

## BOYS IN CARE WORK? VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION TOWARDS EHW PROFESSIONS

**Abstract.** *The professions of EHW (Education, Health and Welfare) are highly segregated and mainly undertaken by women. The question is why this is the case: The theoretical, traditional masculinity and professional habitus of EHW professions is not supportive of boys who are oriented to EHW vocations, although some still choose an EHW career. What leads them to make that decision? Empirical evidence from a survey conducted in Germany with over 3,000 pupils shows the main positive factors impacting boys' EHW vocational orientation are the EHW profession of their parents, the influence of their mothers, and the absence of any focus on technical hobbies. It is concluded that when care and social activities form part of the common lives of male pupils they are much more likely to choose a career in EHW.*

**Keywords:** *masculinity, care, caring masculinities, vocational orientation, habitus, gender equality*

### Introduction

Gender segregation continues to be an integral part of the labour market: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) occupations are practised more often by men, while the occupations of EHW (Education, Health and Welfare) are largely undertaken by women. This has not only economic but, above all, social consequences. The question thus arises of which social closure mechanisms leading to gender asymmetry are in operation. One factor influencing this segregation is the vocational orientation of pupils. By choosing a profession, pupils are reproducing gender asymmetry. Accordingly, it is important to look at the basis of one's vocational orientation, namely, the cultural values, gender stereotypes and images of certain professions the pupils have in mind; all of which are constructed by society.

In this article, the genesis of gender segregation is examined by considering the vocational orientation of pupils with respect to the EHW professions.

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The construction and re-production of gender identities and gender inequalities have a major influence on vocational choices. With regard to caring activities and occupations, this may mean that the learning of subject content and skills in the education system occurs within the framework of the gender order with the corresponding attributions and expectations: Girls and boys have similar qualifications for EHW professions, yet these are more often chosen by girls. From a sociological perspective, the article looks at the factors that impact vocational orientation in the direction of the EHW professions. The framing of masculinity plays a role here: When considering the background of today's masculinity requirements, do boys even have the opportunity to decide on an EHW occupation?

The article has the following structure: First, the current situation of the segregated labour market in Europe is described, focusing on EHW professions. Next, in order to explain the reproduction of gender asymmetry, theories suited to explaining gendered vocational orientation are investigated. These include the division of working spheres into production and reproduction, Bourdieu's (2005) habitus theory and the Theory of Circumscription and Compromise developed by Goffredson (1981). The theoretical basis is then consolidated with empirical evidence from a study on vocational orientation in the third part of the article. A descriptive and multivariate analysis of a survey carried out in Germany, looking at the vocational orientation of more than 3,000 pupils, is presented. The data analysis focuses on factors which influence boys to choose/not choose careers in EHW. The section outlining the multivariate analysis already contains a discussion of the results. The article ends with thoughts on what can influence the social construction of masculinity to make care professions<sup>1</sup> more of an option for boys. Possible pedagogical consequences are outlined.

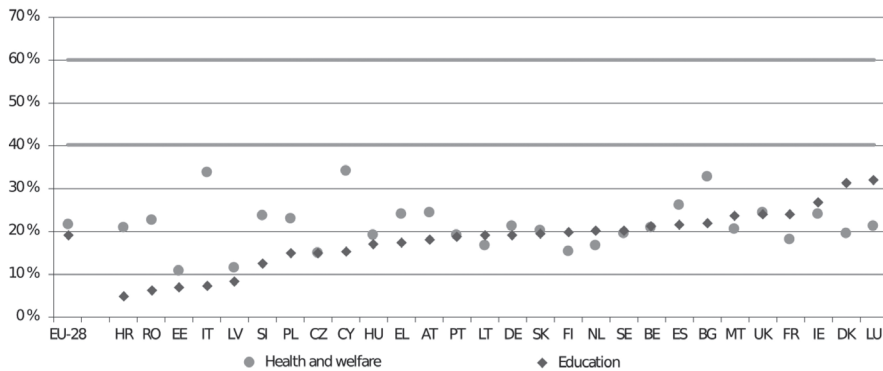
### **The female burden of care work**

On a day-to-day basis, unpaid care work is still mainly done by women. The gender inequality index of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) shows that 1 hour or more of housework or cooking per day is being done by 74% of women and only 34% of men in the 28 EU member states (EIGE 2017: 41). The care burden on women has been especially high and persistent in the last 10 years. A similar situation is seen in the care or EHW professions, which are mainly performed by women.

