, Almut; Mensink, Gert B. M. (2018). Sport und Ernährungsverhalten bei Kindern und Jugendlichen in Deutschland – Querschnittergebnisse aus KiGGS Welle 2 und Trends. *Journal of Health Monitoring*, 2018 3(2). Berlin: Robert-Koch-Institut. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsJ/Focus/JoHM\\_02\\_2018\\_Sport\\_Ernaehrungsverhalten\\_KiGGS-Welle2.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsJ/Focus/JoHM_02_2018_Sport_Ernaehrungsverhalten_KiGGS-Welle2.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

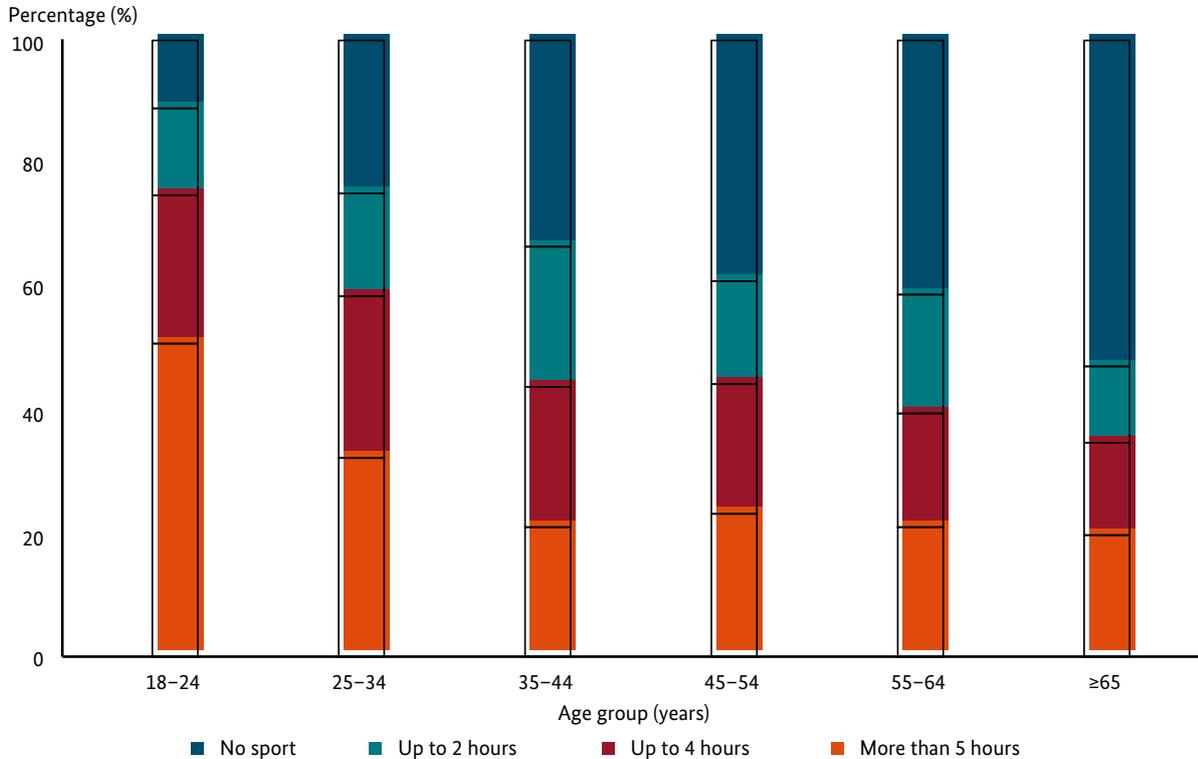
162 Robert-Koch-Institut (2014). Beiträge zur Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes. *Gesundheitliche Lage der Männer in Deutschland*, page 66. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

163 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). *Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Volume 8 Soziales*, page 25

164 Robert-Koch-Institut (2014). Beiträge zur Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes. *Gesundheitliche Lage der Männer in Deutschland*, page 102. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

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Figure 33: Amount of time spent on sports activities per week in the last 3 months, by men and age group (in percentage)<sup>165</sup>



Results are less health-promoting when it comes to nutrition and not exercise. For example, men eat significantly less fruit and vegetables than women, despite the fact that these are a crucial

element of a balanced and healthy diet. However, Figure 34 clearly highlights the increasing level of health awareness exhibited by men as they age.

Figure 34: Fruit consumption of the adult population, by frequency and gender (in percentage)<sup>166</sup>

Age	Men daily	Women daily	Men >1× per week	Women >1× per week	Men >1× per week	Women >1× per week
18-29	25.5 %	38.0 %	55.7 %	50.8 %	18.9 %	11.2 %
30-44	28.4 %	44.3 %	52.6 %	45.6 %	18.8 %	11.1 %
45-64	36.4 %	53.7 %	49.6 %	39.5 %	14.0 %	6.8 %
> 65	61.1 %	72.6 %	33.2 %	24.1 %	5.7 %	3.3 %
<b>Overall</b>	<b>38.1 %</b>	<b>54.2 %</b>	<b>47.8 %</b>	<b>38.5 %</b>	<b>14.1 %</b>	<b>7.3 %</b>
Difference	-16.1 %		-9.3 %		-6.8 %	

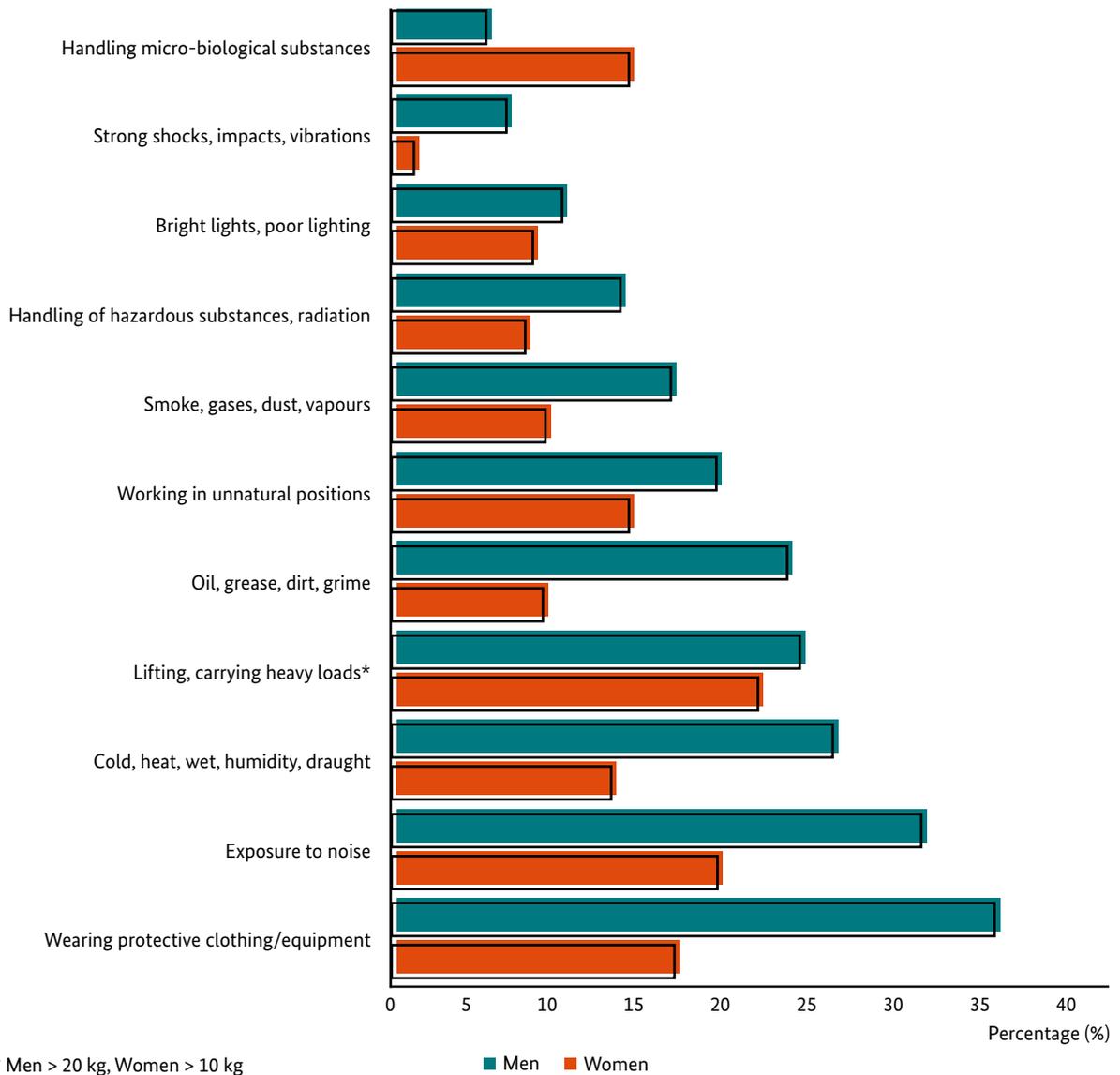
<sup>165</sup> Robert-Koch-Institut (2014). Beiträge zur Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes. Gesundheitliche Lage der Männer in Deutschland, page 102. <https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?blob=publicationFile>

<sup>166</sup> Mensink, Gert B.M.; Schienkiewitz, Anja; Lange, Cornelia (2017). Obstkonsum bei Erwachsenen in Deutschland, pages 47-48. Journal of Health Monitoring, 2017 2(2). Berlin: Robert-Koch-Institut, Berlin. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloads/FactSheets/JoHM\\_2017\\_02\\_Obstkonsum\\_Erwachsene.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloads/FactSheets/JoHM_2017_02_Obstkonsum_Erwachsene.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

Men and women often work in gender-typical jobs (see also 3.1 and 3.2). Therefore, occupational health risks are also contingent on gender. For

example, men are more regularly exposed to dirt and grime, cold and heat, smoke and noise.

Figure 35: Ergonomic and environmental strains of full-time employees over 15 years, by gender (in percentage)<sup>167</sup>



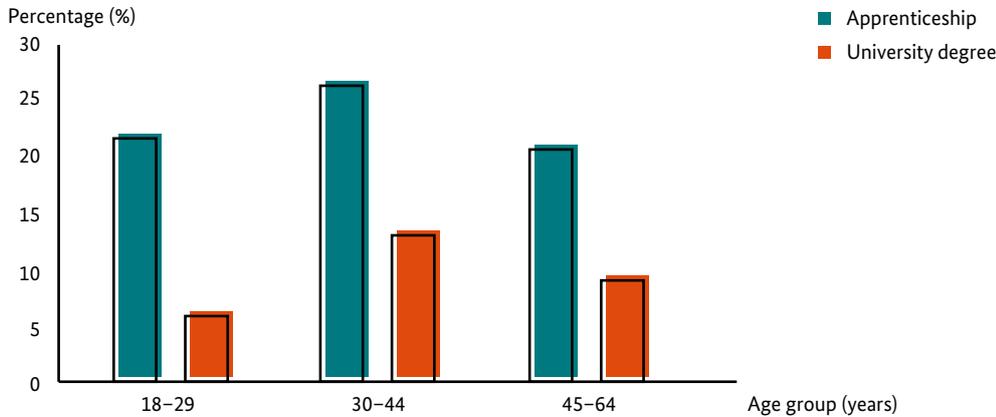
Poor health as a result of environmental factors is understandably higher in occupations that are not performed in the safe atmosphere of an office

workplace. Correspondingly, health risks are also closely linked to educational levels in this regard.

167 Robert-Koch-Institut (2014). Beiträge zur Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes. Gesundheitliche Lage der Männer in Deutschland, page 151. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

### 3 Current circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men: An assessment

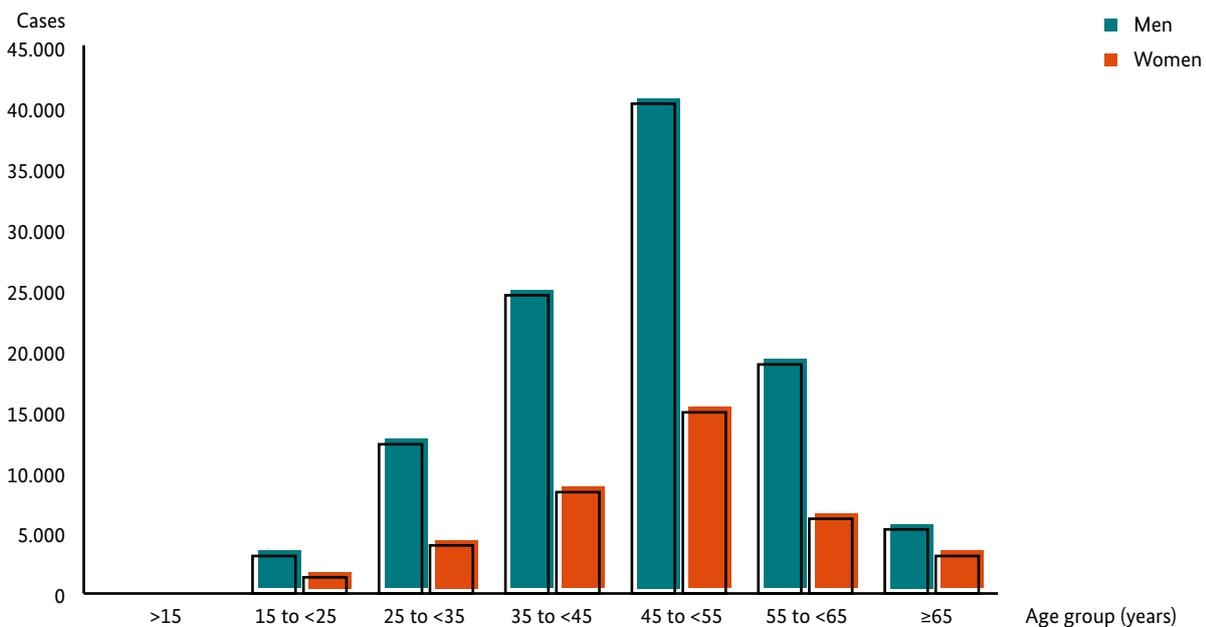
Figure 36: Strong health strain on men in full-time employment caused by work, by qualification (apprenticeship vs. university degree) and age group (in percentage)<sup>168</sup>



However, the necessary focus on the correlation between working conditions, socio-economic status and health risks must not lead to the health risks of well-integrated employed men who work in the services sector being overlooked. Prevention specialists have drawn attention to the fact that alcohol abuse to alleviate stress and pressure is widespread in precisely this cohort and this is

willingly overlooked by the men themselves as well as by their superiors and environment – provided a man “functions”. This group of successful, “everything under control” men find it extremely difficult to face their addiction and see it for what it is. That is why they often find it difficult to seek help.

Figure 37: Cases of alcoholism (ICD-10L F10.2.), by gender and age group<sup>169</sup>



168 Robert-Koch-Institut (2014). Beiträge zur Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes. Gesundheitliche Lage der Männer in Deutschland, page 153. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

169 Ibid. page 61

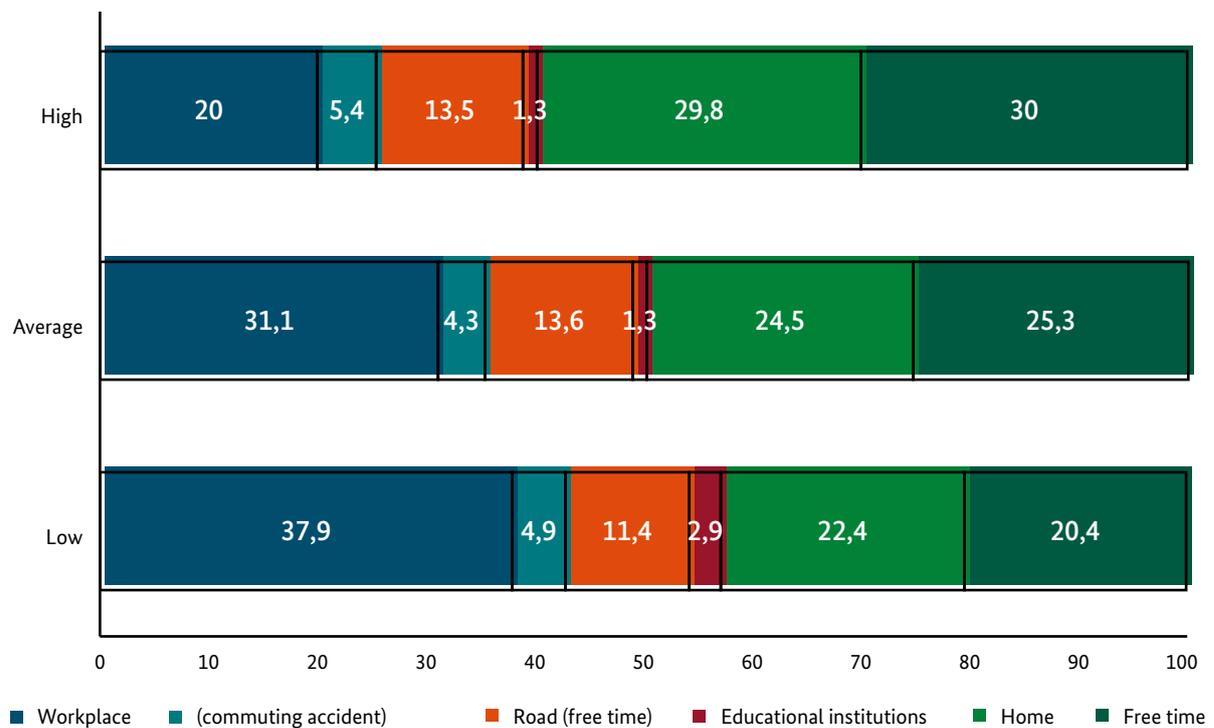
Other personal and social risks men are particularly exposed to need to remain on the agenda. This includes, for instance, the statistically significantly higher risk of men becoming homeless. The Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe e.V. [Federal Association for Assistance to the Homeless] estimates that 73 per cent of adult homeless people are men (not including homeless refugees).<sup>170</sup>

Accidents constitute another element that adds to the risks to health and physical integrity. Men are

disproportionately affected by accidents on the road and at work – both with regard to the number and the severity of the accidents. Almost twice as many men than women are involved in traffic accidents. For each woman dying in an accident there are 3 dead men,<sup>171</sup> with young men particularly at risk.

