

# GEXcel Work in Progress Report Volume X

Proceedings from GEXcel Theme 11–12:  
Gender Paradoxes in Changing Academic  
and Scientific Organisation(s)

Edited by  
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Centre of Gendering Excellence – GEXcel

**Towards a European Centre of Excellence in  
Transnational and Transdisciplinary Studies of**

- Changing Gender Relations
- Intersectionalities
- Embodiment

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Department of Gender Studies, Tema Institute,  
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# Centre of Gender Excellence Gendering Excellence – GEXcel

Towards a European Centre of Excellence in  
Transnational and Transdisciplinary Studies of:

- Changing Gender Relations
- Intersectionalities
- Embodiment

*Nina Lykke,  
Linköping University, Director of GEXcel*

In 2006, the Swedish Research Council granted 20 million SEK to set up a Centre of Gender Excellence at the inter-university Institute of Thematic Gender Studies, Linköping University and Örebro University, for the period 2007–2011. Linköping University has added five million SEK as matching funds, while Örebro University has added three million SEK as matching funds.

The following is a short presentation of the excellence centre. For more information contact: Scientific Director of GEXcel, Professor Nina Lykke ([ninly@tema.liu.se](mailto:ninly@tema.liu.se)); GEXcel Research Coordinator, Dr. Silje Lundgren ([coordinator@genderexcel.org](mailto:coordinator@genderexcel.org)); GEXcel Research Coordinator, Dr. Gunnel Karlsson ([gunnel.karlsson@oru.se](mailto:gunnel.karlsson@oru.se)); Dr. Sofia Strid ([sofia.strid@oru.se](mailto:sofia.strid@oru.se)); or Manager, Gender Studies, Linköping, Berit Starkman ([berst@tema.liu.se](mailto:berst@tema.liu.se)).

## Institutional basis of GEXcel

Institute of Thematic Gender Studies, Linköping University and Örebro University

The institute is a collaboration between:

Department of Gender Studies, Linköping University;

Gender and Medicine, Linköping University

&

Centre for Feminist Social Studies, Örebro University;

Gender Studies, Örebro University

## GEXcel board and lead-team

– a transdisciplinary team of Gender Studies professors:

- Professor Nina Lykke, Linköping University (Director) – Gender and Culture; background: Literary Studies
- Professor Anita Göransson, Linköping University – Gender, Organisation and Economic Change; background: Economic History
- Professor Jeff Hearn, Linköping University – Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities; background: Sociology and Organisation Studies
- Professor Liisa Husu, Örebro University – Gender Studies with a Social Science profile; background: Sociology
- Professor Emerita Anna G. Jónasdóttir, Örebro University – Gender Studies with a Social Science profile; background: Political Science, Social and Political Theory
- Professor Barbro Wijma, Linköping University – Gender and Medicine; background: Medicine and Associate Professor Katarina Swahnberg – Gender and Medicine; background: Medicine

## International advisory board

- Professor Karen Barad, University of California, St. Cruz, USA
- Professor Rosi Braidotti, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands
- Professor Raewyn Connell, University of Sydney, Australia
- Professor Emerita Kathleen B. Jones, San Diego State University, USA
- Professor Elzbieta Oleksy, University of Lodz, Poland
- Professor Berit Schei, Norwegian University of Technology, Trondheim, Norway
- Professor Birte Siim, University of Aalborg, Denmark

## Aims of GEXcel

- 1) To set up a temporary (five year) Centre of Gender Excellence (Gendering EXcellence: GEXcel) in order to develop innovative research on changing gender relations, intersectionalities and embodiment from transnational and transdisciplinary perspectives.
- 2) To become a pilot or developmental scheme for a more permanent Sweden-based European Collegium for Advanced Transnational and Transdisciplinary Gender Studies (CATSgender).

## A core activity of GEXcel 2007–2011

A core activity is a visiting fellows programme, organised to attract excellent senior researchers and promising younger scholars from Sweden and abroad and from many disciplinary backgrounds. The visiting fellows are taken in after application and a peer-reviewed evaluation process of the applications; a number of top scholars within the field are also invited to be part of GEXcel's research teams. GEXcel's visiting fellows receive grants from one week to 12 months to stay at GEXcel to do research together with the permanent staff of six Gender Studies professors and other relevant local staff.

The Fellowship Programme is concentrated on annually shifting thematic foci. We select and construct shifting research groups, consisting of excellent researchers of different academic generations (professors, post doctoral scholars, doctoral students) to carry out new research on specified research themes within the overall frame of changing gender relations, intersectionalities and embodiment.

## Brief definition of overall research theme of GEXcel

The overall theme of GEXcel research is defined as transnational and transdisciplinary studies of changing gender relations, intersectionalities and embodiment. We have chosen a broad and inclusive frame in order to attract a diversity of excellent scholars from different disciplines, countries and academic generations, but specificity and focus are also given high priority and ensured via annually shifting thematic foci.

The overall keywords of the (long!) title are chosen in order to indicate currently pressing theoretical and methodological challenges of gender research to be addressed by GEXcel research:

–By the keyword 'transnational' we underline that GEXcel research should contribute to a systematic transnationalizing of research on gender relations, intersectionalities and embodiment, and, in so doing, develop a reflexive stance vis-à-vis transnational travelling of ideas, theories

and concepts, and consciously try to overcome reductive one-country focused research as well as pseudo-universalising research that unreflectedly takes, for example ‘Western’ or ‘Scandinavian’ models as norm.

–By the keyword ‘changing’ we aim at underlining that it, in a world of rapidly changing social, cultural, economic and technical relations, is crucial to be able to theorise change, and that this is of particular importance for critical gender research due to its liberatory aims and inherent focus on macro, meso and micro level transformations.

–By the keyword ‘gender relations’, we aim at underlining that we define gender not as an essence, but as a relational, plural and shifting process, and that it is the aim of GEXcel research to contribute to a further understanding of this process.

–By the keyword ‘intersectionalities’, we stress that a continuous reflection on meanings of intersectionalities in gender research should be integrated in all GEXcel research. In particular, we will emphasise four different aspects: a) intersectionality as intersections of disciplines and main areas (humanities, social sciences and medical and natural sciences); b) intersectionality as intersections between macro, meso and micro level social analyses; c) intersectionality as intersections between social categories and power differentials organised around categories such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, age, nationality, profession, disability; d) intersectionality as intersections between major different branches of feminist theorising (for example, queer feminist theorising, Marxist feminist theorising, postcolonial feminist theorising etc.).

–Finally, by the keyword ‘embodiment’, we aim at emphasising yet another kind of intersectionality, which has proved crucial in current gender research – to explore intersections between discourse and materiality and between sex and gender.

## Specific research themes of GEXcel

The research at GEXcel focuses on a variety of themes. The research themes are the following:

### Theme 1: Gender, Sexuality and Global Change

On interactions of gender and sexuality in a global perspective.

Headed by Anna G. Jónasdóttir.

### Theme 2: Deconstructing the Hegemony of Men and Masculinities

On ways to critically analyse constructions of the social category ‘men’.

Headed by Jeff Hearn.

### Theme 3: Distinctions and Authorisation

On meanings of gender, class, and ethnicity in constructions of elites.  
Headed by Anita Göransson.

### Themes 4 and 5: Sexual Health, Embodiment and Empowerment

On new synergies between different kinds of feminist researchers' (e.g. philosophers' and medical doctors') approaches to the sexed body.  
Headed by Nina Lykke (Theme 5) and Barbro Wijma (Theme 4).

### Theme 6: Power Shifts and New Divisions in Society, Work and University

On the specificities of new central power bases, such as immaterial production and the rule of knowledge.  
Headed by Anita Göransson.

### Themes 7 and 8: Teaching Normcritical Sex – Getting Rid of Violence. TRANSDisciplinary, TRANSnational and TRANSformative Feminist Dialogues on Embodiment, Emotions and Ethics

On the struggles and synergies of socio-cultural and medical perspectives taking place in the three arenas sex education, critical sexology and violence.

Headed by Nina Lykke (Theme 8) and Barbro Wijma (Theme 7).

### Theme 9: Gendered Sexuated Transnationalisations, Deconstructing the Dominant: Transforming men, 'centres' and knowledge/policy/practice. On various gendered, sexuated, intersectional, embodied, transnational processes, in relation to contemporary and potential changes in power relations.

Headed by Jeff Hearn.

### Theme 10: Love in Our Time – a Question for Feminism

On the recent and growing interest in love as a subject for serious social and political theory among both non-feminist and feminist scholars.

Headed by Anna G. Jónasdóttir.

### Themes 11 and 12) Gender Paradoxes in Changing Academic and Scientific Organisation(s).

Theme on gender paradoxes in how academic and scientific organisations are changing and being changed.

Headed by Liisa Husu.

In addition, three cross-cutting research themes will also be organised:

- a) Exploring Socio-technical Models for Combining Virtual and Physical Co-Presence while doing joint Gender Research;
- b) Organising a European Excellence Centre – Exploring Models;
- c) Theories and Methodologies in Transnational and Transdisciplinary Studies of Gender Relations, Intersectionalities and Embodiment.

The thematically organised research groups are chaired by GEXcel's core staff of six Gender Studies professors, who together make up a transdisciplinary team, covering the humanities, the social sciences and medicine.

## Ambitions and visions

The fellowship programme of GEXcel is created with the central purpose to create transnational and transdisciplinary research teams that will have the opportunity to work together for a certain time – long enough to do joint research, do joint publications, produce joint international research applications and do other joint activities such as organising international conferences.

