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## SUMMARIES

- *H. Bos, F.B. van Rooij and Th. Sandfort*  
**Children's gender identity in lesbian and heterosexual two-parent families**

This study compared gender identity, anticipated future heterosexual romantic involvement, and psychosocial adjustment of children in lesbian and heterosexual families; it was furthermore assessed whether associations between these aspects differed between family types. Data were obtained in the Netherlands from children in 63 lesbian families and 68 heterosexual families. All children were between eight and twelve years old. Children in lesbian families felt less parental pressure to conform to gender stereotypes, were less likely to experience their own gender as superior and were more likely to be uncertain about future heterosexual romantic involvement. No differences were found on psychosocial adjustment. Gender typicality, gender contentedness and anticipated future heterosexual romantic involvement were significant predictors of psychosocial adjustment in both family types.

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- *Sarah Bossaert*  
**Language and gender in the classroom**  
A balanced search for gender differences in the interaction

This study explores if (and how) gender affects teacher-pupil interaction in the first year of primary school in Flanders. By means of observations and video-recordings of lessons in twelve classrooms, the organization of turn-taking has been analyzed. The aim was to find out whether the behavior of girls and boys in class differs and whether boys and girls are treated differently by their teachers.

The article starts with an overview of some of the theoretical and methodological discussions within the rapidly developing field of Gender and Language (or gender linguistics), that form the theoretical framework for this study. After a short description of previous research on the subject, the main findings of this study are presented. They show relatively few differences between girls and boys, certainly regarding the amount of participation in the interaction. However, there are some differences in the *way* both groups interact with the teacher. Some boys tend to call out more often than most of the class, but the more pupils do this, the less it is accepted by the teacher. As a result, these boys are far more often reprimanded than most of the girls (and boys). The qualitative differences are not caused or reinforced by the teachers. On the contrary, all teachers use techniques to compensate for the (individual and gender related) differences, which seem to originate from the children themselves.

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► *Tine Brouckaert*

**Undocumented mothers raising citizens**

A study with lone undocumented migrant women in their interactions with child-care, school and home

This paper is exploring the practices of raising child(ren) by undocumented migrants mothers on their citizenship potentials. The case study concerns an in-depth ethnographic study of the lives of seven undocumented mothers living on Belgian soil. I consider their daily interactions and discourses in the context of childcare, school and practices of homemaking and identity. The mothers demonstrate an expertise in combining various logistic and moral resources on local and transnational level in raising their child. Despite their unequal position, they engage themselves in their children's school context and negotiate between their personal and cultural values and society's normative discourses and practices of child raising. In the context of home they are reproducing but also creating new feelings of belonging, with a place for their perceived differences. Therefore their mothering is not merely limited to the private domain, but extends to public and political spheres, recasting and challenging traditional understandings of citizenship.

► *K. Bügel, R.V.J. Alberts and R.J. Zwieter*

**Are boys falling further and further behind in academic achievement?**

This article examines presumed male underachievement of Dutch students aged fifteen and over, considering three questions: (a) Are educational achievements of boys worse than those of girls? (b) If so, have these discrepancies recently increased? and (c) If so, are these possible growing discrepancies caused by increasing female

performance, decreasing male performance, or both? In order to answer these questions, the following six aspects will be considered: (1) educational level, (2) repeating a school year, (3) choice of programme and subjects, (4) grades, *i.e.* results of the national examinations at the end of secondary school, (5) choice of academic discipline in higher education, and (6) (progression of) academic attainment in higher education.

Overall academic attainment was found to be quite equal, though slightly higher for girls than for boys. Boys are more likely than girls to be held back a grade and girls are more likely to continue to higher levels of education. Overall mean scores in the national examinations at the end of secondary school showed very small to no differences. On the subject level, however, girls outperform boys on Dutch reading, philosophy, art and health care, while boys score higher on exact sciences and economics. Differences were small, but more pronounced at the two lowest school levels. When it comes to subject choice, boys lean towards science and technical programmes whereas girls are more likely to choose the humanities and economical and health care subjects. However, the gender gap in subject choice is narrowing, especially in upper secondary education. Although women are better educated, men frequently earn more and are more likely to hold positions of power in political and economic life.

The results of the study suggest that there is no such thing as a 'boys crisis': on the contrary, males are achieving better than they used to. The explanation simply appears to be that women have progressed even faster. Existing explanations for gender differences are discussed. Finally the authors emphasize that discrepancies among individual girls or among individual boys are much greater than those between the

'average' girl and the 'average' boy. Focus on small discrepancies between genders tends to reinforce difference-based stereotypes. It is argued that education should concentrate on characteristics of individual students instead of gender-based stereotypes.

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► *Sabine Kraus and Hanna Harthoorn*

### **Fathers are indispensable**

A pitfall

Feminists in the '70s started out by demanding a more equal division of care between men and women on the grounds of fairness. After a while the strategy changed, both in the women's movement and in official emancipation policy: men were to be convinced that raising children was rewarding, and that fathers were indispensable.

A lot has been achieved since then. A majority of the public in the Netherlands now disagrees that women are better suited than men to raise small children. But this change has had to be paid for by new stereotyping: fathers are said to be essentially different from mothers (fathers are good at challenging, mothers good at protecting). More and more people in surveys agree that a child needs both a mother and a father. Which can lead to problems for single, divorced, or gay parents.

The article argues that there may be characteristics that are more prevalent among fathers (or mothers), but that no characteristic is exclusive to either gender. Fathers' and mothers' roles are subject to change, even in the course of one generation. It is time for a new feminist discourse on parenthood, based on individual rights, instead of advocating change by using new stereotypes.

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► *J. de Weerd and E. Rommes*

### **'To beta or not to beta', the role of teachers in the choices for science and technology**

Can teachers influence the self efficacy, attitude and choice for science? In this article we discuss the results of 18 in depth interviews and a survey with 149 pupils who are about to make a choice whether to continue following science subjects in school or not. Significantly more boys than girls intended to continue in physics, whereas there was no significant difference in chemistry in the school we studied. In this and previous research, it is hard to show the direct influence of teachers' behavior on pupils choices, except for study advice they give. We did find, however, significant correlations between girls' perception of teachers' behaviour (e.g. how much attention they paid to this pupil) and girls' self efficacy and attitude towards the subject. As girls in general had lower self efficacy and showed less interest in science subjects than boys and as we found that pupils' self efficacy and attitude did correlate and possibly influence their subject choices, we argue that teachers' behaviour is important for the genderedness of the choices of pupils. We also argue that as there were differences in findings between chemistry and physics, this indicates a difference in gender connotations between science subjects.

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