Care *and* education? Exploring the gendered rhythms and routines of childcare work

Pre-print version, please do not cite without permission of the first author!
Nentwich, J. C., Vogt, F., & Tennhoff, W. (2016). Care and education? Exploring the gendered rhythms and routines of childcare work. In Liebig, B., Sauer, B., & Gottschall, K. (Eds.), Gender equality in context: policies and practices in Switzerland (in press). Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich. S. 217-237.

Julia Nentwich
University of St. Gallen, Switzerland
julia.nentwich@unisg.ch

Franziska Vogt
University of Teacher Education, St. Gallen, Switzerland

Wiebke Tennhoff
University of St. Gallen, Switzerland

1. Introduction

Early childhood education is a female dominated occupation (Cameron 2001). Within Europe, more than 95% of the trained childcare workers in nurseries are women, although the numbers of male childcare workers vary from 9% in Norway to less than 1 % in Austria (Rohrmann et al. 2008: 4). Work in early childhood education provides little career perspectives and mobility, and is characterized by low wages as is typical for a female dominated profession (Meyer 2006; Nissen et al. 2003).

This imbalance of women and men in childcare work is nowadays also depicted as problematic. Women's numeric dominance and men's marginalization are perceived as especially problematic for boys as their needs and interests might not entirely be met (Rohrmann 2009). Men caring for small children are becoming more visible as more and more fathers assume a more active role (Nentwich et al, in prep.). As a consequence, attracting more men into the field has become an important objective for gender equality policies and initiatives (Faulstich-Wieland 2011; Buschmeyer 2013). However, such a change seems to occur only at a low pace.

Taking the gendered situation of the occupation as our point of departure, the research project on '(un)doing gender in nurseries' sets out to examine how childcare work is reinstated as gendered work. From the backdrop of the theory of 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman 1987; Nentwich and Kelan 2014) we conceptualize gender as something that is done in everyday practices of 'doing the job' (Leidner 1991). In an organizational context this means to focus on those practices that establish and stabilize what Acker (1990) coined as the 'gendered organization', the interaction of bodies and identities, symbols and images, gendered divisions of labour and gendered interactions. In addition, those practices form the image of the 'ideal worker' – an image of the characteristics ideally displayed by the person performing the job. The 'ideal worker' is gendered too.

However, over the last decade, gender research in organization studies has further explored the relevance of gender performativity (Butler 1990). For instance, Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio (2004 and 2005) emphasized the importance of both material and discursive practices for the everyday practices of doing gender. From such a perspective, both the 'ideal worker'and gender are produced in the very same 'doing'. In conceptualizing gender as a social practice both, the 'situated practices of doing gender and institutionalizing specific forms of gender' (Gherardi and Poggio 2007: 19), are made relevant for our understanding of the persistence of gender inequality. Gender and organizations are (re-)produced by specific social practices that assemble discourses, materiality and identities.

The analysis we are presenting in this chapter tackles in particular the role of organizational rhythms and routines for this assemblage of doing gender in childcare work. Rhythms and routines in general play an important role in stabilizing social practices (Orlikowski and Yates 2002; Staudenmeyer, Tyre and Perlow 2002). They are rather powerful as they are taken and not easily reflected critically. In our empirical analysis we started out with the question, how gender enters the actual work of childcare workers on an everyday level via the material and discursive practices they are engaging in. In the specific ways of how things are done, different facets of a gendered 'ideal worker' are made relevant (Acker 1990). Our analysis of 'doing gender' in this chapter hence moves beyond the idea of gender as limited to the identities of individuals or bodies, but as a powerful resource for the normative formation of the (gendered) ideal worker and, as a consequence, the ideas available how to do the job properly.

The chapter is organized as follows: First we explore the relevance of the discourses of 'care' and 'education' and how these discourses historically construct early childhood education as a gendered occupation. Second, the ethnographic research design and

methodology of our empirical investigations of the everyday rhythms and routines at four nurseries are presented. In the results section we compare these four organizational case studies. We show how the everyday practices of doing childcare work either prioritize the discourse of 'care' or the discourse of 'education', thereby constructing different facets of the 'ideal worker' as either enacting 'the good mother and housewife' or an 'early educator'. In the discussion, consequences of the two competing 'ideal workers' for doing gender as well as for gender equality and the further development of early childhood education are drawn.

2. Early childhood education between 'care' and 'education'

The history of early childhood education emphasizes the relevance of the discourses of 'care' and 'education' for the gendered connotation of childcare work. Both discourses were positioned in a binary opposition. During the 19th century, kindergarten, nurseries ('Bewahranstalten' – literally institutions were children were 'kept') or preschools ('Kleinkinderschulen' – schools for small children) were introduced (Rossbach and Grell 2012: 333), often as a provision for children of working class families as both parents worked in factories. The names of these institutions illustrate the different discourses of 'education' and 'care' in early childhood provision. Institutions of early childhood education and care were seen as a lesser evil, as children should be cared for while their mother works in a factory, but as inferior to motherly care in the family. In order to counteract the idea that kindergarten would actually harm a child if he or she attends the kindergarten too early or for too many hours a day, kindergarten and nurseries were depicted as being like a traditional family home with a caring mother (Friis 2008: 23).

Within Europe, Rossbach and Grell (2012) distinguish two types of early childhood education and care according to the emphasis on either 'care' or 'education': the early education type, for example in France, and the kindergarten type emphasising the social pedagogy tradition, for example in Germany. Within the Swiss Cantons, this contrasting focus is also reflected by the language divide. The historic development of the kindergarten seems to leave the kindergarten shifting between the poles of 'social' vs 'pedagogical' and 'private' vs 'public.' Both poles are clearly gendered, connecting the 'social' and the 'private' with 'femininity' and 'pedagogical' and 'public' with 'masculinity' (Rabe-Kleberg 2003: 31). Whereas the German kindergarten still follows the social pedagogical model, the Swiss kindergarten is now part of the education system. The Swiss kindergarten has developed from local initiatives supported by women's charitable organisations in the early twentieth century

to a fully integrated part of the Cantonal education system, with defined curricula and the requirement of professional training at tertiary level.

