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**Factors Influencing the
Professional Advancement of
Women in the Social and Health
Sector in Germany**

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Abstract

The majority of the employees working in the social and health sector in Germany are women. However women in leading positions are a minority. The three main goals of our research project are the description of the vertical gender segregation in these two sectors, the investigation of reasons for the career probability of women and the analysis of the factors influencing women's motivations in professional advancement. The research of questions concerning women in leading positions in the social and health sector in Germany is very scarce. Due to the demographic change and the skilled worker shortage in Germany these are questions not only of academic but also of economical and political interest.

The investigation of factors for the career probability and also for the female motivation in professional advancement can be very different. Our analysis focuses on the preferences and attitudes, education, social networks, social background and personal life situation (existence of partner and young children) of women. Other factors are considered to be important: organizational facilities for human resources development, further education and the existence of different models of flexible work time and of job location. Likewise development of childcare is an important factor in topics around the employment of women.

The statistical part contains descriptive statistics concerning the situation of vertical gender segregation in the partaking enterprises. Additionally different statistical bivariate models will be applied. The project pursues with its results the identification of the inhibiting and furthering factors to increase the percentage of women in leading positions.

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Introduction

The majority of the employees working in the social and health sector in Germany are women. However women in leading positions are a minority. The three main goals of our research project are the description of the vertical gender segregation in these two sectors, the investigation of reasons for that under-representation of women in leading positions and the analysis of the factors influencing women's motivations in professional advancement. The research of questions concerning women in leading positions in the social and health sector in Germany is very scarce. Due to the demographic change and the skilled worker shortage in Germany these are questions not only of academic but also of economical and political interest.

Theory: what says the theory about the professional advancement of women and which are our hypotheses

The paper deals with the investigation of factors for the under-representation of women in leading positions and also for the female motivation in professional advancement. These factors can be classified into three different groups: the individual characteristics, characteristics of the organizations and enterprises, and characteristics of society. In the group of the individual characteristics we can find factors that may influence the motivation or the advancement of women like education, family status, number of children and the age of the youngest child. The social background and some characteristics of the parents may also have some influence on our topic. Social networks and the existence of role models are discussed in the literature as important aspects influencing the employment in general and also the employment of women. Factors related with preferences and attitudes are also treated as important for these questions of investigation. Work orientations and individual priorities are very important in the social and health sector, particularly because social workers and care professionals are frequently not supposed to be career-oriented, but to be in these fields because of the importance of the social and human aspects of their professions. Attitudes concerning the role of women in society and in the family are also considered to be meaningful in topics around the employment of women. Within the enterprises, several more factors are considered to be influential: the organizational facilities for human resources development, further education, promotion of women and the existence of different models of flexible work time and job location. The development of childcare is an additional important factor both within the enterprises and in society.

Education and wages

The human capital theory is used in sociology and in economics to explain the labor force participation of women. The employment behavior of women is the result of rational decisions about the investment in human capital. Human capital is understood as years of schooling, further education on the job and job experience (Mincer 1974, Mincer und Polachek 1974). Accordingly women who invest more in human capital are more career oriented. Similarly the human capital theory provides explanations for the professional advancement. Differences in human capital cause differences in productivity. For these reasons higher education, occupational qualification and work experience have strong influence on the occupational position (Becker 1993). In the

human capital theories human capital explains the income of women. Persons with a higher human capital have normally a higher income. Applied to the employment behavior of women it means: the higher the income the more probably they will be employed. For the professional advancement of women it means: the higher the increase in income after the next career step, the more probably women will be career oriented.

Role models: gender roles, leadership roles and roles in social and helping professions

The role congruity theory predicts perceived incongruity between female gender roles and leadership roles. Social roles are expectations people have about persons who are members of a social category, or who occupy a social position (Eagly, Karau 2002). Important in the social role theory is the difference between descriptive and injunctive norms: descriptive norms are “consensual expectations about what members of a group actually do”, and injunctive norms are consensual expectations about what a group of people “ideally would do” (Eagly, Karau 2002: 574). Gender roles are expectations about the characteristics of women and men and contain injunctive norms about the behaviour of them. Other researchers believe there is a correspondence between the actions of people and their inner dispositions. Gender roles attribute communal qualities to women and agentic qualities to men (Eagly, Karau 2002). Prejudice emerges when women and men do not behave in the way gender roles predict. For this reason people do not have similar beliefs about women and leaders but they have similar beliefs about men and leaders. In our analyses we suppose, that these beliefs influence the career motivation of women: the stronger the beliefs of women are about these role stereotypes the lower are their career orientations. As far as the leadership role is concerned, people combine their expectations about leaders and their expectations about men because the majority of the leaders are men and thus they associate the male gender role with the leadership role. For this reason we suppose that the women’s belief about leadership is not compatible with women’s reality and this influences the career orientation of women.

