

Rohrmann, Tim; Plaisir, Jean-Yves & Brody, David (2021). **A cultural lens on job turnover and drop-out of male students and workers in the field of ECEC**. Paper presented on the 30th EECERA Annual Conference, Online, 10.9.2021.

Abstract

Within the frame of an international research project on men's career trajectories, this paper focuses on the relevance of cross-country differences regarding gender equality status, structures of ECEC systems, and patterns of male involvement, for developing national strategies towards a gender-mixed work force. International bodies support the involvement of men in ECEC (European Commission 2011, OECD 2019). However, research as well as policy often does not take cultural and institutional differences between countries into account (Emilsen/Rohrmann 2015, Sak et al. 2019). The paper intends to frame qualitative research on men's careers, as well as policy measures for a gender-mixed work force, by analysing linguistic, institutional and societal structures in the field of ECEC in cross-country comparison. Approaches include multilingual etymology, metanalysis of statistics, comparison of structures of national ECEC systems (SEEPRO 2018), and analysis of national policies. Data material includes gender equality indexes, national statistics on men and women in the workforce, policy documents on strategies for involvement of men in ECEC, and personal communication with experts. Awareness of the relevance of cultural differences regarding concepts, attitudes, and institutional structures of ECEC is an important ethical foundation for international comparative research. The results shed light on the importance of diversity between as well within countries and national systems and structures, and help to avoid misleading generalisation of research results in the field of ECEC. The authors suggest rethinking the idea of transfer of "best practice" strategies by focusing on cultural diversities, which frame ECEC practices in local and national contexts.

Keywords

gender equality, men in ECEC, cross-cultural studies, cross-country comparison, institutional structures

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A cultural lens on job turnover and dropout of male students and workers in the field of ECEC



Tim Rohrmann, Jean-Yves Plaisir & David Brody




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An anecdote on language: what is a “dropout”?

nosher, “to fall off”, such as a leaf falling off a tree
brottfall, quit school, or leave the country to work abroad
Abbrecher, not successful in completing education
avhoppare, quit training –
or a spy who flipped sides!

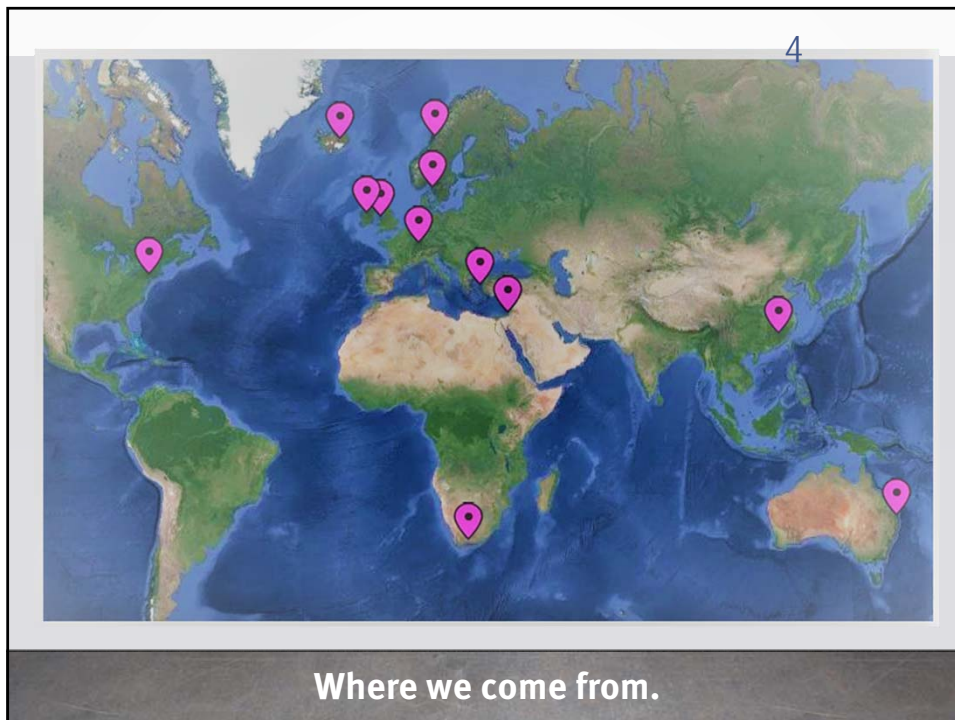
Different languages –
different meanings!