Figure 38 highlights how closely accident risks are related to socio-economic status.

Figure 38: Men in accidents requiring medical treatment (last accident), by accident location and socio-economic status (in percentage)<sup>172</sup>



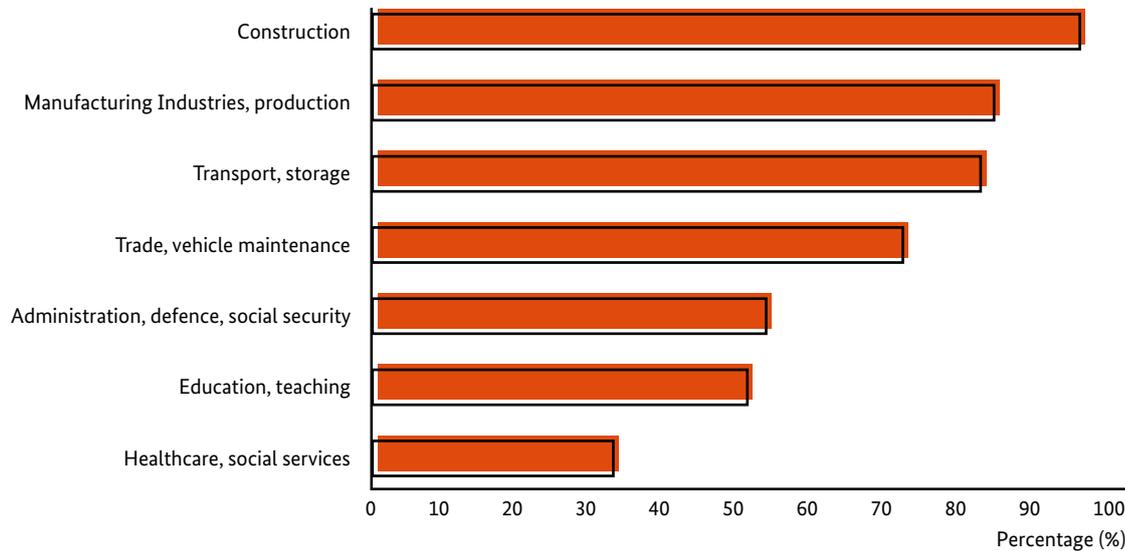
170 Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe e.V. (2020). Wohnungslosigkeit: Kein Ende in Sicht. Mitteilung anlässlich der Bundestagung der BAG Wohnungslosenhilfe 11. bis 13. November 2019. <https://www.bagw.de/de/themen/zahl-der-wohnungslosen/index.html>

171 Robert-Koch-Institut (2014). Beiträge zur Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes. Gesundheitliche Lage der Männer in Deutschland, page 50. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

172 Ibid.

The following table illustrates how accident risks at the workplace are distributed amongst sectors:

Figure 39: Men involved in reportable workplace accidents in 2010, by economic sector (in percentage)<sup>173</sup>



Even though men generally seek less professional support and do so later than women, there is no gender difference with regard to health literacy, that is, the ability to seek, understand and implement health-relevant information. In total, over half of German men and women (54 per cent according to a study conducted by the University

of Bielefeld)<sup>174</sup> only possess limited health literacy. Disproportionately represented amongst this cohort are people with migration background (71 per cent), a lower educational level (62 per cent), a lower social status (78 per cent), chronic illness (73 per cent), and older age (66 per cent).

### Counselling for men: A growing field

How is work with boys and men done? Where can you learn it? The SKM Bundesverband [Social Service of Catholic Men] provides the first comprehensive training for multipliers in Germany, funded by the BMFSFJ.



Rüdiger Jähne has only been back at home in Düsseldorf for a few days. He spent the previous week at the Coesfelder Kolping education centre in the heart of the lush greenery of the Münsterland parklike landscape. He was there in a professional capacity: in his role as head of the “training

course to become a counsellor for men for multipliers”. His memories are still fresh. “It was the result of two years of preparatory work. I found it extremely touching to see how all of the participants were fulfilled, satisfied and also grateful for the initial course week in their own way,” explains the 39-year-old, who is responsible for the course, together with Andreas Moorkamp and Jan Mokros.

173 Robert-Koch-Institut (2014). Beiträge zur Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes. Gesundheitliche Lage der Männer in Deutschland, page 51. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

174 Schaeffer, Doris; Vogel, Dominique; Berens, EvaMaria; Hurrelmann, Klaus (2016). Gesundheitskompetenz der Bevölkerung in Deutschland – Ergebnisbericht. Bielefeld: Universität Bielefeld. [https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/gesundhw/ag6/downloads/Ergebnisbericht\\_HLS-GER.pdf](https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/gesundhw/ag6/downloads/Ergebnisbericht_HLS-GER.pdf)

Rüdiger Jähne, who holds a degree both in social work and social education work, has worked with boys and men at the SKM since 2015. His supervisor – Stephan Buttgerreit, general secretary of the SKM – is also active on the executive board of the Federal Forum Men. The strong duo has propelled SKM to one of the leading providers of work with men in Germany in recent years. At first, they posed some critical questions to themselves: Why is it that we see primarily male clients at housing assistance, debt counselling or drug counselling? Is it possible to change the fact that men often seek help (too) late? How do the image of men and the services on offer need to change to help us get through to them earlier?

As a result, in 2015, the SKM Bundesverband successfully took a special counselling service for men from the regional network in the diocese of Münster and launched it throughout Germany. Its programmatic title: “Real men talk” – from man to man. “Experience has proven that if the counsellor is a man, many men will experience less inhibition when it comes to seeking help;” explains Jähne.

The service was a hit: “At each location where we established counselling for men, the majority of the counselling offices were working at full capacity – often without any advertising.” Local networks and co-operations make sure that people become aware of the service.

In the meantime, 18 counselling offices in SKM regional associations and local Caritas associations now provide dedicated services for men. Increasingly more regional offices are showing a willingness to discuss the subject. This requires expert knowledge – and corresponding qualification opportunities for future counsellors for men. These opportunities are few and far between. “Well, then it’s our job to develop the corresponding course,” thought Jähne and his fellow campaigners. The BMFSFJ embraced the idea and has facilitated the newly developed

course to be held twice in the period between 2019 to 2022 – for 32 participants in total.

The entire course takes eight weeks to complete, 40 days of training altogether. In between, there are also regional intervention groups. The training begins with the biographical analysis. What are the effects of male socialisation? How are social, cultural and biological factors linked? Why do men often suffer in silence and alone? To what extent am I, myself, influenced by masculinity exigencies? Do they suit me at all or do I just follow them simply because I think I have no choice? “When I’m in a counselling session opposite a client who needs assistance, I don’t have any time to ponder these questions myself. I need to have developed an expert stance beforehand. And this is not possible without real personal analysis,” explains Rüdiger Jähne.

This forms the basis for thematically advanced modules on issues such as violence, addiction or sexuality. Increasingly more attention is being paid to the transfer of counselling know-how and skills on how to create professional relationships. The training course clearly touched a nerve. Within six weeks of its announcement, the first course was fully booked.

However, is man to man counselling not perhaps an odd notion when gender-equality policies are attempting to break down gender stereotypes and encourage stronger mixing of gender-separated spheres? “That’s what we all hope to achieve,” agrees Jähne, “but as a step in this direction, it is essential that male experts assume responsibility, offer to be role models, create a safe space and intimacy, and engage with their clients with sincerity, humour and patience. This is precisely what men don’t typically experience in traditional relationships between men – and this is precisely why it’s an indispensable field of studying and development.”

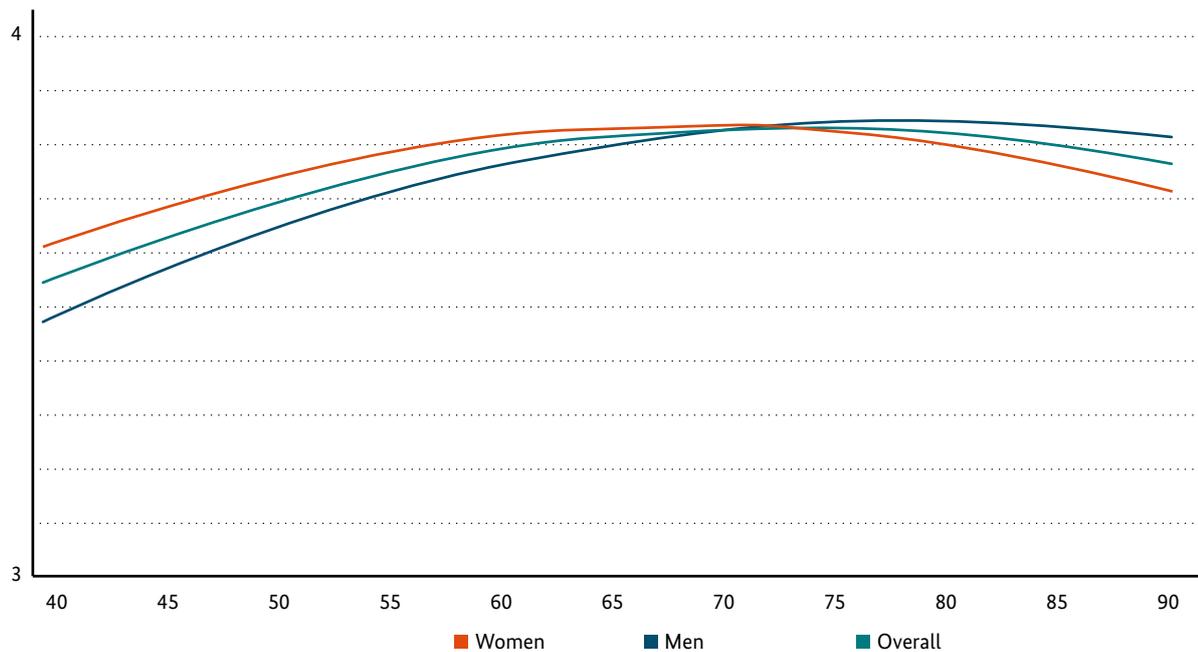
## Older men and health

Functional health has an influence on an individual's quality of life and satisfaction but is not its sole determiner. Figure 40 illustrates how life satisfaction changes throughout adulthood into old age. It highlights that men are, on average, more satisfied once they retire than when they are working.<sup>175</sup> This is surprising, as the career-exit phase is typically considered a critical transitional for men with conventional life plans: Having fulfilled their task as family breadwinner, for the first time in their lives they feel they do not have a "roll to play". They often lose their reputation and contacts. It is key that they develop a new daily

structure and renegotiate the distribution of household chores. Can self-value and purpose be maintained beyond employment and success? Is it possible to transform a social network closely interweaved with the working world and/or build a new one? The earlier, the less voluntarily and the more sudden working life ends, the more it is prone to produce crises and health risks for men during this transitional period.<sup>176</sup>

In view of these challenges, the fact that men above 70–75 are the "more satisfied gender" can be interpreted as an indication of the level of freedom associated with the elimination of professional constraints.

Figure 40: Life satisfaction of women and men, by age



Life satisfaction is rated from 1 ("deeply dissatisfied") to 5 ("extremely satisfied"). The figure only shows the range from 3 ("neither satisfied nor dissatisfied") to 4 ("satisfied").<sup>177</sup>

175 BMFSFJ (2019). Frauen und Männer in der zweiten Lebenshälfte – Älterwerden im sozialen Wandel. Zentrale Befunde des Deutschen Alterssurveys (DEAS) 1996 bis 2017. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/135038/62670d8da500Ebenda548deb1da31a01c0/frauen-und-maenner-in-der-zweiten-lebenshaelfte-data.pdf>

176 Cited in Hammer, Eckart (2012). Schlaglichter auf eine Politik für alte(rnde) Männer. In: Theunert, Markus (Ed.). Männerpolitik, 187–212. Wiesbaden: Springer VS

177 BMFSFJ (2019). Frauen und Männer in der zweiten Lebenshälfte – Älterwerden im sozialen Wandel. Zentrale Befunde des Deutschen Alterssurveys (DEAS) 1996 bis 2017, page 14. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/135038/62670d8da500Ebenda548deb1da31a01c0/frauen-und-maenner-in-der-zweiten-lebenshaelfte-data.pdf>

Does increasing satisfaction after retirement age indicate that the majority of men cope well with the end of their career in the long term? Work with men questions how reliable this self-reported satisfaction is, as men do not like to regard the crisis of ending their career as such. Often physical symptoms, depressive and other mental disorders, or relationship problems during this transitional phase conceal their actual shock. Men from these older generations are perhaps more accustomed to sitting out crises, covering them up with actionism or medicinally “solving” them.<sup>178</sup> Having often eagerly waited for retirement, it can be difficult for someone to admit dissatisfaction or “failure” with the new phase of life.

In addition to health status, financial resources also play a significant role with regard to life satisfaction. Statistics on those at risk of poverty or social exclusion generally show relatively low influence from age or gender (Figure 41), although proportionally more women are at risk of poverty, particularly after retirement. This is not surprising due to their overall lower earnings and retirement provisions.

Figure 41: Population at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by age and gender in 2018 (in percentage)<sup>179</sup>

	Men	Women	Difference
< 18 years	17.6 %	17.1 %	+0.5
18–65 years	17.8 %	20.1 %	-2.3
> 65 years	17.1 %	20.8 %	-2.7

A differentiated analysis is required to reveal vulnerabilities in old age (Figure 42): The leading risk factor for poverty is neither age, gender nor living/familial situation. The decisive factor is migrant status and the resulting level of social, economic and cultural inclusion. Those most at-risk of poverty are single migrants. Singles also constitute the group most at-risk of poverty amongst those without a migration background – but this risk remains lower than that amongst the migrant population in other life and living situations.

Figure 42: Risk of poverty in 2018, by migrant status and gender (in percentage)<sup>180</sup>

	Men over 65 years	Women over 65 years	Difference
<b>Without migration background</b>			
Single	16.5 %	20.8 %	-4.3 %
Couple household without children	8.6 %	8.5 %	+0.1 %
Couple household with children	7.1 %	8.3 %	-1.2 %
<b>With migration background</b>			
Single	36.0 %	38.5 %	-2.5 %
Couple household without children	29.1 %	28.7 %	+0.4 %
Couple household with children	24.2 %	22.7 %	+1.5 %

178 BMFSFJ (2019). Frauen und Männer in der zweiten Lebenshälfte – Äterwerden im sozialen Wandel. Zentrale Befunde des Deutschen Alterssurveys (DEAS) 1996 bis 2017, page 14. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/135038/62670d8da500Ebenda548deb1da31a01c0/frauen-und-maenner-in-der-zweiten-lebenshaelfte-data.pdf>

179 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Press release no. 419 dated 30 October 2019. [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2019/10/PD19\\_419\\_639.html](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2019/10/PD19_419_639.html)

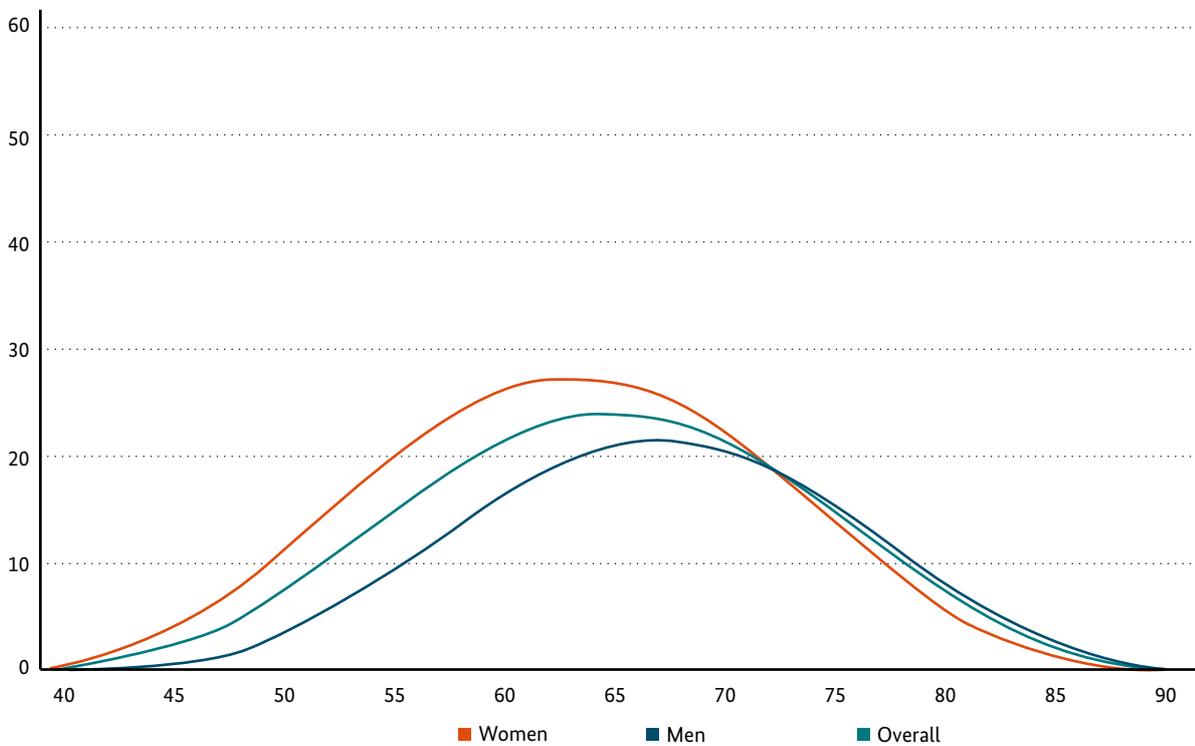
180 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund – Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2018. Fachserie 1, Reihe 2.2, pages 353 and 360. [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Migration-Integration/Publikationen/Downloads-Migration/migrationshintergrund-2010220187004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Migration-Integration/Publikationen/Downloads-Migration/migrationshintergrund-2010220187004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

### 3 Current circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men: An assessment

Historically speaking, shaping the third life stage between entering retirement and very old age as a phase in which physical health and mental capabilities remain high and there is – quite often – corresponding financial scope, is a relatively new challenge. After 40 years of working (usually with little time for personal interests), men face the challenge of having to develop capabilities of making decisions and acting when there are a wide range of options and ideas. Work with men shows that, during this phase, men often catch up on things there was no time for

during their careers. Many fathers with a traditional career-orientation now wish to do and see with their grandchildren what they missed out on with their own children. It is noteworthy that nowadays grandfathers are equally engaged in caring for their grandchildren as grandmothers (Figure 43). This trend towards equality seems to be growing. Thus, grandfathers are making a crucial contribution to facilitating a successful work-life balance for the middle generation in the rush hour of life.