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, care professions are defined: "as a type of employment (including self-employment) directly for and in contact with people, in order to increase their well-being and/or education." (Gärtner et al., 2018: 4).

Figure 1: PERCENTAGE OF MEN AMONG EHW GRADUATES BY FIELD OF EDUCATION (2013–2015)



Source: EIGE 2018: 36.

The share of men among EHW graduates in Europe averages out at 21% in health and welfare, and 19% in education; conversely, 79% and 81% of graduates in these sectors are women. The situation in Germany follows this pattern. The share of male graduates in EHW almost equals the EU-28 average. On average, slightly more men work in health and welfare than in education. These figures vary from country to country, but none of the EU-28 states is close to parity. In all of these states, care in a private setting, like in professional, care is mainly provided by women.

There are several approaches to providing a theoretical framework for gender segregation. First, we look at the division of productive/reproductive work. The approach of dividing working spheres into productive or reproductive work creates a dichotomy: Reproductive work includes household activities as well as care and the education of children. Production work represents value-creating work, in the sense that something is produced and monetary resources are earned. The separation of the spheres of work has become much more important in the context of industrialisation. Productive work is increasingly being shifted from the domestic to the “out-of-home sector” (Knoll and Ratzer, 2010: 76). Before the working spheres were separated, activities were not so dichotomously divided and shared by all members of the family.

In capitalist societies, productive work is regarded as more essential than reproductive work and valued accordingly. It has a male connotation. The gender connotation of a profession or activity leads to classification in the hierarchy. The gender-hierarchical separation of the labour market is a structural feature of modern societies showing great persistence (Wolffram, 2003: 64). It constantly influences the vocational orientation of adolescents and reproduces the asymmetry, making it necessary to look at what underpins vocational orientation and how can it influence the asymmetry.

## Vocational orientation in the direction of the EHW professions

Vocational orientation is influenced by different factors such as individual dispositions, current social conditions, cultural interpretations, role models and gender roles. Pupils do not choose a profession as isolated individuals, but under social conditions. Institutional restrictions like the offer of apprenticeships, region of residence, and apprenticeship opportunities in the desired occupation influence the individual process of choice and its outcome (Neuenschwander et al., 2012: 51). Accordingly, the individual's ideas about occupations and their acceptance in society influence their vocational orientation.

As mentioned, gender influences vocational orientation. In this article, the focus is on how masculinity is constructed. In the two-sex system, masculinity and femininity are seen as antagonisms (Wetterer, 2008) and this binary system thereby divides humans, skills and professions as either male or female.

Böhnisch describes externalisation as one aspect of masculinity. Men tend to act outwardly and to compartmentalise their emotions (Böhnisch, 2004: 34). This includes the struggle against anything considered as weak. In the constant fight for dominance and competition during male socialisation, emotionality and empathy are compartmentalised. Everything connected to femininity is not perceived as being equally important. Instead, tasks like emotional work and care taking are viewed as potential threats to masculinity. These tasks form the basis of the EHW professions. To conclude, traditional masculinity is opposed to a vocational orientation that encompasses the EHW professions. It is important to keep this in mind because the vocational orientation process is described by Holland (1959) and Gottfredson (1981) as a fitting process between individual dispositions like gender role and assumptions, and knowledge about the professions.

The congruence of personality and professional characteristics is central to Holland's theory. Due to its high practicability and good comprehensibility, the theory is still in use today. It is classified as a structural theory. According to Holland, career choice is an expression of personality and individual interests, with both being reflected in the choice. Likewise, the stereotypes and perceptions individuals assign to individual occupations have a relevant impact on career orientation. These stereotypes are characteristic of a profession. People from different social backgrounds share similar powerful perceptions and stereotypes of a profession. These perceptions appear to be relatively constant over time.