We will build on our extensive international networks to promote the idea of a permanent European institute for advanced and excellent gender research – and in collaboration with other actors seek to make this idea reality, for example, organisations such as AOIFE, the SOCRATES-funded network Athena and WISE, who jointly are preparing for a professional Gender Studies organisation in Europe.

We also hope that collaboration within Sweden will sustain the long-term goals of making a difference both in Sweden and abroad.

We consider GEXcel to be a pilot or developmental scheme for a more long-term European centre of gender excellence, i.e. for an institute- or collegium-like structure dedicated to advanced, transnational and transdisciplinary gender research, research training and education in advanced Gender Studies (GEXcel Collegium).

Leading international institutes for advanced study such as the Centre for the Study of Democracy at the University of California Irvine, and in Sweden The Swedish Collegium for Advanced Studies (SCAS at Uppsala University) have proved to be attractive environments and creative meeting places where top scholars in various fields from all over the world, and from different generations, have found time for reflective work and for meeting and generating new, innovative research. We would like to explore how this kind of academic structures that have

proved very productive in terms of advancing excellence and high level, internationally important and recognised research within other areas of study, can unleash new potentials of gender research and initiate a new level of excellence within the area. The idea is, however not just to take an existing academic form for unfolding of excellence potentials and fill it with excellent gender research. Understood as a developmental/pilot scheme for the GEXcel Collegium, GEXcel should build on inspirations from the mentioned units for advanced studies, but also further explore and assess what feminist excellence means in terms of both contents and form/structure.

We want to rework the advanced research collegium model on a feminist basis, including thorough critical reflections on meanings of gender excellence. What does it mean to gender excellence? How can we do it in even more excellent and feminist innovative ways?



## Editors' Foreword

This volume is the result of the initial activities carried out within the frame of GEXcel Theme 11–12, *Gender Paradoxes in Changing Academic and Scientific Organisation(s)*. It comprises work-in-progress pieces written by the junior and senior Visiting Fellows who stayed at Örebro University, Sweden, for different lengths of time during Spring and Autumn 2011. During and after the kick-off conference of the theme in May 2011 the Visiting Fellows started to work on their GEXcel projects.

The report is of a work-in-progress character, and thus the papers presented here are to be elaborated further. The reader should also be aware that due to the fact that this is a report of working papers, the language of the papers contributed by non-native English speakers has not been specifically edited.





# Gender Paradoxes in Changing Academic and Scientific Organisation(s)

*Liisa Husu*

How are academia, science and scientific organisations changing and being changed in Sweden, Europe and globally, and how are these changes related to gender?

Seen from a historical perspective, it becomes evident that feminism has changed academia, science, and academic and scientific organisations (Schiebinger 1999). However, current views on changes in gender relations in academia and science frequently appear as contradictory, claiming a persistent male dominance, on the one hand, or an emerging new imbalance in women's favour, on the other. Recent European gender and science statistics demonstrate how women continue to be a minority of European researchers in higher education, the business sector and in governmental research, and how the gatekeepers shaping the research agenda, and the heads of universities and research institutions are overwhelmingly male (EC 2009ab), but at the same time, we can also be warned that women are about to 'take over universities' (see Husu 2007; Quinn 2003; Morley 2011).

Academic and scientific organisations are key sites of societal, academic and scientific knowledge production. These sites, as well as the nature of much academic and scientific work, have experienced rapid changes in recent decades. Such changes include: globalisation and increasing internationalisation of institutions, policies and academic and scientific work; rapid technological change; new forms of governance and increased accountability; new stratifications of institutions and professions with increased emphasis on competition, excellence and top performance; and prioritising science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) fields in research policy. These changes are increasingly shaping the contexts of academic and scientific work, careers, organisations and knowledge production, nationally, regionally and globally.

Despite such rapid changes, it can be argued that it is rather a lack of change that characterises the gender patterns in many, even most, academic and scientific organisations and settings. Gender patterns in academia and science have been shown to be highly persistent and resistant to change regardless of cultural setting. Horizontal, vertical and

even contractual gender segregations continue to characterise the academic and scientific labour force. Men continue to be over-represented among gatekeepers setting academic and research agendas. Workplace cultures, networks and interactions in academic and scientific organisations continue to show highly gendered patterns (see Currie et al 2002; EC 2009b; ETAN 2000; Eveline 2004; Hearn 2004; Husu 2001, 2005, 2007; Husu et al 2010; Husu and Koskinen 2010; Leemann and Stutz 2010; Morley 2007; Pellert and Gindl 2007; Riegraf et al 2010; Sagaria 2007; Siemienska and Zimmer 2007; van den Brink 2010).

This wide range of gender inequalities remains so despite the fact that the recruitment pool to academia and research has been feminising rather heavily in several fields, such as medicine, and despite a wide variety of interventions aimed at changing academia and science towards greater gender balance and gender awareness. The evidence accumulated on the dynamics of gender equality interventions in academia and scientific organisations, and the experiences of different change agents, show significant organisational gender inertia and various forms of resistance, implicit and explicit, against attempts of changing the asymmetric gender order (see Blanpain and Numhauser-Henning 2006; EC 2008a; Fogelberg et al 1999; *Higher Education in Europe* 2000; Morley 1999, 2005; Müller 2007; Pincus 2002; Riegraf et al 2010).

Indeed, promoting gender equality in academia and scientific research is currently strongly on the agenda of various major stakeholders, nationally and internationally. This has occurred in:

- Universities (see, for example, Fogelberg et al 1999; MIT 1999; *Higher Education in Europe* 2000; LERU 2012);
- National research councils and major funding organisations (see Husu et al 2010; NSF 2007; EC 2009b);
- High profile science journals such as *Nature* and *Science* (see Barres 2006; Bhattacharjee 2007; Nature 1999, 2009; Stevenson 1997);
- International intergovernmental organisations: the United Nations (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995) and its specialised agencies, such as UNESCO (Harding and McGregor 1995; UNESCO Courier 2007); the OECD (2006), and the European Commission (EC 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2009a, 2009b; ETAN 2000; Rees 2002, 2007).

Gender paradoxes in how academic and scientific organisations are changing, and being changed, have been the main focus in GEXcel research themes 11 and 12. Science is here understood in its wider meaning, as in the German term 'Wissenschaft' or the Swedish 'vetenskap', including all disciplinary areas, and referring not only to the natural sciences.

Both the changes that are constituted by long-term macro trends, on the one hand, and the more immediate changes aimed for in terms of policy interventions, on the other, are of interest here. Many changes seemingly appear as non-gendered or are represented as such. The GEXcel research themes 11 and 12 interrogate the gender dimensions and gender impacts of both these sets of changes on academic and scientific organisations, on academic and scientific work, and knowledge production.

The GEXcel research themes 11–12 were addressed by three sub-themes, which are partially overlapping:

(a) **The paradox of change:** How can we understand the contradiction between rapid ‘non-gendered’ changes, on the one hand, and the widely observed gender inertia or lack of change in gender relations in academic and scientific organisations, on the other? In what ways are various seemingly ‘non-gendered’ change processes gendered, such as globalisation, technological changes (see, for example, *Journal of Technology, Management and Innovation* 2010) or changes in governance? What is the role of various gatekeepers and gatekeeping processes and practices in promoting, facilitating, or blocking and preventing change towards more gender equal academic and scientific organisations?

(b) **The paradox of excellence:** What kind of gendering processes can be observed in new and emerging stratifications of academic and scientific organisations, disciplines and professions? What kind of gender impacts can be discerned in the design and implementation of different initiatives and programmes bearing the ‘excellence’ label? In what ways are the policies and actions promoting excellence, and promoting gender equality perceived and presented as contradictory?

(c) **The paradox of interventions:** How can we understand the contradiction of long-term gender equality promotion in academic and scientific organisations in many cultural settings, and the slow change in gender relations in academia and science? Can gender equality interventions inadvertently enhance inequalities and how? What kind of contradictions and resistance do gender equality change agents experience in science and academia? How to analyse the gender dynamics and impacts of seemingly non-gendered interventions such as reforms in appointment, evaluation, funding or salary systems?

## GEXcel Research Theme 11–12 Activities

All in all fifteen GEXcel Visiting Scholars from nine countries were invited to spend a visiting period from a few weeks up to four months at the Centre for Gender Excellence at Örebro University during Spring

and Autumn 2011, to work on their research, interact intensively with other GEXcel Scholars around the GEXcel research themes 11–12, to give and receive collegial feedback, and discuss and develop potential future collaborations.

The Visiting Scholar positions for the doctoral students and post-doctoral researchers were internationally advertised, and the Scholars were selected in competition and by peer review to pursue their research projects related to the theme. The selected Visiting Scholars were Dr. Marieke van den Brink (Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands), Dr. Jennifer de Vries (University of Western Australia, Australia), Professor Heike Kahlert (Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Germany), Dr. Mia Liinason (Lund University, Sweden), Dr. Paula Mählck (Stockholm University, Sweden), Irina Nikiforova (Georgia Institute of Technology, USA), Dr. Maria do Mar Pereira (London School of Economics, United Kingdom, and Universidade Aberta, Portugal), Dr. Helen Peterson (Linköping University, Sweden), Helene Schiffbänker (University of Vienna, and Joanneum Research, Austria), Monica Wirz (University of Cambridge, United Kingdom), and Dr. Angela Wroblewski (Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna; University of Vienna; Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria). Three of the Visiting Scholars were selected as doctoral students: Irina Nikiforova, Helene Schiffbänker and Monica Wirz, and two of them, Nikiforova and Schiffbänker, have subsequently obtained their Ph.D. Four scholars were invited as Senior GEXcel Scholars to Örebro: directrice de recherche Suzanne de Cheveigné, CNRS, Centre Norbert Elias, France; Professor emerita Jan Currie, Murdoch University, Australia; Professor Louise Morley, Sussex University, United Kingdom, and Professor Teresa Rees, Cardiff University, Wales. In addition to working on their own research the Senior Scholars provided advice and individual mentoring and coaching to the Junior Scholars. The composition of the group of Visiting Scholars enabled ongoing in-depth international comparisons between regions, countries, institutions, career systems and welfare regimes.