Social background and Migration

The social background can be also important for the professional advancement. Hartmann and Kopp found in Germany that persons who come from the upper class (gehobenes Bürgertum) have better chances to get a leading position. (Hartmann and Kopp 2001: 458). Hartmann shows, the higher the father’s position is, the more pronounced are those characteristics in the children which are demanded by top positions (Hartmann 2000). These results are especially relevant for men. Fietze et al. find an effect of the father’s education on the careers opportunities of men. Although the effect is not significant for women, they don’t find any significant differences between men and women (Fietze, Hols, Tobsch 2009). In our analyses we want to examine the importance of the social background for women through the analysis of education and professional position (leading or not leading position) of the parents (father and mother). It is not only the social background but also the migration background which can influence the career opportunities. This aspect is often unconsidered in the research of women in leading positions. Different investigations indicate that migrants with high education are often employed in under-qualified occupations. This under-qualified occupation is specially widespread between highly

educated female migrants: German women are up to 9,9% under-qualified in their professions while for female migrants this figure is up to 23.6% and even up to 32%,3 when they are not from any OECD country (OECD 2006).

Social Networks

The concept of social networks describes the social relations which one person has to family, neighbours, friends and colleagues (Diewald 1991: 61). Social networks constitute the infrastructure for the production and distribution of social support. Social support takes place in terms of interventions on persons and organisations (recommendations, procuration of advantages and establishment of contacts), provision of information, consultation and guidance, transfer of behaviour models, provision of identity and affiliation and also in terms of motivation (Diewald/ Sattler 2010). For these reasons social relations and contacts are very important for the positioning on the labour market. A large and heterogeneous network is favourable for the occupational position, including weak relationships (Granovetter 1973). Even the characteristics of the network members are very important. If the network members possess high economic and cultural capital, the network has bigger resources to offer than in other cases (Bourdieu 1983).

Components in the enterprises and organisations

There are the biography and characteristics of the individual, also the organizational culture and the organization of work which can have influence on the career orientation and the professional advancement of women. Thus the organizational culture of appreciation seems to be important for increased motivation and productivity of employees (Lindner 1998; Rettler, Göll 2010). In his ranking of motivational factors, Lindner (1998) found the full appreciation of finished work tasks as the third highest ranking factor for employee motivation. Also personnel development in terms of providing further education and training can play a role for career orientation and the ascend to leadership positions (Becker 1991). Women in general attend further education almost as often as men, however they seem to be less likely to be elected for career-relevant trainings (Ebner, Bausbacher 2008: 227; Mazumder, Wanzenried 2010: 37). In an international study of the perceptions of executives of large corporations more women than men mention the lack of professional or executive development opportunities as barrier for women's advancement to senior leadership (Catalyst 2002). Another important point for the professional advancement of women is the corporations' support for the reconciliation of work and family life. Such supporting measures for women to stay in their jobs during the years of child-rearing may be, e.g.: flexible working hours, job sharing, child care options. Such family-friendly human resources practices can help to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions (Eagly, Carli 2008: 68).

Empirical evidence

3.1. Description of the sample

The results to be described here, are derived from the data obtained in the research project "Women, Career, Development". The research project's duration is about fourteen months (April 2011 until May 2012). The data were collected during two

months between October and December 2011 in twelve different enterprises with more than 6000 female employees in total. The rate of return is 17,5 % (with 1052 cases). All respondents are women. Some of them are women in leading positions (23,7%) while others are not (76,3 %). The respondents in leading positions are in three different levels of management: lower (47,75 %), middle (33,88 %) and top management (18,37 %).

Table 1. Number of women in leading positions and in not leading positions.

	count	%
Women in leading positions	803	76,3
Women in not leading positions	249	23,7
Total	1052	100

Table 2. Number of women in different management levels.

	count	%
Top management	45	18,4
Middle management	83	33,9
Lower management	117	47,8
Total	245	100

Furthermore we analyze the female motivation on professional advancement and we compare the results influencing the promotion, and the results influencing the motivation. These differences may hint to some of the constraints why women do not achieve leading positions.

3.2. Factors influencing the female motivation on professional advancement and the probability on promotion

The human capital theory predicts career orientation when the education is high, but also with larger work experience. The reason is that with a higher human capital a higher income can be achieved. Table 3 shows that women with at least a degree of a university of applied sciences are more career oriented than women with lower education. We also see that women without career breaks hold more probably a leading position. We can also see: when they know about the salary increase on their next career step they are more career oriented than when they do not have such knowledge. This result indicates that such increase of income on their next career step motivates women in their careers.