*In short, people of different ages and backgrounds have characteristic perceptions of an occupation: its appropriateness for men and women,*

*its level of prestige, and the personal traits of the typical incumbent.*  
(Holland, 1997: 11)

Gottfredson (1981) integrates the Theory of Circumscription and Compromise from Holland's model into her concept of developmental psychological career choice. Gottfredson sees career orientation as a fitting process between occupational characteristics and individual interests. According to Gottfredson's concept, there is a close connection between subjective occupational concepts and career aspirations. The vocational concepts are ideas about the fields of activity, the prestige of the profession, and stereotypes about the people who undertake these professions. Important foundations for personality development with corresponding career concepts are laid early in childhood. According to Gottfredson, pupils develop a cognitive map of occupations (occupational map) during childhood. "A cognitive map is a generalization about occupations, that links the individual images to each other into a more coherent whole" (Gottfredson, 1981: 547).

On a cognitive map, potential occupations and fields of activity are depicted based on gender type and social status. The map adapts to the cognitive development and development of young people's concept of self. The concept of self encompasses both current and projected perceptions of one's own abilities, talents, interests, gender and social status (Ratschinski, 2009: 53). Gender norms influence job orientation. Gottfredson's theory shows that already from an early age children will not consider professions that do not suit their gender identity. Only with puberty do they consciously choose from the occupational map of professions, which has by then already been reduced by subconscious processes.

To describe the vocational process of fitting between individual dispositions and professional work in more detail, Bourdieu's concept of habitus is applied. For Bourdieu, habitus represents a relatively stable system of social ideas and practices. Among other things, it contains specific patterns of language, perception, evaluation and action (Bourdieu, 1987: 175). It is an open collective disposition system that is constantly influenced and changed by the environment and social practice. Every profession has a specific professional habitus which is already formed during the period of schooling.

Through professional habitus, actors learn and internalise a specific action system (Holtermann, 2017: 92). They can then apply this system to the respective occupations, or it enables them to act in their fields and define what are adequate behavioural patterns. This includes both specialist knowledge, competencies, ways of communication, as well as worldview and reality constructions. These directly impact on social practice. "Homologous and collective sense structures are assumed within the professional culture" (Willems, 2007: 21).

The characteristics of a professional culture are the typical patterns of thought, perception and action, as well as other dispositions, i.e. the habitus. The professional culture shapes the image that young people hold of occupations, and this image is already internalised before any vocational training. Usually the classification and the professional habitus of pupils is based on occupational activities equated with the respective profession (Neuhaus, 2011: 270).

The fit of individual characteristics and the profession is central to the theories of Holland, Gottfredson and the habitus theory of Bourdieu. The greater the match of individual skills and interests with professional requirements, the more likely it is to be career-oriented in this field. It is assumed that “the decision in favour of a subject of study is made predominantly on the basis of the subjectively perceived fit between the self-image specific to gender and origin and the anticipated subject culture” (Lojewski, 2011: 280).

The stronger the agreement between professional habitus and individual dispositions, the lower the expected habitual ambivalence. Further, with increasing agreement, less individual effort is required in order to participate and act in the professional culture. The gender order has an explicit influence on the homology between the actors and the subject culture and thus also on job orientation.

According to the introduced theories and statistics, the professional habitus of EHW professions has a female connotation. Therefore, in order to choose an EHW profession, boys need to deal with the habitus ambivalence since care has a female connotation. That might be one factor explaining the smaller share of men found in these professions. From childhood, boys quite literally sort out the skills and professions that do not suit their gender identity, leading to a shrinking of their cognitive map of professions. The care and EHW professions are not part of the masculinity concept.

Theoretically, the possibility of men choosing EHW professions is low due to their perceptions of masculinity and the professional habitus contradicting it, yet some men still choose EHW professions. It is interesting to investigate why they choose such professions. These men are dealing with the ambivalences of habitus. From their choices, one can learn what might constitute the foundation of a vocational orientation toward the EHW professions. What can alter the job orientation of boys and widen their perspective to include more social and care professions? In search of an answer, the focus of the statistical analyses is to identify what leads boys in the EHW direction.