The papers in this volume introduce shortly the research projects the GEXcel theme 11–12 Visiting Scholars were to pursue during their stay in Örebro and GEXcel. The topics of their research projects cover a wide range of approaches and issues related to theme 11–12: from science and research policy to leadership, management and career advancement, from analysis and reflections on gender equality interventions and gender equality change agents to exploring the paradoxes of the status of gender studies in different cultural settings.

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# Chapter 1

## Science Policies in the European Union as a Tool for Change Toward Gender Equality: 10 Years after ETAN

*Teresa Rees*

For many years my research has focused on gender mainstreaming and science policies in the European Union, and more specifically, on the thorny issue of women in science. I have acted as a rapporteur for a series of expert group reports on this topic for the European Commission's (EC) Research Directorate-General (Osborn et al 2000; Rees, 2002; RübSamen-Waigmann et al 2003). The EC has arguably played a significant role over the last ten years in seeking to ensure that the issue of women and science is recognised as important (EC 2010). This is motivated by social justice but also by the fact that gender is still used as a major organising principle in the allocation of research opportunities and rewards, which cuts across the promotion of excellence. In an increasingly competitive environment, this is clearly inefficient. The debates on women and science have moved from 'why so few' women (Valian 1999), to investigating the chill factors in the culture of universities, especially in their science departments and the research teams within them, to the neglect of gender as a variable in research itself: as Shiebinger has called it – fix the woman, fix the culture and fix the science (Shiebinger 2007; Schiebinger and Schraudner 2011). Research leaders in Europe have recently testified that this is a significant problem that needs urgently to be addressed (genSET 2010).

This paper looks at the record of the EC as an agent of change in gender equality by focusing on its actions on women and science. How successful has it been in promoting this agenda? The paper also draws partly upon my experience as a Pro Vice Chancellor at Cardiff University, a research-intensive institution in the UK, where we have sought to adopt good practice to promote gender equality.

### The ETAN report

The Women and Science Unit in the EC's Research Directorate-General set up a European Technology Assessment Network (ETAN) in 1999 to explore the issue of women and science. The members of the group,

women scientists from various EU countries, laboured to collect internationally comparative statistics on women and science at the time; there were for example different definitions of roles such as professor in the different countries. We recommended such figures should be collected and published on a regular basis, as they now are in the *SHE Figures* series (see for example EC 2009). We discovered how men are promoted disproportionate to their numbers in the base recruitment pool in every country, in every discipline and at every grade in the academic hierarchy (Osborn et al 2000). We made a series of recommendations for mainstreaming gender equality throughout the European Union. We also argued for gender mainstreaming in research itself, such as that funded by the EC through the Framework Programme.

At the same time as the ETAN report was being prepared, the first meeting of the Helsinki Group of National representatives on women and science was convened (in Helsinki). This group, which still exists, worked together to compare national policies on women and science (Rees 2002) and to chart the patterns of attrition of women from science in their respective countries in the familiar ‘scissors’ diagram – where women may start as the majority of graduates in a discipline, but become a small minority by the time they reach the end of blade (professorial ranks); the blade crosses over with the rising proportions of men in promoted grades. The Women and Science Unit (variously renamed over the decade and now in danger of disappearing) was highly active in promoting women and science through organising conferences, commissioning research, convening meetings of networks of women in science, and in seeking to ensure a better gender balance on its advisory committees and among research teams in the Framework Programmes, as its stock take of 10 years activity reports (EC 2010). It also sought to review the way in which gender had been paid attention to in the research funded under the 5th Framework Programme and sought to ensure that it was more prominent in the research in the 6th, through obliging research teams to include Gender Action Plans in their research proposals and reports.

## Gender mainstreaming

It is useful here to pause to define gender mainstreaming, as there are so many competing definitions. I have compared three approaches to promoting gender equality as ‘tinkering’ (equal treatment), ‘tailoring’ (positive action) and ‘transforming’ (mainstreaming) (Rees 2005). While tinkering focuses on the individual and their rights to equal treatment, positive action seeks to ameliorate the effect of group disadvantage that women experience (although, in cases, this amounts to remedial treatment rooted in a deficit model), while transforming requires institutions

to review and change their cultures and underpinning processes, policies and procedures to ensure that promoting gender equality is part of the way it does business. The tools include gender proofing of policies, gender disaggregated statistics and equality indicators, consultation, gender-budgeting, gender audits, gender balance in committees, gender impact assessments and so on. The most complex tool I have called visioning, which is to reflect on the sometimes obscure ways in which androcentricity underpins the organisation and its culture and creating ways to neutralise it. This can work both ways; female dominated organisations can create cultures that are based on assumptions that do not work for men. Gender budgeting on health screening reveals far more money is spent on women than men. Gender mainstreaming promotes gender equality by diminishing its role in cultures, organisations and the allocation of opportunities.

## Challenges

From the EC commissioned research on women and science over the decade, it is clear that there are a number of challenges. In the first instance, the reviews of the way in which gender was addressed as a variable in the 5th Framework Programmes proved to be disappointing. However, so were the Gender Action Plans in the 6th. The Commission therefore funded a toolkit and training for researchers for the 7th Framework Programme and is currently considering what action to take in the 8th. There is growing evidence that ignoring the gender dimension in research impairs its quality, especially in medical research where pharmaceutical products that are prescribed for women have much less of an evidence base than those prescribed to men – as clinical trials are very often men only (see Holdcroft et al 2011; Rees 2011; Shiebinger 2007).

A second challenge is the neglect of the significance of gender as a variable in the undergraduate curriculum and in post graduate training, resulting in researchers who underestimate its importance. This is in part why the Gender Action Plans were unsuccessful, as the research community was not equipped to deal with the requirement.

A third challenge is the lack of women in decision-making about science, on funding bodies, science committees, learned societies, editorial boards, promotion panels and so on. Who decides what is excellent? (Rees 2011) While feminist scholarship has been developing, it tends to appear in feminist journals and is not necessarily known in a wider research community.

A fourth challenge is women's experiences in the academy, where women not only fail to reach top positions in the number one might expect, but many experience 'chill factors' that can lead to women leav-

ing science (see, for example, Lober Newsome 2008 for an account of women's experiences in Chemistry Departments in the UK).

## An institutional approach

In Cardiff University, we have adopted some of the good practice that has emerged, including examples published by the EC, to seek to improve the position of women in the institution. Promotion procedures are now more transparent and published benchmarks are used against which the panel, assessors and referees measure candidates. Policies to address harassment and bullying have been developed, and an equal pay audit was conducted, together with audits of gender balance on senior committees. The institution took advantage of the training sponsored by the EC and delivered by Yellow Window on avoiding gender bias in research. The 'inclusive curriculum' project seeks to ensure that the diversity of the population, including gender differences, is reflected in the education that is provided. A women professors' network has been established and the university participates in an all Wales mentoring scheme for women, academics and support staff. A public equality and diversity lecture series is hosted by the pro vice chancellors. These and other measures seek to provide a more positive working environment for all staff.

In the US, the National Science Foundation funds the ADANCE programme, which provides grants for universities to reflect upon and make necessary cultural changes to improve the situation for women on the staff. While some EU Member States support this kind of work, for example in Germany, a major investment of this kind from the EC would assist individual institutions to change much more effectively.

## Conclusions

The main approach of the EC to women and science reflects its commitment to gender mainstreaming and is in line with the recommendations in the ETAN report. However, progress is slow. While there may be more women among early career researchers, attrition remains an issue, and the experience of working in a university has not necessarily improved for those women who still find themselves in a small minority. The Research Directorate-General has published a report on Structural Change in Research Institutions, with a focus on improving the position of women in science and the treatment of gender in research. Meanwhile the Education Directorate-General is preparing a Communication on Modernising Universities. It is clear that even after ten years activity, while we may understand it better, the 'problem' of women in science has

not been solved. However, its importance as an issue to be addressed is still recognised.

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## Chapter 2

# Sex, Grades and Southern Theory: the Impact of Feminist Research on Higher Education Globally



*Louise Morley*

I shall be working on a paper that will consider feminist research in relation to impact and global inclusiveness. The quality of research in the UK and elsewhere is now evaluated for its policy, social, economic and community impact (Saunders 2010), with the concept of knowledge exchange now a dominant concern of research funders. Knowledge is no longer seen as legitimate in its own right. It has to be transferred into diverse contexts and effect auditable change. A further consideration is how to develop an epistemology of the South, or Southern theory *i.e.* the inclusion of southern perspectives in knowledge production, development and legitimisation of feminist and social theory (Connell 2007; De Sousa Santos and Meneses 2009; Smith 1999). These two issues come together in relation to global feminist research findings on sexual harassment in higher education. Lucid, convincing evidence is being repeatedly ignored, with abusive practices repeatedly enacted. There appears to be considerable global knowledge but very limited exchange!