Nurseries in Switzerland are not part of the education system but of the social welfare system and only loosely regulated. Swiss nurseries are mostly privately run and financed. Whereas teachers in kindergarten are qualified at tertiary level, the childcare workers in nurseries obtain a professional qualification in a three-year apprenticeship at secondary level, thus emphasising a hierarchy between 'education' and 'care' as well as work with older and younger children. While kindergarten focuses on the two pre-school years, nurseries cater for children from the age of three months to six years. Nurseries are still conceptualised as a substitute for childcare provided by the family, mostly the mother. For instance, the media discourse rather emphasizes societal and economic benefits resulting from female employment rather than the pedagogical and developmental benefits for children (Lanfranchi and Schrottmann 2004: 10). Consequently, care is at the centre of nursery work, childcare workers do at the nursery what the caring parent would do at home, they follow homely routines of meals, sleep times, visits to the playground etc. The emphasis on care is also noticeable in the regulatory requirements. The guidelines of the Swiss Nursery Association (SKV) define requirements for structural aspects such as room size, qualification of personnel and staff-children ratio. A pedagogical concept is also requested for the permission of running a nursery, but there are no requirements stated regarding its content and the pedagogical quality (Lanfranchi and Schrottmann 2004: 19). While care aspects are defined precisely, criteria of education quality remained vague.

However, in recent years the discourse of 'education' has gained importance. Nurseries have joined the programme of 'infans' (Laewen and Andres 2011) and call nurseries 'Bildungskrippen' (educational nurseries) (Thkt 2014) in which childcare workers are trained to observe and document children's 'Bildungs- und Lerngeschichten' (stories of education and learning) (Leu et al. 2007). Nurseries are encouraged to adhere to a curricular framework (Wustmann, Seiler and Simoni 2012) and to assess and develop the quality of nursery provision, including learning activities. Large scale quality assessments found a medium to high level in the interaction and relationships between childcare workers and children in nurseries, but only medium to low level of seizing learning opportunities and providing educational impulses (Fried and Briedigkeit 2008; Pianta et al. 2005). Focussing on quality, the discourse of education enters the discourse of 'good childcare', and the demand for quality serves as an impulse for innovation and further development (Vogt 2015). Quality in early childhood education, or 'good childcare' therefore integrates 'education' and 'care'.

While both, the discourse of ‘care’ and the discourse of ‘education’, are made important for defining what counts as ‘good childcare’ and what qualifies as a ‘good childcare worker’, the discourse of ‘care’ is dominating. ‘Care’, even within ‘education’, is often connected with motherliness and femininity (Vogt 2002). This connection was enforced by the women’s movement around 1900 to secure women’s access into professional work (Evers 2012: 492). Up to the early twentieth century, teaching was considered a male occupation. The argument was put forward that women are better suited for educating and teaching young children because of their natural ability to be a mother and to provide motherly care. The discourse of ‘care’ was instrumental for the entry of women into a paid occupation. Depending on the economic situation and the shortage or surplus of teachers, women were called to work in schools and kindergartens or asked to leave paid work (Crotti 2005, 2011).

Work in early childhood is dominated by an understanding of providing care, whereby care is strongly connected to mothering, ensuring hygiene and providing food. This connection of ‘care’ and ‘femininity’ has immediate consequences for the position of men and women working in the field. As Vogt (2002) analysed from the interviews with kindergarten and primary teachers, an understanding of caring as mothering excludes men from the work and renders the work as women’s natural work. As a consequence, men’s position in this field is often contested, as for instance people regularly react with surprise when coming across a man in the nursery. Men in the field have to deal with the femininity of the ‘ideal worker’ (Nentwich et al. 2013; Cross and Bagilhole 2002).

Our review shows that although ‘care’ and ‘education’ are not necessarily oppositional concepts and care might as well be understood as being part of being a professional (Vogt 2002), the discourses of ‘care’ and ‘education’ are clearly gendered along a binary opposition. While the discourse of ‘care’ is closely connected to femininity, the discourse of ‘education’ is potentially open to both, masculinity and femininity. Only in its connection to the ‘early years’ educators’ gender it is becoming more narrowly defined as feminine. Furthermore, the discourse of ‘education’ also serves as a powerful reference for men when legitimating their position (Nentwich et al. 2013; Tennhoff, Nentwich and Vogt, in prep.).

Assuming that gender and organizations are (re-)produced by the social practices that are assembling discourses, materiality and identities (Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio 2005), these two discourses play a major role in the everyday practice of childcare work. While the discourse of ‘care’ establishes the image of an ideal worker who is oriented towards the ideal of the ‘good mother and housewife’, the discourse of ‘education’ rather emphasizes the importance of ‘enabling learning’ and hence an ideal of an ‘early educator’. Both the ideal of the ‘good mother

and housewife' and the ideal of the 'early educator' strive for defining what counts as 'good childcare'. And both concepts contain specific requirements with regards to doing gender. While the image of the 'good mother and housewife' cannot be separated from 'doing femininity', the 'early educator' is potentially open for both, performances of femininity and of masculinity. Analysing how they are made relevant in the everyday rhythms and routines provides us with some insights in how the construction of early childhood education as gendered is stabilized and hence inequality is perpetuated.

2. Methodology

The empirical research project was conducted in Switzerland's German-speaking part. Our ethnographic research design (Gherardi 2012; Eberle and Maeder 2010; Gobo 2008; Dellwing and Prus 2012) involves multiple qualitative research methods: 20 interviews with nursery managers, 18 interviews with male and female childcare workers, photographic documentation of the spatial arrangements, and (video) observations in four nurseries during 15 days in total. Eight of the nurseries in our sample employ one or more fully-trained male childcare worker; this enabled us to conduct ten interviews with men and eight interviews with their respective female colleagues. Observations of everyday practices were carried out in four of the nurseries that employ at least one fully trained male childcare worker. Following the procedure of theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss 1967), the four nurseries were selected on the basis of sampling criteria such as differences in the children's economic background and the nursery's spatial arrangements. An important sampling criterion relevant for the analysis of the discourses of 'care' and 'education' was the pedagogical concept. While the nurseries *blue* and *yellow* only provided very short specifications on their websites, the concepts of nurseries *red* and *green* are more elaborated.

