


**Supporting long-term paternal involvement.  
Swiss experiences**



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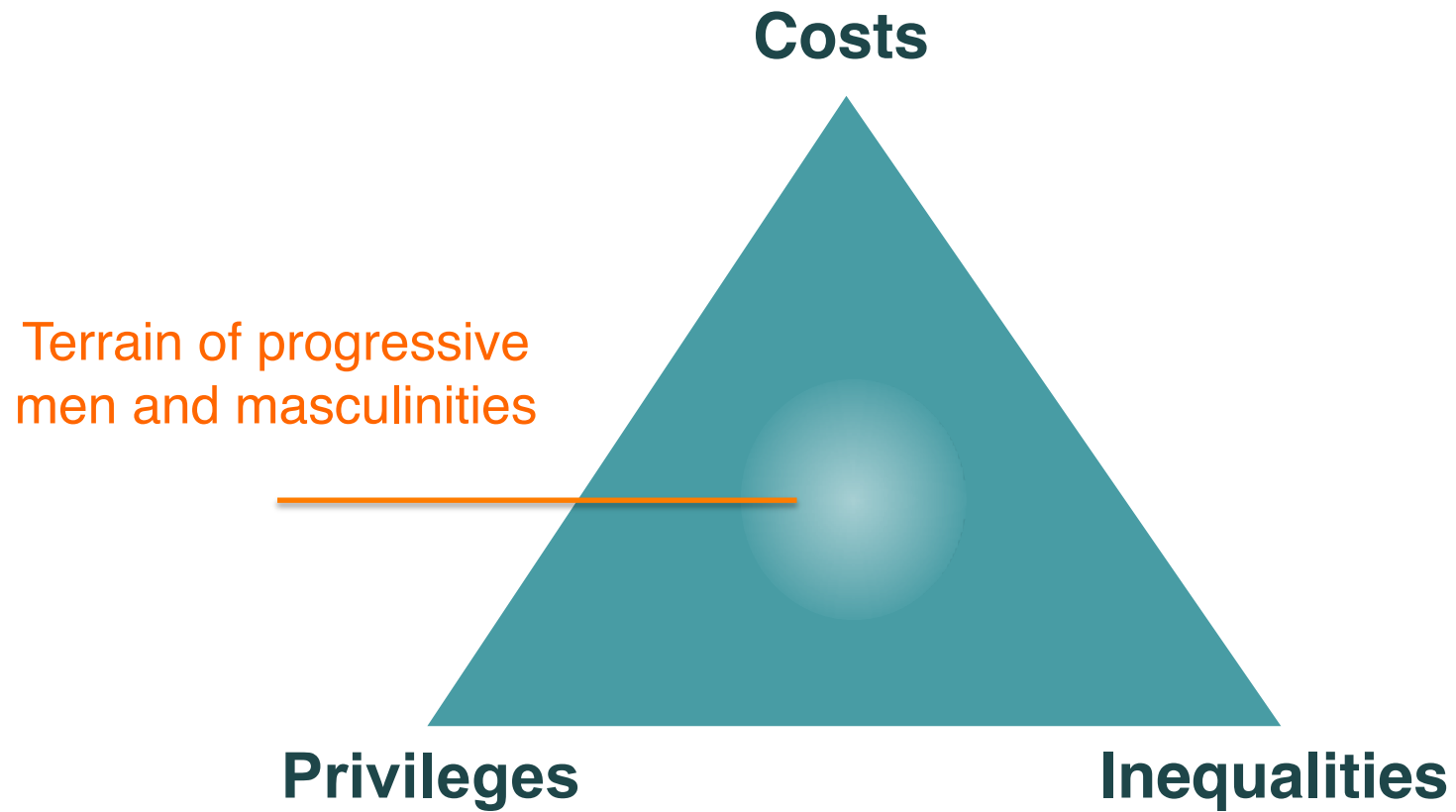
männer.ch is the umbrella association of progressive men's and father's organizations in Switzerland, founded 2005.

Since 2014, männer.ch leads the national program MenCare Switzerland (as umbrella strategy for all advocacy and capacity building activities).