Sexual harassment is a hidden norm of organisational life that frequently remains unchallenged – despite the global policy architecture of gender mainstreaming (Morley 2010). It involves spatial and cognitive justice, with women having to self-minimise in order to avoid unwanted attention (the majority of studies report heterosexual male to female harassment). Hostile/toxic learning and working environments, or ‘chilly climates’ for women have been the subject of much research (*e.g.* Sandler et al 1996; NUS 2010). MacKinnon’s (1979: 116–18, 174) early theorisations argued that sexual harassment is sex discrimination because the act reinforces the social inequality of women to men. The labelling of familiar behaviour as sexual harassment in the 1970s was a landmark speech act which both named and declared opposition to these practices and discriminatory gender regimes. Since then, there have been numerous studies internationally *e.g.* Botswana (Letsie and Tlou 1997), India (Bajpai 1999), Hong Kong (Chan 1999), Israel (Kaplan 2006), Nigeria (Bakari and Leach 2007; Nwadiwe 2007), Ghana (Tete-Mensah 1999), Kenya (Omale 2002), Pakistan (Durrani 2000), Lesotho (Mapetla and

Matlosa 1997), Zimbabwe (Shumba and Matina 2002; Zindi 1998), South Africa (Simelane 2001), Sri Lanka (Jayasena 2002), Southern Africa (Bennett et al (2007), the UK (Bagilhole and Woodward 1995), sub-Saharan Africa (Hallam 1994), and in a global context including Sri Lanka, India, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda, (Mirsky 2003). Manuh, Gariba and Budu (2007: 138) also discuss ‘transactional sex’, or ‘sexually transmitted grades’, in their Ghanaian study. This when male lecturers offer female students high grades in return for sexual favours – a finding that was also apparent in Morley et al’s (2010) study of Ghana and Tanzania.

Sexual harassment can involve both actual and symbolic violence, but is often hidden, silenced and displaced. A theme running through all these studies was how sexual harassment is rarely formally reported by female students, for fear of victimisation, stigmatisation or lack of confidence in procedures. A further recurring theme is the impact on women’s academic engagement, health and well-being. Difficulties with disclosure and the on-going existence of sexual harassment raise questions about how gender continues to be formed and reformed in the discursive, spatial and temporal contexts of higher education- internationally. The act of sexual harassment has considerably more impact than research on the topic.

There are dangers that the rapidly developing austerity culture and global recession will coagulate with the ‘chilly climates’ that women have experienced in higher education for centuries. We have heard for some time of the policy symbolism of the progressive gender equality initiatives in the Nordic countries (Husu 2000, 2007). What would open minds and doors, overcome resistances to the evidence (Hey 2010), and disrupt the disqualification of feminist knowledge?

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# Chapter 3

## French Gender Paradoxes in Changing Academic and Scientific Organisations



*Suzanne de Cheveigné*

In this presentation, originally made at the GEXcel launch conference, I discuss the situation of women working in research in France. My aim is to provide information concerning the specificities of the French case but also to use it as a basis on which to discuss the possibility of future research collaborations. To do so, I shall provide a few elements of background, report briefly on a study I carried out on careers in the main French research organisation, CNRS, nearly ten years ago, and then discuss the directions in which I hope we can move forward, taking advantage of the exceptional opportunities for joining forces that GEXcel offers.

Within the western part of Europe, France often appears as an ‘average’ country, intermediate geographically but also sociologically between the Nordic and the Mediterranean countries. It is often close to its neighbours and/or to the EU average in opinion surveys – see as an example the Eurobarometer surveys on science<sup>1</sup>. Concerning women in science, France has a proportion of female researchers, all sectors included, close to EU-15 average (28% and 29% respectively, 35% and 36% in higher education) as well as an average proportion of women in Grade A academic positions (19% and 17% respectively (European Commission (EC) 2009b)). Why then has it appeared to be getting behind on Women and Science issues (see for instance the discussions in EC 2008, 2009a and earlier studies such as Osborn et al 1999; Rees 2002; Xie and Shauman 2003; EC 2004, 2005)?

Perhaps the reason we get this impression is that France is not moving forwards, as many of its neighbours are, on the women in science issue. Growth rates of numbers of scientists from 2002 to 2006 were 3.1% for women and 3.2% for men, when the EU-15 averages were 7.1% and 3.7% and EU-27 ones 6.3% and 3.7%. In other words, while proportions of women were increasing in Europe, France was slightly regressing! The proportion of grade A female academics gained two percentage

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1 [ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_340\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_340_en.pdf)

points from 2002 to 2007 while it doubled in Switzerland and was multiplied by 1.5 in Germany (EC 2009b).

Beyond this, there is a degree of regression of the situation of women in general in France, which used to be among the best in Europe, due to policies concerning children and working women. But, unfortunately, these advantages are weakening. For instance, the proportion of children that can begin public kindergarten at age two has dropped by 30% from 2003 to 2007, for lack of places. A global indicator, the Gender Gap Index<sup>2</sup> for France was 0.703 in 2010, at the 46th rank out of 134 – the country was 15th in 2008, 18th in 2009. Again, this takes place when others are progressing: only 14% of all countries regressed in 2010 on the index.

Another element of the general context is the general situation of research in France. There is insufficient investment in science: R&D investment was 2.02% of GDP in 2008 (2.1% in 2000), a long way from the Lisbon target of 3%. Over the past five years, academic and scientific organisations have been reformed very rapidly: a law on the autonomy of universities was passed in 2006, and an ‘independent’ evaluation agency and a competitive funding agency, the National Research Agency (ANR) were created in 2007. The latter provides us with an interesting snapshot of the place of women in research decision-making – and shows that a preoccupation with the place of women hasn’t been at the centre of the reforms! The president of ANR is a man, the director general is a woman. None of the seven heads of scientific departments are women, the Administrative Council counts two women among ten members and its ‘Council of Prospective’, with eight members, includes no women. One could go on working through the program committees...

This gives us a quick picture of the general situation. I shall now discuss research I carried out within the French National Research Organisation CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) in 2001, that is, before this wave of reform. The CNRS plays a central role in French public research. It is a national institution, organisationally very different from universities (Fox 2001). It runs approximately 1,300 laboratories throughout the country, the majority in association with local universities or other organisations, and employs roughly 26,000 permanent civil servants (this is functionally equivalent to having tenure), of which 11,500 researchers and 14,500 support staff (engineers, technicians and administrative personnel). This makes it the largest employer in the area of pure scientific research in Europe.

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2 <http://www.weforum.org/issues/global-gender-gap>

Women are under-represented among CNRS researchers but not among support staff: at the end of 2004 they represented 42.7% of the permanent CNRS population – 52.0% of the support staff but only 31.2% of researchers. These proportions have changed extremely slowly. Indeed, when the CNRS was created in 1946, 30% of the researchers were women (Kaspi and Raimunni 2004). Women also have trouble moving up the hierarchical ladder. Both female support staff and female researchers are affected, even though their modes of evaluation and promotion differ. The situation in CNRS is slightly more favourable than in the universities (Boukhobza et al 2000; Barré et al 2002; Crance and Ramanana-Rahary 2003; Hermann and Picq 2005).

Our study, based on qualitative interviews, concerned women's and men's perceptions of their careers in CNRS laboratories (as opposed to the central administration). It covered researchers and support staff – the latter are too often forgotten when we speak of women in science. The aim was to go beyond the glass ceiling statistics that were beginning to be systematically produced. We also wanted to get a grasp on the role of the employer, taking what could be called a sociology of work perspective. This was in opposition to the usual approach taken in France to women in science problems that tended to focus on the reasons behind girls' career choices in secondary school. The research was carried out 2001–2002 (at my initiative but financed by CNRS's *Mission for the place of women*). Publication by CNRS was repeatedly postponed until I finally got permissions to publish myself – in English. An article appeared in *Social Studies of Science* in 2009 (Cheveigné 2009).

The fieldwork began with a series of interviews with women, eight support staff and seven researchers from the different disciplinary departments (including social sciences), at various hierarchical levels, in Paris or the provinces (an important variable in France!), age 24 to 60. The names of these first women were picked randomly in the CNRS directory. We then asked each of them to introduce us to two colleagues, one female, one male. We thus ended up with 45 interviews in 'clusters' – the idea was to triangulate on the situation in each laboratory – including both men and women. The interviews lasted about two hours. They were carried out by interviewers who were not CNRS employees (one female sociologist, one male anthropologist) and the interviewees' anonymity was guaranteed. The interviews covered the person's career history, their perceptions of their present job and their expectations. They were not explicitly gender-oriented – we only raised the question at the end if it didn't come up spontaneously.

Analysing the results, we found some common opinions that were shared by both women and men, support staff and researchers. A strong

positive point was the deep pride they expressed in taking part in the scientific endeavour, but all nevertheless reported a lot of frustration and discouragement. Complaints concerned the weight of administrative inertia, the insufficiency of internal communications within the organisation and the poor management of human resources. It should be pointed out that the interviews took place about three years before an unprecedented strike that touched the whole of French academia, in which nearly a thousand laboratory directors handed in their resignation. Many of the problems pointed out here concerning CNRS were – and to a great extent still are – shared by the universities.

Let us return to the interviews and focus now on women, including both researchers and support staff. We were told that they don't meet discrimination – except... The spoken consensus was one of equal opportunities for women and for men, but women often had an 'anecdote' to tell. (One male researcher, interviewed by our male colleague, very explicitly gave his opinion concerning women in science!) The interviewees were globally unaware of the glass ceiling figures and unanimously refused 'quotas' or any form of positive discrimination.

Comparing female support staff to female researchers, the differences were related to the fact that the former have less freedom to change activities or functions, and are more subordinated, by statute and in practice, than researchers. A lot of frustration was expressed, particularly among engineers who are highly qualified, often with PhD's. Globally speaking, support staff mobilised fewer socio-cultural explanations for their situation than researchers and tended to attribute it more often to mistakes that they themselves had made in managing their careers.