## Empirical evidence on vocational orientation

The empirical analysis uses data from a nationwide quantitative survey carried out between October 2011 and April 2013 that involved over 3,000 pupils from different school types, grades and federal states in Germany. Pupils were questioned in girls' grammar schools, regular schools and Waldorf schools<sup>2</sup> in Grades 7, 10 and 12. The questionnaires were distributed in person, accompanied by an introduction and a researcher's presence in the class. The average age of pupils in Grade 7 in Germany is 13 years. Hence, pupils in Grade 10 are 16 years old, and those in Grade 12 are 18 years old. The sample contains schools from three different federal states: Berlin, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and North Rhine-Westphalia. The schools all have a secondary focus, meaning it is possible to leave with a high school certificate.<sup>3</sup>

The data were analysed with the help of descriptive and multivariate methods. The focus is on boy's job orientation with respect to EHW occupations, taking account of class levels and school types, as well as an analysis of other influential factors like family background, leisure activities and gender stereotypes. In the analysis, EHW professions contain all professions with a social, health or welfare focus. This includes professions that can be qualified for on the levels of secondary and tertiary education.<sup>4</sup>

Pupils were able to submit up to three vocational aspirations. If one of the three was grouped as EHW, it was counted as an EHW vocational orientation. The following figure shows the shares of male and female pupils with a least one EHW job orientation.

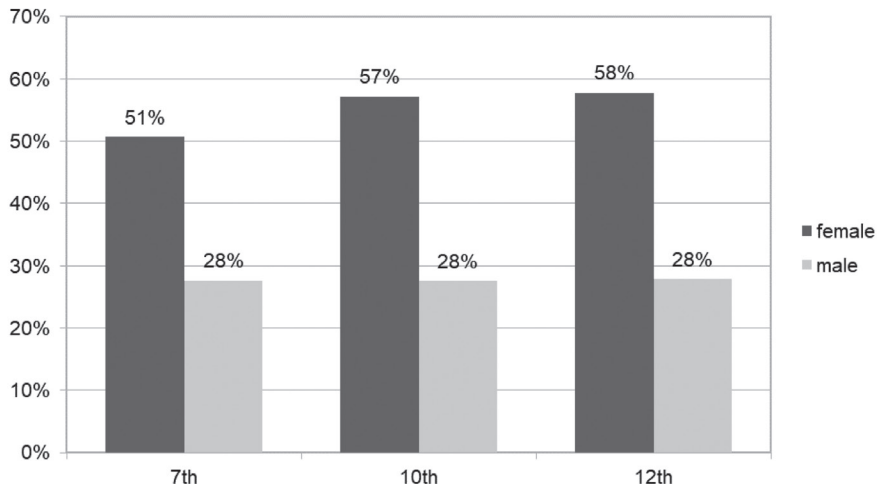
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<sup>2</sup> Waldorf schools are private schools. Their worldview and pedagogical approach are based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner.

<sup>3</sup> More detailed information about the data can be found in Holtermann (2017) and Wensierski (2015).

<sup>4</sup> According to the ISCO classification (International Standard Classification of Occupations) the following areas of work are grouped as EHW: ISCO-88 22 Life science and health professionals, 23 Teaching professionals, 32 Life science and health associate professionals and 33 Teaching associate professionals. From the ISCO-08 22 Health professionals, 23 Teaching professionals, 32 Health associate professionals, 53 Personal care workers. The same systematization of EHW professions was used as by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE, 2018: 99).

Figure 2: PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS WITH AN EHW JOB ORIENTATION BY GRADE AND GENDER



Source: Authors' own calculations, n = 3152.