Table 3. Education, income and career breaks.

	Orientation	Probability
Education (at least degree of university of applied sciences)	ttest= 0,389* (986)	phi= 0,083 ** (975)
Professional biography: existence of career breaks		phi= -0,074 * (955)
They can estimate the increase on salary versus they do not have any idea about the increase on salary on the next career step	ttest=0,872*** (991)	

There is also empirical evidence that it is not only such estimation about income after their next career step which influences career orientation of women. It is also the reconciliation of family and employment which appears important. The more they think that their work after their next career step is compatible with care of children and dependent relatives, with a good working partnership or with their hobbies, the more motivated they are on career advancement.

Table 4. Ideas about the conciliation of work and family after the next career step (career orientation).

After the next career step the job...		n
...can be reconcile with the education and care of children	r=0,221***	696
... can be reconcile with the care of care-dependent relatives	r=0,151***	679
... can be reconcile with a good working marriage/partnership	r=0,117***	824
... allows enough time for my hobbies	r=0,093**	834

The attitudes and preferences to work are central in the work fields which we have analyzed. Social and care professionals are supposed not to be career oriented. They are supposed to have chosen these work fields due to the social component of their professions and due to the direct work with patients or clients. Therefore we collected some data concerning the attitude of the respondents toward work. On the one hand it is the following assumption: if aspects related to management are more important for these professionals, then they will be the more motivated to advance in their professions. On the other hand we assume: if direct contact with clients is more relevant, then they will be less motivated to advance in their careers. Table 5 illustrates empirical evidence about the attitudes to aspects related to management. Aspects like making strategic decisions, accepting far-reaching responsibility and leading employees have medium strong positive effects on the motivation to advance in the profession. Positive influencing factors are also innovating, social status, high income and fixing targets in the organization. Also significant but less strong are aspects like financial management, working on the public image of the company and contributing to the development with innovative ideas. Negative influence on the

motivation to advance has the direct work with clients/patients and the compatibility of family and work. The latter aspects are not significant, only the direct work with clients with an error probability of 10% ($p < 0,10$).

Table 5. Attitudes to work (career orientation)		
	Association	n
How important are the following aspects of a job to you?	Correlation Pearson's r	Number of cases
Making strategic decisions	$r=0,347^{***}$	940
Accepting far-reaching responsibilities	$r=0,341^{***}$	944
Leading employees	$r=0,325^{***}$	938
Innovating	$r=0,266^{***}$	934
social status	$r=0,240^{***}$	906
A high income	$r=0,235^{***}$	969
Fixing targets and to express standards/guidelines	$r= 0,218^{***}$	914
Doing the financial management	$r=0,193^{***}$	928
Working on the public image of the company	$r=0,162^{***}$	928
Contributing to the development with innovative ideas	$r=0,141^{***}$	947
Working directly with clients/patients	$r=-0,056+$	918
Compatibility of family and work	$r=-0,027$ n.s.	956

Table 6 shows empirical evidence about the influence of role models on the career orientation. The respondents answer questions about their understanding of women roles concerning family and employment. The index of role-understanding is generated with the mean of five different items. These items measure the attitudes of women concerning the relationship of female leaders with their children, the well-being of children when their mothers are in leading positions, the convenience for children when mothers are career oriented and when they share the household and childcare with their partners, and the convenience for all parties when both partners are employed and share the housework. The results indicate that the support of modern role models has an influence on career orientation. Women with modern understanding of the female role in the family and in the labor market are more career oriented than women with a more traditional understanding. Concerning stereotypes: we collected data about the beliefs of women concerning characteristics of leaders. The results indicate that there is an association between the typical characteristics of leaders and career orientation of women: the more women think that leaders have typical characteristics of the female stereotype, the more they are career oriented. Here we treated the following characteristics as female characteristics: empathic, to be able to communicate, and to be community-oriented. We see also: there is an association between being strong-willed and career orientation, and between being rational and career orientation. These are characteristics which are attributed to the male stereotype, however table 6 illustrates that the more women think, women are rational and strong-willed, the more career oriented they are. The career orientation does not depend only on the characteristics women attribute to leaders, but also on the characteristics women attribute to women.