Figure 43: Likelihood of participation in caring for grandchildren, by gender and age (in percentage)<sup>181</sup>



<sup>181</sup> BMFSFJ (2019). Frauen und Männer in der zweiten Lebenshälfte – Älterwerden im sozialen Wandel. Zentrale Befunde des Deutschen Alterssurveys (DEAS) 1996 bis 2017, page 26. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/135038/62670d8da500ebd1548deb1da31a01c0/frauen-und-maenner-in-der-zweiten-lebenshaelfte-data.pdf>

In general, the high percentage of retired men engaged in voluntary work is surprising. Figure 44 illustrates participation amongst men and women according to age group. In all age groups, men are disproportionately represented. In absolute figures,

participation equals out, as the number of women in these age groups is higher. It, therefore, seems all the more important that male engagement is not overlooked (in particular in family care, for more on this topic see 3.5).

Figure 44: Level of voluntary engagement, by age group and gender<sup>182</sup>

	Men		Women		Difference
	Percentage	Absolute figure	Percentage	Absolute figure	
60–64 years	50.2 %	1.2 million	42.3 %	1.2 million	+8.9
65–69 years	48.6 %	0.9 million	38.4 %	0.7 million	+10.2
70–74 years	42.7 %	1.0 million	37.4 %	1.0 million	+5.3
75–79 years	39.1 %	0.7 million	30.6 %	0.6 million	+8.5
80–84 years	26.8 %	0.3 million	20.6 %	0.4 million	+6.2
> 85 years	18.5 %	0.1 million	10.7 %	0.1 million	+7.8

However, it does not suffice to simply remark on success experienced during the last third of life. There are a number of problematic aspects to male ageing. In principle, it can be said that the older men become, the more they become a minority. In the age group between 65 and 75 years, the gender ratio remains almost even (47 per cent to 53 per cent). But in the group of the over-75-year-olds, there are almost twice as many women as men (37 per cent compared to 63 per cent).<sup>183</sup> As care and support of older people is still a women’s domain, men once again – as at the beginning of their lives – find themselves in a structurally feminised world. Many men value this. Others react with insecurity and withdrawal.

The men who base their lives strongly on traditional masculinity exigencies need to expand their self-image as they age: In retirement, maintaining the relationship within the couple as well as social contacts, searching for forms of emotional self-expression, and accepting support all need to be relearned and integrated. Men who succeed in doing so live longer and healthier lives.<sup>184</sup>

Old age and the need for care that often comes along with it, is a particular challenge for men as they age, and many feel offended by it. They need to consciously accept the perceived and real dependence and reliance on other people. This is a significant development task for men in old age.

182 Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (2019). Pressemitteilung zum Tag des Ehrenamtes am 05.12.2019. <https://www.dza.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/pressemitteilungen-2019/04122019.html> (Datenquelle: Deutscher Freiwilligensurvey 2014)  
 183 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Volume 2 Bevölkerung, Familien, Lebensform, page 33 (own calculations)  
 184 Cited in Hammer, Eckart (2012). Schlaglichter auf eine Politik für alte(rnde) Männer. In: Theunert, Markus (Ed.). Männerpolitik, 187–212. Wiesbaden: Springer VS

### 3 Current circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men: An assessment

Figure 45: Persons requiring care, by age and gender (in percentage of the respective population group = care rate)

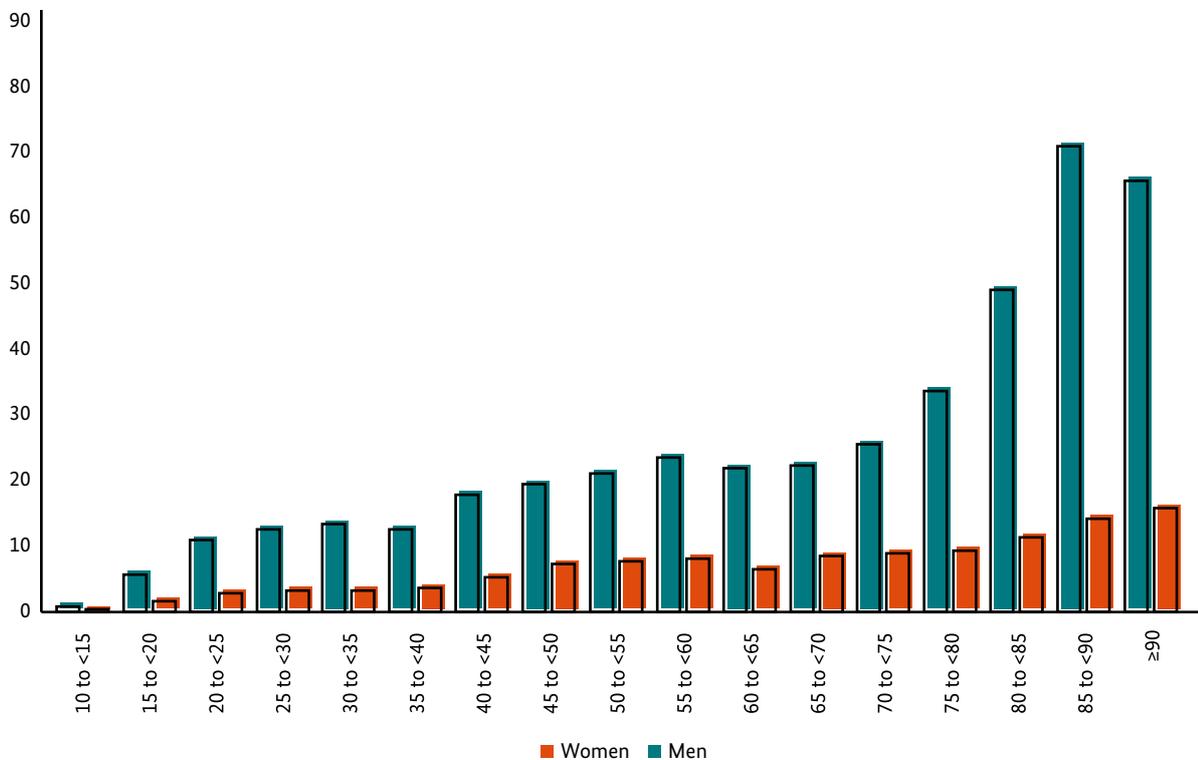
	Men	Women	Difference
60–65 years	2.5 %	2.3 %	+0.2
65–70 years	4.0 %	3.7 %	+0.3
70–75 years	6.3 %	6.5 %	-0.2
75–80 years	10.5 %	12.3 %	-1.8
80–85 years	19.3 %	26.1 %	-6.8
85–90 years	35.6 %	49.3 %	-13.7
> 90 years	57.8 %	74.9 %	-17.1

These figures include both professional care at home and inpatient care in nursing homes.<sup>185</sup>

Unfortunately, not every man manages to cope with this task. But not every case of old-age suicide should be interpreted as a result of failure in this respect. At the same time, statistics (Figure 46) do give food for thought as they clarify,

at a glance, how many men end their own lives, especially in old age. The question is how many of these suicides are acts of self-determination and how many are acts of desperation.

Figure 46: Suicide rate by age and gender in 2012 (per 100,000 residents)<sup>186</sup>



<sup>185</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch 2019, Volume 4 Gesundheit, page 136

<sup>186</sup> Robert-Koch-Institut (2014). Beiträge zur Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes. Gesundheitliche Lage der Männer in Deutschland, page 59. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

## Concluding remarks

Finally, two key aspects must not be overlooked when discussing men and health (at all life stages):

- Health is more than simply the absence of illness. Therefore, going beyond the statements in this section, male health requires further health resources: Does a man foster trusting friendships? Does he find a purpose in life? Is he able to care for and love himself? Upon closer observation, there are often severe research gaps in this regard, for example on the importance of friendships for (male) health.
- Critical incidents can often have a stressful impact on men. As a rule, their intensity and duration are often contingent on the resources available. Certain incidents have been found to

be particularly problematic for men. These include separation and divorce, for instance. “Numerous international empirical studies have proven that divorced men are subject to a significantly higher mortality risk and inferior mental health than married men. In particular, men from lower educational backgrounds, who are not integrated into the labour market, carry a higher mortality risk after separation or divorce. Furthermore, there are also indications that, following a separation or divorce, men suffer from worse deterioration of health than women. (...) With a view to the peak of strain, there are also gender differences. For many men, health problems only arise directly after separation, and they more frequently suffer health problems after a divorce. In comparison, women regularly report problems and health burdens for a long period before separation.”<sup>187</sup>

187 Robert-Koch-Institut (2014). Beiträge zur Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes. Gesundheitliche Lage der Männer in Deutschland, page 178. [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Gesundheitsmonitoring/Gesundheitsberichterstattung/GBEDownloadsB/maennergesundheit.pdf?__blob=publicationFile)

### 3.5 Community engagement and volunteering

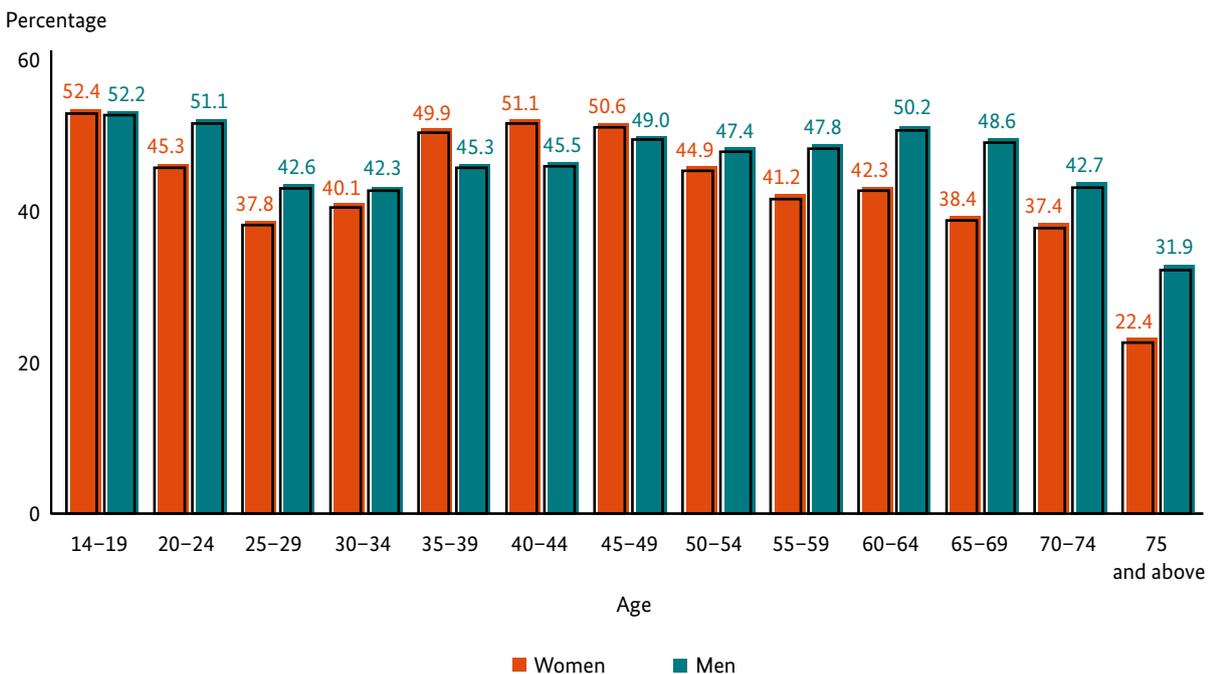
**Q** Young and older men are proportionally more engaged in voluntary work than women of the same age. In doing so, many make use of existing professional skills. Others prefer to enter uncharted waters.

**Q** The more direct, personal as well as invisible the engagement, the higher the obstacles are for men. Personal care experiences can make it easier for men to engage in voluntary care work.

**Q** Men over the age of 70 are particularly underestimated when it comes to their care contributions for dependants.

What holds true for gainful employment can also be observed in voluntary engagement: There is no “lazy gender”, but depending on gender, there are different patterns concerning voluntary work. In general, however, it is striking that men do more voluntary work than women in the majority of life stages, with the exception of the intensive period that features the double burden of work and family life between the of 35 and 50.

Figure 47: Participation in voluntary work in 2014, by gender and age group (in percentage)<sup>188</sup>

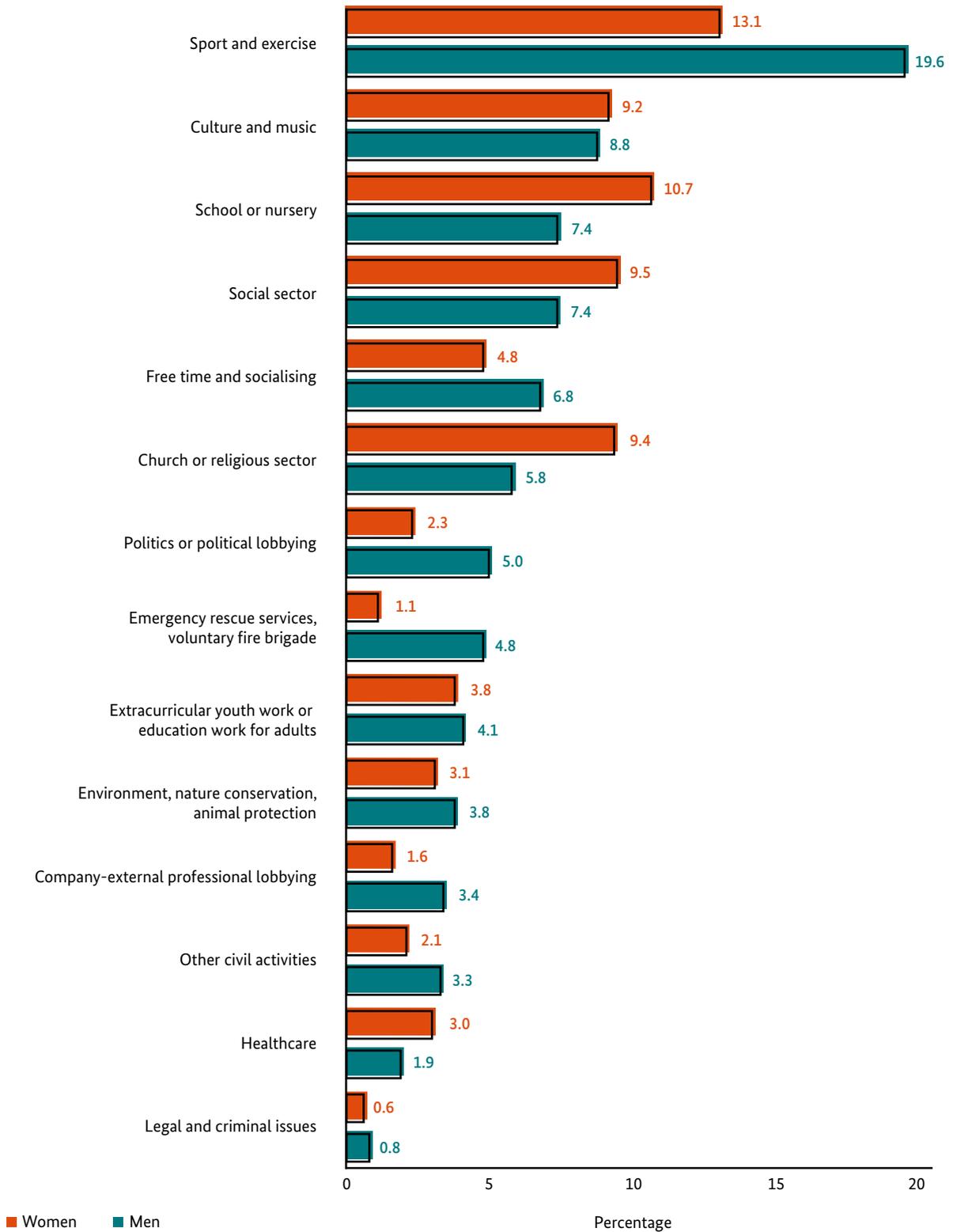


When analysing of the fields of activity of voluntary engagement, differences between genders can be found. It may seem surprising, that there are hardly any male or female domains. Emergency rescue services and the voluntary fire brigade are the only exceptions. In other areas, the gender

balance does not tip any more in one direction than a ratio of one third to two thirds. When compared to gainful employment, voluntary engagement thus shows stronger mixing amongst genders.