Overview

- Cross-country collaboration
- Attitudes on gender equality
- Statistics on men in ECEC
- Institutional contexts and qualification paths
- Cultural definitions of masculinities

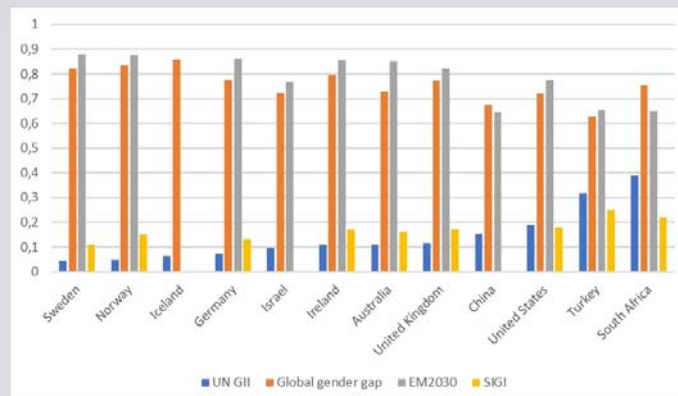


Gender balance*: an international policy goal

To promote process quality and improve the supply of potential workers, countries should engage in stronger efforts to bring men into ECEC
 (OECD, 2019, p. 12)

* There are controversies around the term 'gender balance'. For us, involving men in ECEC is connected to gender diversity and sensitivity, whereas it is not always clear what kind of understanding is behind governments' engagement for more men.

Gender equality status in international comparison



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Attitudes towards gender equality



Traditional gender roles are to be replaced by new patterns where men and women do the same and where women and men are not complementary categories. Gender categories are not to determine what men and women can, would and should do.

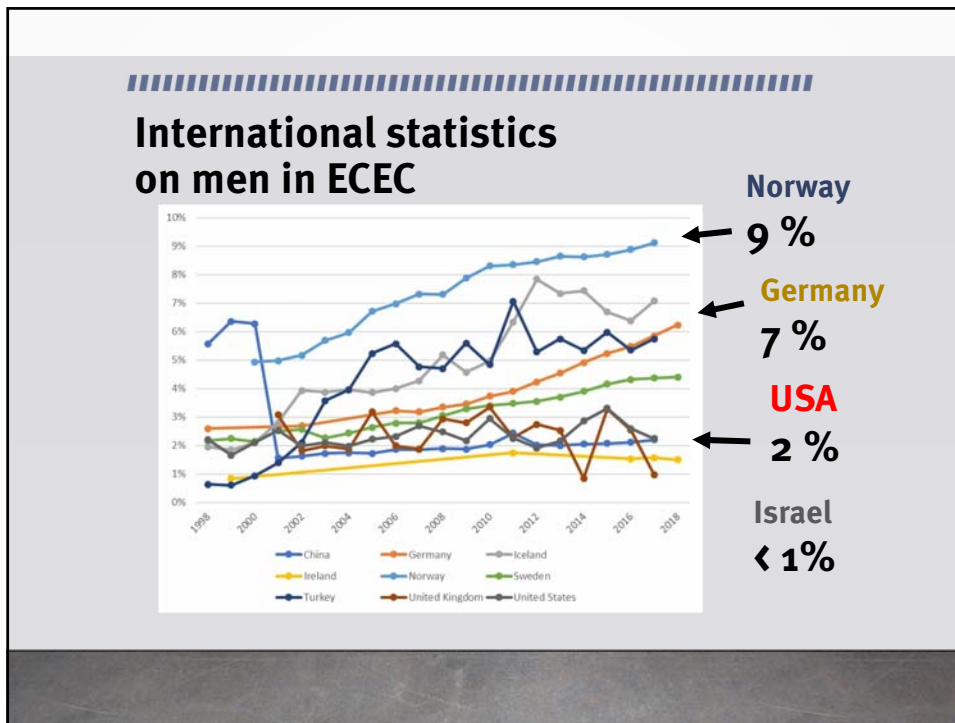
Evaluation of the 3rd Norwegian Action Plan,
Hoel & Johannesen 2010

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Attitudes towards gender equality



Including men in the education and care of boys at this crucial period of child development during early childhood will help 'rebuild' Chinese men's masculinities. (...) More men should be encouraged into ECEC due to their different roles and styles from female teachers.