Table 6. Role models about women, leadership and family (career orientation)

Index of role-understanding	r=-0,170***		976	
Opinion about attributes of..	...Leaders		...Women	
empathic	r=0,106***	958	r=0,073*	963
Strong-willed	r=0,065*	959	r=0,073*	974
Able to communicate	r=0,114***	959	r=0,067*	973
Competitive-oriented	n.s.	954	r=0,056+	955
Rational	r=0,087**	954	r=0,076*	956
Community-oriented	r=0,074*	952	r=0,061+	960
self-presenting	n.s.	945	n.s.	959
Emotional	n.s.	955	n.s.	960

Concerning the probability of promotion we find also positive statistical association between the existence of role models for female professional careers and the probability to become a leader. Women who have good examples of persons in leading positions become more probably leaders. We do not find any evidence about the sex of these persons.

Table 7. Role models (career probability)

Role models for female professional careers	Phi= 0,102** (947)
Sex of the persons, which are role models	V= 0,063 n.s.

Studies about the labor market participation show the influence of family status and children on the employment of women. These factors are not only significant for the employment of women but also for their career orientation. Married women who live together with their partners are less career-motivated than other women, while not-married women are more career-oriented than other women – even when they have a partner. We can explain these differences with gender roles and attitudes concerning the roles of married women. With regard to the probability of promotion the statistical association for married women in comparison with all other women is not statistically significant. For not-married women living together with their partners the coefficient-phi is weak ($\phi < 0,05$) and the error probability is of 10% ($p < 0,10$). An interesting result concerning the probability of promotion to leading positions is the support of the partner. It seems to be more important for the promotion of women to have a partner who supports them in the career planning and in the realization of the career goals, than the mere fact to have a partner. The support by the partner in the career is highly significant. The probability of promotion does not depend on the family status, it depends on the support by the family: the higher the support by the partner, the more likely it is that women with a partner hold a managerial position.

Table 8. Family, partnership and children.

	Career Orientation	Career Probability
Family status		
Married and live together with partner	ttest= -0,875*** (984)	n.s. (976)
Not married and live together with partner	ttest=0,974*** (984)	phi=0,056 + (976)
Not married and without partner	ttest=0,658** (984)	n.s. (976)

Table 9. Support from marriage-/life-partner (career probability)

On my career planning	tau-b=0,115 *** (574)
On the realization of my career goals	tau-b=0,189 *** (566)

Also the mean in the career motivation is different between women with children at home and without children: when children are living at home women are less career motivated. But it is not only the presence of children - the age of the youngest child has also an influence on the career orientation: women are the less career oriented the younger the children are. Furthermore we find empirical evidence of the child-care support on the career orientation of women.

Table 10. Children (career orientation)

Presence of children at home	ttest= -0,860*** (982)
Age of the youngest child	r= -0,152*** (500)
Social child-care support	ttest=0,655*** (974)

Concerning the social background we also find statistical associations between the career orientation of women and the education and employment of parents. When the father has at least a degree of the university of applied sciences, or he had a leadership position or experienced a professional advancement because of further training, the motivation on advancement of women is higher. The effect of education and employment of the mother is similar, but there are also differences. Mother's education has a higher effect than father's education. A further difference is the employment of mothers: while the employment of fathers is not significant but their leadership positions, the effect of the mothers' employment is significant but not their leadership position. The professional advancement of the mother due to further training has also an influence on the career orientation of women, and this effect is stronger than the effect of the further training of fathers. As we can see the influence of fathers is important, when the father had a leading position, while the influence of mothers is already visible when they were employed.

Table 11. Social Background (career orientation)	
Father	
Education (at least a degree of university of applied sciences)	ttest=0,716 *** (931)
Mainly been employed	n.s. (952)
leadership position	ttest=0,540** (842)
Professional advancement due to further training	ttest=0,460* (840)
Mother	
Education (at least a degree of university of applied sciences)	ttest=1,077 *** (942)
Mainly been employed	ttest= 1,060*** (973)
Mainly not employed/ hausfrau	ttest= -1,084*** (973)
Leadership position	ttest=0,009 n.s. (457)
Professional advancement due to further training	ttest=0,901*** (877)

The immigration background shows an effect on the career orientation of women. Women with German citizenship are less motivated on advancement than women without German citizenship, while women with an immigration background advanced less probably than other women in their careers.

Table 12. Immigration background		
	Career orientation	Career probability
German citizenship/ immigration background	ttest=-1,364* (985)	phi= -0,057+ (939)

Research about social networks predicts the importance of relationships for the positioning on the labor market. The bivariate statistical analyses on table 13 show the positive association between the private contact to persons in management position and the probability to ascent to a managerial position. The results indicate that the effect of lower and middle management is stronger than the effect of upper management. The descriptive analyses show that women are more frequently in lower and middle positions than in upper positions. For this reason the weaker effect of top management seems comprehensible.