188 BMFSFJ (2017). Freiwilliges Engagement von Frauen und Männern. Genderspezifische Befunde zur Vereinbarkeit von freiwilligem Engagement, Elternschaft und Erwerbstätigkeit, page 17. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/118460/1a128b69e46adb3fa370afc4334f08aa/freiwilliges-engagement-von-frauen-und-maennern-data.pdf>

Figure 48: Voluntary work in 14 areas of society in 2014, by gender (in percentage)<sup>189</sup>



189 BMFSFJ (2017). Freiwilliges Engagement von Frauen und Männern. Genderspezifische Befunde zur Vereinbarkeit von freiwilligem Engagement, Elternschaft und Erwerbstätigkeit, page 19. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/118460/1a128b69e46adb3fa370afc4334f08aa/freiwilliges-engagement-von-frauen-und-maennern-data.pdf>

What motivates men to engage in voluntary work? There is no significant difference between genders when it comes to the motivations behind an engagement in voluntary work: 93.3 per cent of men and 94.4 per cent of women get involved simply because it is fun; 79.5 of men get involved in order to meet people (84.6 per cent of women). The acquisition of qualifications is less important (men 52.7 per cent, women 50.2 per cent), and 29.9 per cent of women and 33.1 per cent of men want to gain standing and influence by voluntary engagement. Conversely, 23.9 per cent of women and 25.7 per cent of men hope for occupational advancement through voluntary work. Only 7.9 per cent of men (6.5 per cent of women) do voluntary work to earn a little extra on the side.

As praiseworthy as the commitment of men in the voluntary sector is, the fact that gender hierarchies also strongly prevail when looking at voluntary commitment from the perspective of equality is palpable: In all age groups, men are significantly more often to be found in management roles in the voluntary sector, with the differences between genders being lowest amongst the young and most pronounced amongst the older generations.<sup>190</sup> The Fünfte Altenbericht [Fifth Report on Senior Citizen] pointedly summarises this relationship: “The more respected, prestigious, influential and, in this

sense, political a voluntary role is, the higher the number of men in these roles.

On the other hand, the more discreet, behind-the-scenes, commonplace and focused on immediate human everyday relationships the role is, the more likely it is to be performed by women.”<sup>191</sup>

The Seventh Report of Ageing also indicates another gender-relevant issue: “Large parts of reporting of engagement in Germany still reflects a middle class and gender bias that pays almost no attention to less formal mutual support networks, whilst at the same time formal structures tend to exclude people with a low formal education or a migration background (...). The sundry ‘informal engagement’ that typically manifests itself in care for children, the elderly and/or the (respective) community is excluded from this approach, as long as it occurs within family settings or in informal neighbourly networks.”<sup>192</sup>

It cannot be denied that voluntary work needs to be analysed from a gender-sensitive perspective. With regard to the involvement of men in civil society, the question of which factors could promote involvement in informal, unorganised or loosely organised voluntary work therefore arises in particular.

190 BMFSFJ (2017). Freiwilliges Engagement von Frauen und Männern. Genderspezifische Befunde zur Vereinbarkeit von freiwilligem Engagement, Elternschaft und Erwerbstätigkeit, page 22. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/118460/1a128b69e46adb3fa370afc4334f08aa/freiwilliges-engagement-von-frauen-und-maennern-data.pdf>

191 BMFSFJ (2006). Fünfter Bericht zur Lage der älteren Generation, page 215. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/79080/8a95842e52ba43556f9ebfa600f02483/fuenfter-altenbericht-data.pdf>

192 BMFSFJ (2016). Siebter Bericht zur Lage der älteren Generation, page 86. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/120144/2a5de459ec4984cb-2f83739785c908d6/7--altenbericht--bundestagsdrucksache-data.pdf>

Figure 49: Carers (25–54 years) for non-related children in 2014, by gender and parenthood (in percentage)<sup>193</sup>

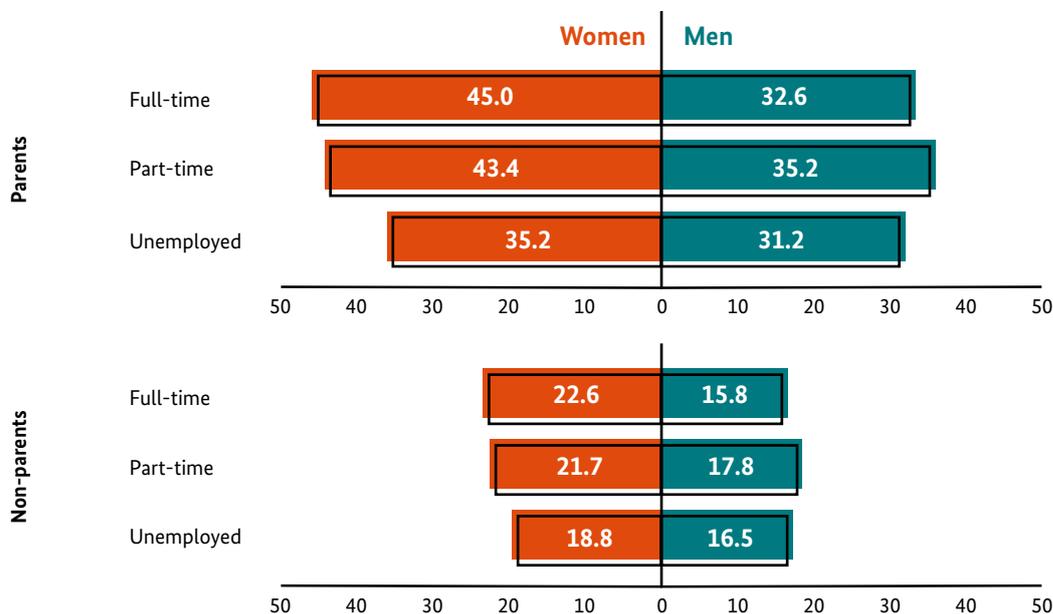


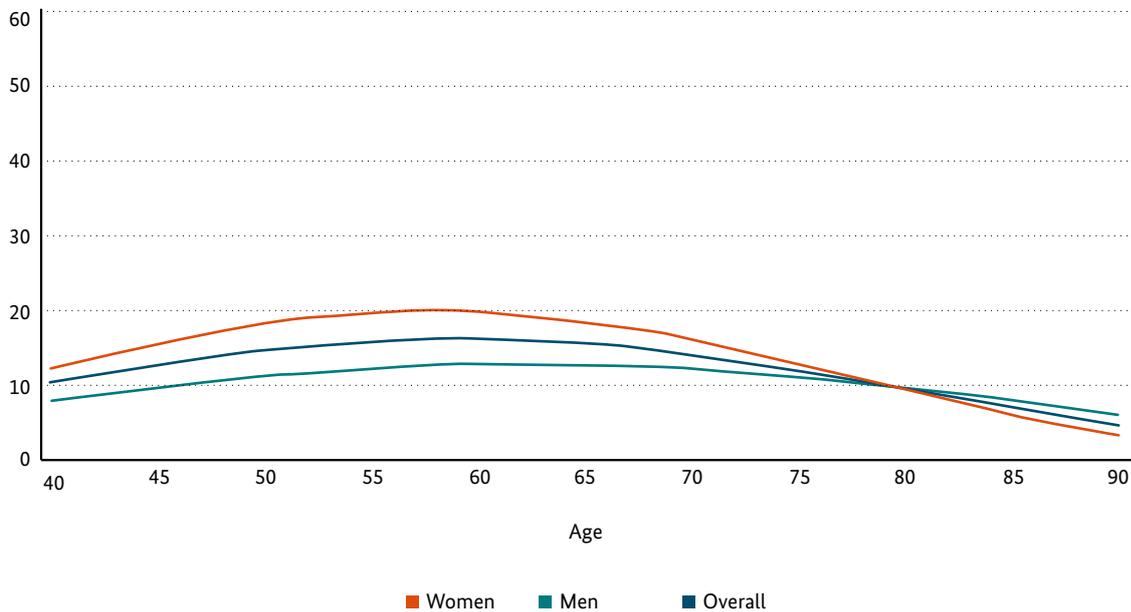
Figure 49 illustrates that with regard to voluntary support, fathers are twice as engaged in the care for non-related children than men without children. This could be interpreted as an indication that voluntary work is well performed on a voluntary basis but is nevertheless work requiring specific skills and experience. It is possible that the presence of children in the household could provide a point of reference for fathers, which childless men do not have. This consequently makes it less surprising that childless men are less likely to get involved in providing care for non-related children. The air of suspicion hanging around the motives of men who get involved in voluntary childcare may be an additional hindrance. Experts agree in this regard: Any “general suspicion” must not be left unchallenged and needs to be handled as energetically and transparently as possible.

The example of care for dependants shows further conducive factors for a kind of engagement, in which the strong involvement of men is commonly underestimated. Figure 50 illustrates a surprising link: Men above the age of 80 are more likely to care for relatives (typically their partners) than women of the same age. This could lead to the impression that older women are simply sick and tired of performing care work after they have done so for decades (above all for their own parents). But this would be a false conclusion, as it has to be taken into account that women over 80 provide less care simply because they often live alone or have been widowed. Men at this life stage are much more likely to have a partner requiring care; that is the person they provide care for. For men, care is not more of what they have done for decades, but rather something different, new and undiscovered.<sup>194</sup>

193 BMFSFJ (2017). Freiwilliges Engagement von Frauen und Männern. Genderspezifische Befunde zur Vereinbarkeit von freiwilligem Engagement, Elternschaft und Erwerbstätigkeit, page 45. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/118460/1a128b69e46adb3fa370afc4334f08aa/freiwilliges-engagement-von-frauen-und-maennern-data.pdf>

194 Langehennig, Manfred (2012). Genderkonstruierte Angehörigenpflege. Wenn Männer „männlich“ pflegen. Informationsdienst Altersfrage, Heft 04, Juli/August 2012, 5–11. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen. [https://www.dza.de/fileadmin/dza/pdf/Heft\\_04\\_2012\\_Juli\\_August\\_2012\\_gesamt\\_PW.pdf](https://www.dza.de/fileadmin/dza/pdf/Heft_04_2012_Juli_August_2012_gesamt_PW.pdf)

Figure 50: Likelihood of providing health-related support and care, by gender and age (in percentage)<sup>195</sup>



This new type of care experience is both an opportunity and challenge for men. They benefit from the feeling of being needed. This gives them a purpose and strength. Especially men with traditional role perceptions often see caring for their partners as an opportunity for repaying their partners for the care work previously delegated to them.

Men speak of expanding horizons, of the chance to experience something new that would otherwise have remained unavailable to them. Providing care also enables men to gain new access to their own feelings, in particular to grief, which is otherwise often concealed by the “manlier” feeling of anger.

“A number of men clarify the new experience: Now they can ‘understand what closeness can be’ and they speak of ‘the personal gain of really being able to feel’ and of ‘becoming more tender and capable of empathy.’”<sup>196</sup>

Men also tend to view caring for others as work. They use certain technical help to handle it, often conjuring up terms and images from their own careers to describe care work. “Many maintain stronger internal detachment, feel less bound by societal demands to provide care, they define their stress boundaries at any earlier stage and consequently less often provide care for the seriously ill and they come to the decision to use institutional care more quickly.”<sup>197</sup>

195 BMFSFJ (2019). Frauen und Männer in der zweiten Lebenshälfte – Älterwerden im sozialen Wandel. Zentrale Befunde des Deutschen Alterssurveys (DEAS) 1996 bis 2017, page 28. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/135038/62670d8da500ebd1548deb1da31a01c0/frauen-und-maenner-in-der-zweiten-lebenshaelfte-data.pdf>

196 Ibid.

197 BMFSFJ (2002). Vierter Bericht zur Lage der älteren Generation, page 198. Berlin: BMFSFJ. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/94658/4a99f36664e-ba951dd911974f883b956/prm-21786-4--altenbericht-teil-i-data.pdf>

## 3.6 Criminality and violence



*Men are highly over-represented in statistics on crime and violence. In prisons, 94 in every 100 inmates are male.*



*Gender-stereotypical patterns of perception distort the view of the fact that two-thirds of the victims of violence in a public space and one-fifth of the victims of domestic violence are men.*



*Male vulnerability and victimisation are often concealed and issues hard to broach. Extensive studies, surveys of unreported cases, and specialised support services are scarce.*

Violence incurred by, and inflicted on, men is a sensitive topic, in the midst of a difficult field of tension: On the one hand, knowledge of the structural aspects of violence calls for special sensitivity towards violence against women and girls, whilst, on the other hand, there is a justified demand for safeguarding the physical, psychological and sexual integrity of every person regardless of their gender.

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, better known as the Istanbul Convention, shines a light on the outlined field of tension. The treaty makes its agenda immediately clear by recognising the structural aspects of violence in the preface, “that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men, which have led to domination over, and discrimination against, women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women.” It also acknowledges “the structural nature of violence against women as gender-based violence” as a fact and states that “violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.”<sup>198</sup>

This is debated under the heading Gender Based Violence (GBV) in the global commitment to human rights and gender equality. In this context, violence is more than just a matter of micro-social relations. It is rather the more or less logical consequence of a gender order based on patriarchal hierarchies, in which men are on top and women at the bottom. Prevention of violence must not be limited to the immediate environment: it needs to constantly reinforce progress in gender equality and change gender relations.

Violence amongst men can by all means be incorporated into this view as an expression of a structural struggle for a higher position in the gender hierarchy. Violence experienced by men at the hand of women is less easy to explain in this sense – unless it is also an expression of power relations. The Istanbul Convention cannot solve this issue. It takes a pragmatical approach by implicitly acknowledging that men are also victims of structural violence (insofar as women and girls are “only” exposed to a “higher risk of gender-based violence than men”) and explicitly recognising men as victims of domestic violence (“recognising that domestic violence affects women disproportionately, and that men may also be victims of domestic violence”).

This field of tension has evolved over time, further complicating an unobstructed view on men’s vulnerability and experiences of violence. In 2004, in the BMFSFJ-funded pilot study “Violence against men – Men’s experiences of interpersonal violence in Germany”, Ralf Puchert et al. concluded that: “violence against men is a widespread and, at the same time, often culturally ignored phenomenon. When the issue of violence is brought up in society, attention always ‘automatically’ turns to men as perpetrators. Violence to which boys and men are exposed, however, is often underestimated. The idea itself suggests that boys and men are not granted the same level of integrity as women.”<sup>199</sup>

198 Council of Europe (2011). Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>

199 Puchert, Ralf; Jungnitz, Ludger; Walter, Willi; Lenz, HansJoachim; Puhe, Henry (2004). Gewalt gegen Männer in Deutschland. Studie im Auftrag des BMFSFJ, page 377. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/84590/a3184b9f324b6ccc05bdfc83ac03951e/studie-gewalt-maenner-langfassung-data.pdf>

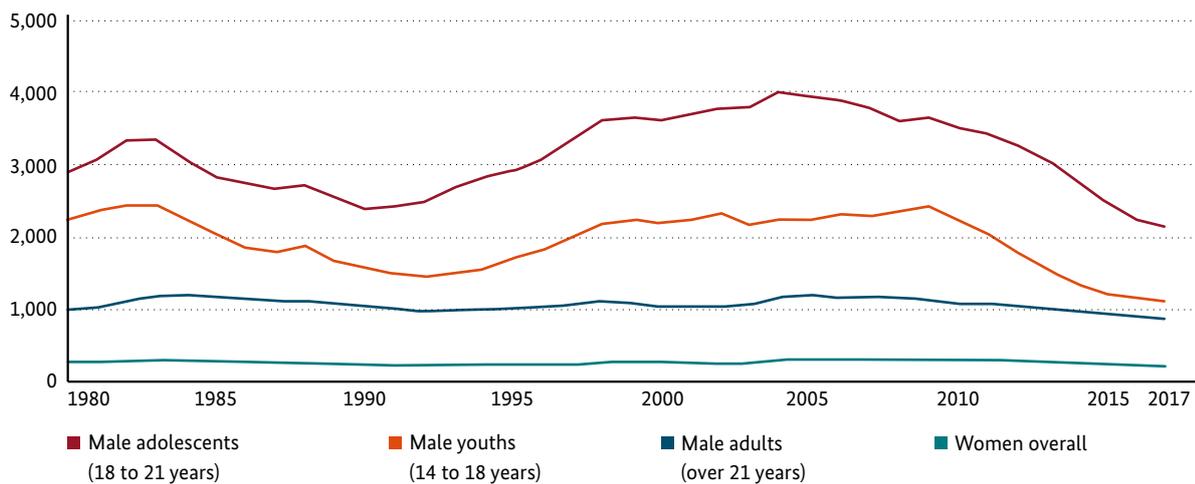
This statement has lost nothing of its validity. It leads to two questions.

Firstly: How can the visibility and recognition of male vulnerability be promoted? This is an objective of gender equality which can be dealt with within the scope of our gender equality policy for boys and men. Secondly: Should violence inflicted on men by themselves and by other men not rather be understood as a structural phenomenon, as it is encouraged – perhaps even provoked – by masculinity norms and male socialisation experiences? This question requires wider reflection.

### Violence perpetrated by boys and men

Let us start with the facts: Men are typically over-represented in statistics on socially problematic behaviour. They also dominate the statistics on those sentenced for crime. Figure 51 illustrates the high percentage of male adolescents and young adults sentenced for criminal activity – albeit with a clear downward trend.