Nursery	**Male and female childcare workers (fully educated)**
Yellow	1 man, all other educated childcare workers are women
Red	1 man, all other educated childcare workers are women
Green	1 man, all other educated childcare workers are women
Blue	4 men and 5 women

Table 1: Organizational case studies and number of men and women in the teams

Teams of two researchers spend a total of 15 days in these four nurseries, taking turns in observing and taking field notes and following childcare workers with the video camera. After each day, we discussed and shared our fieldnotes and wrote short memos. From the four nurseries, a total of 50 hours of video material was collected. The material was coded using Atlas.ti. We developed a descriptive coding scheme identifying the spatial situation (doll corner, building blocks etc.), the childcare workers involved (female or male childcare worker), the activity involved (guided or unguided play, tidying up, meals, sleeping times). Coding the videos helped us to reduce the material to those scenes, where gender was made relevant. Again, we wrote memos describing and interpreting these scenes.

The photographic documentation of the spatial arrangements is analysed elsewhere (Vogt, Nentwich and Tennhoff 2015), as well as the self-positioning of the male childcare workers in the interviews (Nentwich et al. 2013; Tennhoff et al. in prep.). In this contribution, our focus of analysis lies on the organizational rhythms and routines. We draw on material from the video analysis, fieldnotes and interviews. In a contrasting reading of scenes in the four nurseries, we developed 'thick descriptions' (Geertz 1977) of organizational rhythms and routines. All names are pseudonyms.

3. 'Care' and 'education': Preparing food in four nurseries

A central and common task in all nurseries is preparing food for lunch or snacks. Snack- and lunchtimes are also major markers for the daily rhythms and routines. In the following section, we present a contrasting analysis of four scenes of preparing food in the four nurseries. The analysis shows that preparing food can be done differently and with contrasting consequences for the relevance of the discourses of 'care' and 'education' as well as the gendering of the ideal worker. While activities related to 'care' as well as activities related to 'education' proved to be equally important for the everyday work in all four nurseries, they differed significantly in the way these activities were organized, or *how* these aspects of 'care' and 'education' were made relevant. While in nursery *blue* and *yellow*, 'caring' activities such as preparing food, washing hands and so on dominated the daily routines, nursery *red* and *green* had more emphasis on aspects put forward by the discourse of 'education': pedagogical objectives and children's learning activities.

4.1. Nursery *blue and yellow:* The discourse of 'care' and the dominance of household requirements

In nursery yellow, we noted the following routines: It is close to lunchtime. The children are playing in the entrance hall; the female childcare worker is with them. Maurin, the male trainee, is laying the table. A colleague from another group is helping him to get things done in time. Maurin sorts out little symbols for the children that assign them a specific seat at the table. Everything is prepared for the children (figure 1). Salad is already served on the plates, water is poured into cups. While Maurin is pouring water, the following interview takes place:

> Interviewer: Is there a certain reason, why you prepare everything completely before the children are coming in?
>
> Maurin: Hmmm just as a preparation. Because afterwards, we only have got 20, 25 minutes to eat, half an hour at the most, and it requires a lot of time, when you have to serve every child.
>
> Interviewer: Why are there only 25 minutes to have lunch?
>
> Maurin: Because they need to have their nap afterwards, they have to brush their teeth, and I need to have sent all the crockery to the kitchen, yes it all is, in terms of the timing, not stress, but tight, I then have to clean, then teeth brushing with the kids, and now I have not managed to get the matrasses ready for sleeping. It is mainly because of the kids, because they go for their midday nap afterwards, and it also is the case, that they fall asleep while sitting at the table, hmm.
>
> (Video transcript, nursery *blue*)

In his description, Maurin refers to the schedule of 'to dos', which appears to be stressful, even though he emphasises that it is 'no stress, just tight'. Bringing the crockery to the kitchen in time as well as having to clean dominates the worker's activities and results in a mealtime routine where children are not part of laying the table and doing the dishes. Feeding the little ones is seen as a chore. What Maurin describes here is what we also observed in nursery *yellow*: household activities are the dominant element for structuring the work priorities and daily schedules.

Household requirements dominate not only the organization of meal time routines but also the days' time structure. This finding is also mirrored in **c**hildcare workers' 'articulation work' (Corbin and Strauss 1993; see Gherardi 2012: 12). For every transition from one activity or task to another, they are negotiating who is going to do what. Talking about task allocation takes quite some out of their total talking time amongst the team. This leaves a general impression of being busy. As a result, the day's structure is divided into tiny sequences. Play and other pedagogical activities are cut short through hygiene tasks and seem squeezed in between rituals. These rituals are designed in such a way, that all children have to participate and join in the same way and at the same time. Very often we observe children waiting for others to do something, then do it themselves, then wait again. In consequence the time available for free play and for interaction among the children is rather limited.

Most of the activities are done in the group and the daily schedule defines what to do and when to do it. For instance, nappies are changed at a certain time, and not when it is necessary

in a specific case. This results in a high proportion of waiting times for the children in nursery *blue*. They wait for others getting done with something, sitting on a bench in the entrance hall or in a circle at the floor. This general idea of having to do things together and not individually is even more dramatically in nursery *yellow*, as the following video memo shows. Here the dominant logic of 'everybody does the same at the same time, no matter if it is individually necessary' is often enforced, even against children's will and at the cost of escalating conflict.

> Leo gets reminded several times by Michel, that he should also sit in the circle for singing. Leo is fidgety and repeatedly leaves the circle. As Leo turns away from the circle completely and starts to play with a snail, Michel gets up and puts the snail away. Leo shouts 'no'. Michel warns him that he will 'get the chair.' Leo comes back into the circle and is quite agitated, because Michel has put the chair in the vicinity. (The chair seems to be a sanction: when children are misbehaving, they need to sit on the chair).
>
> (Video memo, nursery *yellow*)

Not only joint activities such as circle time are used in a disciplinary way, but also the choices of play during times of seemingly free play times. In nursery *yellow*, playing in the home corner is often not allowed although children ask for it. Instead, childcare workers suggest jigsaws, board games and art activities, which are done quietly sitting at the table. Childcare workers' suggestions for play and other activities are chosen according to time of the day, they need to fit into a general scheme of activities and should not lead to too much noise. Often, activities are offered to reinforce normative behaviour, such as keeping things quiet, and not for a purpose of a more general learning.