Comparatively analysing the way women and men spoke of research, it appeared that the women interviewed described a more collective model of science than men did. In their discourse, research activity included organising seminars, preparing proposals with colleagues, working with students, etc. The more individual dimensions, such as 'writing up my latest article', were brought less to the fore than in the discourse of their male colleagues. This appeared at all levels, from lab technician to director of unit. These contrasting epistemologies – science is basically the work of individuals or of teams – refer to different models but they also relate to different work practices.

Now, if we come back the complaints we collected concerning work conditions in CNRS, many were related to the collective dimensions of research. For instance, communication and human resources problems hinder collaboration and cooperation. On the other hand, the evaluation of both researchers and support staff is very much centred on individual performance. Our conclusion was that women are caught in an 'indi-

vidual vs. collective trap’: they are particularly attentive to and invested in the collective nature of research whereas the institution focuses on the individual dimension, paying insufficient attention to supporting everyday collective activities. In other words, the responsibility of the employer in creating fruitful work conditions for everyone is a very important part of the women in science equation.

It should be noted that we are discussing the collective dimensions of scientific activity itself, of knowledge production. What we are saying is not in contradiction with theories according to which old boys’ networks are mobilised by men for their careers – those may be collective structures but in that case they are mobilised for individual purposes. Nor are we attributing ‘care’ functions to women. But these questions no doubt need further clarification and for that we need to better understand the everyday practices of science. That is why we presented the French case as an example – an example of a way of approaching women in science questions, by understanding the work place, taking into account hierarchies (e.g. the specific case of support staff), comparing women and men. I think, however, that even more focused ethnographic work is needed, for example to observe exchanges and body language or to understand the use of space and apparatus.

In summary, French science is in a rather fragile situation in general and women there are not seeing their situation greatly improve. Indeed, there has been little progress over the past few years in spite of the re-organisation of the whole research system. The quality of the new procedures in general and their lack of ‘gender sensitivity’ raise real questions. One that I find particularly interesting concerns competition: does it really improve research? What, if any, is the impact of competition on the situation of women? To answer all these questions, much work needs to be done, with international comparisons. GEXcel provides an ideal frame for that.

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# Chapter 4

## Situating Swedish Research Policy Landscape in the Global Knowledge Economy: Some Reflections

*Paula Mählck*

Staying ahead in research is becoming more and more important for countries' social and economic development (Kogan 2005). This is accompanied by discourses on hyper competitiveness at the global, national and local level, increased differentiation between and within universities and the preference of STEM subjects in relation to social sciences and humanities, in Sweden translated to *Strategiska satsningarna*. In addition, performance indicators such as bibliometrics and concentration of external research funding grants are having an increasing impact on the social organisation of research. The principles that are guiding these changes have generally been theorised under the umbrella of *New Public Management*. The overall direction of these discourses and practices are usually highlighted as general traits of *The global knowledge economy* (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 2000; Sandström and Benner 2000; Väälina and Hoffman 2008). Despite the efforts to formulate a common platform for a European policy on higher education and research, the organisation of research is often heavily mediated by country-based policies and politics. Against this backdrop, I will briefly outline a few areas that are subject to debate when New Public Management principles in Higher Education and Research are theorised. I will also give a few snapshots of the level of implementation in a selection of countries in order to highlight the Swedish context.

I take my point of departure from one specific national context but I intend to apply an international outlook since a) research has always been international to a degree, b) what is going on at the national level is often influenced by agreements across national borders, and c) such a comparative perspective will make critical features of Swedish national research infrastructures more visible.



## Tensions and debates in previous research on NPM principles in HE and Research

Central for understanding the move towards meeting the demands of the Global knowledge economy in Swedish HE and Research Policy, is the implementation and legitimation of New Public Management principles in HE and Research. While few would argue that HE systems are transforming globally and that one dominant feature of this change refers to different forms of steering of the HE sector, there are considerable debates on ways of conceptualising forms of steering, the sectors of society and actors involved in these processes as well as the ways in which these processes are constructed in policy and put into practice in different nation-states. Another disputed area is the relationship between the nation-state bureaucracy and the HE sector and actors operating at different analytical levels; these debates encapsulate the variations between different nation-states as well as complexities of regionalism, transnationalism and globalisation (Ferlie et al 2008).

New forms of steering have largely been theorised through the narratives of New Public Management, Network Governance and neo-Weberianism (NPM principles)<sup>1</sup>. While these can be separated at a theoretical level, these forms of steering mechanisms are often combined in practice, sometimes oscillating from one form to another. Typical instruments that can be linked to one or a combination of the three are: evaluation instruments of teaching and research, new formulas for the allocation of budget and human resources and the devolution of HE responsibility and encouragement of their strategic alliances with funding agencies and with other HE institutions in the same territory. And lastly we find the instruments of the creation of new intermediate bodies in charge of new missions or of existing ones that were previously handled by public authorities. The emergences of national research councils or accreditation offices are such examples (Ferlie et al 2008). Feminists have made important research contributions exploring New Public Management principles at university level, this research has explored the gendered dynamics of new managerialism in higher education institutions (Currie et al 2002), the position of women managers in academia (Blackmore and Sachs 2001; Göransson and White 2011), the gendered implications of new assessment devices (Morley 2007) and changes in teaching and research curricula (Leathwood and Read 2009). Analysis of how New Public Management principles are implemented at national and transnational level and its consequences for gender equality as well inter-

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<sup>1</sup> While recognising the complexities of these narratives, they will be addressed under the umbrella of 'NPM principles' in this text.

sectional approaches to this are with few exceptions (see for example Ahmed 2007; Leathwood and Read 2009; Husu 2010) largely under-represented.

## Level of implementation

While UK has been the nexus for the development, implementation and spread of NPM principles since the early 1980s, the development in UK has not been uniform but rather swinging from more clear-cut NPM routines to network governance and lately back to an intensification of NPM through the RAE system (evaluation of research system). Countries like Australia and New Zealand have shown a long term development in a similar direction. In these settings, the forms of steering have been conducted mainly through managerialism which includes 'executive leadership at the expense of the professional role in decision making and an instrumental rationality stressing the three Es (economy, efficiency and effectiveness) and top-down structures, such as centralisation and hierarchy' (Currie et al 2003: 98). As such managerialism and its significant set of technologies and practices can be seen as a product at the intersection of neo-liberal political rationalities and business management prescriptions for organisational change to meet the competitive challenge of the global economy (Clarke and Newman 1997). With few exceptions the implementation of NPM in HE in countries in the global south, particularly those who are donor dependent, often has been particularly rapid, Uganda being one such example. This has often been a direct response to pressures from international agencies such as the World Bank and international donors (Mamdani 2007; Guni 2008). In a European perspective Germany and to some extent France represent examples of much slower development (Ferlie et al 2008; Wolter 2006), indicating a great differentiation regarding both the content of NPM practices as well as levels of implementation (ibid).

During the 1980s New Public Management practice (NPM) was implemented in Swedish society at large and was introduced in the HE sector in beginning of the 1990s. More specifically, it was implemented in relation to the systemic changes in 1993 that led to greater organisational and scientific autonomy of the sector (Bill 1992/93:170) In its early days until the beginning of the 2000, NPM practices were based on the different HEIs' own evaluation work which focused on qualitative indicators, processes and outcomes of processes. The work was coordinated by the Swedish council for higher education (HSV) (Modell 2005). This allowed for more variation in the application of NPM techniques since the different HEIs could create measures that best suited their specific conditions.

The development from 2000 onwards points in the direction of an increased demand to construct more uniform quantitative quality indicators and result-oriented NPM measures in the HE sector as a whole. The quality indicators identified include different bibliometric markers such as citations and publications in highly ranked international journals and external funding. One of the most recent illustrations of this is the newly implemented system of resource allocation to HEIs based on performance indicators (Bill 2008:09/50). The development has not been uniform and reveals several tensions with regard to questions about how this is supposed to be organised as well as what these indicators are supposed to measure. The latter relates to the more fundamental question: What is the role of HEIs in Swedish society?

## Concluding remarks

In this text I have outlined a few areas that are subject to debate in research on New Public Management principles in Higher Education and Research. I have also presented a few snapshots of the level of implementation in a selection of countries in order to contextualise the development in Sweden. For future research ways of synthesising different models of researching New Public Management principles seems fruitful, particularly since a) there exists great variation in practice both within and outside Europe despite current efforts (mainly at European level) to harmonise research organisation and b) policy research on the global research economy has often focused on its fluid and boundaryless specifics, while research organisation in practice is often characterised by material processes that are heavily mediated by authorities at the local, state and regional level.

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# Chapter 5

## The Paradox of Excellence: Merit and Occupational Attainments of Women in Computer Science

*Irina Nikiforova*

Academic labour markets place men and women in direct competition with each other for positions, research grants, salary as well as intangible rewards such as fame and prestige. Historically, men and women have not competed as equals, but have been segregated by gender (and sex) in occupations and work tasks, in both more and less gender-egalitarian countries (Charles and Grusky 2004). Despite the rise of universalistic and egalitarian ideals, the achievements of women scientists and engineers have remained less visible than those of men, and their recognition often lagged. In the stretch of roughly a century, over 300 men won a Nobel Prize in sciences and only 16 women (also see McGrayne 1998). In over 40 years of history of the Turing Award for technical contributions to computer science, over 50 men and only two women have been honoured. These numbers raise critical questions about the ability of women scientists to compete for honour and recognition in academic communities: Why have so few women scientists received professional recognition? What obstacles and symbolic boundaries – those derived from meaning and values – demarcate education, work and achievements of women scientists compared to men? What makes some scientists more honour-worthy and more recognised?