Figure 51: Convicted Germans per 100,000 people of the same population group 14 years and over between 1980 and 2017, by gender and age<sup>200</sup>



Former West Germany, as of 1995 including all of Berlin; as of 2007 re-united Germany; not including road traffic offences.

Consequently, men form the majority of prison inmates. Figure 52 illustrates that the percentage of men increases with the severity of the offence

and the duration of the sentence respectively, both for adolescent and adult offenders (with the exception of life sentences).

200 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch, Volume 11 Justiz, page 317

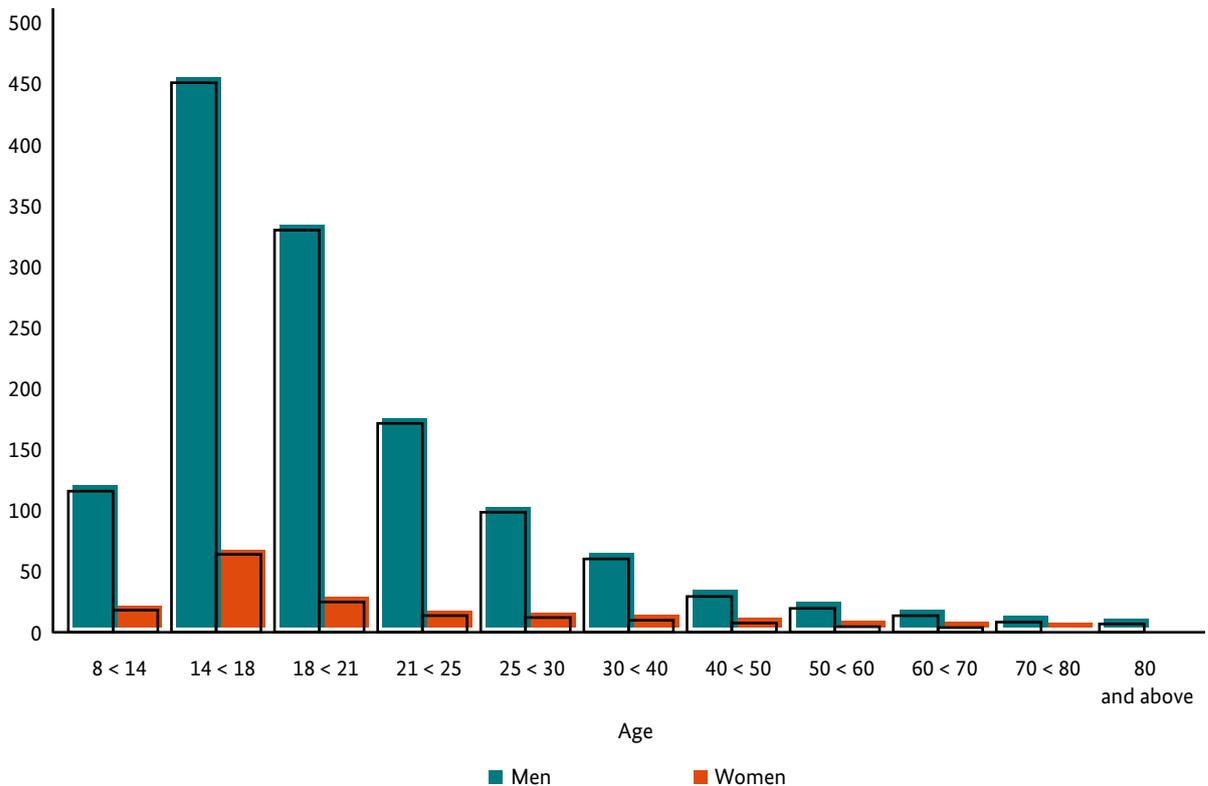
Figure 52: Prisoners by gender (in percentage)<sup>201</sup>

	< 9 months	9–12 months	12–24 months	2–5 years	5–15 years	Life sentence
<b>Young offender sentence</b>						
Men	No information	94 %	96 %	98 %	–	–
Women	No information	6 %	4 %	2 %	–	–
<b>Imprisonment</b>						
Men	92 %	94 %	95 %	96 %	97 %	94 %
Women	8 %	6 %	5 %	4 %	3 %	6 %

In the case of supposedly minor offences, too, – Figure 53 showing the example of vandalism in the public sphere – young men are persistently the

main perpetrators. The percentage of women sentenced is approximately 11.1 per cent for all age groups.

Figure 53: Tatverdächtigenbelastungszahlen [number of persons officially registered as suspects per 100,000 members of the same age group] for damage to property (except for damage to vehicles) in the public sphere, by age and gender<sup>202</sup>



201 Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Statistisches Jahrbuch, Volume 11 Justiz, page 324

202 Bundeskriminalamt (2019). Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik, Jahrbuch 2018, Volume 4 Einzelne Straftaten/gruppen und ausgewählte Formen der Kriminalität, page 149. Source: <https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/PolizeilicheKriminalstatistik/2018/pks2018Jahrbuch4Einzelne.html> (Accessed on: 30 May 2020)

## Violence against boys and men

Without relativising the over-representation of men among perpetrators of violence, the large extent to which men are also affected by violence needs to be acknowledged. In the large majority of cases of violence, victims are also male (up to

90 per cent in the public sphere, whereby two-thirds of the perpetrators are not known by the victim).<sup>203</sup> Figure 54 summarises the personal experiences of violence of men and classifies them statistically (due to methodical issues, the figures cannot always be compared.).

Figure 54: Selected violent events experienced by men (excerpt)<sup>204</sup>

	Physical	Mental	Sexual
Childhood and youth	Beaten, slapped, kicked or thrashed: 6 in 10 Harassed or threatened: 4 in 10 Beaten up: 2 in 10 Attacked, robbed, stolen from: 2 in 10 Threatened or injured with a weapon: 1 in 9	Bullied, grossly insulted, intimidated or humiliated: 6 in 10. Ridiculed or humiliated by a parent or guardian: 5 in 10 Blackmailed: 1 in 8	Victims of clearly sexualised violence: 1 in 12.
Adult age	Physical integrity injured by a female partner (including acts where there is no clear evidence of violence): 1 in 4. Slapped, bitten, kicked or had an object thrown at him by a female partner: 5-10 per cent Physically threatened (in public in the last 5 years): 1 in 10 Threatened with a weapon: 3-5 per cent Beaten up: 1 in 100	Prevented from socialising by a jealous female partner: 2 in 10 Monitored by a female partner: 5-8 per cent Grossly insulted, intimidated or aggressively yelled at by a superior or colleagues: 1 in 8 Slandered (at work): 1 in 11 Ridiculed, teased, devalued or humiliated at work: 1 in 12	Sexual violence in the workplace is mentioned in individual cases. One young man, for instance, described long-term sexual harassment from a trainer. Other studies indicate a higher exposure of men to sexual harassment in the workplace.

The risk of becoming a victim of violence as a male is significantly higher amongst children and adolescents than it is amongst adults. Only a minority of the men surveyed – one in seven – reported no experiences of violence during these life stages.<sup>205</sup> Accordingly, the Independent Commissioner for Child Sexual Abuse Issues has

called for the “expansion of dedicated counselling centres and low-threshold support services for all those affected by sexual violence and their caregivers.” This is “urgently required, predominantly in rural areas, for boys and men, people with disabilities and victims of ritual violence.”<sup>206</sup>

203 Puchert, Ralf; Jungnitz, Ludger; Walter, Willi; Lenz, HansJoachim; Puhe, Henry (2004). Gewalt gegen Männer in Deutschland. Studie im Auftrag des BMFSFJ, page 383 ff. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/84590/a3184b9f324b6ccc05bdfc83ac03951e/studie-gewalt-maenner-langfassung-data.pdf>

204 Ibid.

205 Ibid.

206 Independent officer for questions regarding sexual abuse of children (2017). Positionspapier „Sexuelle Gewalt gegen Kinder und Jugendliche verhindern – Betroffenen Unterstützung, Hilfe und Anerkennung ermöglichen“, page 6. <https://beauftragter-missbrauch.de/service/positionspapiere/#c1217>

## Men also need to be protected against violence



Bundesfach- und  
Koordinierungsstelle  
Männergewaltschutz

*The Free State of Saxony is a pioneer in work targeted at boys and men. Back in 2019, the Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft Jungen- und Männerarbeit Sachsen e. V. [Society for Work with Boys and Men in the Federal State of Saxony] put itself forward as the umbrella organisation for the new Federal Consulting and Coordinating Centre for Protection from Violence against Men. Frank Scheinert is the managing policy officer of the organisation. Here is what he says:*

“In Germany, there are currently nine protection projects for men with 29 places (as of May 2020). When we began work on our initiative in 2016 as the Society for Work with Boys and Men in the Federal State of Saxony, there were just two other similar projects: one in Oldenburg and another in Switzerland. That was all. We concluded that there was also a need for protection facilities tailored to the needs of men affected by violence.

Of course, the demand for projects to protect children and women is unfortunately much higher. There is no doubt about that. Yet we nevertheless need to ensure that male vulnerability and victimisation aren't overlooked just because it doesn't fit in with society's prevailing notions of masculinity. This becomes all the more apparent when one considers the number of unreported cases that must exist when men feel unable to come forward because a beaten man is not a 'real' man. Is it really 'just' 25,000 men who are affected by violence within a partnership as recorded by the Federal Criminal Police Office?

We, therefore, estimated the real demand and raised a call for political action: According to our estimates, three facilities for the protection of men were required in Saxony: one in Dresden, one in Leipzig and one in Plauen. The Ministry for Gender Equality was quick to initiate funding, with the proviso that local agencies made comparable commitments. That has worked out fine.

Then we received an increasing number of enquiries from other federal states: Baden-Württemberg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria. We provided the best possible counselling with limited resources and also tried to help to promote the projects. This is how we first came into contact with the BMFSFJ. They could envision that we would further develop

and systematise our know-how and get a clear mission to coordinate counselling nation-wide. This led to the establishment of the Federal Consulting and Coordinating Centre on Protection from Violence against Men. Our work officially kicked off on 1 October 2019. Location: Dresden. Geographical area: all of Germany

The project will initially run for a period of three years and funding has been secured until August 2022. That being said, we expect it to develop into a long-term service. A total of six staff is planned with between 20 and 40 hours per week each.

Our task consists of several components: Firstly, we provide advice to specialist units, project sponsors and committees at federal and state level that want to establish or further develop counselling services. Secondly, we organise conferences, training courses and other networking events for experts and public authorities. Thirdly, we support quality assurance and professionalisation with proposals for nationwide standardised case documentation, nationwide quality standards, etc. Fourthly, we provide a statistical basis. For a long time, it has been our objective that a representative study on violence faced by men and their children be conducted. Fifthly, we unite and broaden the nationwide public relations on the issue of protecting men from violence. Our website [www.maennergewaltschutz.de](http://www.maennergewaltschutz.de) now features a network map and direct access to existing protection facilities for affected men, counsellors and other professionals.

It needs to be kept in mind that even if each federal state had three, four or five protection facilities for men, this would cover a mere 10 per cent of known cases of violence. There's a need to catch up – just as with facilities for women and girls. However, there is also cause for celebration: Various initiatives have already begun. There is palpable political interest, even at a regional level, people are becoming increasingly aware of the problem and expressing their goodwill. The leading media in Germany have also been following the topic for three or four years. There's often Contact persons and responsibilities are often still missing at state-level. However, change is in the air here, too.

### 3 Current circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men: An assessment

Patience is required, but not modesty. Framework conditions need improving. Each time we have clearly stated what is required – naturally without demanding comprehensive provision right away – politicians have always lent us their ears.

I'm looking forward to expanding and strengthening the network of services for men. It's important to

keep in mind: Our protection facilities are not particularly successful if they shelter as many of those seeking help as possible. We instead regard our work a success if we are able to advise affected people and guide them elsewhere. The option to temporarily stay in a safe apartment is only one of the available possibilities.”

Inquiries into experiences of violence are often plagued by a significant number of unreported cases, particularly amongst men:

- First and foremost, experiences of violence need to be recognised as such. Since experiences of violence form a “normal” element of boyhood, this is far from easy. “Physical violence experienced when growing up is not viewed as violence by many men, but instead as a “normal” method of upbringing. Typically, an act is often only considered to be violence or mistreatment when it is seen as an act of caprice or ‘unjustified brutality.’”<sup>207</sup>
- Secondly, these events need to be remembered. As is the case with other negative or traumatising experiences, people tend to “forget” or even dissociate violent experiences. Undesired

sexual assaults committed on boys or adolescents by women are often perceived as initiation rituals for entry into adult life.

- Thirdly, and of particular importance: “Victimisation” often contradicts the key exigencies of masculinity, that is to not show any weakness and in no way be the weakest. For this reason, experiences of violence can be particularly shameful for boys and men – which consequently makes them all the more difficult to research.

As many men rather keep experiences of violence secret, there is most likely a significant number of unreported cases. However, almost two thirds of all victims of violence in the statistics for criminal offences recorded by the police on successful and attempted assaults are male.

Figure 55: Victims of criminal offences against sexual self-determination, of assault, and robbery (successful and attempted), by gender<sup>208</sup>

	Men	Women	Difference
All criminal offences	611,094	414,147	+196,947
	59.6 %	40.4 %	+19.2
...Thereof criminal offences against sexual self-determination	2,103	29,012	-26,909
	6.8 %	93.2 %	-86.4
... Thereof physical assault	392,699	232,918	+159,781
	62.8 %	37.2 %	+25.6
... Thereof robbery	29,219	12,311	+16,908
	70.4 %	26.6 %	+43.8

207 Puchert, Ralf; Jungnitz, Ludger; Walter, Willi; Lenz, HansJoachim; Puhe, Henry (2004). Gewalt gegen Männer in Deutschland. Studie im Auftrag des BMFSFJ, page 97. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/84590/a3184b9f324b6ccc05bdfc83ac03951e/studie-gewalt-maenner-langfassung-data.pdf>

208 Bundeskriminalamt (2019). Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik, Jahrbuch 2018, Volume 2 Opfer, page 14 ff.

#### **Sexism: Men ignore male victims**

*A recent study<sup>209</sup> conducted by the DELTA institute on behalf of the BMFSFJ looked at what people in Germany regard as sexism and where or how they encounter it in their daily lives.*

Solid foundations are required to pursue an effective gender equality policy for boys and men: Up-to-date figures need to be collected and complex links require more research. The BMFSFJ facilitates this fundamental work. Most recent example: Commissioned by the BMFSFJ, Carsten Wippermann investigated the attitudes of men and women towards sexism in a pilot study.<sup>210</sup> What do they understand by sexism? How and where do they encounter it? How do they react to it? How common are experiences of sexism in everyday life? How can they be avoided?

A selection of experiences:

- Almost all people in Germany have a notion of what sexism is. The term tends to trigger something. Perceptions diverge with regard to the meaning of the notion. What they all have in common is the conviction that sexism is something to be avoided.
- Women are more likely to view sexism as a structural problem. For men (predominately middle-aged and older and those from traditional and middle-class social milieus), sexism is primarily considered a moral misdemeanour of individuals and groups of people that appears in brutal and upsetting words, in gestures and images.
- Accordingly, sensitivity towards sexism differs between women and men in their daily lives. Half of all men report not to encounter any sexism at all in their own environment, compared to only one third of women.
- Both women and men automatically associate sexism with male sexual intrusiveness towards women and claim that this is the most common constellation of sexism. Almost exclusively, women indicate that women are also intrusive towards men. Men tend to ignore this or make it taboo.
- The notion that men can be subject to sexism from other men is only reflected in the context of homosexuality (be it sexual harassment from men by men or the stigmatisation of homosexual men by other men).
- When the notion of sexism extends beyond physical assault to include more subtle forms of belittling, this often encourages people to acknowledge situations whereby men are the victims of sexism. Sport is the primary area in which men are subject to sexual harassment and assaults on their manliness in the form of comments, gestures, actions and similar events (predominately from other men).

209 Wippermann, Carsten (2019). Sexismus im Alltag – Wahrnehmungen und Haltungen der deutschen Bevölkerung (Pilotstudie). Sozialwissenschaftliche bevölkerungsrepräsentative Untersuchung im Auftrag des Bundesministeriums für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, DELTAInstitut für Sozial und Ökologieforschung. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/141246/022f9fac09435d797f3b1a8bef56a211/sexismus-im-alltag-pilotstudie-data.pdf>

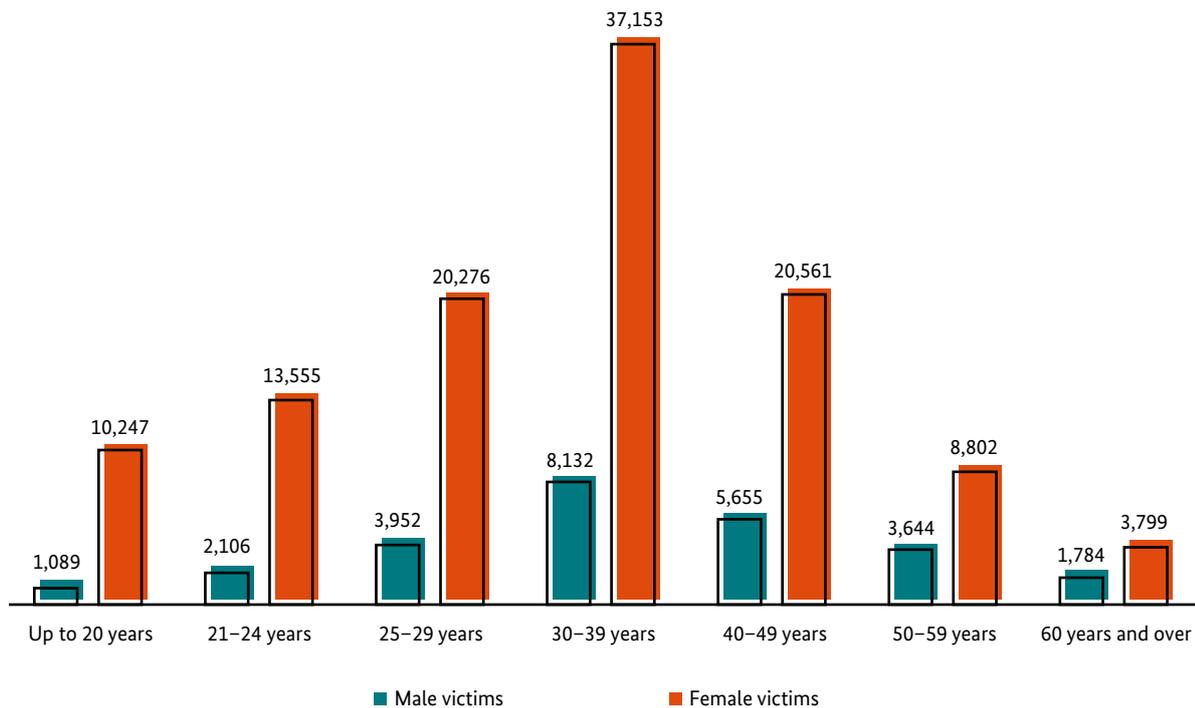
210 Ibid.