Preventing chaos and preserving order are important objectives for the childcare workers: this is very tellingly captured by a sign put up in the entrance hall of one of the nurseries we analysed for their spatial situation. With the general slogan *'orderliness is a necessity, chaos oh no!'* childcare workers and eventually also parents are reminded to tidy up shoes on the designated shelf, to put away dry clothes in the wardrobe and to only leave seasonal clothing in the nursery. However, preventing chaos and preserving order is not only a norm for childcare workers' behaviour, but has also consequences for what counts as acceptable behaviour for children. While childcare workers emphasize in the interviews that children should be able to move around, jump, and shout, such behaviour is rarely accepted in the indoor-facilities of the nurseries, as in the following scene in nursery yellow:

> Playing becomes increasingly wild and a boy turns a chair over several times. Michel intervenes the second time and asks, whether this is a good idea and he warns them to be quieter. As it is not getting quieter he repeats his demand and warns them, that he will finish the play if they are not quiet immediately. Few moments later the head of the nursery comes to the door of the room and says in a stern voice, that the smaller children are sleeping and that it is too loud. Michel removes the chairs 'we have to tidy up, I told you'. He asks the children to go and get board games and to sit at the table.
>
> (Video memo, nursery *yellow*)

Rules are followed in a rigid way here. Especially in nursery *yellow*, children are often admonished to behave well and refrain from being noisy or fidgety. Although children are involved in some of the household chores, for instance bringing back their plates to the sink after finishing lunch or helping with the cleaning tasks in nursery *blue*, the tasks are mainly done by the childcare workers in an efficient way. Household activities are mostly separate from the task of enabling children's learning. In everyday rhythms and routines, these two nurseries treated 'care' and 'education' as rather separate activities and hence re-enforced 'care' and 'education' as binary oppositions.

The dominance of keeping things quiet and orderly is also mirrored by the nursery's aesthetics. Order is achieved in a systematic way for instance by using boxes and little signs in the cloakroom, extra boxes for every child at the entrance of the dormitory to deposit clothes before going for a nap, or for putting away tooth brushes in the bathroom.

While being able to retrieve the specific tools or accessories of every child is of course an important necessity when sharing organizational space with 20 or more children, it was the strong emphasis on this specific task and the aesthetics of orderliness that shows the dominance of household duties.

Furthermore, children are often asked to do things ‚nicely'. With demanding that things are done ‚nicely,' childcare workers emphasise the order and final product but not the potentially messy learning process. As in the following example, Michel motivates children to focus on the 'nice' end product – a tall tower that stands without tumbling – and rather holds them back from what could be depicted as the learning aspect of exploring its stability, experimenting with the force of gravity or statics.

> Michel constructs a high tower using building blocks with the children. The children are very excited, noticeable as they speak with loud voices. Michel is also very immersed in the task, he repeatedly tells the children to be careful to make sure that the tower is not falling down, as 'it is such a nice tower'. He does not encourage children to take part in the building process. He mentions that the children should not try to put more blocks on the tower, as the tower might fall down. This surprises me a bit, as there would be spaces to put additional blocs also at the bottom of the tower. Michel suggests to preserve the tower standing there, certainly until snack time. He then mentions repeatedly, that the tower is so nice.
>
> (Video memo, nursery *yellow*)

Overall, the everyday rhythms and routines are (re)producing a dominance of household tasks and hence the discourse of 'care'. Mealtimes and snack times, cleaning up after meals and activities are important activities for the childcare workers and structure their day. Time is enacted as 'chronos' here, giving priority to its linearity emphasizing effectiveness and efficiency (Orlikowski and Yates 2002). Household chores are primarily tasks that are done by

the childcare workers. Even if children are involved in these activities, the scenes are handled in a way that prioritizes the efficient and effective handling of the situation rather than enabling the children to learn to handle water, plates, etc. By keeping the discourse of 'care' as separate to the discourse of 'education', household activities are not depicted as suitable for enabling children's learning. Furthermore, the relevance of learning is rather marginalized: Although many opportunities for learning are created, the priority for setting the schedule is given to household activities. It is the household and care chores that define the time frames and what needs to be done by everyone at a set time, whereas learning is 'happening' in between. Interestingly, in nurseries *red* and *green* we found a different way of organizing time and routines that we describe subsequently in the following paragraphs.

4.2 Nursery *red* and *green*: Preparing food as an activity that enables learning

Daily rhythms and routines are organized differently in nurseries *red* and *green*. Although care and catering for the children are important activities here, too, these activities are not dominating. The main objective for structuring the day in these two nurseries is the need to create as large units of time as possible for children's play and learning activities. Time is not as much understood as linear, but being build up from 'events' and their particular sense making (Orlikowski and Yates 2002). Enabling learning and hence the discourse of 'education' is setting the scene here, while household necessities are still being done. There seems to be a balance of both, household requirements and children's learning, instead of one dominating the other.

One example of how 'care' and 'education' work are organized in nursery *red* is a scene, where three children between two and three years old and the female childcare worker are baking bread. Baking bread is a meaningful household activity as this is the bread that children would eat over the next days. Every week, one of the two groups in the nursery is responsible for baking bread.

> Stefanie cleans up the kitchen table and prepares all ingredients and tools for making the dough. She lets the children know that it is about time to bake bread. It is a voluntary activity for the children; they are free to join in. Two boys and one girl come to the kitchen (one girl and boy are about three years old and the other boy is two). Stefanie gets them aprons and helps them putting them on. She asks the children: What do we need for baking bread? The children are very eager to answer her questions and point out the ingredients. Now they start to prepare the dough. Children take turns in adding things into the bowl. Stefanie takes her time to give everybody a chance to participate. She points out the flour dust that is in the air after pouring flour into the bowl. The atmosphere is calm and concentrated. Stefanie starts to sing while working the dough, the children first listen, copy her movement with the dough with their hands on the table, and then join in singing. Stefanie sends one girl that has licked off the dough on her hands to wash her hands. All children are now joining in

> and work smaller parts of the dough. The children are 60 minutes at the table, working concentrated to bake bread.
>
> (Fieldnotes and video memo, nursery *red*)

What is striking in this scene is that baking bread, although a necessity for the upcoming meals is organized as a learning activity for the children. It is not the product and its efficient production that is at the centre, but getting children engaged with the activity of baking bread, learning about the ingredients, smelling the ingredients, and feeling the dough.

