A3.6 Competencies and Educational Choices Across Gender and Immigrant Background in Germany

**Director/ Irena Kogan**  
**Researchers/ Tobias Roth, Manuel Siegert**  
**Funding/ DFG**

### Objectives

Gender-specific as well as ethnic inequalities – both subject of scientific, political and public interest – have hardly ever been connected in empirical research in Germany. The aim of the project was the examination of *ethnic-specific gender differences* within the German education and training system. To that end, different points of time during the educational career have been analysed, and typical pathways have been portrayed in order to identify why and where differences emerge, decrease or reinforce each other. Throughout the project, the focus has been put on the investigation of the *impact of gender-specific socialisation.*

Project major goals were:

1. Explore educational careers of young men and women with and without migrant background in the German education and training system.
2. Examine underlying mechanisms.
3. Differences in educational performance.
4. Differences in educational self-evaluation.
5. Differences in educational and vocational aspirations/decisions.

### Expectations

- Children from traditional families show stronger gender-typical educational performance, interests and self-concepts (perception of gendered subjects might create stereotype threat, lower area-specific motivation and reduced self-handicapping strategies).
- At the latest in puberty, boys, particularly those originating from more traditional societies, show pronounced disadvantages in educational performance. This is partially attributed to their stereotypically masculine behaviour, which is largely dysfunctional in a school context.
- In families stemming from more traditional societies, lower educational aspirations and transitions for girls prevail because of anticipated lower labour market participation.
- Aspired occupations of students from traditional families show a more pronounced gender typicality.

### Data

- National Educational Panel Study (NEPS)
- Young Immigrants in the German and Israeli Educational Systems
- Official school statistics (North Rhine-Westphalia)

### Summary

- Girls from all ethnic groups are better positioned in the education system than boys from the 7th grade onwards.
- Despite similarities with respect to the direction of the gender gaps, their size and development differ across ethnic groups.
- However, we detect only limited evidence for the expectation that students originating from more traditional societies more often display gender-typical performance, self-concepts or aspirations.
- Traditional gender roles seem to play a rather minor part in explaining gender differences within the German education system.

### Findings

#### Share of boys at Gymnasium in North Rhine-Westphalia between 5th and 10th grade (Synthetic Cohorts)

![Graph showing share of boys at Gymnasium in North Rhine-Westphalia between 5th and 10th grade](image-url)

**Sources:** Roth/Siegert 2013: 176; Data: official school statistics (NRW)

#### Change in no. of boys and girls between 5th grade and Abitur at Gymnasium in North Rhine-Westphalia (Synthetic Cohorts)

![Graph showing change in no. of boys and girls between 5th grade and Abitur at Gymnasium in North Rhine-Westphalia](image-url)

**Sources:** Siegert/Roth 2013: 66; Data: official school statistics (NRW)

#### Competences in maths by ethnic background and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Background</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other foreign</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Differences in educational self-evaluation; this is especially true for Turkish girls. Comparable results can be found with regard to the overall academic self-concept.

#### Gender typicality of aspire job (girls with Turkish background vs. native girls (Ref.))

**Gender typicality of aspired and expected jobs of girls**

- Boys have better grades and competences as well as a more positive self-evaluation in maths than girls.
- Although students with a Turkish background have the lowest competences in maths, they show very positive self-evaluations; this is especially true for Turkish girls. Comparable results can be found with regard to the overall academic self-concept.
- Generally, there is rather little variation in the degree of gender differences between ethnic groups and, contrary to our expectations, the smallest differences are found for students with a Turkish background.
- There is no indication of substantial effects of gender roles on maths competences and attitudes towards maths.

**Source:** NEPS-SC4_R_4-0-0, own calculation and illustration; controlling for school type, no. of books in household, (right figure + competencies and grades in maths)