### 3 Current circumstances and challenges faced by boys and men: An assessment

In contrast, male experiences of violence in the home are much rarer, although they still happen. According to figures recorded by the police in 2018, 104,146 (80.5 per cent) of the victims of intimate partner violence were female and 25,273 (19.5 per cent) were male.

The fact that the likelihood of a man becoming a victim of partner violence continues to grow the older he gets, is particularly important. For couples over 60, the gender ratio for victims of partner violence is almost 1:2 (32.0 per cent for men, 68.0 per cent for women).

Figure 56: Victims of intimate partner violence in 2018, by gender and age group<sup>211</sup>



Percentage distribution: 9.6 per cent male victims amongst under 20-year-olds, 13.4 per cent amongst 21–24-year-olds, 16.3 per cent amongst 25–29-year-olds, 18.0 per cent amongst 30–39-year-olds, 21.6 per cent amongst 40–49-year-olds, 29.3 per cent amongst 50–59-year-olds and 32.0 per cent amongst over-60-year-olds (own calculations)

The Federal Criminal Police Office has reported an “increasing relevance” of intimate partner violence “to the detriment of men”: “A clear indication of this is the (almost continuously) growing number of male victims in recent years (2014: 22,302 men; 2015: 23,167 men;

2016: 24,124 men; 2017: 24,928 men; 2018: 26,362 men).<sup>212</sup> It remains to be seen to what extent partner violence against men is actually increasing, or whether this increase is “only” due to the fact that more men are willing to report incidents.

211 Bundeskriminalamt (2020). Kriminalstatistische Auswertung Partnerschaftsgewalt für das Berichtsjahr 2018, page 6. [https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/JahresberichteUndLagebilder/Partnerschaftsgewalt/Partnerschaftsgewalt\\_2018.html;jsession-id=9B4904E28B791CC0D6DB700465605C97.live0602?nn=63476](https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/JahresberichteUndLagebilder/Partnerschaftsgewalt/Partnerschaftsgewalt_2018.html;jsession-id=9B4904E28B791CC0D6DB700465605C97.live0602?nn=63476) (Accessed on: 30 May 2020)

212 Ibid. page 21

#### **The 5-stage plan for a support system for boys and men in crises and difficult situations**

The aforementioned development prompted the Federal Ministry for Gender Equality to draft a five-stage plan at the end of 2019 with a stronger focus on men, particularly those in crises and difficult situations. The objective is to create a stronger network and consequently further expand the range of male-specific counselling services.

The first stage began in February 2019 with the launch of the online counselling map, initiated by the Federal Forum Men ([www.maennerberatungsnetz.de](http://www.maennerberatungsnetz.de)). The website already features over 300 counselling services for boys and men on issues related to upbringing, work, experiences of violence, and care.<sup>213</sup> Stronger networking and the expansion of counselling services are two of the objectives of the new project “Increased support for men in the gender equality policy” (Federal Forum Men).

The second stage aims at improving the quality of counselling and scope of the services for men. SKM – Bundesverband e.V. has developed a training concept that helps specialists incorporate male topics into their daily counselling work. They are also to act as disseminators to ensure that male-focused counselling becomes more available in the future. The first training course began held in Spring 2020.

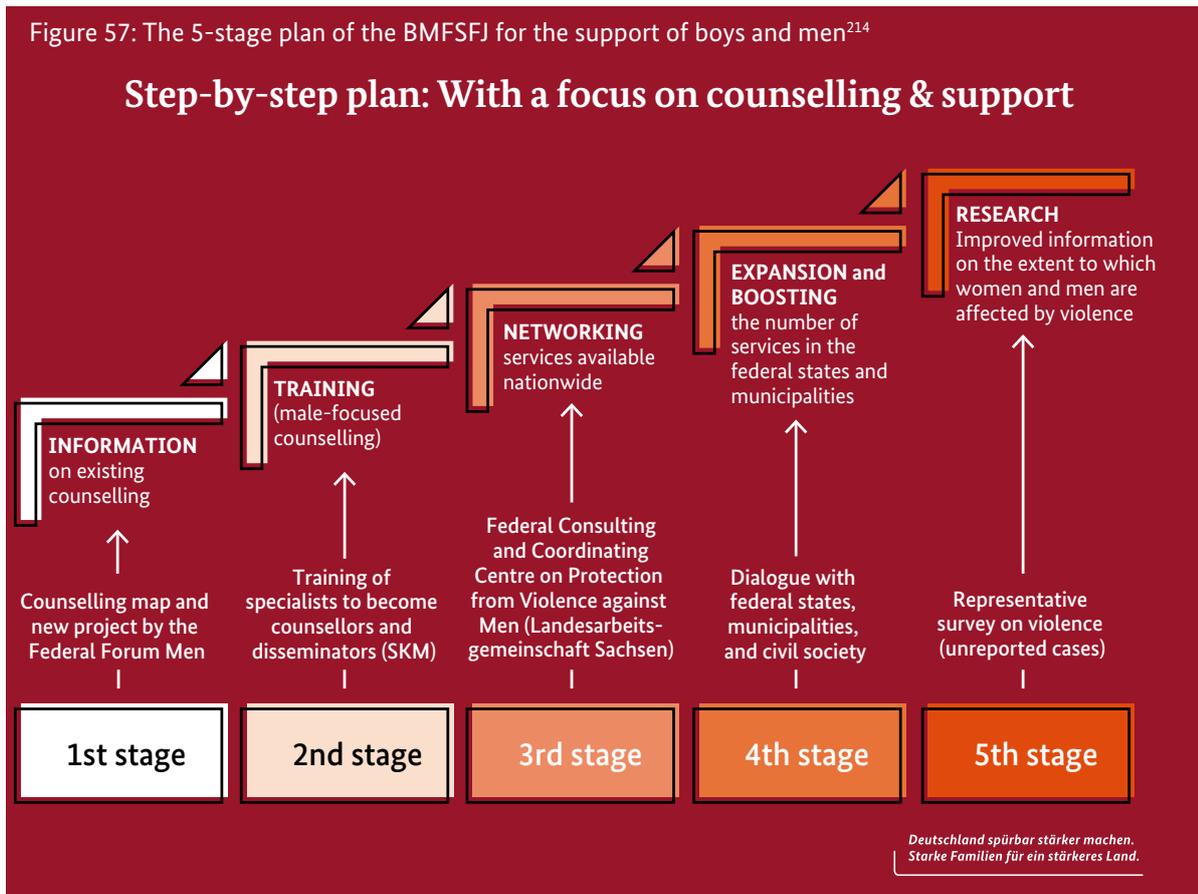
The third stage focuses on supporting men affected by (domestic) violence and seeking help and support. The nationwide Federal Consulting and Coordinating Centre on Protection from Violence against Men, with its headquarters in Dresden, was established to ensure services are available in all of the federal states. It advises interested institutions, local authorities and federal states on issues such as the setting up and operation of protection facilities. The centre’s website includes an overview of the existing protection facilities for affected men and their children. Future plans include nationwide standardisation of case documentation and online counselling services.

In order to ensure the concerns of boys and men receive more acknowledgement in municipalities and federal states, a dialogue was established with the federal states at the beginning of 2020 (fourth stage). The parties involved will convene on a regular basis and consider measures at a political level. Initiatives by individual federal states – such as, for example, the common helpline for men from North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria ([www.maennerhilfetelefon.de](http://www.maennerhilfetelefon.de)) – are welcomed by the Federal Ministry for Gender Equality. However, these initiatives can only be regarded as truly successful once all federal states participate.

Finally, in the fifth stage, the Federal Ministry for Gender Equality is planning to conduct a comprehensive study on gender differences with regard to unreported cases of violence – in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Criminal Police Office. This study is to determine the real demand for support services to protect people against violence – regardless of the gender of those affected.

.....  
213 as on 1st May 2020

Figure 57: The 5-stage plan of the BMFSFJ for the support of boys and men<sup>214</sup>



214 BMFSFJ Press conference on 14 January 2020 (as on: January 2020)

## 3.7 Conclusion

Current data on the status of gender equality for boys and men highlight the fast pace at which notions of masculinity and gender relations are changing in Germany. The employment rates of men and women are rapidly converging. The structural change on the labour market has provided men with a range of new opportunities that they are hesitantly, yet nonetheless increasingly, taking advantage of. Underestimated male care contributions – for example, contributions to the care of relatives, in particular by men over the age of 70 – are slowly gaining the recognition they deserve. Expanding notions of masculinity are increasingly opening up minds to experiences of violence suffered by men. The fact that one-sided conceptions of masculinity present a risk to health, has made its way into mainstream society.

At the same time, the assessment draws attention to strong forces of inertia. Unequal pay and traditional stereotypes persist in the labour market. Men remain focused on gainful activities and dedicate less time to childcare and household chores than mothers. Two-thirds of all children in Germany would like to spend more time with their fathers. Many men themselves also aspire to achieve a more balanced division of time – yet they still encounter resistance. Male vulnerabilities and victimisation are often concealed. Male-specific approaches in prevention and healthcare remain few and far between, similarly to male-specific support and counselling services for a variety of life questions and crises.

The 5-stage plan of the Federal Ministry for Gender Equality is going to tackle these issues and take them into account in the long term.

All things considered, from the perspective of the BMFSFJ, this concurrence of contradictions requires a gender equality strategy for boys and men that works on two axes:

On the first axis, gender equality policy aims at further promoting tried and tested measures such as breaking down gender stereotypes and providing structural incentives to promote diversity and create equal opportunities for all, irrespective of gender, social status, migration and educational background.

On the second axis, gender equality policy intends to strengthen new emphases to accelerate the concrete redistribution of burdens and resources between genders. The aspects of time and money are primarily addressed in this regard, as they remain very much unequally distributed between genders. Here, the BMFSFJ emphasises its mission statement: Equality will only be achieved once the fair share principle is fully implemented on the labour market and in family life, the economy and society: The key word is partnership!

The BMFSFJ has based its new cooperative gender equality policy for boys and men on these convictions and mission statements, which are described in more detail in the next section.

# 4

## Cooperative gender equality policy for boys and men: Effects and horizons

The previous statements have clearly illustrated that:

- Boys and men also face challenges when it comes to gender equality. Boys and men harbour their own desires for development and also benefit from a policy based on equal opportunities. But increasingly they have to take responsibility for acting in a (more) fair manner.
- Not all (groups of) boys and men are affected to the same extent and/or by the same issues. Whilst disadvantaged boys and men need to be granted more (and equal) opportunities, privileged men are more closely involved in the issues of sustainability and sharing.
- Boys and men from every walk of life (and gender equality policy) need to ask themselves two demanding questions: How can men's lives become more sustainable and diverse? And what is required to embark on this process?
- It is necessary to defend gender equality against attacks efforts to reinterpret the idea. Gender equality is more than simply a vague maxim: it's a down-to-earth mandate to distribute opportunities and resources fairly.
- Boys and men are increasingly requested to ensure that their notional commitment to gender equality is backed up by corresponding action. The target notion of "fair sharing" can and has to be actively addressed and demanded.

To ensure this does not simply remain a call for action, but also constitutes an offer; incentive systems and framework conditions need to be more coherently aligned with the gender equality concerns of boys and men.

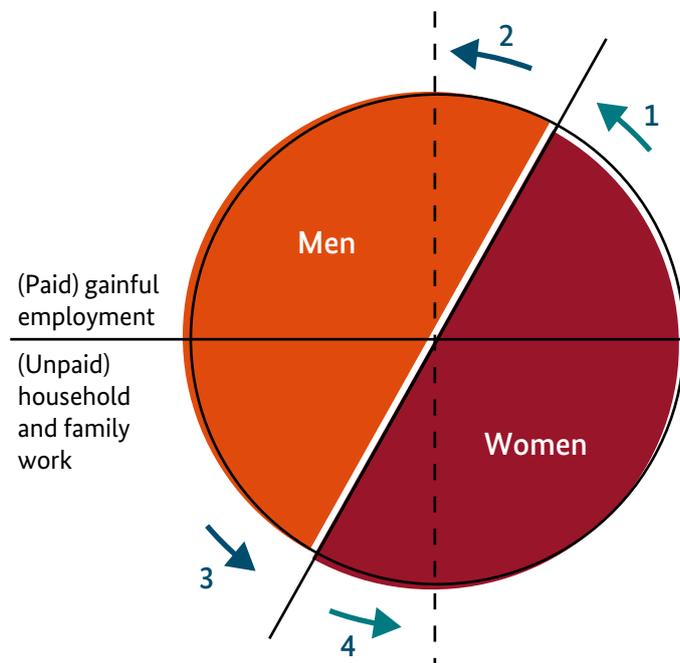
### 4.1 Axes of intervention and key objectives

The BMFSFJ equality policy for boys and men is, therefore, based on two axes of intervention:

- On axis 1, the key objective is "equal opportunities"
- On axis 2, the key objective is "fairness"

The target of equal opportunities is more qualitative in nature: From the beginning, each and every one should be granted the same opportunities as well as for their development, regardless of background or gender. This requires targeted support: Support needs to most benefit those who start life with minimal resources. In this regard, the Federal Ministry is building on previous experiences and commitments. These commitments are as necessary as ever.

Figure 58: Circular model of distributive justice between men and women (paid and unpaid work)<sup>215</sup>



Distributive justice is a more quantitative objective: It means that resources and burdens are equally shared, regardless of people's background or gender. It goes without saying that this policy must not dictate how people, men or women, live their lives. However, it has to state the objective that – looking at society as a whole – men and women have the same amount and are allowed to do the same things. This requires a more focused strategy than before. A simple illustration will show where to start (see Figure 58).

The circle represents the total amount of work performed in an economy. The upper half represents paid and the lower half represents unpaid work.

This approximately corresponds to the actual proportions.

The diagonal line marks the current situation and clearly illustrates unequal distribution: Despite the fact that both genders perform roughly the same amount of work overall (see also 3.2 and 3.3), men take on much more gainful employment whilst women undertake far more unpaid work.

What is the ideal distribution from a gender-equality perspective? 50:50. This is the only option, unless one gender is imputed to have a natural inclination to undertake more unpaid work – otherwise unequal distribution is accepted with a shrug.

Four political levers need to be set in motion to overturn this social imbalance and facilitate progress from the current situation to the target state. Whilst the promotion of women within and into the labour market (leverage 1) has formed part of the political agenda for many years, the impor-

215 Expanded presentation based on: Theunert, Markus (2012). Männerpolitik(en) – ein Rahmenkonzept. In: Theunert, Markus (Ed.). Männerpolitik Wiesbaden: Springer VS, Page 33

tance of leverages 2, 3 and 4 has only recently been discovered and harnessed.

Leverages 2 and 3 directly address boys and men. Which gender equality policy measures encourage a move away from a one-sided orientation on achievement and responsibility as the breadwinner? Which measures help men in particular to achieve their wishes to work more part-time and to increase time flexibility (leverage 2)? Which measures support more male participation in care tasks within families and society (leverage 3) – especially when it comes to childcare and housework? Leverage 4 is also indirectly relevant: What helps women to encourage their partners to take on more responsibility for housework and childcare – and not simply doing it themselves or delegating to others (usually women) which would otherwise remain unfinished?