The nursery's schedule reflects the general principle of facilitating the maximum possible length of free and uninterrupted playtime for the children. It is the aim that children are deeply engaged in play and interact with other children in the group without being directed by childcare workers.

> We are keen to enable really long and uninterrupted play sessions as far as possible and we offer less activities initiated by us, like circle time and such. That is what we do: we gather them before lunchtime, for example. But we realise that we do not want to disrupt them with things, which are our things, where we think they would benefit. They are only able to really enter into play when we leave them to it for as long as possible.
>
> (Interview, nursery manager, nursery *red*)

This is similarly important to Reto, the male childcare worker leading the outdoor group of nursery *green*. Spending the day outdoors in the forest or the nursery's spacious garden, the most important objective for organizing the day is children's time for play. Both nurseries, *red* and *green*, organize time around a few fixed times such as breakfast and arrival, lunchtime with a brief group activity just before lunch, and a calmer part following after lunch. The snack times in the morning and the afternoon are offered as voluntary snacks: children are merely asked whether they are hungry. Children who are hungry can come and fetch something to eat, usually some fruits or little biscuits. However, it is not organized as a group event where everybody has to join. Similar to the scene of baking bread children are often actively involved in preparing snacks, such as cutting apples or bread, thereby learning how to handle a knife without getting hurt.

> They can only develop their play if we leave them to it as long as possible, as, already the meals are setting structures. So breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack. These are the structures which are set, and we would like to keep them free in their choice of play, of playmate and of duration of play.
>
> (Interview, nursery manager, nursery *red*)

While our example of baking bread in nursery *red* showed how household activities can be transformed into sites of learning, the following scene highlights the cooking activity as an important aspect of organizing space. Reto, the male childcare worker in nursery *green*, stresses in the interview the importance of preparing the spatial situation '*as activating and stimulating*,

space is the third teacher', thereby drawing on a major concept of Reggio pedagogics (Knauf 2000). The nursery's space – in his case the garden and the outdoors – have to be organized in a way that allows children to play freely and without being interrupted.

> Reto: I concentrate on the environment, I cannot focus on individual children, this is intended, not because I would not be able, but I am the helping hand for the children.
>
> Interviewer: What do you mean by preparing the environment?
>
> Reto: The forest is already prepared in a quite good way, but to see where are limits, where is broken glass, but also which limits is the environment imposing on us. This is exciting, I can demonstrate, I can show what one can do, but I prefer the most, when they manage by themselves. (…) Preparing the environment also means mentally preparing, what is happening today in the forest. Sometimes there are days, weird people are walking around here, that I do not like and then I keep the children nearer, and then there are days, where it is totally relaxed.
>
> (Video transcript, nursery *green* ')

Relying on the spatial situation as stimulating as well as limiting children's activities also has consequences for the childcare worker's role. He has to be present and approachable for the children and able to observe what is going on, but not interfere with children's activities. In a video sequence, Reto points out the importance of keeping the balance between risk prevention and enabling children to play freely. While his primary focus is on leaving children to explore and play independently, he would rather go and check as soon as he has the feeling that something is going wrong.

> Reto is pottering round with the kitchen utensils and then turns to Wiebke (researcher) and begins to explain: Now it suddenly got very quiet, them there in the far back, they were playing completely quietly. Now I need to see, where they are at, they were really quiet during play. And if we would even come nearby, we would disrupt them. We know, they are at the back over there, but when I get a strange feeling, and then I go quickly to have a look.... Controlling is sometimes better.
>
> (Video transcript, nursery *green*)

What strikes us as interesting also from our observations is how he succeeded in organizing this balance between leaving the children on their own as well as them being safe. By making it his job to prepare lunch at the open fireplace, he manages to be part of the scene and being approachable for children, however, he is not participating in children's play. In that sense, he is making use of the necessary household activity of preparing lunch for educational means: creating a protected but nevertheless free space for children to learn. In nursery *green*, cooking became an important enabler of children's free play in a protected environment. Thus, taking care of household requirements and creating learning opportunities are not treated as in opposition, but as enabling one another.

Of course, nurseries *red* and *green* are relying on time structures to organize the rhythm of their days too. For instance, in nursery *red* the daily schedule is displayed on a complex chart

in the group's kitchen. The day is organized in small sequences. The chart maps out childcare workers' activities such as cooking, changing nappies, brushing teeth, but also preparing a group activity or holding a meeting. Stefanie, the group lead childcare worker explains that this schedule is important to organize the work and to let trainees and apprentices know what they should do. Furthermore, childcare workers take it in turn to be responsible for organising the duties and activities for one day or for half a day. Like that, tasks are allocated clearly and childcare workers do not need time for organizing (nursery *red*, interview with Stefanie).

Despite this rigid-looking plan, the everyday schedule doesn't give the impression of being rigid or split in tiny micro-activities. Furthermore, we never observed the micro-articulation work that was inevitable in nursery *blue*. In the everyday practice the schedule is handled rather flexible and can be adjusted spontaneously when needed. The planning and collegial but structured work allocation provides a structure for the smooth running of the day. There is less need to negotiate between workers. This enables childcare workers to focus on the pedagogical aspects of the work.

Furthermore, as the following example from nursery *green* shows, even lunchtime as an important corner stone in the everyday schedule can be changed and done differently if necessary.