Since the 1970s, the participation of women in the science and engineering labour force in the United States has been increasing, but continues to vary by field, age, rank, employment sector, and the status of employing institution. As a group, women are “less successful” than men in the number of doctoral degrees received, the proportion (of women) employed in the science and engineering, as well as in rank and salary (Long 2001). The factors that explain this low participation of women in some fields have been the focus of active research in the last two decades (Cohoon and Aspray 2006; Hill Corbett and Rose 2010; Long 2001). Harriett Zuckerman (2001) considered career commitment of men and women scientists to be ‘a thoroughly uncharted area’ and encouraged further studies of aspirations, attitudes to promotion, income, and fame (p. 73). To account for women’s low career attainment in the areas of

rank, salary, and research productivity, Mary Frank Fox (1995) suggested researchers to look beyond individual level characteristics to the social and organisational contexts of science and consider both status and performance together. She argued that as career attainments differ by employment sector and types of institutional locations, so do the impact of social and organisational factors, such as 'human and material resources, workplace practices and policies' (Fox 1995: 223). Social, organisational, and environmental factors remained at focus in studies of gender, achievement and recognition in science.

Feminist researchers have long established that women's achievements, knowledge and skills have been historically invisible (Rossiter 1982, 1995) and traditionally undervalued (Wajcman 1991). Sociologist Ruth Woodfield, writing about women in computing, acknowledged the existence of a general problem that 'women face in having their skills recognised and rewarded' and particularly in occupations 'which involve intellectual and/or social labour to a large degree' (2000: 189). The theoretical insights come from realising that skills and success are socially constructed to reflect the ideals of the dominant group (male) even in science and technology fields (Philips and Taylor 1980; Woodfield 2000). Thus, 'It is the sex of those who do the work, rather than its content, which leads to its [work] identification as skilled or unskilled' (Philips and Taylor 1980: 85). As a result, work done by women is likely to be perceived as less skilled. Because technical skills and competency define male identity and constitute a source of their power (Wajcman 1991), for women to aspire to such competency is 'to transgress the rules of gender' (Cockburn quoted in Rees 1989/1992: 32) and pay a very high price by sacrificing their own gender identity (Wajcman 1991: 164). The dominant culture of computing continues 'to be bound up with masculine identity and interest' (Woodfield 2000: 197) while the full potential of women in computer fields has not been fully realised.

Early on in the 1960s and 1970s, the computer, as a recently invented machine, was perceived to be 'an object of indeterminate gender identity' that promised to redefine women's relationship with technology. However, by the 1980s computer culture had been established to reflect male values and male life-style where technical concerns presided over social concerns (Woodfield 2000). Masculine computer culture, at its best, depicted 'tireless pioneers working at the cutting edge of technical progress' and 'experts whose obsession with information technology and with the "thrill of inventiveness"' (Glastonbury and LaMendola 1992: 112) cannot but guarantee the reaping of intellectually and even – albeit inadvertently – socially useful and justifiable rewards' (Woodfield 2000: 19). In such a culture, to be perceived as successful, women would have

had to not only adopt male values but also work harder to exceed the standard of mastery and obsession with work.

Lack of appropriate qualifications 'has always been held to explain in part why women do not secure access to certain professional jobs' (Rees 1989/1992: 28). However, women who have aspired to advancement and who have earned doctoral degrees in male dominated fields have earned the qualifications that would allow them to secure professional jobs. Advances in computing technologies in the second half of the 20th century created new jobs and careers, prompting the following questions regarding gender: Did men and women make equal use of these new opportunities? What factors influenced their education, career opportunities, and chances for scientific contributions? Did women scientists manage to succeed in the institution of science historically built around male attributes of success? Since masculine dispositions (qualities, thinking, expression) are part of the culture dominating scientific fields, to be knowledgeable means to possess masculine qualities (Woodfield 2000). Likewise, when it comes to success in science, Traweek (1988) concluded '...the virtues of success, whatever their content, are associated with men' (p. 104). Defining success in terms of masculine dispositions would constitute a socially privileged meaning system in computer science that is likely to accord importance and symbolic weight to some distinctions and qualifications over others in evaluations of scientific contributions. Failure to recognise the excellence of women researchers may, in fact, demonstrate yet another subtle and hidden form of discrimination observed in other contexts of academia in the times of anti-discrimination laws (see Husu 2001).

This study aims to analyse the attainments of women pioneers in computer science and assess their merit and prize-worthiness by comparing their education and career achievements to other computer scientists: 1) women who won the Turing Award, 2) men who won the Turing Award, and 3) men who did not win the award. The investigation of characteristics and qualifications of prize-worthiness will aid in understanding what facilitates and what stands in the way of contributions and recognition of minority groups in science. The underlying objective is to determine how organisations can support and promote achievements of both women and men in computing.

In my doctoral dissertation, I examined the education and careers of men in computer science who were awarded a prestigious Turing Award in computing. In this project, I will examine the educational and career attainments of the first women in computing. Women of interest to this study are those who earned doctoral degrees and, by doing so, were well positioned to contribute to research in computer science during the pe-

riod of formation of the discipline from the 1970s to the present (2011). The study will address the following three questions:

1. How do the educational and career attainments of the first women computer scientists compare to those of men and women prize-winners (and the control group)?
2. How can the differences in career attainments inform efforts that promote gender equity?

This research will examine the qualifications considered as worthy, those possessed by award winners and used in evaluation of men and women in computer science for promotion and awards. The studies of evaluation processes continue to raise important issues about operationalisation of selection criteria (Sonnert 1995), dependence of the quality of evaluation on the size of the budget (Langfeldt 2001), and influence of intellectual milieu on peer judgments (Hirschauer 2010). To explain the differences in achievements and recognition, I will use sociological theories accounting for recognition and eminence (accumulative advantage; Matthew effect; invisible college; visibility in networks of affiliation and social capital).

The data for this project consists of biographic and bibliometric information on early women pioneers in computing. Biographical entries in directories such as *American Men and Women of Science*, *Notable Women Scientists*, or *World of Computer Science* usually contain basic demographic data (date and place of birth, marriage year, children), information on education, work experiences, membership in professional associations, and honours received. I have extended the biographical data by collecting bibliometric (publication) statistics from the *Thomson Reuters* (formerly *ISI*) *Web of Knowledge*. Gender differences in achievements are identified by comparing publication productivity of women scientists to those of distinguished men in computing in the same time period. The lessons learned from studying gender differences in computing careers in the U.S. are likely to apply to information technology careers in other countries.

This study is intended to contribute to the understanding of the ‘the paradox of excellence’ by examining the achievements of pioneering women and men in computer science and factors associated with lagging recognition of professional achievements of women computer scientists. It lifts the veil of ambivalence about women’s work by examining the pathways that women scientists took in computing during the second half of 20th century. The relationship between gender and computing has only recently received considerable scholarly attention. Much of research on women in computing focused on making women visible in workplaces (Light 1999) as well as on addressing issues of underrepresentation of

women in computer science and information technology (IT) (Margolis and Fisher 2001/2002; Cohoon and Aspray 2006), relationship between gender and computers and information technology (Cooper and Weaver 2003; Burger, Creamer and Meszaros 2007), gendered skills and pathways (Woodfield 2000) and the influence of culture on careers in IT (Millar 1998; Misa 2010). However, the knowledge about achievements and careers of the first women computer scientists is still missing. Were they able to attain high professional status? How many of them became Matildas ('invisible', see Rossiter 1993)? The results of this study are intended to inform intervention policies supporting women in science and engineering, specifically how scientific institutions can better support the achievements of women (and other underrepresented groups).

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# Chapter 6

## Women Academic Managers in Swedish Higher Education: Real Women, Gender Neutral or Quota-Bitches?



*Helen Peterson*

A number of different efforts to promote gender equality in the higher education sector from the late 1970s and onwards have earned Sweden the label ‘global gender equality leader’ (Castaño et al 2010: 3). Yet, as in many other countries the Swedish higher education sector is still characterised by vertical and horizontal gender segregation (European Commission 2008). Only approximately 20% of the (full) professors were women in 2009 (Statistics Sweden 2010). This can be compared with 6% women professors in 1990, which indicates an increase by 14 percentage units in 20 years (Statistics Sweden 2001).

In my study I have investigated women’s increasing representation in senior academic management positions in Swedish higher education from 1990 to 2010 and found it to be much more dramatic than the increase in women professors. During this period of time women Vice Chancellors increased from 14% to 43%. Women Pro Vice Chancellors increased even more. In 1990 Pro Vice Chancellor was a male-dominated position as 81% of Pro Vice Chancellors were men. 20 years later women were in a majority, constituting 60% of all Pro Vice Chancellors. In the spring of 2010, 31% of the Deans were women. Compared with 1990, when only 3% of the Deans were women, this is also a significant increase. These quantitative results have been presented more fully and detailed in a previously published report (Peterson 2010). That report also presents some initial analyses of the qualitative data that together with the quantitative data constituted a study about women in academic management in Swedish higher education.

The aim of this work in progress paper is to introduce some lines along which the analyses of the qualitative data can continue to be developed. The quantitative increase of women in senior academic management in higher education constitutes the setting against which interviews with 22 women academic managers are introduced and analysed in this paper. The qualitative material will allow for a critical analysis of whether the

numerical increase of women also translates into institutional change and increased (qualitative) gender equality within the academy, i.e. if women as a result also face less challenges and have reached parity with men. This critical analysis follows the arguments put forth by Florence Bonner who found that women's numerical majority in higher education entry and graduation was 'not sufficient to claim the end of gender inequality' (Bonner 2006: 167).

