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## **SOCIAL WORK AND ACTIVATION – GIVING A GENDERED PROFESSION A MORE „MASCULINE FACE“?**

While Social Work has been discussed as a „gendered profession“ (Engelfried/Voigt-Kehlenbeck 2010) in a broader way in the last years, German politics lately discovered early childhood (e.g. kindergarden/pre-school services) as a field where men as professionals are missing as role models for young children and especially for children in so called single mother households. The corresponding political programme reveals a wide range of (theoretical) approaches and an understanding of gender which seems to be evident and rather „natural“. The consequence is as evident as this: The number of 2.4% male professionals in the field of early childhood has to be increased (BMFSFJ 2010).

In the meantime other fields of social work also discuss the (political/professional?) demand of training and employing more men as social workers particularly for social services that support families and deal with young persons. Here the role of male social workers as „door openers“ to engage fathers and young men seems vital while we still have little empirical or theoretical insight on how relationships of families and professionals are influenced by gender. The presentation therefore focusses on the recent discourse on gender and professionalism and questions notions of „professional masculinity/femininity“. It will also discuss the changing face of Social Work in the context of growing tendencies toward market-orientation, efficiency, effectiveness and managerialism as a possible attempt of giving Social Work the „masculine face“ of an „activating profession“ (Heite 2010)

### **References:**

**BMFSFJ** 2010: Männliche Fachkräfte in Kindertagesstätten. Berlin

**Engelfried, C., Voigt-Kehlenbeck, C.** 2010: Gendered Profession. Soziale Arbeit vor neuen Herausforderungen in der zweiten Moderne. Wiesbaden: VS

**Heite, C.** 2010: Soziale Arbeit – Post-Wohlfahrtsstaat – Geschlecht. Zum Zusammenhang von Professionalität und Politik. In: Boellert, Karin/Oelkers, Nina (Ed.): Frauenpolitik in Familienhand? Neue Verhältnisse in Konkurrenz, Autonomie oder Kooperation. Wiesbaden: VS