> I come in the morning and I have my repertoires, and so, that is me, that is how I am, I improvise and am spontaneous. Once it was, I walked on the way to the nursery and I saw really a lot of chestnuts on the ground. So I went collecting chestnuts, but until the children were all ready and dressed, and then on the way, they needed to look at everything, okay, we went. I had planned something entirely different for the afternoon, and the food was also bought, but then, it took ages, you would walk five minutes, but we almost took two hours to get there, to pick up chestnuts, to look at every single chestnut, to compare them, to sort them, and all what is part of that, and then it was lunch time and I just knew I need to now order pizza, (laughs) well that is now maybe not very good, and not very creative, but it was the quickest to do and I also had the staff to cover it. And so we sat on a rock there and ate pizzas and later in the afternoon, we made our way back.
>
> (Interview, childcare worker Reto, nursery *green*)

This general flexibility is also mirrored in interaction with children. Childcare workers would stop an activity that is no longer interesting and reorganize their plans according to children's needs. As a matter of fact, children are also allowed to get lost in an activity and to decide autonomously what to do. As a consequence, we observed long sequences of free play in nursery *red* and *green* without childcare worker's interventions. Careful scripts for transitions are crucial here. For instance, one of the childcare workers in nursery *red* would leave the lunch table earlier, go to the bathroom and start helping children brushing their teeth, washing their hands and changing nappies. Children who have finished their meals can get up, tidy their dishes away and leave for the bathroom to get ready for play or a nap without having to wait

for others. The same can be observed with the transition for going to the garden. One of the childcare workers would check if the gates are locked and stay outside, receiving the children ready to play in the garden, while the second one would help children putting on their shoes, hats and sun cream. This way of organizing transitions allows the children to get ready in their own pace and not having to wait for others, and already start with their activities. Childcare workers on the other hand are rarely in need of disciplining children for not participating or not waiting patiently.

Children in nursery *red* and *green* are free to choose in which room they engage in what kind of activity. Children's play is most often self-organized. Childcare workers would decide on the basis of a child's playing behaviour and interests what to do. They place a great emphasis on enabling long sequences of uninterrupted activity. This is also true for guided activities. In one scene in nursery *red*, Stefanie reads books to the children. She does that in such a performative and interesting way that children are mesmerized and highly attentive. Participation is created by capturing children's attention and interest and not by disciplinary means, also allowing for individual freedom. For instance, it is totally acceptable for children to leave the book-reading scene for a moment and come back later. While tidying up and keeping things in order is also an important issue in these nurseries, the main focus is on children's competences to install this order by themselves. Tidying up the toys they have been playing with is used as a learning event.

Also the issues surrounding order are enacted in a different way. In nursery *red* a system of little coloured dots is used to inform children in the creativity room, which material is freely available and for which material they would have to ask a childcare worker. A similar rule applies in nursery *green*, here children have to ask the childcare worker when they are interested in material that is kept in the construction trailer in the nursery's garden. All other things are freely available. The order that is installed in these two nurseries relies very much on self-organization, children's autonomy and getting children to implement order on their own initiative. Again, tidying up or doing things in a specific order - which is considered an important objective in all the Montessori-based activities in nursery *red* - is important for children's learning, and not because things might look nicer.

In contrast to the dominance of the discourse of 'care' in nursery *blue* and *yellow*, nurseries *red* and *green* are prioritizing 'education' and 'learning' as the major organizing principles. Although care, hygiene and healthy diets are important here as well, they are not dominating the everyday rhythms and routines. The daily schedule is organized to provide children as much space for play and other autonomous activities as possible. Rituals and routines are critically

reflected for their support of children's learning and often reduced in order to meet the objectives of serving children's and childcare worker's needs.

4. Discussion

The discourse of 'care' and 'education' have shown to be relevant not only for the gendered construction of the occupation in a historical perspective, but also for the making of the 'ideal worker' in the everyday practices of childcare work. With our ethnographic perspective we especially focused on the everyday rhythms and routines in four nurseries in German speaking Switzerland. We found profound differences between our organisational case studies. In nurseries *blue* and *yellow* the dominant organizing principle builds upon the discourse of 'care'. Organizational rhythms and routines are prioritizing the discourse of 'care' and thereby marginalizing the discourse of 'education.' This was different in nurseries *red* and *green*. Here the demands of 'household' and 'learning' where no longer seen as in a binary opposition, on the contrary, household activities were used as learning opportunities for children. It can be concluded, that although both discourses, 'care' and 'education', are stressed as highly relevant for childcare work, they are prioritized differently in the everyday practices across organisations.

Our observations in nurseries *blue* and *yellow* revealed that the two aspects, 'care' and 'education', were perceived as opposites here. Childcare workers seemed to be stressed, as they didn't have enough time to both lay the table *and* interact with the children in a meaningful way. Managing chaos and noise was a major challenge in these nurseries and children were often admonished and disciplined. On the contrary, nursery *red* and *green* seemed not to have problems around noise, order and behaviour. Their approach of using household activities as an opportunity for learning enabled them to provide both 'care' *and* 'education' in early childhood education.

These two major principles in organizing early childhood education in nurseries lead to different concepts of the 'ideal worker'. While in nursery *blue* and *yellow* childcare workers feel obliged to secure order, to prevent chaos, and to produce products adhering to a certain aesthetic, they enact the ideal of 'the housewife'. In contrast, nursery *red* and *green* encourage the workers to create opportunities for learning, to be attentive, to observe children's development and to turn everyday situations into learning events, therefore fostering the ideal of an 'early educator'. With its strong connection to femininity, the 'ideal housewife' reinforces the femininity of the occupation, while the 'early educator' remains potentially open to both women and men. As our in-depth analysis of the interviews with male childcare workers shows

in greater detail (Nentwich et al. 2013; Tennhoff et al. in prep.), both ideal workers are frequently referred to. However, while the ideal of the 'early educator' was frequently cited by the interviewed men in order to produce legitimacy, the 'housewife' ideal either remained as a taken for granted or it had to be examined in a more critical stance enabling the speaker to distance himself from this ideal worker without being perceived as unprofessional. While the discourse of the ideal worker as an 'early educator' would allow both, doing femininity and doing masculinity, the discourse of the ideal worker as 'housewife' comes with implicit images and connotations about the ideal subjects engaging in that work being female.