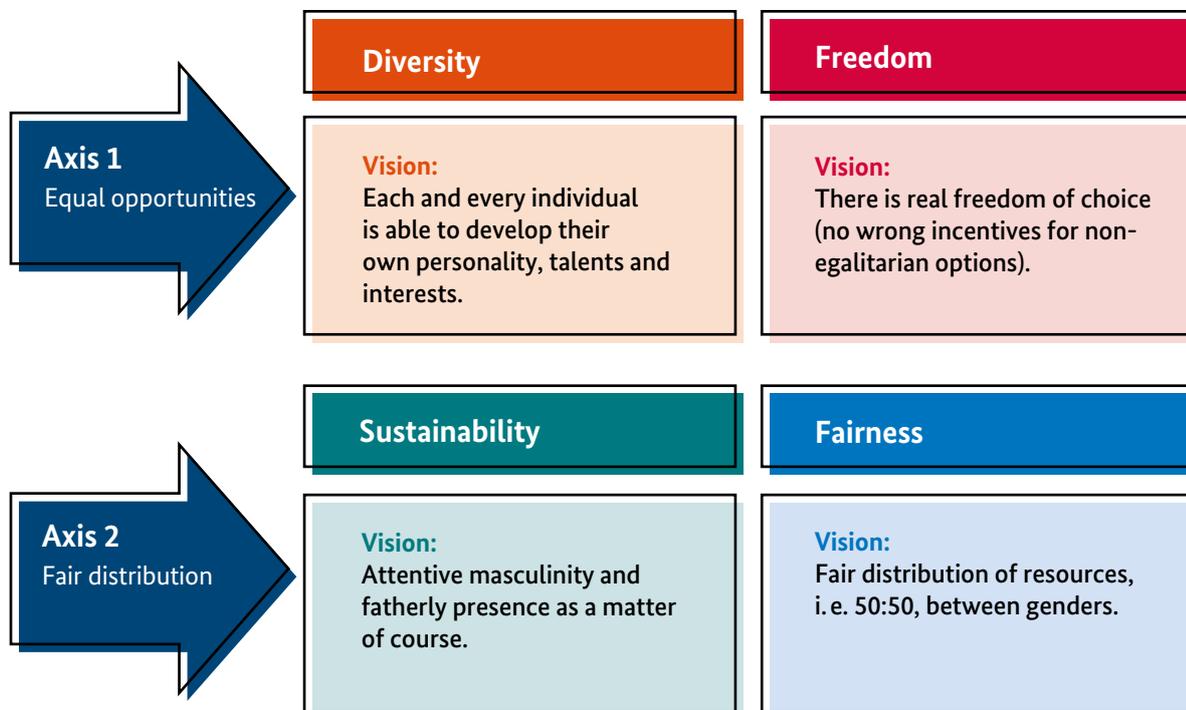
## 4.2 Key objectives

Four key objectives can be distinguished within this two-pronged approach.

In order to be effective, gender equality policy for boys and men must operate in multiple fields of tension and conflicting goals. It would, therefore, be better to pursue complementary objectives simultaneously than to reduce the complexity to a single objective at all costs.

The Federal Ministry for Gender Equality’s gender equality policy for boys and men thus simultaneously promotes freedom and diversity, sustainability and fairness to the same degree. Figure 59 illustrates these four objectives and positions them along the two axes of intervention (see 4.1).

Figure 59: The four objectives of gender equality policy on two axes of intervention/levels of impact



The objectives are not in conflict but rather reinforce each other. If nature has fairly distributed skills and talents between the sexes (as is assumed to be the case), then distributive justice,

for instance, is nothing but the expression of equal opportunities achieved – and on the labour market the optimal allocation of educational resources and investments.

### 4.3 Cross-sectional task

As highlighted in section 3: Gender inequality often and, in some cases, primarily constitutes inequality between social classes. As a rule, the following applies: Social classes with limited access to resources (in terms of education, income, housing, etc.) are at higher risk of poverty, health issues and gender inequality. It, therefore, follows that the development of gender equality policy requires a certain level of sensitivity to the risk of “egotism of the couple”,<sup>216</sup> which grants privileged women the same standing as privileged men, but fails to lead to more social equality.

Therefore, the principle is: **No gender equality without social justice.** The BMFSFJ’s gender equality policy for boys and men is consequently geared towards addressing the requirements of disadvantaged groups. In each area targeted, it aims to reach the (groups of) men who need help the most.

### 4.4 Framework model for a cooperative equality policy for boys and men

With this, the framework model is now complete.

As described above, the four objectives and the two axes are of equal importance, but the starting point is a different one: We have more previous experience to draw from on axis 1. In a discursive manner: Male freedom of choice and variety/diversity have already been acknowledged and worked on for quite a while, other than the topics of caring and sharing.

#### That is to say that

for gender equality policy to be fully effective, it needs to place greater emphasis on the issue of distributive justice.

Axis 2 is concerned with the lower half of the circular model (4.1), which highlights an evident claim: The question of power in a gender-equality sense is decided by the distribution of household chores. Increased attention has to be paid to this issue in the future.

It is also important to remember that 50:50 is not the default for every couple. Freedom of choice remains the motto in this regard. That said: Distributive justice must remain the goal at the societal level – and it is also the logical outcome, as neither gender is more inclined than the other to engage in paid or unpaid work!

At this level, it is not simply a matter of appealing to men and their sense of justice. The primary objective is to extend the discourse on gender equality and address power issues not only within the political and economic domains (where men primarily need to relinquish power), but also in the educational and domestic spheres (where men are to gain more room for development).

This also accounts for one of the sustainability goals of the United Nations.<sup>217</sup>

216 Freely adapted from Erich Fromm (“The Art of Loving”)

217 UN <https://unric.org/de/17ziele/>

# 5

## Gender equality policy for boys and men: Implementation goals and measures

The framework model introduced in section 4 identifies the key objectives and visions of the BMFSFJ's gender equality policy for boys and men. Now the content of these lines of attack needs to be outlined in more detail and measures need to be implemented "on the ground". This is what section 5 is about.

In the first step, four concrete implementation goals are assigned to each of the four key objectives (section 5.1). They describe the changes planned for the respective target groups (outcome). The 4x4 framework of gender equality policy for boys and men consequently defines a total of 16 implementation goals that could significantly contribute to improving life for boys and men in Germany.

Section 5.2 highlights the specific measures required to achieve the 16 implementation goals. This section completes the strategy. It will become clear that whilst the individual goals and specific measures are primarily tailored to benefit boys and men, women, too, have to gain from this policy. Thus, the term "cooperative gender equality policy" becomes plausible, realistic and credible.

A detailed look at the individual objectives and the resulting measures gives rise to the following schematic structure.

## 5.1 Implementation goals

The four implementation goals to which each of the four key objectives are assigned are outlined in section 5.1.

### Diversity

“Each and every individual needs to be able to develop their own personality, talents and interests.” This statement forms the vision behind the key objective of diversity. The following strategic approaches have to be adopted for the implementation of this policy:

- Acceptance of a wide variety of notions of masculinity needs to be promoted. Opportunities to encourage exploration and extend the range of masculinity norms have to be grasped at all levels of government. This also entails combating the devaluation of differing and/or fluid versions of masculinity and approaching the creation of new norms with a critical gaze.
- Conventional standards of masculinity require boys and men not to show weakness. This often leads to hostility to male vulnerability and even tabooing male victimisation through violence perpetrated (more often) by other men or (less often) women. This dynamic has to be ended. In order to achieve this, knowledge of the extent and forms of male experiences of violence needs to be increased on the one hand, while, on the other, support services addressing vulnerabilities and experiences of violence need to be expanded and developed.
- Significant differences can be observed within the social group of men. Men from educationally disadvantaged social classes, having little socio-economic resources and/or being particularly vulnerable are especially affected by unequal opportunities and tough living conditions.

These men require special support and, therefore, gender equality policy for boys and men needs to pay more attention to intersectional issues, with particular regard to the integration of male refugees.

- The increased sensitivity to women’s concerns has led to a diverse range of support services for women in recent decades. However, men’s specific concerns, that need addressing, have largely gone unanswered. Corresponding sensitisation of specialists and psycho-social institutions is strongly to be promoted and to call for. Well-based specialist knowledge on how to reach, counsel and accompany men needs to be developed and made available.

From all this, the four implementation goals (outcomes) of the key objective of diversity can be deduced:

- **Implementation Goal 1.1:** Growing acceptance of more diverse masculinities in the public.
- **Implementation Goal 1.2:** The vulnerability of boys and men is taken (more) seriously.
- **Implementation Goal 1.3:** Boys and men are given more support in order to reduce disadvantages and exclusion they have experienced.
- **Implementation Goal 1.4:** Psycho-social institutions increase their abilities to reach, counsel and accompany boys and men according to their needs.

## Freedom

“Real freedom of choice with no wrong incentives for non-egalitarian options.” This is the vision behind the key objective of freedom. The following strategic approaches have to be adopted for the implementation of this policy:

- Gender images and norms of masculinity are powerful. Many boys and men, therefore, follow paths of life and careers which subordinates their own talents, interests and abilities to social norms. This works to the advantage of neither the individual, society nor the labour market. Measures, both at the individual and structural level, that promote life decisions free from stereotypes and, in particular, career choices not dictated by gender norms, are to be continued.
- The majority of couples and families would like to follow egalitarian working models. However, traditional work-life models often prevail in reality. This is problematic both for the people involved and for the economy as a whole. One reason is the fact that the legal framework is still based on the underlying assumption of the traditional model and thus continues to undermine true freedom of choice. It is, therefore, key that wrong legal incentives need to be eliminated. This primarily pertains to tax legislation and regulations on support in the early years of parenthood. New incentives to accelerate progress in gender equality (for example, the introduction of a quota for men in the social, health and educational sectors) also need to be considered.
- School is key to socialisation. It has a strong influence on the transformation of boys into men. This is both risk and opportunity. Schools need to be prevented from replicating and reinforcing clichés. At the same time, the question is how schools can promote freedom of choice and educational opportunities regardless of gender. This requires an increase in the gender competence of educational

systems (heads, teaching staff, those responsible for educational and teaching material, etc.) at all stages and levels.

- Many men perceive the current political changes towards gender equality and the associated dissolution of gender norms as a threat, not as an opportunity. For them, these changes hardly constitute an increase in freedom and opportunities for development, but rather a loss of direction and historical privileges. This has an unsettling effect. Many men view themselves as “losers in emancipation” and harbour – sometimes violent – feelings of anger, bitterness, sadness and fear. There is a lack of research on the extent to which and of how men are affected, as well as on the link between changes towards gender equality and political radicalisation. Knowledge needs to be acquired and potential to be identify – including on the question of if and how work with men can contribute to preventing radicalisation.

From all this, the four implementation goals (outcomes) of the key objective of freedom can be deduced:

- **Implementation Goal 2.1:** Boys and men no longer face obstacles due to gender stereotypes when choosing a career.
- **Implementation Goal 2.2:** (Legal) framework conditions provide boys and men with real freedom of choice and eliminate wrong incentives for the traditional breadwinner model.
- **Implementation Goal 2.3:** There is higher gender competence in the educational sector.
- **Implementation Goal 2.4:** There is more awareness of the support needs of men who perceive themselves as the “losers in emancipation”.

## Sustainability

“Attentive masculinity and fatherly presence as a matter of course.” This is the vision behind the key objective of sustainability. The following strategic approaches have to be adopted for the implementation of this policy:

- Gender-reflective work with boys and men is a field that is currently subject to a dynamic process of professionalisation. This development requires support. In order to ensure quality, specialist qualification opportunities need to be made permanent, the development and dissemination of professional standards need to be facilitated and needs-based differentiation of counselling offers needs to be adopted in cooperation between the federal government, federal states and municipalities.
- Whilst couples typically strive to achieve an egalitarian balance between family work and gainful employment, the traditional model tends to prevail once they start a family. In terms of gender equality, the phase surrounding pregnancy and the birth of a child is a particularly sensitive one. Gender stereotypes also play a particularly strong role at the structural level. There is consequently quite a potential for the sensitisation of professionals who provide guidance to young parents during this phase. How to professionally deal with stereotyping processes has to be part of their training. All health professionals ought to be better prepared for the promotion of men’s health and self-care.
- Men make significant contributions when it comes to the care of relatives and the extent of these increases with age, especially once the men enter retirement. During their working life, men typically tend to favour formal involvement in associations or similar activities

over providing care for others. These contributions deserve recognition. At the same time, it has to become a matter of course to expect men to commit to caring for others over their complete life courses to the same degree as women do.

- The labour market and opportunities for participation in it are changing. Digitisation facilitates more flexibility as to working hours and location. An increased willingness to engage in lifelong learning is becoming indispensable in order to stay on the ball professionally. Whilst this places high demands on people, but it also offers a range of opportunities for achieving a better reconcilability of work, family and personal interests. It remains to be clarified which opportunities for reconciliation have opened up for boys and men as a result of this and how they can benefit from these.

From all this the basis for the four implementation goals (outcomes) of the key objective of sustainability can be deduced:

- **Implementation Goal 3.1:** Gender-reflective work with boys and men continues to develop professionally. This work is being put on a permanent footing.
- **Implementation Goal 3.2:** Healthcare professionals and organisations place a greater emphasis on promoting men’s health and self-care in research, education and practice.
- **Implementation Goal 3.3:** Male contributions to family care are becoming increasingly more visible and numerous.
- **Implementation Goal 3.4:** Digitisation and the changes of the labour market make men’s life and career courses more flexible.

### Fairness

“Fair distribution of resources and burdens (including all paid and unpaid work) – i.e. 50:50 – between genders.” This is the vision behind the key objective of equality. The following strategic approaches have to be adopted for the implementation of this policy:

- As highlighted in section 3.3: Many parents fail to succeed in achieving an equal division of household and family work on the one hand, and gainful employment on the other. Starting a family typically promotes traditional models. It is useful to make young parents, and fathers-to-be in particular, aware of these risks before the birth of their child and to encourage them to grapple with these questions. What do I want my role in the family to be? How do I want my relationship with my child to be as a father? How do I want to split my time between childcare and gainful employment? How can I support the professional engagement of the child’s mother? Suitable measures need to be introduced to encourage parents to broach these questions both individually and together while they are preparing for the birth of their child and starting a family. It remains to be established how these small-scale processes can be supported by sensitisation and through PR on a large scale. There is also significant potential for boosting networking opportunities and mutual support amongst (young) fathers.
- Due to the rapid pace at which family care patterns are established in the weeks following childbirth the period surrounding the birth of a child is of crucial importance in terms of gender equality. Men who have just become fathers require space to assume the role of caregiver.
- Their care competences should develop at the same pace as the mothers’, thus enabling fathers to take responsibility for childcare at all times and form an independent, reliable bond with their children. Hormonal changes should not be neglected. In fathers, these changes are less of a biological automatism and instead only develop through direct contact with the new-born. For fathers to gain this crucial experience during this sensitive phase, impetus is required. A great opportunity in this regard has been offered in the form of the EU directive on ten-days’ paternity leave immediately after childbirth.<sup>218</sup>
- Parenthood continues to affect men and women on the labour market differently. Whilst employers are obligated to actively establish how to handle the temporary loss of staff and the subsequent work-life balance issue of expectant mothers, a comparable approach is often neglected for fathers-to-be. The outdated cliché that fathers are less responsible for childcare still prevails. The result: The “career risk” associated with parenthood is unilaterally borne by women. This is neither fair nor in line with the times. Thus, employers have to be encouraged to systematically view fathers amongst their employees as a target group for forward-looking HR policies. Employers are to receive incentives so that they encourage and ask men to confront their future dual roles as employees and fathers. Part-time work should also be promoted amongst men.

218 European Union (2019). DIRECTIVE 2019/1158 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 20 June 2019, Paragraph (19): “(19) In order to encourage a more equal sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men, and to allow for the early creation of a bond between fathers and children, a right to paternity leave for fathers (...) should be introduced. (...) Member States are able to specify whether paternity leave is expressed in working days, weeks or other time units, taking into account that ten working days correspond to two calendar weeks. In order to take account of differences between Member States, the right to paternity leave should be granted irrespective of marital or family status, as defined by national law.” <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELLAR:4119596d-a475-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1>

## 5.2 Measures

- The traditional distribution of tasks within families remains widespread in modern-day Germany: Women assume more family work and men more gainful employment. The consequences of this arrangement for fathers are quite different after separation or divorce from what they were before. Whilst they continue to bear their share of responsibility for the family income, they often lose their place within the family. This reorganisation of the family set-up after separation and divorce touches on a number of extremely sensitive issues. It therefore needs to be approached with the necessary care. There is, however, a clear need for action: When men are expected to assume responsibility for their half of unpaid work within the home and family, increased complementary efforts are required to ensure compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Art. 9 para. 3): “States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child’s best interests.”<sup>219</sup>

From all this, the basis for the four implementation goals (outcomes) of the key objective of justice can be deduced:

- **Implementation Goal 4.1:** Men deal with the topics of fatherhood and reconciliation (more) actively and early (/earlier) on.
- **Implementation Goal 4.2:** Men assume a growing share of the responsibility for unpaid household and family work.
- **Implementation Goal 4.3:** The development of reconciliation policies for men and fathers in companies is encouraged. An increased number of men work part-time.
- **Implementation Goal 4.4:** Framework conditions ensure the rights of children to close relationships with both parents in everyday life, even during/after separation/divorce.

In general, as well as in the following subsection, where individual measures are brought up, one thing is glaringly apparent: Progress in gender equality can only be achieved by cooperation between genders. Whilst the measures are focused on men and targeted at improving the situation of men, they do not at the same time worsen the situation of women. If women and men cooperate on gender equality issues, both stand to benefit – that is precisely why this policy’s claim is to be neither specifically for women nor against men, but rather a cooperation on equal terms.

In the measures listed below, projects are assigned to the visions and key objectives and the 16 associated implementation goals, as illustrated in Figure 61. This encompasses both the continuation of initiatives that already exist (be it by the federal government, the federal states or civil society associations) and new commitments important to the further development of gender equality policy for boys and men.