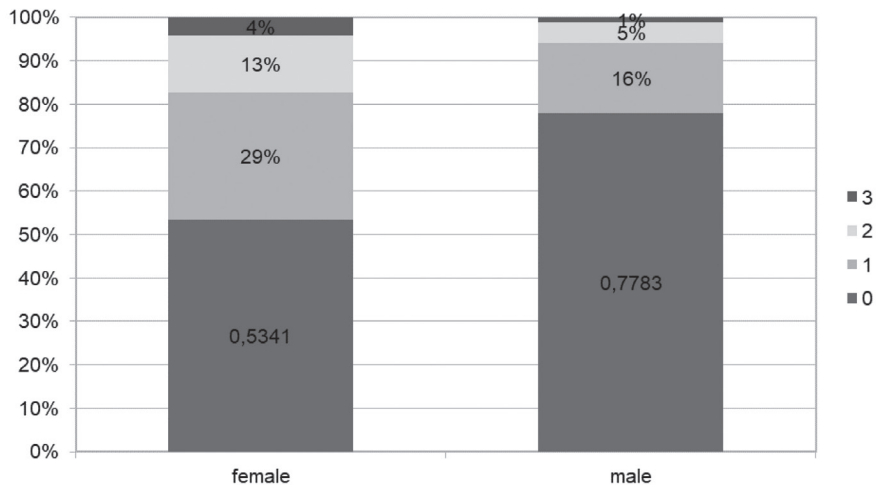
This figure shows that the share of male pupils interested in care professions is the same for all three grades. About 28% of male pupils in all three grades had considered a career in the care professions. There is a slight increase in the percentage of girls interested in EHW professions between grades: The difference from Grade 7 to Grade 12 is 7%.

More than one-quarter of the boys in all three grades can imagine choosing a care profession. That is interesting, yet not reflected in the actual numbers of boys selecting these professions. As seen earlier in this article, only about 20% of EHW graduates are men. The difference from the share of male pupils considering an EHW profession is about 8%, representing those who choose another profession or do not seem to make it through to graduation.

On the other hand, there is no change in the share of men with EHW job orientations when the three grades are compared. This might mean that during the period of schooling there is no great change in boys' possible vocational options, which would fit Gottfredson's theory and its assumption that boys' occupational map is already reduced by the time they make a conscious choice. The next figure shows the frequency of boys and girls holding EHW aspirations. The pupils could select up to three vocational aspirations; Figure 3 presents the frequency of EHW aspirations.



Figure 3: PERCENTAGE OF EHW ASPIRATIONS BY GENDER



Source: Authors' own calculations, n = 3152.

Figure 3 shows that female pupils are more strongly orientated to EHW. Nearly half of them at least once said that an EHW profession was a possible option. In contrast, just 22% of boys could imagine working in a care profession. The more frequently an EHW profession is mentioned as a possible career option, the greater the probability the pupil will choose one. Yet, only 4% of the females and 1% of the males three times mentioned EHW professions as possible career options. The male pupils saw EHW professions as a career option less often than their female counterparts. This means that, compared to girls, there is a greater chance that male pupils will choose a different profession once they have gone through the education system. Focusing on boys' vocational preferences, which EHW professions do they mainly see as a possibility? Table 1 presents the EHW professions the male pupils mentioned, and in which shares. Male pupils who could imagine choosing an EHW profession are considered.<sup>5</sup> The percentage share shows the EHW professions most frequently in the male pupils focus.

As seen in Table 1, the boys choose mainly the highly qualified EHW professions. To be a physician (43.9%) or teacher (32.5%), one must study and complete tertiary education. These EHW professions have a higher social value with regard to their income level and reputation than direct personal care or working in a kindergarten. The boys did not prefer jobs in nursing, midwifery or directly caring for people. Veterinarian makes a notable

<sup>5</sup> The question in the questionnaire concerning the professions had no prepared list of occupations in advance. The pupils answered freely.

appearance on the list because at first glance it is not connected to EHW professions. The veterinarian profession is part of the ISCO classification of health professionals and is considered as such. The core aspects of this profession are caring for animals and being in contact with animal owners. Large parts of the veterinarians' activities relate to care. Veterinarian may be counted as an EHW profession, although it is not a care profession according to the definition used in this article. The focus of care is on animals, not humans.