A particular strength of our theoretical framework is that it enables to differentiate between *men and women doing something* while at work in the nursery on the one hand, and the *organizational practices* at work on the other. Both are relevant for explaining doing gender in an organizational setting. However, our analysis clearly shows that male/female ratio of childcare workers did neither explain the major differences in everyday rhythms and routines nor the two facets of the ideal worker that were enacted in a nursery. Individual men or women are not doing things differently within their organizational logic. Rather it is the organizational rhythms and routines that seem to be relevant beyond the individual worker. They are responsible for (re)producing the two distinctive ideal workers of the 'housewife' and the 'early educator' resulting in different consequences for doing gender.

5. Conclusion

Focusing on the organizational rhythms and routines that enact gendered discourses of 'care' and 'education' sheds some light on the practices that stabilize traditional gender concepts and therefore counteract the aim of gender equality. Although the curriculum for Swiss nurseries equally emphasize both 'care' and 'education' as important aspects (Wustmann Seiler and Simoni 2012) and the quality criteria also include both aspects (Qualikita 2014), 'care' still seems to dominate 'education' in two of our cases whereas the other two nurseries seem to be more balanced in that respect. As the traditional connection between 'care' and 'femininity' is still made relevant in the 'ideal worker' as well as in the organizational rhythms and routines, change is easily resisted here. As organizational rhythms and routines play an important role in stabilizing social practices (Orlikowski and Yates 2002; Staudenmeyer, Tyre and Perlow 2002), we conclude in more general terms that it is crucial to focus on these tacit practices that we are often unaware of when implementation of new pedagogical concepts is at stake. Furthermore, the relevance of the feminine 'ideal worker' as well as the discourse of 'care' for the dominance of household activities in nurseries' rhythms and routines proves to be a vital starting point for

explaining the stability of gender inequality in this field. Moving beyond early childhood education and the nursery, our findings point to the relevance of the material and discursive practices that bring the gendered subject into being (Nentwich 2014). It is exactly these everyday rhythms and routines that seem to counter-act gender equality policies in the long run.

Literature

Acker, J. (1990): Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies - a Theory of Gendered Organizations. In: Gender & Society, 1990, 4, 2, pp. 139–158.

Bruni, A., Gherardi, S., & Poggio, B. (2004): Doing Gender, Doing Entrepreneurship: An Ethnographic Account of Intertwined Practices. In: Gender, Work & Organization, 11, 4, pp. 406–429.

Bruni, A., Gherardi, S., & Poggio, B. (2005): Gender and Entrepreneurship: An Ethnographic Approach. Milton Park: Routledge.

Buschmeyer, A. (2013): Zwischen Vorbild und Verdacht: Wie Männer im Erzieherberuf Männlichkeit konstruieren. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Butler, J. (1990): Gender Trouble Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. New York: Routledge.

Cameron, C. (2001): Promise or Problem? A Review of the Literature on Men Working in Early Childhood Services. In: Gender, Work and Organization, 8, 4, pp. 430-453.

Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. L. (1993): The Articulation of Work through Interaction. In: Sociological Quarterly, 34, 1, pp. 71–83.

Cross, S., & Bagilhole, B. (2002): Girls' Jobs for the Boys? Men, Masculinity and Non-Traditional Occupations. In: Gender, Work and Organization, 9, 2, pp. 204–226.

Crotti, C. (2005): Lehrerinnen – frühe Professionalisierung: Professionsgeschichte der Volksschullehrerinnen in der Schweiz im 19. Jahrhundert. Bern: Peter Lang.

Crotti, C. (2011): Lehrerinnen als Ersatzspielerinnen in der Schulgeschichte der Schweiz. In: Grunder, H.-U. (ed.): Professionswissen für Lehrerinnen und Lehrer. Aus der Geschichte lernen. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Hohengehren, pp. 165-186.

Dellwing, M., & Prus, R. (2012): Einführung in die Interaktionistische Ethnografie: Soziologie im Außendienst (Auflage: 2012). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Eberle, T., & Maeder, C. (2010): Organizational Ethnography. In: Silverman, D. (ed.): Qualitative Research. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, pp. 53-73.

Geertz, C. (1977): The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays. New York: Basic Books.

Evers, R. (2012): Erzieherinnen und Erzieher In: U. Sandfuchs, W. Melzer, & A. Rausch (ed.): Handbuch Erziehung. Stuttgart: UTB, pp. 490-494.

Faulstich-Wieland, H. (2011): Werden tatsächlich Männer gebraucht, um Bildungsungleichheiten (von Jungen) abzubauen? In: A. Hadjar (ed.): Geschlechtsspezifische Bildungsungleichheiten. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 393-415.

Fried, L., & Briedigkeit, E. (2008): Sprachförderkompetenz. Selbst- und Teamqualifizierung für Erzieherinnen, Fachberatungen und Ausbildner. Berlin: Cornelsen Scriptor.

Friis, P. (2008): Männer im Kindergarten. Wie man sie anwirbt - und dafür sorgt, dass sie auch bleiben. Themenheft des norwegischen Kultusministeriums. Deutsche Fassung hrsg. vom Forschungsprojekt Elementar, Universität Innsbruck. Retrieved from