219 See <https://www.unicef.de/informieren/ueber-uns/fuer-kinderrechte/un-kinderrechtskonvention>

## 5 Gender equality policy for boys and men: Implementation goals and measures

Key objectives 1: Diversity			
<b>Implementation Goal 1.1: Growing acceptance of more diversity of masculinities among the general public.</b>			
Measure 1.1 A	Measure 1.1 B	Measure 1.1 C	
A permanent footing for the platform „meinTestgelände“ – das Gendermagazin (run by: BAG Jungenarbeit e.V. in cooperation with BAG Mädchenpolitik e.V.)	Convince men to shape and benefit from gender equality policy, make politicians and the public aware of the concerns of men (project: “Männer stärker in die Gleichstellungspolitik”, run by: Federal Forum Men)	Combating (multiple) discrimination by means of the German General Equal Treatment Act (AGG), counselling and support by the Federal Antidiscrimination Agency (ADS), expanding the competence of the ADS (right to sue)	
<b>Implementation Goal 1.2: The vulnerability of boys and men is taken (more) seriously.</b>			
Measure 1.2 A	Measure 1.2 B	Measure 1.2 C	Measure 1.2 D
A gendercomparative study on unreported cases of violence in order to determine the true extent of male experiences of violence (BMFSFJ, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Federal Criminal Police Office)	Specialist advice, consulting, sensitisation, coaching, case documentation through the nationwide Federal Consulting and Coordinating Centre on Protection from Violence against Men for existing facilities, federal states, municipalities, individual players and potential organisers of protection facilities (run by: LAG Jungen- und Männerarbeit Sachsen e.V.)	Coordination of a helpline and online advice service (in collaboration with the federal states) (see Art. 23 and 24 of the Istanbul Convention; the federal states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria are responsible for this project, see <a href="http://www.maennerhilfetelefon.de">www.maennerhilfetelefon.de</a> )	Aftercare/reconditioning after sexual abuse (primary responsibility: Independent Commissioner for Child Sexual Abuse Issues – UBSKM)
<b>Implementation Goal 1.3: Increased encouragement of boys and men to dismantle experienced disadvantages and exclusion</b>			
Measure 1.3 A	Measure 1.3 B	Measure 1.3 C	Measure 1.3 D
Sustainable measures for labour market integration of men with little access to education and jobs (by increasing the number of target group-specific social projects, for example)	Pilot project for a group programme aimed at long-time unemployed men (according to the model of Männerberatung Wien [association that provides counselling for men based in Vienna])	Fundamental research on experiences of violence and trauma suffered by male refugees to clarify the need for support	Boosting intersectional approaches in health statistics in order to facilitate a deeper analysis of relevant health determinants for men (social class, education, etc.) and increase recognition and prevention of sexual abuse of boys (UBSKM)
<b>Implementation Goal 1.4: Psychosocial institutions (such as counselling centres, educational centres for families) increase their expertise to reach, advise and accompany boys and men according to their needs.</b>			
Measure 1.4 A	Measure 1.4 B	Measure 1.4 C	
Guidelines (theory and practice) for successfully addressing and working with boys and men (good practice recommendations)	Development of training modules for organisations and individuals providing basic psychosocial counselling	Encourage providers to establish mixed teams as the obligatory standard	

## 5 Gender equality policy for boys and men: Implementation goals and measures

Key objectives 2: Freedom			
<b>Implementation Goal 2.1: Boys and men are no longer restricted in their career choice by gender stereotypes.</b>			
Measure 2.1 A	Measure 2.1 B	Measure 2.1 C	Measure 2.1 D
Continuation of the initiative “Klischeefrei” with a particular emphasis on gender-reflective career advice and sensitisation of parents regarding their restrictive influence (stereotypes); continuation of “Boys’Day” (target group-specific approach for boys to promote career choice free from the constraints of gender stereotypes)	Model project: “Men in social occupations”: Raising awareness for important occupations in the social and healthcare sector and inviting men to learn more about these professions	Making social occupations more attractive, by opening more chances for advancement, improving pay in long-term care, making training for educators and healthcare workers free, remunerated and subject to social insurance contributions; continuation of the “Konzertierte Aktion Pflege” [Concerted Action Care]: Improving working conditions and increasing the attractiveness of the care professions	Guidelines to encourage transparent handling of the problematic issue of general suspicion against men in educational and social occupations (instructions for the establishment of professional protection concepts against sexual violence)
<b>Implementation Goal 2.2: (Legal) framework conditions provide boys and men with real freedom of choice and eliminate wrong incentives for the traditional breadwinner model.</b>			
Measure 2.2 A	Measure 2.2 B	Measure 2.2 C	
Gender equality-oriented further development of the income tax	Extension of the number of months partners have to take parental leave in order for the couple to be eligible for the complete time of parental leave with the aim to encourage more men to take time off and to take more time off	Cost-benefit analysis on the effectiveness of a gender quota in jobs in the educational, social, and care sectors (and/or in training for these jobs)	
<b>Implementation Goal 2.3: Gender competence is increased in the educational sector.</b>			
Measure 2.3 A	Measure 2.3 B	Measure 2.3 C	
Action plan compiled on the basis of the policy recommendations from the research project “Boys and education – masculinity in educational institutions” (research association headed by Jürgen Budde)	Measures to improve gender balance amongst teaching staff, i.e. to increase male representation (both for young men and for career changers)	Analysis of teaching methods and materials in order to illustrate their effects on gender-specific role attributions and occupational preferences of boys and men	
<b>Implementation Goal 2.4: Awareness is increased of the support needs of men who perceive themselves as the “losers in emancipation”.</b>			
Measure 2.4 A	Measure 2.4 B	Measure 2.4 C	Measure 2.4 D
Conducting a fundamental study on men who regard themselves as “losers in emancipation” to clarify the backgrounds, extent and risk potential, also to establish recommendations for support and prevention measures	Launching and evaluation of pilot projects on work with boys and men to prevent radicalisation	Conducting an integration study that investigates existing role models in refugee families and the associated challenges faced by boys and men when faced with modern role models; development of support measures	Support of the BAG TàHG [Federal Association of Institutions working with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence], further development of the standards, expansion of the target group, development of suitable statistical tools that ensure anonymity

## 5 Gender equality policy for boys and men: Implementation goals and measures

Key objective 3: Sustainability			
<b>Implementation Goal 3.1: Gender-reflective work with boys and men makes progress in the fields professionalism, qualification, standardisation, and quality assurance. Work with boys and men gains a permanent footing.</b>			
Measure 3.1 A	Measure 3.1 B	Measure 3.1 C	Measure 3.1 D
Promotion of further training of men to become disseminators of counselling for boys and men (run by: SKM Bundesverband e.V.)	Continuation and further development of the counselling map; creation of a skills profile for male counselling and/or definition of professional standards for gender-reflective work with, and counselling for, men (run by: Federal Forum Men)	Creation of guidelines and/or recommendations for the development of services in the federal states and municipalities; work with boys and men in cooperation with the federal states (run by: Federal Forum Men)	Promotion of a nationwide coordinating body for the Heroes® network, further development of standards, use of concepts by existing projects in the field of social work with youths (run by: Strohalm e.V.)
<b>Implementation Goal 3.2: Healthcare professionals and organisations place a greater emphasis on promoting men's health and self-care in research, education and practice.</b>			
Measure 3.2 A	Measure 3.2 B	Measure 3.2 C	Measure 3.2 D
Systematic evaluation on the transferability of the WHO-Europe strategy to men's health <sup>220</sup>	Improving the implementation of the prevention act in order to improve gender equality in health; strengthening of gender-sensitive prevention work and healthcare	Training and continued education of healthcare professionals including on the basic aspects of gender-sensitive communication, on care for, and accompanying of, boys and men, and on the great importance of gender-specific approaches in prevention and care	Further development and expansion of the webportal on men's health <sup>221</sup>
<b>Implementation Goal 3.3: Male care contributions towards relatives and general contributions in informal care work become more visible and increase.</b>			
Measure 3.3 A	Measure 3.3 B		
Research on factors conducive to increasing male care contributions with the application of a notion of care that encompasses and shines a light on the contributions made by men	Anchoring of a suitable framework both legal and negotiated by the social partners, including, in particular, wage replacement for those who care for relatives (along the lines of parental leave) and working time models that account for the needs of care providers		
<b>Implementation Goal 3.4: Digitisation and changes in the labour market are facilitating more flexible approaches to life and work for men.</b>			
Measure 3.4 A	Measure 3.4 B	Measure 3.4 C	
Study on the transformation of the labour market (digitisation as an opportunity to promote non-traditional career paths for (young) men)	Study on the options for increasing part-time work for men who care for others	Feasibility study on the introduction of a "care year" (separate from the Federal Volunteers Service)	

<sup>220</sup> See [https://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/378165/68wd12e\\_MensHealthStrategy\\_180480.pdf?ua=1](https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/378165/68wd12e_MensHealthStrategy_180480.pdf?ua=1)

<sup>221</sup> See <https://www.maennergesundheitsportal.de/>

## 5 Gender equality policy for boys and men: Implementation goals and measures

Key objective 4: Fairness		
<b>Implementation Goal 4.1: Men grapple with the topics of fatherhood and reconciliation (more) actively and early (/ealier) on (for themselves and also together with their employers and partners). They are aware of the risks of the breadwinner model.</b>		
Measure 4.1 A	Measure 4.1 B	Measure 4.1 C
Prenatal classes that cover the special requirements of fathers; setting standards for course modules for fathers-to-be only	Promotion of a network of (young) fathers (on- and off-line) (see also Väter gGmbH)	The social partners support the right of fathers (-to-be) to participate in the upbringing of children with suitable provisions in labour agreements and employment contracts
<b>Implementation Goal 4.2: Men take over an increasing share of their half of the responsibility for unpaid work within the family and household. Improved incentives for paternal engagement in childcare directly after the birth of a child.<sup>222</sup></b>		
Measure 4.2 A	Measure 4.2 B	
Implementation of the EU directive establishing an additional 10 days of paternal leave directly after the birth of a child. <sup>223</sup>	German participation in the global “MenCare” campaign ( <a href="http://www.men-care.org">www.men-care.org</a> )	
<b>Implementation Goal 4.3: The promotion of the development of reconciliation policies for men and fathers in the labour market. An increased number of men work part-time.</b>		
Measure 4.3 A	Measure 4.3 B	Measure 4.3 C
Impetus for companies to introduce men and father-specific reconciliation policies in collaboration with trade unions and employer associations	Guidelines on “Work with fathers and men” in the work place; synergies to promote occupational health	Measures to promote part-time employment amongst men
<b>Implementation Goal 4.4: Framework conditions ensure the right of children to close relationships to both parents in everyday life, even during/after separation/divorce.</b>		
Measure 4.4 A	Measure 4.4 B	Measure 4.4 C
Suitable upgrade training courses increase the gender-sensitivity of domestic relations courts, youth welfare offices, etc., as well as their awareness of the significance of fathers and of continuing the relationship with both parents after separation or divorce	Encouraging dialogue with organisations of those concerned, expansion of mediation services for separated couples	Adjustments to the right of contact and of access towards a more flexible model for separated parents

222 Comparative milestone according to the 2030 Agenda – Sustainable Family Policy “Approximately half of fathers take paternity leave and a parental allowance, therefore allowing them to spend more time with their children” and “reducing the difference in the amount of time fathers and mothers of minor children invest in family time by 30 percentage points.”

223 European Union (2019). DIRECTIVE 2019/1158 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 20 June 2019, Paragraph (19): “(19) In order to encourage a more equal sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men, and to allow for the early creation of a bond between fathers and children, a right to paternity leave for fathers (...) should be introduced. (...) Member States are able to specify whether paternity leave is expressed in working days, weeks or other time units, taking into account that ten working days correspond to two calendar weeks. In order to take account of differences between Member States, the right to paternity leave should be granted irrespective of marital or family status, as defined by national law.” <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELLAR:4119596d-a475-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1>

# 6

## 4x4 framework model as a compass to guide boys and men

Section 5 has clearly outlined the gender equality measures necessary for supporting boys and men in a wide range of areas – be it on the federal, the federal states or the civil society level, according to their respective responsibility. The final section of this dossier concludes with a reflections on how each individual can use the basic concept of a 4x4 gender equality policy for boys and men to shape their own development and emancipation.

Being a man is just as thrilling an endeavour as it is stressful. Our fathers' and grandfathers' perceptions and exigencies of masculinity are still very much alive. There still is pressure to live up to them, despite it being abundantly clear from everyday experience and research how restrictive and often destructive they can be. It is mainly younger men and women, who want to send out a wake-up call and draw attention to the darker aspects of the traditional notion of masculinity: how it makes for violations of boundaries, assaults and violence; how it turns the exploitation of others and men themselves into a completely normal phenomenon; how it takes refuge in devaluation and exclusion when it is time for critical self-questioning.

Increasing numbers of men have acknowledged the signs of the times and they are expanding their self-images. Caring for yourself as a man? Certainly! Cooking, cleaning, sewing and shopping as a man? Why not? Changing nappies as a man? No problem.

Many men do their best and try to please everyone. They want to be good men and attempt to combine the old notions with new ones. Many are able to accept the challenge and view it as a daring adventure, even as an historic opportunity to redefine themselves as men. Some feel paralysed, some offer passive resistance and others openly fight these developments.

The Federal Ministry for Gender Equality cannot, and does not intend to, prescribe how to be a man or what men should be like. It can, however, and wants to, give all men on the move some orientation as to what being a contemporary man might entail. It also aims at drawing the line at certain notions of masculinity much more clearly than before. The following model also serves that purpose. It illustrates how the four gender equality objectives for boys and men (see section 4) can equally be understood as horizons for the development of each individual boy and man does precisely this.

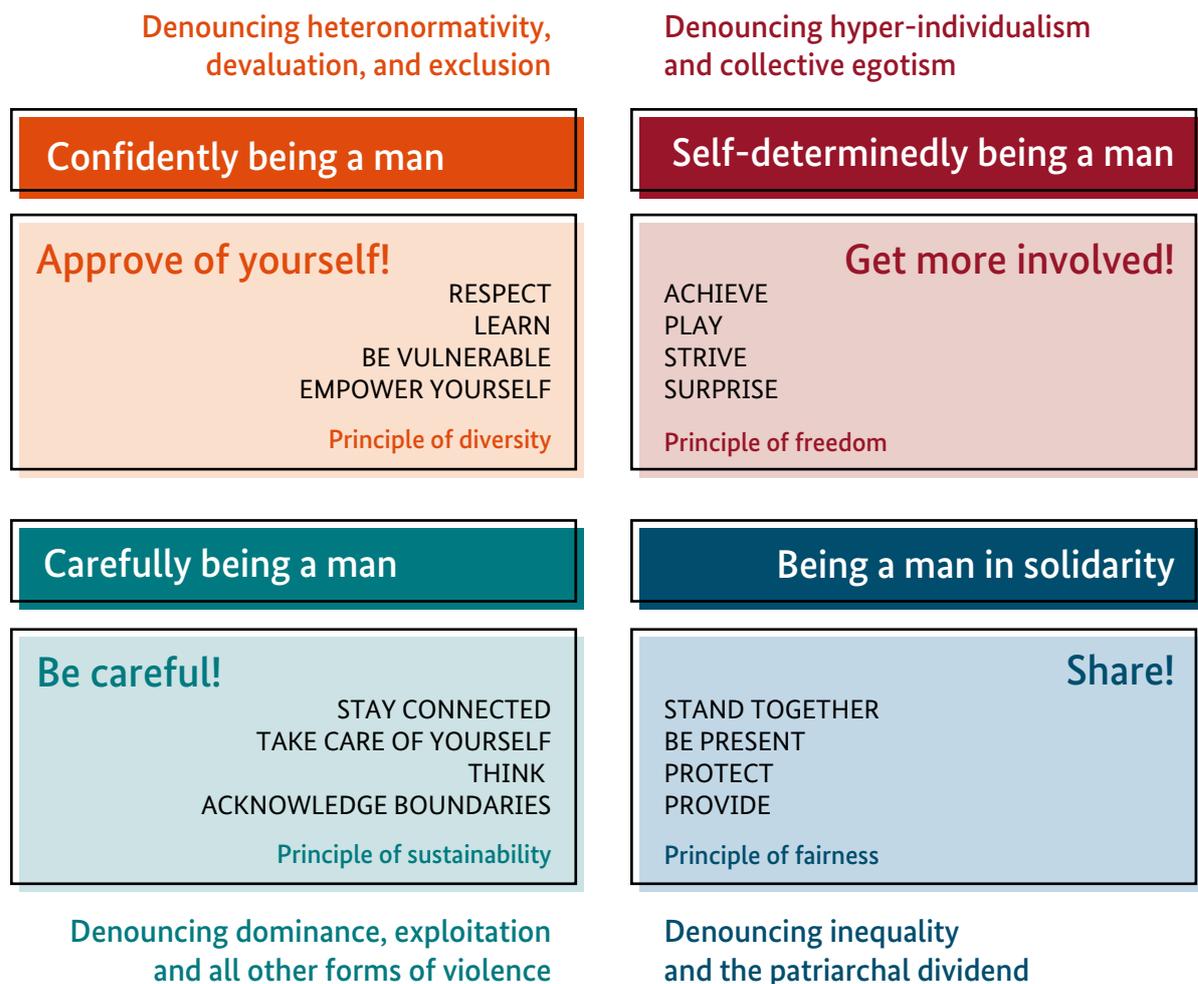
What exactly does that mean?

Your development task is actually quite simple: You are required to develop and live out all 4 potentials as equally as possible. This gives you maximum flexibility. It also lets you find the confidence to become a contemporary, fair and non-violent man and human being.

This dossier does not intend to provide a final definition of masculinity; that is not the objective. It instead intends to shine a light on if and how men are perceived in gender equality policy and

their needs are taken into account. It by no means constitutes a final assessment, but rather takes the form of a discussion paper illustrating both existing gaps and achievements.

Figure 62: The four objectives of gender equality policy on the individual level



This model is

- a treasure map illuminating the path to unexplored horizons;
- a compass helping men check whether they are on the right path;
- an anchor ensuring men to be on the safe side;
- a protective device highlighting where the limits are.

In short: This 4x4 framework model illustrates how seemingly incompatible notions can be reconciled – thus showing men that they stand to gain a lot from their own emancipation. Indeed, particularly boys and men stand to gain far more from gender equality than the loss of (ambivalent) privileges. It provides a way in which cooperative gender equality can realistically and sustainably be achieved.

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