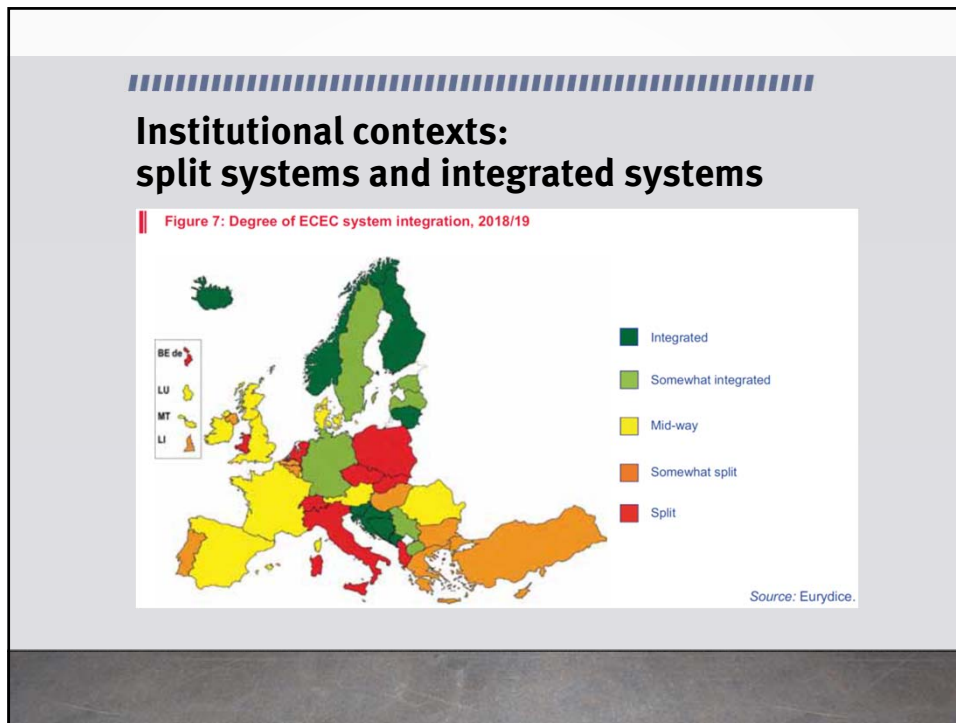
Xu & Waniganayake (2017) summarizing debates in China in their critical review






Institutional contexts are relevant

What are we talking about – what is “ECEC”:

- care settings for children from 0-3?
- kindergarten 3-6 ? or 1-6?
- pre-school 4-6 ?
- settings for children from 0-10, including after school care?



Institutional contexts: examples

<i>Turkey:</i> ECEC = pre-school, one teacher in a class with children from 4/5 to 6 years	
<i>Norway:</i> Barnehage (kindergarten) = children from 1-6 years in one institution, with high enrolment of children under 3.	
<i>United Kingdom:</i> Early Years = a variety of institutional contexts, including infant care. School starts with 5 years.	

Qualification paths: 'teachers' and 'assistants'

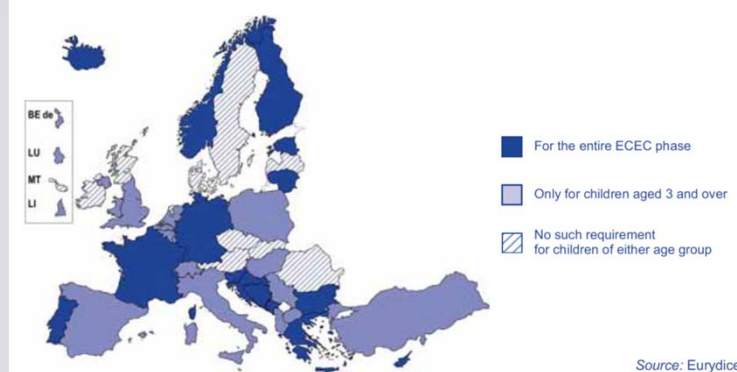
Whom are we talking about?