The initial research question that is posed in this paper is: How did the interviewed women describe and explain their career and their current position in academia in relation to the quantitative increase of women in academic management? The analysis will not focus on how the women actually worked to promote gender equality in higher education. Instead it highlights how the women presented themselves as gender equality change agents and their position as women in relation to gender-equality measures. Such an analysis will also highlight how they used different strategies in order to position themselves in relation to the meritocratic norm within science and academia. How did the women incorporate gender equality, gender equality measures and policies when negotiating their position as academic manager in the interviews? How did they perceive that these measures and policies had shaped their careers? The analysis will also deal with their perspective on issues like gender and management style, women's contribution to organisational culture and their impact on decision-making in higher education institutions (cf. Bagilhole and White 2011: 3).

The analysis is influenced by a number of different studies on women in higher education and women in academic management. Liisa Husu captures well what could be considered a common point of departure for these kinds of studies: 'Interviewing academic women provides information about the experiences of those who are the main targets of gender discrimination in academia that would probably not be obtained by using most male academics as informants' (Husu 2001: 94). Just as Husu I have as main interest to analyse how academic women perceive and understand their experiences in 'gendered academia' (Husu 2001: 94). Underpinning such an analysis is the approach that women interpret and try to cope with these experiences (Husu 2001: 92).

The analysis is also inspired by the study from Sharon Mavin and Patricia Bryans (2002) in which they identified how the women academics they interviewed had used 'informal collective strategies to enhance their visibility, gain power in current organisational structures, to identify common strategies for change and to raise the profile of gender issues' (Mavin and Bryans 2002: 239). They report from a network for women in academia that was formed on their initiative to support, empower

and emancipate academic women. This network formed a foundation from which the women could challenge existing boundaries and dominant (masculine) styles of doing academic work and management by for example encouraging the use of collaborative and inclusive patterns of seminar talk (Mavin and Bryans 2002: 245).

In addition, the analysis draws on studies of women in management, i.e. not particularly only in *academic* management. Ina Wagner and Ruth Wodak discuss how professional women 'live, understand, and "perform" success'. How do women define professional success and what do they perceive as contributing to being successful (Wagner and Wodak 2006: 319)? Wagner and Wodak analyse this by focusing on the women's discursive strategies of self-representation (Wagner and Wodak 2006: 385). They found that the interviewed women frequently used metaphors to describe success. Some of the women put emphasis on the importance of being part of a successful group or being at the right place at the right time rather than their own ambitions (Wagner and Wodak 2006: 396–397). Others, however, described themselves as self-made, autonomous women (Wagner and Wodak 2006: 406).

Finally, the analysis is influenced by an article by Johanna Wyn, Sandra Acker and Elisabeth Richards (2000) in which the authors explore 'the ways in which senior women academics are positioned and position themselves as agents of change within academia' (Wyn, Acker and Richards 2000: 436). They continue to describe the aim of the article: 'We examine the pathways and strategies adopted by these women in their efforts to make a difference' (Wyn, Acker and Richards 2000: 436). Their results illustrate how the women managers considered themselves as being 'forces of change', as 'making a difference' and as contributing something unique as women in leadership roles (Wyn, Acker and Richards 2000: 445).

Just as in the above-mentioned studies only women were interviewed in this study on senior management in Swedish higher education. The selection of interviewees was made with the intention to create a heterogeneous sample concerning management position, higher education institution (taking into consideration if the HE institution was large or small, old or new and the geographical location) and disciplinary field. Four Vice Chancellors, six Pro Vice Chancellors, five Deans and seven Pro Deans were interviewed. These women represented ten higher education institutions; eight universities and two university colleges. They came from different faculties; law, art, medicine, theology, humanities, social sciences, technology, natural sciences and educational sciences. Fifteen were professors; five were associate professors and two senior lecturers. Their age ranged from 44 to 64 and they had between 20 and

30 years' experience of working as researchers, lecturers and senior managers in the Swedish academia. Due to research ethical considerations no more information about the interviewees will be provided (Gustafsson, Hermerén and Peterson 2006).

The interviews were performed between February and April 2010. They lasted between 40 and 70 minutes and were semi-structured and fully transcribed. The aim of the interviews was to learn more about how women in senior academic management view policies, practices and processes that produce, reproduce and change vertical and horizontal gender segregation in higher education. The interviewed women were asked to describe their current work situation and their academic career. They were also encouraged to reflect upon the academia as a work place for women from a more general point of view, and changes occurring over the past 20 years.

The women described the masculine academic culture as well as problems concerning lack of objective and transparent evaluation practices of merits (Peterson 2010). To explain women's increase in academic senior management positions the women referred to the successful implementation of a gender balance principle. The principle was however referred to as a 'double-edged sword' as it increased women's workload and therefore delayed their scientific research career. The gender balance principle also resulted in a balance where women complemented men but in management positions below the men in the hierarchical organisational structure, a pattern also illustrated by the quantitative data (cf. Peterson 2011).

This paper identifies three different discursive strategies of self-presentation used by the women. These strategies capture three different ways of discursively constructing a position as a successful and gender aware woman in academia. The three strategies will be referred to as the difference position, the gender neutral position and the feminist position. These three ideal typed positions will here be illustrated by quotations from the interviews.

The following excerpt from an interview with a Pro Dean is illustrative for the difference position. She is here answering a question about how she thinks her colleagues (all men) see her as an academic manager:

They appreciate my feminine sides. I really think they appreciate that. Professionally that is, not in any other way [laugh]. In professional matters I'm always... I mean, I take a different view on things and think differently. They appreciate my good judgment they say: 'She's always so sensible. We must ask her first'. And it's my way of thinking as a woman. I am able to see the full picture in a way they can't. [...] I feel that I've contri-

buted to the group as a woman. I communicate in a different manner, talk in a different manner...  
(*Pro Dean 1*)

This position could be interpreted as a way of emphasising the importance of a gender mix in a professional setting. Gender difference is here constructed as a professional contribution to higher education management (Peterson 2011). This could also be interpreted as an example of how women managers consciously and successfully adopt ‘feminized’ or ‘maternal’ management styles and sometimes draw on caring discourses or experiences of motherhood in order to construct a professional identity (cf. Leathwood 2005: 403–404; López Yáñez and Sánchez Moreno 2008). One of the interviewed women argued explicitly for ‘the mother as a leadership model’ in the following way:

Women and men *do* have different leadership styles. We have different perspectives. We need to put more emphasis on that most women, at least those who are mothers, are excellent leaders. They make prudent and strategic decisions. They are sensitive to if someone is not feeling well and they are supportive. That is exactly what is needed from a leader.  
(*Pro Dean 3*)

However, this way of arguing for women as managers is not straightforwardly positive for women in that it might create problems with keeping authority and fitting in with the (masculine) management ideal (Priola 2007: 36).

The second position, the gender neutral position, is here illustrated by the following quotation from an interview with a Dean.

We look very much at merits from a scientific perspective. Gender doesn’t matter. I don’t think so. And I don’t think I got where I am today just by chance. We all have worked just as much to get here. But of course... maybe I got some assignments because it’s required to include a woman in the faculty board.  
(*Dean 3*)

As in the study from Sylvia Benckert and Else-Marie Staberg (2001) some of the interviewed women were reluctant to express support for gender equality policies without reservation. In order not to be seen as a threat, subversive or too challenging women can stop to argue for gender equality measures (Leathwood 2005: 404). Reluctance can also be traced to the fear of being looked upon as less competent than men. One woman explained the problem: ‘A quota system is doubled-edged for women. It’s

so easy for the opponents to accuse the promotion of women for breaking the meritocratic principles if it's based on a quota system' (Pro Dean 5). A quota system can thus have unwanted consequences for women who benefit from it if it means that their competence is questioned: 'I'm often afraid that people might think that I got the position just because I'm a woman' (Pro Vice Chancellor 2).

The third position, the feminist (or standpoint) position, is a completely different position compared to the gender neutral position and is illustrated by the following quotation:

I'm a 'quota-bitch'. I'm sure that I would never have become a Pro Dean if not the Vice Chancellor had said: 'You have a male Dean so now you must have a female Pro Dean'. [...] Without such a policy there will always be a male applicant considered more qualified. [...] Someone needs to be the first [woman] and if it has to be through a quota system so be it. I really don't have any problems with that.  
(*Pro Dean 4*)

Answering the question about what had qualified her to become a Pro Dean this woman referred to herself using what seemed to be a derogatory word: 'quota-bitch'. But that this word was not meant to be derogatory is evident. Being offered and accepting a position inside of a formal or informal quota system was expressed as the responsibility of a woman. A quota system was understood as an efficient tool to achieve gender-equality in an academic system, where women are constructed as 'lacking' (Katila and Meriläinen 1999: 170).

Despite divergent discursive strategies the women expressed that they were aware that they had a responsibility as women academic managers. Just as the women interviewed by Wyn, Acker and Richards (2000) they did present themselves as if they did make a difference – as managers and as women. The problem with the 'women making a difference'-approach is that it also fosters the 'women as different (from the ideal/norm)-approach. It also means that women 'have to carry the burden of proving that they make a (positive) difference' (Hovden et al 2011: 409). However, being different from the norm also means that the norm is challenged. Several of the women managers were pioneers as they were the first woman on a senior management position in their faculty or university. They emphasised the power they had as role models: 'I guess I do make a change by being a role model' (Vice Chancellor 3). This did not involve arguing for women bringing a special perspective into management:

I was the first female Dean and people questioned if it was even possible for a woman to have the title Dean. But no one ever thinks about that anymore. A woman can be a Dean, that's it. A lot has happened.  
(Dean 4)

The analysis of the empirical material will continue in order to further explore how these women position themselves in higher education management by either identifying with the management ideal or challenging the norm, thereby drawing on a powerful and empowering discourse of difference.