*Table 1: PERCENTAGE OF EHW PROFESSIONS MENTIONED BY THE MALE PUPILS*

EHW Profession	Percentage
Physician	43.9%
Teacher	32.5%
Psychologist	9.1%
Physiotherapist	2.7%
Educator	2.4%
Social Worker	2.4%
Veterinarian	1.9%
Paramedic	1.9%
Nursing	1.9%
Other professions*	1.9%

Source: Authors' own calculations, n = 372.

\*Other professions" are below 1%: ergo therapist, hairdresser, naturopath, houseman and cleaner.

The results shown in the table can be connected to two aspects. First, the sample of schools and, second, the ambivalences of habitus. In all schools surveyed, the pupils could graduate with a high school diploma. The boys learning at these schools tend to have a high educational level and education aspirations as well as better situated families in terms of education and wealth. The higher the educational levels, the less probable are aspirations for jobs where staff mainly work in direct care, such as a geriatric nurse or nursing attendant.

Probably the fit between individual disposition and professional habitus is too small in direct care professions. The social value and wages of these direct care professions fit less with the male socialisation and the habitus of the boys. EHW professions with an academic education and higher social value do not seem to create as much habitus ambivalence as professions like nursing in old people's homes, or kindergarten teacher. Accordingly, the academic EHW professions are more frequently chosen.

### Multivariate Analysis

The data were analysed with a binary logistic regression. One can test the probability of an event occurring by applying logistic regression. The dependent variable is the EHW vocational orientation of the male pupils, which tests the regression where the covariate has an influence on the probability of choosing an EHW profession. Through the vast amount of 26 covariates, the number of cases was reduced to 600. The  $R^2$  is 0.23, meaning that nearly one-quarter of the variation in the data can be explained, which is an acceptable value.<sup>6</sup>

Table 2: RESULTS OF THE LOGISTIC REGRESSION (ONLY SIGNIFICANT COVARIATES ARE SHOWN)

Covariate <sup>a, b</sup>	Exp(B) <sup>c, d</sup>
EHW profession of at least one parent <sup>D</sup>	1.812**
Self-description as "social"	0.916*
Technical self-concept	1.063*
Having technical hobbies	1.578**
General self-concept	1.092*
Average mark	0.656*
Self-description as "athletic"	0.634**
Did your mother influence your vocational orientation <sup>D</sup>	1.953**
Did your father influence your vocational orientation <sup>D</sup>	0.601*
Did your teachers influence your vocational orientation <sup>D</sup>	2.902**
Traditional values in the family	1.301(*)

Source: Authors' own calculations, n = 594.

<sup>a</sup> Covariates followed by a <sup>D</sup> constructed as binary dummy variables

<sup>b</sup> The non-dummy covariates are metric Likert scales from 1 to 5: 1 is the highest agreement, 5 the lowest agreement.

<sup>c</sup> Significance level: n.s.  $p > 0.10$ , (\*)  $p \leq 0.10$ , \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$

<sup>d</sup> For the interpretation of Exp(B): If the independent variable increases by one unit, the odds increase/decrease by the factor Exp(B) (Backhaus et al. 2011: 266).

The logistic regression shows interesting results concerning the boys' job orientation. The first significant covariate is the EHW profession of at least one parent. If a minimum of one parent works in an EHW profession, the probability of their son choosing a career in EHW rises. If a male pupil sees his parents working in a social profession, this influences his EHW aspirations. The idea of boys preferring to do what their parents do might equally well be ascribed to social legacy. A covariate showing similar results

<sup>6</sup> Nagelkerkes-R is used to measure the quality of the logistic regression. It measures how much variance the model can explain (Field, 2009: 269). The higher the value of Nagelkerkes-R, the higher the explanatory power of the model. Values greater than 0.2 are acceptable, from 0.4 good and from 0.5 very good (Backhaus et al., 2011: 276).

is describing oneself as “social”. The less boys consider themselves as social, the less likely they are to aspire to join the care professions. More professional habitus intersections with EHW professions mean a higher likelihood of boys choosing to work in EHW.

A great interest in technical topics lowers the probability of EHW aspirations. The technical self-concept focuses on abilities and competencies with technical issues. The more boys perceive their technical abilities to be good, the less probable it is they will aspire to hold an EHW profession. This thesis supports that the notion that with a decrease in the time spent on technical hobbies the probability of a pupil choosing an EHW profession rises; namely, the more the male pupils are occupied with technology, the less likely they are to choose a care profession.