- Assistants
- Qualified workers
- Workers with academic qualification

*Even expressions for types of qualification differ
and are difficult to translate!*

Qualification paths and requirements

Figure 4: Staff with a minimum of a Bachelor's level qualification (ISCED 6), 2018/19

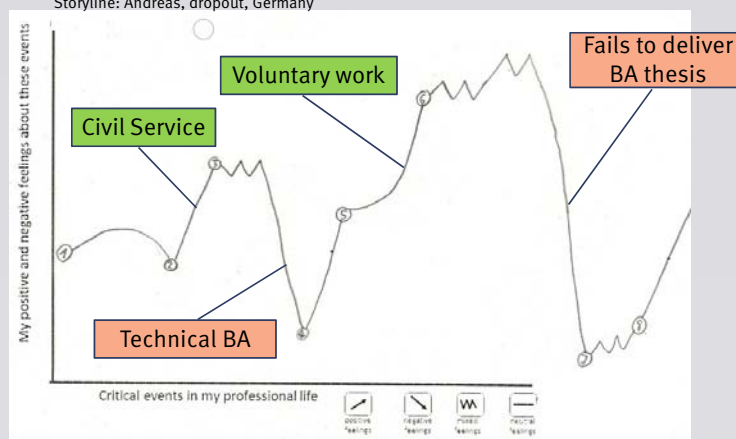


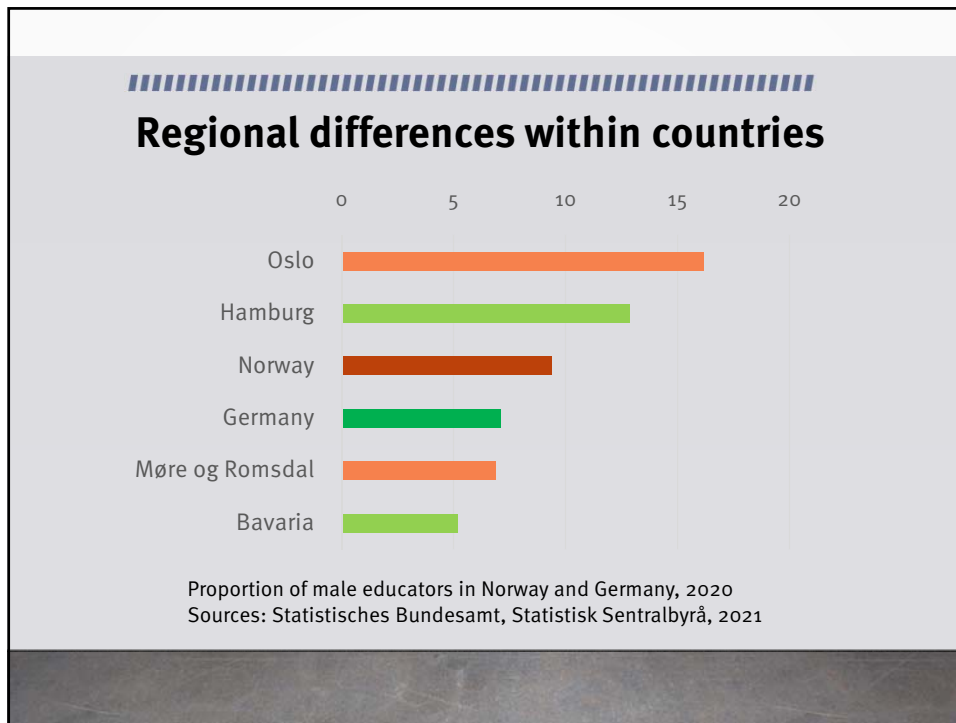
Qualification paths: ways into the system

- In many countries, men (and women) can start to work in ECEC without formal qualification,
- whereas in some countries, formal qualification is required.
- Qualification requirements can be obstacles – or stepping stones – for promoting more men

Vocational paths: Example

Storyline: Andreas, dropout, Germany






Cultural factors

Communities set different expectations towards the roles of men and women in society, and the relevance of men in the early years.

Intersections of race, class and gender are relevant:
Even if white males were there, they would not have understood the pressure that I had.
(Senzo, South Africa)



Individual men contest societal expectations

*I don't consider myself a macho person...
I feel confident in myself, I'm like, 'Well, yeah, just
because I don't yell and scream and push people
around or get into conflicts doesn't mean that I'm
not man enough', you know?*
(Marcos, Latino background, USA)



Conclusion

- A cultural perspective on diversity between and within countries is necessary for understanding issues of gender in the ECEC work force....
- ... and crucial for countering tendencies to attribute behavior of men and women to seemingly “natural” gender differences.
- Individual men go their own way in supporting and/or challenging cultural understandings of gender in their environment.

Main Reference

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More references in Rohrmann, Brody & Plaisir 2021

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Danke fürs Zuhören
Takk for at dere hørte på
Dinlediğiniz için teşekkürler
Tack för att du lyssnar
Thanks for listening
谢谢你的倾听
Xièxiè nǐ de qīngtīng
Takk fyrir að hlusta
תודה רבה על ההשתתפות



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