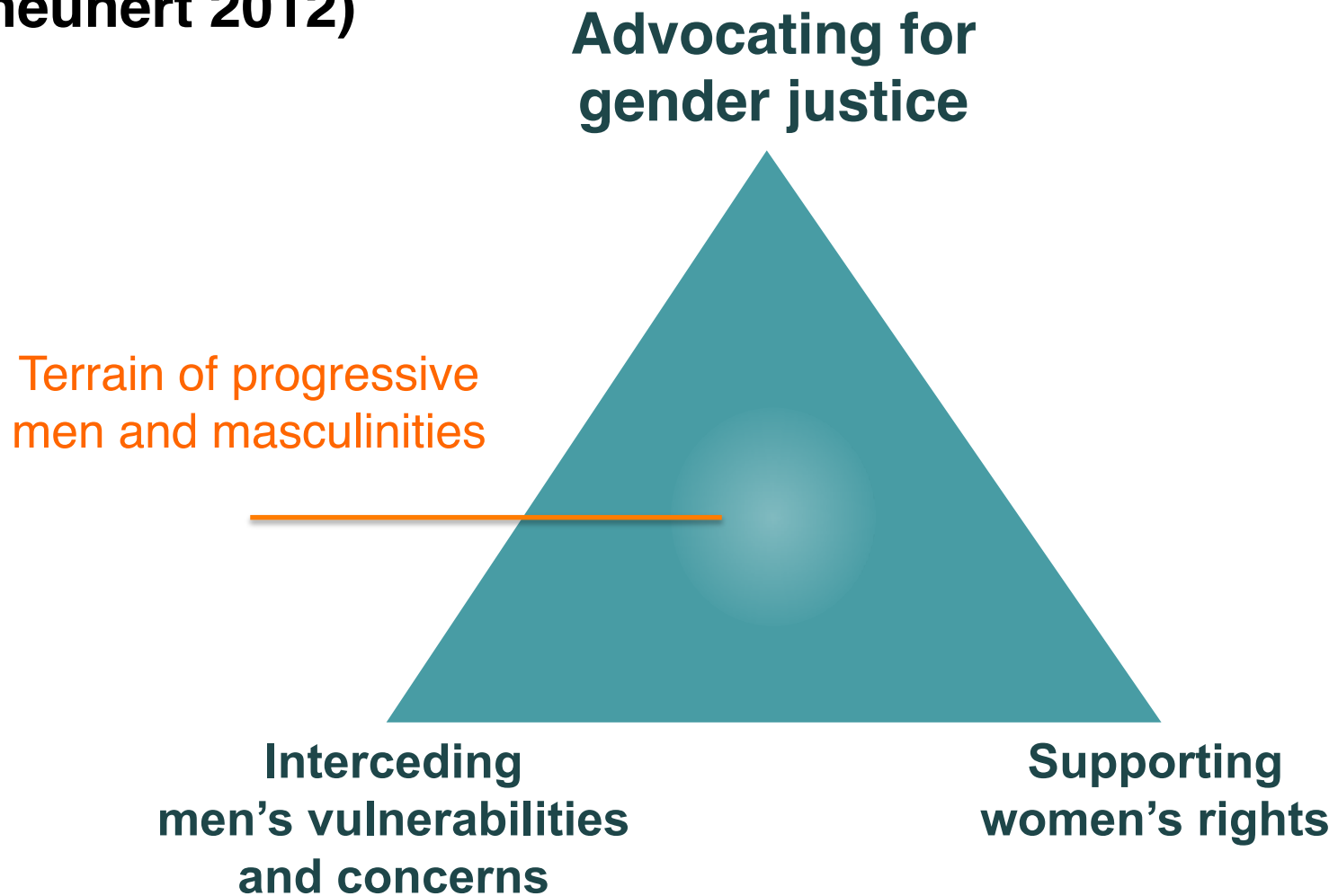
The overarching objective of MenCare Switzerland is to create a social norms change to make paternal masculinities and paternal involvement normal.

**men**care **schweiz  
suisse  
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## Basic concepts I (Messner 1999)



## Basic concepts II (Theunert 2012)



## Relevant experiences

Our advocacy work lead to two major law revisions:

1. Revised child custody law (2014)
2. Revised child support law (2017)

And hopefully soon as third major achievement:  
Anchorage of a paternity leave of 10 days (federal  
popular votation on September 27th 2020...  
Wish us best of luck ;-) !

## Crucial challenge

Legal conditions are set in a field of strong tension:

- fostering gender equality and share fair of childcare
- supporting women / single moms

-> how to deal with as progressive / profeminist organization in the political discourse?



## Lessons learned / Theses

1. Pregnancy and birth constitute a sensitive period concerning paternal involvement. Being engaged as a father from the beginning is key to prevent divorce (fights).
2. What (traditional) men do as breadwinner has to be appreciated. They do care *for* their families. To appreciate that is the precondition to ask: Why don't you care (more) *in* the family?

## Lessons learned / Theses

3. In the case of divorce, traditional male breadwinner risk to find no way back *into* the family. Legal conditions may set additional hurdles. That's neither fair nor smart.

4. Not every angry divorced father is a men's right activist or a anti-feminist. It's worth to differentiate and to look for common grounds with moderates (i.e. the will to be an involved father and to share fair domestic duties).

## **Lessons learned / Theses**

5. Legal fights may be prevented by focusing reorganisation of the whole family system under changed circumstances (instead of focusing parental rights or child's wellbeing exclusively).

6. In case of divorce, paternal involvement is not a subject of individual liberty anymore. Legal conditions play a crucial role. They have to ensure a basic involvement of all fathers (regardless of their involvement) and to reward involved fathers with the protection of their involvement.

## Lessons learned / Theses

7. A sensitive question remains: Do have (traditional) male breadwinner a „right to learn“ of the failure of their marriage? Do they have a right to involve themselves more in childcare after divorce? This is no Yes/No-question. To make it ideological is a safe way to do harm.

8. Always remember: It's not about „men **versus** women“. It's about „gender equality and share fair **versus** gender inequality and share not fair“.