http://www.uibk.ac.at/psyko/forschung/elementar/literatur/friis_maenner_im_kindergarten.pdf (28.10.2015).
Gheradi, S. (2012): How to Conduct a Practice Based Study. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
Gherardi, S., & Poggio, B. (2007): Gendertelling in Organizations - Narratives from Male - Dominated Environments. Copenhagen: Liber.
Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967): The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. Chicago: Aldine Pub.
Gobo, G. (2008): Doing Ethnography. Los Angeles: Sage.
Knauf, T. (2000): Reggio-Pädagogik. Ein italienischer Beitrag zur konsequenten Kindorientierung in der Elementarerziehung. In: W. E. Fthenakis & M. R. Textor (ed.): Pädagogische Ansätze im Kindergarten. Weinheim: Beltz, pp. 181–201.
Laewen, H. J., & Andres, B. (2011): Das Infans-Konzept der Frühpädagogik: Bildung und Erziehung in Kindertagesstätten. Weimar, Berlin: Verlag das Netz.
Lanfranchi, A., & Schrottmann, R. E. (2004): Kinderbetreuung ausser Haus - eine Entwicklungschance. Bern: Haupt Verlag.
Leidner, R. (1991): Serving Hamburgers and Selling Insurance: Gender, Work, and Identity in Interactive Service Jobs. In: Gender & Society, 5, 2, pp. 154–177.
Leu, H. R., Flämig, K., Frankenstein, Y., Koch, S., Pack, I., Schneider, K., & Schweiger, M. (2007): Bildungs-und Lerngeschichten. Bildungsprozesse in früher Kindheit beobachten, dokumentieren und unterstützen. Weimar: Verlag das Netz.
Meyer, C. (2006): ‘Also, als Mann im Kindergarten, die Kinderherzen fliegen einem sofort zu‘ Männer in Frauenberufen und ihr Beitrag zur Professionalisierung personenbezogener Dienstleistungsberufe in Erziehung, Pflege und Sozialem. In: Praxis. Zeitschrift für Sozialarbeit, Sozialpädagogik und Sozialpolitik, 36, 3, pp. 269–284.
Nentwich, J. (2014): Puppen für die Buben und Autos für die Mädchen? Rhetorische Modernisierung in der Kinderkrippe. In: Malli, G. and Sackl-Sharif, S. (ed.): *Wider die Gleichheitsrhetorik. Soziologische Analysen – theoretische Interventionen. Texte für Angelika Wetterer*. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, pp. 50-61.
Nentwich, J. C., & Kelan, E. K. (2014): Towards a Topology of ‘Doing Gender’: An Analysis of Empirical Research and Its Challenges. In: Gender, Work & Organization, 21, 2, pp. 121–134.
Nentwich, J. C., Poppen, W., Schälin, S., & Vogt, F. (2013): The same and the other: male childcare workers managing identity dissonance. International Review of Sociology, 23, 2, pp. 325–344.
Nentwich, J. C., Tennhoff, W., & Schälin, S. (in preparation): Switzerland: ‘Leitmotif: Sharing! 3 + 3 + 1.’ In: Deutsch, F. & Gaunt, G. (eds.), Equally Shared Parenthood: A Global Perspective.
Nissen, U., Keddi, B., & Pfeil, P. (2003): Berufsfindungsprozesse von Mädchen und Jungen Frauen: Erklärungsansätze und Empirische Befunde. Opladen: Leske und Budrich.
Orlikowski, W. J., & Yates, J. (2002): It’s about Time: Temporal Structuring in Organizations. Organization Science, 13, 6, pp. 684–700.
Pianta, R., Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Bryant, D., Clifford, R., Early, D., & Barbarin, O. (2005): Features of Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Classrooms, and Teachers: Do they Predict Observed Classroom Quality and Child-Teacher Interactions? In: Applied Developmental Science, 9, 3, pp. 144-159.
QualiKita (2014): *QualiKita-Handbuch: Standard des Qualitätslabels für Kindertagesstätten. Verband Kindertagesstätten der Schweiz*. Jacobs Foundation. Verfügbar unter http://quali-kita.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Arbeitsinstrumente/QualiKita_Handbuch.pdf. (01.04.2014).
Rabe-Kleberg, U. (2003): Gender Mainstreaming und Kindergarten. Weinheim: Beltz.

Rohrmann, T. (2009): Gender in Kindertageseinrichtungen. Ein Überblick über den Forschungsstand. Deutsches Jugendinstitut: München.

Rohrmann, T.,Aigner, J., & Koch, B. (2008): Vorwort zur deutschen Übersetzung. In: Friis, P. (2008): Männer im Kindergarten. Wie man sie anwirbt - und dafür sorgt, dass sie auch bleiben. Themenheft des norwegischen Kultusministeriums. Deutsche Fassung hrsg. vom Forschungsprojekt Elementar, Universität Innsbruck. Retrieved from http://www.uibk.ac.at/psyko/forschung/elementar/literatur/friis_maenner_im_kindergarten.pdf (28.10.2015).

Rossbach, H-G. & Grell, F. (2012): Vorschulische Einrichtungen. In: Sandfuchs U., Melzer, W. & Rausch A. (eds.), Handbuch Erziehung. Stuttgart: UTB, pp. 332-337.

Staudenmayer, N., Tyre, M., & Perlow, L. (2002): Time to Change: Temporal Shifts as Enablers of Organizational Change. In: Organization Science, 13, 5, pp. 583–597.

Tennhoff, W., Nentwich, J., & Vogt, F. (under review). Doing Gender and Professionalism: Exploring the Intersectionalities of Gender and Professionalization in Early Childhood Education.

Thkt (2014): Ein Ansatz zur Entwicklung der pädagogischen Qualität in Schweizer Kitas. Retrieved from http://www.familienservice.ch/de/bildungskrippen.html (28.10.2015)

Vogt, F., Nentwich, J. C., & Tennhoff, W. (2015): Puppenecken und Bauecken: Gender und Raumordnung. In: Müller, C., Amberg, L., Dütsch, T., Vogt, F. & Wannack, E. (eds.): Perspektiven und Potenziale der Schuleingangsstufe. Münster: Waxmann. (forthcoming).

Vogt, F. (2002): A Caring Teacher - Explorations Into Primary School Teachers' Professional Identity and Ethic of Care. In: *Gender and Education, 14*, 3, pp. 252–264.

Vogt, F. (2015): Bildung in der frühen Kindheit: ‚Bildung' und ‚pädagogische Qualität' als Auslöser von Angebotsausbau und Innovation. In M. Bergman, M., Grunder, H.U., Hupka-Brunner, S., Imdorf, C., (eds.): Qualität in der Bildung. Bad Heilbrunn: Julius Klinckhardt. (forthcoming).

West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987): Doing Gender. In: Gender & Society, 1, 2, pp. 125–151.

Wustmann Seiler, C., & Simoni, H. (2012): Orientierungsrahmen für frühkindliche Bildung, Betreuung und Erziehung in der Schweiz. Erarbeitet vom Marie Meierhofer Institut für das Kind, erstellt im Auftrag der Schweizerischen UNESCO-Kommission und des Netzwerks Kinderbetreuung Schweiz. Zürich. Verfügbar unter www.orientierungsrahmen.ch.