Table 13. Social Network (probability of advancement)

Private contact to persons in following positions (No Yes)	
Upper management	phi= 0,233 *** (960)
Middle management	phi= 0,243*** (967)
Lower management	phi= 0,294*** (960)

Table 14 shows: between further education in terms of management and business administration, and career orientation of women is a positive statistical association. This kind of further education influences also in a positive way the probability to hold a managerial position. Women in leading positions had more of this form of further education before they hold the actual position, than women without leading positions. In contrast to this effect, we find a negative influence of further and professional trainings concerning social, medical and care aspects. Concerning instruments of personal development the results indicate that employee assessment and development interviews with employees have a negative statistical association with the frequency of advancement. It seems that this instrument of personal development is not being implemented for the support of women's careers. There are positive statistical associations with the probability of advancement with instruments like substitution and replacement for leaders on holiday and with coaching. The influence of taking over project tasks and other additional tasks has also a positive influence with professional advancement.

Table 14. Further education and personnel development (probability of advancement).

Management and business administration (career orientation)	r=0,101** (823)
Management and business administration	ttest = 1,312 *** (747)
Made use of personnel development instruments	
Employee assessment and development interviews (Mitarbeitergespräche)	phi= -0,173 *** (975)
Further Trainings and professional training	phi= -0,155 *** (975)
Substitution and replacement for leaders on holiday	phi= 0,118 *** (975)
Coaching	phi= 0,138 *** (975)
Others	
I ask voluntary for project tasks/additional tasks	tau-b= 0,155 *** (890)

Table 15. Organizational culture and the organization of work (career orientation)

Award/Reward and appreciation (motivation on career)	r=0,106*** (981)
Which of the following work-time and -place models can you call on?	
Flexitime wage record	ttest= 0,366+ (763)
Provision of child care	ttest=0,721** (614)

Concerning appreciation of finished work tasks we find also positive statistical associations with career orientation. Appreciation of work increases motivation and productivity of employees as Lindner shows (1998), such appreciation is also important for the career orientation. Also the support of the conciliation of work and family life is important for the motivation on professional advancement. Table 15 shows that women have a higher career orientation when they have flexible work time and provision of child care.

Furthermore the empirical evidence shows that the kind of contract influences the probability on professional advancement. Women with a fulltime contract held more probably a leading position than women with a part time contract. They worked on average more hours than other women before they achieved their leading position, whether agreed hours or not-agreed hours. But not only the volume of work, also the limitation of the term of employment has an influence on the probability to hold a managerial position. A higher percentage of women with a managerial position had a permanent employment contract before they achieved their actual leading position, than other women.

Table 16. Extant and kind of employment relationship (probability)

Fulltime/Part-time	phi=0,175*** (909)
Contract agreed working hours a week	ttest= 3,305 *** (909)
Actual working hours a week	ttest= 3,729 *** (874)
Permanent employment contract (limited/ unlimited)	phi= 0,071* (891)

Summary

In this paper and in our research project we analyze the factors influencing the motivation of women for career advancement, and the probability to take a managerial position. Empirical evidence shows that women who invest more in human capital (in terms of education and in terms of their continuity of employment) are more career oriented and they held also more probably a leading position. The results indicate that transparency concerning work conditions about income and about conciliation of work and family influences in a positive way the career orientation of

women: they are more career oriented when they guess that such conciliation is possible. The motivation to advance in the profession is also influenced by the meaning of aspects linked to management positions. They are the more career oriented the more important for them are aspects linked to management. Furthermore the direct work with clients is in a negative way correlated with the motivation to hold a leading position. Also the beliefs about gender roles are important for career orientation. Women who think that typical characteristics for the female stereotype are also important for leading positions, are more career oriented. Also modern attitudes about the roles of women in employment and family are important for the career orientation. Concerning role models we found that having good examples of close persons in leading positions has a positive influence on the professional advancement. Also networks to persons in leading positions influence positively the probability to advance in their career. The social and immigration background is also statistically significant. The education and employment of parents - and especially of the mother - has some effect on the career orientation. As expected, the family status, the existence of children and their age are also fundamental. Our results also indicate that women with a partner advance more probably in their careers when the partners support them in the planning of the career and in the realization of their career goals. Concerning aspects of personnel development we find empirical evidence about the importance of further education in management and business, some instruments as coaching and the performance of project tasks. Instruments for the conciliation of work and family and the appreciation of the work are important. Finally there are workng conditions, e.g. fulltime and permanent work contracts which are important for the career advancement of women in the social and health sector.

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