



Expertise of the Expert Commission  
on the Second Gender Equality Report of the German Federal Government:  
**New ways of restructuring paid work and (unpaid) care work**

## Factsheet 6:

# Men and gender equality

## Equality – for whom?

The Expert Commission stresses an understanding of gender equality policy which includes women *and* men and takes into account their life courses.

- » Modern gender equality policy for instance creates better conditions for the implementation of the earner-carer-model. It expects both women and men to benefit if they gain the freedom to not have to opt for either the earner or the carer role in a relationship.

It is the guiding principle of the expertise of the Expert Commission to make it possible for women and men to live the earner-carer-model (→ factsheet earner-carer-model). With this underlying understanding of gender equality policy, the expertise is of importance to men, too, and the recommendations included in it also have positive effects on their lives.

The guiding principle of the Expert Commission on the Second Gender Equality Report is: “We aim to create a society in which there are equal capabilities for women and men; lifetime opportunities and risks are equally apportioned.”

- » Gender equality policy is not an interest-driven policy favouring specific women’s or men’s issues.
- » It is about equal capabilities for *all* people - irrespective of gender - and about appreciation for different life plans and life achievements.

## Men in the expertise

The Expert Commission underlines that equal capabilities for women and men can only be achieved if gender-based structures that prevent men from realising their life plans are also determined and removed.

- » Stereotypical assumptions about tasks and characteristics of men can only be dissolved if similar assumptions regarding women are dissolved as well.
- » Attributing specific characteristics to one gender or the other also prevents men from organising their lives according to their own wishes.

Gender equality policy is effective if it identifies issues and needs and eliminates gender-related disadvantages of men within society. The expertise of the Second Gender Equality Report offers recommendations in several policy fields which show how this can be achieved.

## **Vocational choice, entering professional life**

The job market continues to be segmented, entering a specific job is heavily influenced by gender:

- » In 2015, a mere 16% of students being trained in non-academic medical professions were men.
- » Only 5% of all persons working in care centres for children under the age of 14 were men.
- » 58% of employed men work in a male-dominated profession, e.g. mechatronics engineering or as house painters and decorators.
- » Only 10% of women and men work in a profession that is dominated by the other gender.

Sustainable gender equality policy supports the elimination of gender stereotypes. It supports men to freely follow their career aspirations - also in professions that are deemed "untypical for men". This means that men wanting to work in such "atypical" professions do not face barriers and hindrances and can achieve their career aspirations.

## **Career development and working times**

The working times of many men do not leave much time for care responsibilities.

- » Employed men perform on average over 8 hours more paid work per week than employed women.
- » 9% of men in insurable employment work part-time.

The concept of a 40-hour working week as standard for dependent employment does not do justice to the wishes of men who also want to take over care responsibilities.

The amount to which fathers benefit from parental leave and parental allowance is massively influenced by the flexibility offered in their companies.

The Expert Commission therefore recommends

- » a change towards making flexible working time with regard to the respective life phase the standard,
- » including care responsibilities in corporate culture and present new role models accordingly,
- » introducing supporting measures like an Elective Working Time Act and
- » establishing the right to mobile and home-based work.

## **Men as fathers**

When it comes to cutting down work because of a child, there are still major differences between men and women:

- » The share of fathers applying for parental allowance grows continuously: from 20% in 2008 to about 25% in 2010 and 34% in 2014.
- » 96% of mothers applied for parental allowance in 2014.
- » 79% of fathers applied for parental allowance for two months.
- » 87% of mothers took the maximum allowance of twelve months.
- » 80% of fathers find they are not able to spend sufficient time with their children.
- » Particularly young men today agree with the statement: "As long as the children are still young, the father should reduce his working times."

To strengthen fathers' contributions to unpaid infant care work, the Expert Commission recommends the introduction of a two-week period of paternity leave during the first 30 days after the birth of a child.

- » Studies show: The earlier fathers take responsibility for infant care work and child rearing, the likelier they are to become active fathers in the long term and the more support this offers for sustainable gender equality.

## **Men as carers and dependent persons**

The share of men performing care work for dependent relatives has increased significantly.

- » Today, men account for more than a quarter of the main carers.

Whereas dependent family members are still mostly cared for by women - mostly wives, daughters or daughters-in-law - more and more men are facing the challenges posed by informal care work and social security.

- » An ever-increasing share of persons performing informal care work also performs paid work. The share of persons providing care work and being employed full-time has also risen.

For a growing number of men, the question of how to balance informal care work and paid work arises. The Expert Commission recommends the introduction of a flexible time budget of 120 days, among other measures. During this time, persons performing care work must receive compensation payments to provide social security.

Care guides should be gender-competent and also appeal to men and their respective life phase.

Just like dependent women, dependent men are in need of high-quality care work and professional care infrastructure. Gender-competent care benefits everyone.

- » Gender competence as well as diversity competence and intercultural competence should be better embedded in the training curricula and in everyday care work.
- » Many persons in need of care are hesitant to voice their gender-related wishes - like the wish for a care worker of the same sex, for instance.
- » Convincing more men to work in care professions improves the diversification of the care personnel.

Social work, household-related services, health and care as well as child rearing (the SAHGE-professions) are to be revalued - also in order to facilitate stronger integration of men into these professions.

- » The share of men among persons working in SAHGE-professions is at 20%.

### **Men in the context of flight and migration**

There have so far been only few projects targeting male refugees (boys and men) and their experiences and needs.

- » Male refugees fear for the family members they left behind or have experienced violence during their flight.

Explicit focus on issues and challenges for male refugees has added value in terms of gender policy as well as violence-preventing effects. Taking each individual person and their specific backgrounds and experiences seriously can prevent premature categorisation, stigmatisation and marginalisation and present starting points for alternative and comprehensive solutions.

The Expert Commission underlines

- » that it is important to develop and support projects which explicitly focus on boys and men and reflect on their gender roles;
- » that communication on the topic of flight and gender must not reproduce gender stereotypes (for instance the image of the “suppressed woman” or the “violent man”).

## Men and the earner-carer-model

Gender equality policy should put active focus on the interests and needs of men. Less working hours in paid work and more time for care work have so far been unfulfilled wishes of many men. Care work should therefore be taken into consideration when organising paid work. The earner-carer-model should be accessible for all people.

- » To achieve this, framework conditions have to be established that allow men and women to take up employment on an equal footing, without having to forego private care work.
- » Policymakers must address the issues of gender-related organisation of paid work and care work and not let the social organisation of care work be individualised on private level.

Men should have the capabilities to perform informal care work without being subject to gender stereotypes when performing work that is considered to be “female work”.

### Further reading:

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Expert Commission on the Second Gender Equality Report of the German Federal Government (2017): New ways of restructuring paid work and (unpaid) care work. Expertise of the Second Gender Equality Report of the German Government. Available online at

[www.gleichstellungsbericht.de/gutachten2gleichstellungsbericht.pdf](http://www.gleichstellungsbericht.de/gutachten2gleichstellungsbericht.pdf)

- With regards to this factsheet, see in particular chapters B, C.I, C.IV, C.V, C.VI, D.III and E

### Factsheet created by the Agency for the Second Gender Equality Report

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