A similar situation may be seen with the general self-concept. This covariate measures how positively pupils think about themselves. When one’s general self-concept is low, the probability of choosing EHW professions rises. If boys do not trust themselves very much, this slightly increases the probability of choosing a care profession. Vice versa, the more confident boys are about themselves, the less likely they will choose an EHW profession. For a boy, lower average school grades mean they are less likely to work in EHW. This result seems reasonable because most of the boys want to be a teacher, physician or psychologist. In order to be given an opportunity to study in these fields, pupils need good grades. If boys regard themselves as athletic, they do not consider a care profession. To summarise the covariates, the more confident boys are about themselves and have good grades, the less likely it is they will choose an EHW profession. It seems that these characteristics do not match with the professional habitus of the EHW professions.

The results concerning people who have an influence on the vocational orientation of male pupils are very interesting. If the mother did have an influence on job orientation, it is positive with regard to the likelihood of choosing a career in EHW. Mothers raise the possibility of their children selecting an EHW profession. If a father has an influence on their son’s vocational orientation, the likelihood of the son aspiring to join an EHW profession decreases. The biggest influence in the model is the influence of the teacher. Where teachers influence the vocational orientation, there is a greater probability of choosing a care profession. This shows that teachers have a vital role to play in vocational orientation. The less the boys’ families share traditional values, the more likely those boys will choose a care profession. Therefore, where it is the father who makes the decisions at home, it becomes less probable that the boy will select a care profession.

The media, vocational counselling or practical training do not significantly impact the orientation towards or away from the EHW professions.

The fact that the media does not have an influence on the boys' EHW job orientation is interesting even though the media plays an important role in their daily activities. Media forms are used more by boys for entertainment than by girls (Wensierski, 2015: 103). In this usage, where the family background is more important, media does not support a vocational orientation in the direction of EHW professions and other factors. Finally, it would be interesting to see how the EHW professions themselves are presented in the media. One conclusion is that EHW professions are not made sufficiently appealing in the media. A recent analysis of vocational orientation material in Germany shows that visually appealing and interactive online tools are needed more, along with a more diverse representation of the occupations and activities in which men and women can work (Rieske et al., 2018: 35).

The fact that vocational counselling is not a significant covariate does not mean it is not necessary. However, the question then is: how much counselling did the pupils receive? The educational policy in Germany lies mainly in the hands of the regional governments. The occupational orientation system varies slightly in each regional state. Vocational education usually starts in Grade 7 or 8 and depends greatly on the responsible teacher's commitment. Therefore, it could be that the boys have not received much occupational counselling. In addition, the pupils are still in the vocational orientation process and perhaps still unaware of the effects of the counselling. Faulstich-Wieland (2018: 255) notes the following about occupational orientation for Germany:

*The development and testing of gender-competent didactics of vocational orientation on a theoretical and empirical basis is still largely pending. In the practice of school-based vocational orientation, irritations of ideas about gender can play an important role in achieving an expansion of interests.*

It is remarkable that peers do not influence the vocational job orientation towards EHW. Pupils typically spend a lot of time with their peers, and being with their peers acts to reproduce cultural and gender norms (Holtermann, 2017: 263). Research by Wensierski (2015: 240) shows that peers have a significant influence on job orientation in the direction of the STEM professions. In this study, peers with this orientation do not influence boys with an EHW job orientation. It is interesting that male socialisation does not support an EHW orientation. The lack of significance could be due to a few reasons: One might be that the boys either do not mention their EHW orientations or promote other orientations, which are not EHW, so as to avoid any negative reactions from their peers. Another reason could be that boys do not talk about their job orientations with their peers because

that does not fit with the topics they wish to talk about. Talking about one's insecurities is hardly learned in male socialisation and difficult for boys (Dissens et al., 2012: 63). On the other hand, boys who already have an EHW orientation do not seem to be deterred from this orientation by their peers.

Likewise, the other non-significant covariates<sup>7</sup> are interesting. Male pupils' attitude to gender stereotypes does not play a role; nor does agreement with the stereotype "women shouldn't do technical things". The type of school and the level of education completed by the parents is not significant. The friends of the boys have no influence and neither do creative hobbies. To conclude, the regression results could be interpreted to mean that the more boys are involved and surrounded by aspects that are close to EHW professions, the more likely it is they will choose one.

## Conclusion

This article poses the question: Why do boys choose (or not) a social, educational or nursing occupation? Young people's vocational decisions are usually not made explicitly, but against the background of

*implicit (gender) knowledge that prevents most people from choosing an occupation that is not gender-specific. In contact with cultural representations, including media-filtered images, young people have a part in collective memories. They acquire practical knowledge, abilities, know how, a conglomerate of everyday techniques that makes it easier for them, in one way or another.* (Brandt and Cornelissen, 2004: 32)

Through empirical analyses of certain aspects, reasons could be found for why male pupils consider pursuing EHW professions. A general conclusion is that the greater the fit between the professional habitus of EHW professions and the individual dispositions, the more likely it is that pupils will consider social, educational or nursing professions. Therefore, if the boys are in contact with social and care activities they will hold a stronger orientation towards EHW, while the habitus ambivalence is reduced. The construction of masculinity and the female connotation of care professions add to the ambivalence existing between male pupils' dispositions and the EHW

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<sup>7</sup> Non-significant covariates are: Agreement to general gender stereotypes, Agreement to gender stereotypes related to technology, Consider oneself as analytic, school type<sup>D</sup>, school self-concept, having been social in childhood, reconciling work and family life, educational degree of the parents<sup>D</sup>, having creative hobbies, did your friends influence your vocational orientation<sup>D</sup>, did media influence your vocational orientation<sup>D</sup>, did vocational counseling influence your vocational orientation<sup>D</sup>, did a practical training influence your vocational orientation<sup>D</sup>, did a practical training influence your vocational orientation<sup>D</sup>, age, migration background of at least one parent<sup>D</sup>.

habitus. Traditional masculinity does not integrate care, care activities or care professions. It is therefore unsurprising that boys do not choose care professions. Care professions do not appear frequently as a career possibility for boys. These professions are not on their occupational map, but have instead been sifted out through gender socialisation. If a male pupil considers an EHW profession, it is mainly those with higher educational requirements such as a physician or teacher.

Teachers in particular play a role in the vocational orientation leading towards EHW professions. They exert the greatest positive effect on vocational orientation. Still, the number of boys with EHW profession interests remains the same throughout the three grades – nearly one-third is interested in care professions. During the period of schooling, this does not change and the already established segregated vocational orientation remains in place. Yet, it is important because vocational orientation is one aspect of reproducing traditional gender norms and inequality. The difference between the number of male pupils holding EHW aspirations and actual graduates of EHW professions in Germany is nearly 8%. The aspirations of this 8% could be shaped while they are still at school so as to also include the choice of an EHW profession.

The more gender-equitable norms are socially accepted in society, the more likely it is that boys will choose an EHW profession (EIGE, 2018: 71). If boys are in touch with social activities and these activities are part of their life, there is a bigger possibility they will choose a care profession. The concept of caring masculinities seeks to change the current situation and to see care and care professions as an integral part of masculinity (Scambor, 2016). The integration of care into masculinity is one step in changing the binary gender system and possibly creates greater equality through sharing care more equally among all.

What are possible pedagogical implications? A few projects are dealing with this issue, such as the concept of “Boys and Girls Day” in Germany. The idea is that girls and boys can widen their vocational orientation by visiting STEM or EHW professions for 1 day a year. This happens during school time. Another project is “Boys in care – Strengthening boys to pursue Care Occupations”, where the focus is on training teachers and vocational counsellors as well as developing gender-sensitive vocational material (Scambor et al., 2019). A gender-sensitive vocational orientation is assisted by considering vocational orientation as forming part of one’s life orientation (Debus, 2015). It is important to start as early as possible by diversifying the images young people have of professions with the aim to de-gender skills, qualities and professions.



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