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# Chapter 7

## Gendered Practices in Appointment Procedures: Familiar and New Barriers to Women on the Path to a Professorship

*Angela Wroblewski*

Over the last few decades, women have conquered our universities. A century ago, universities might well have been centres of learning accessible exclusively to men, but nowadays more than half the students and 46% of staff (39% of academic staff; WS 2009/10) at Austrian universities are women. Yet despite this, women remain underrepresented in top university positions. In 2010 only one of Austria's 22 universities is headed by a woman and less than one fifth (18.8%) of the country's professors are female. In essence, the 'leaky pipeline' (Berryman 1983) has hardly changed: top positions at universities remain a male domain, and the higher the position on the career ladder, the lower the likelihood that it will be held by a woman. In recent years, there has been extensive debate on gender bias in university appointment procedures (cf. Färber 2003; Wissenschaftsrat 2005; Zimmermann 2006; Färber and Spangenberg 2008; Van den Brink 2009; Spreyermann and Rothmann 2009; for the situation in Austria cf. Neissl 2005; Eckstein 2006). In Austria, the Universities Act 2002 (*Universitätsgesetz* 2002) sought to increase transparency and combat subtle exclusion mechanisms by regulating the appointment procedure. The proposed project will analyse experiences with the implementation of this regulation in the universities. In doing so, it focuses on the interplay between university strategy and its reception by the central players in the appointment process. This type of focused analysis should serve to reconstruct opposition to, improper use of and paradoxical results of these regulatory requirements.

### Gender equality goals and measures in Austrian universities

Policies to promote women and equal opportunities in science and research have a long tradition in Austria. The development of specific gender equality measures in this area began back in the early 1980s. These

have since been successively expanded, and a comprehensive and consistent policy mix was in place by the end of the 1990s (cf. Wroblewski et al 2007). The implementation of the Austrian Universities Act 2002 (*Universitätsgesetz* 2002; ‘UG 2002’), which came into force on 01.01.2004 and granted autonomy to the universities, represented a seismic change for university policy in general as well as for the advancement of women and equal opportunities in particular. Universities now enjoy autonomy in financial and personnel matters and are also responsible for the advancement of women and the establishment of gender equality. While UG 2002 establishes general gender equality goals, it is up to the universities how they go about achieving them. In recent years, a very much differentiated policy mix has emerged, reflecting the specific core focus and value attached to this topic at the individual universities (cf. Wroblewski and Leitner 2010; Wroblewski et al 2011).

UG 2002 sets the specific goal of increasing the proportion of women in university management positions or full professorships, a goal that is included in each university’s obligatory female advancement plan. The exact formulation of this goal at individual university level varies greatly: some universities formulate it in general terms (‘increase the proportion of women’), others set themselves more specific targets (‘increase the percentage of women by ...percent in the next ... years’), and some also develop and define concrete strategies to achieve this goal. Examples of the latter include the reorganisation of appointment procedures to raise transparency, avoid gender bias or increase the presence of women in such procedures. In most cases, these strategies take the form of highly detailed procedural guidelines, i.e. the university formulates a range of appointment procedure provisions designed to help achieve this goal.

The attitude of the central players (in this context academics and scientists in appointment commissions) to such university goals is shaped by the very nature of the university as an ‘expert organisation’. One distinguishing feature of universities as expert organisations is the caveat between profession/discipline (subject system) and the organisation as a whole (social system). Experts see themselves more as representatives of a particular discipline than as employees of a particular university. This lack of identification with the organisation and its goals leads to a lack of commitment to university goals (Pellert 1999: 167). Consequently, a university must deploy specific management instruments to encourage its employees to embrace its goals. Ada Pellert describes this as the ‘art of managing experts’. She also describes reflection – both on an institutional and on an individual level – as a prerequisite for accepting and ‘embracing’ goals set either by external bodies (government university policy) or university management (Pellert 1999: 319).

## Empirical basis for the proposed project

The starting point for the proposed project is a set of case studies carried out at all 22 universities in Austria during the evaluation of ‘excellencia’,<sup>1</sup> a Ministry of Science programme designed to increase the proportion of female professors. The material for these case studies was gathered by analysing the design of university appointment procedures with regard to gender equality goals,<sup>2</sup> document analysis<sup>3</sup> and from a series of interviews<sup>4</sup> with the key players in the appointment process (university management, equal opportunities working party chairperson, appointment commission chairperson, professors).

The case studies focused in particular on the value attached to gender equality goals in comparison to other strategic goals, the binding nature of gender equality goals, their acceptance by the central players in the appointment procedures and, last but not least, the latter’s awareness of subtle discrimination mechanisms. These particular aspects were chosen based on the hypothesis that the potential effects of a measure like the ‘excellencia’ programme are dependent on the complex interaction between these and other such factors. The case studies revealed a broad range of different approaches to the implementation of gender equality policy in the appointment procedure context. A number of ‘good practice’ universities were identified that clearly attach high relevance to this issue and have already developed and implemented promising, transparent procedures. At the other end of the scale are the universities where gender equality de facto plays virtually no role at all, even in appointment procedures. Between the two extremes are a number of universities that have already taken initial steps and are basically ‘on the right track’.

An initial descriptive analysis of these case studies reveals various situations or phenomena that are of relevance to Subtheme C of GEXcel Theme 11–12, Gender Paradoxes of Changing Academic and Scientific Organisation(s) – ‘The paradox of interventions’. Various forms of resistance (such as the wording and arguments used to explain why gender

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1 The programme aimed to double the percentage of female professors from 13% to 26% in its lifespan (2005–2010). During this period, universities received a (one-off, non-restricted) bonus payment of between 30,000 euro and 100,000 euro for each additional female professor appointed.

2 The appointment procedure is defined in general terms in UG 2002. Most universities have formally incorporated these requirements into their statutes.

3 Documents analysed included the universities’ performance agreements with the ministry, intellectual capital reports and statutes (in particular, appointment procedure guidelines, female advancement plans).

4 These took the form of guided expert interviews, which were recorded and transcribed with the consent of the interviewees and analysed on a topic by topic basis. For specific details of the interview procedure see Wroblewski and Leitner 2009.

equality is not an issue or why the university feels it has no scope for action in this regard) were encountered at universities with a low commitment to gender equality. However, far more interesting in this context are certain phenomena identified at 'good practice' universities, which we have defined in an initial step as indicative of the limits of gender equality policies. For example, the interviewees consistently provided examples of subtle discrimination mechanisms that can lead to women either not applying for a post in the first place or being eliminated from the procedure at an early stage, despite formal adherence to procedural rules and guidelines.

Interviews with representatives of disciplines exhibiting high ratios of women revealed the paradoxical situation that gender is accorded little, if any, relevance, while strong importance is placed on excellence. Surprisingly, the un-reflected arguments used to explain this situation emphasise those criteria that could include a gender bias (availability, time restrictions, publication output, mobility).<sup>5</sup> In other words, the assumption of a high degree of sensitivity to gender equality issues in these disciplines seems to be invalid.

As far as the importance of institutional and individual reflection (Pellert 1999: 319) is concerned, our results indicate that the members of appointment commissions give surprisingly little reflection to their task, both on a general level and with regard to gender aspects. Indeed, such reflection is usually prompted by conflict situations (such as a debate with the representative of the equal opportunities working party in a meeting of the commission, serious breaches of transparency or publicly discussed cases of workplace harassment).

A further interesting finding of the descriptive analysis is that while good practice universities and universities with low commitment to gender equality both articulated prevailing social values and norms regarding maternity leave and childcare facilities, they both attach totally different connotations to this topic. In some cases, for example, a university's lack of commitment to the advancement of women and gender equality was justified with the argument that responsibility for the provision of childcare facilities lies with society as a whole, and as long as society does not meet this obligation, a university cannot do anything to change the situation. At good practice universities, the career/family compatibility issue is seen as a challenge to be addressed through measures to promote women/equal opportunities or as an aspect that must be given particular attention in appointment procedures. The high level of relevance attached to this topic is not surprising, since a traditional

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5 See, for example: EC 2004; Bros 2003; Pasero and Priddat 2003; Lind 2004.

image of motherhood still dominates in Austria and there are virtually no childcare places available for toddlers. However, empirical studies for Austria do indicate that these traditional images lose relevance the higher the level of education attained (cf. Kapella and Rille-Pfeiffer 2007; Wernhart and Neuwirth 2007).

This brief description of randomly selected results from the descriptive analysis indicates that a great deal of interpretation goes on between the strategic and the individual levels and that all manner of different factors of influence can affect this interpretation. The goal of the analysis is to determine these factors of influence for selected case studies and discuss how they relate to each other, which subtle discrimination mechanisms can accompany them and what other differentiating criteria play a role here alongside gender. In this way, the description of paradoxical situations can be extended to reconstruct how they come about.

## Project aims and methodology

The proposed project will provide a focused, in-depth analysis of two or three selected case studies that have so far been analysed primarily in descriptive form (cf. Wroblewski and Leitner 2010; Wroblewski et al 2011). In doing so, it seeks to examine how gender equality goals are received by the individual players in the appointment process. Which aspects of university strategy do they take into consideration? To what extent do they reflect on (subtle) discrimination mechanisms? What role does disciplinary background play?

The methodology used will draw on Adele Clarke's 'Situational Analysis' (Clarke 2005) approach and in particular on her situational maps, social world/arena maps and positional maps.<sup>6</sup> Situational maps are strategies for articulating the elements in the situation and examining relations among them. Social world/arena maps are cartographies of collective commitments, relations and sites of action. Positional maps represent simplification strategies for plotting positions articulated and not articulated in discourses (Clarke 2005: 86).

In this case, the (design of the) appointment procedure forms the situation of interest, and the situational maps will be used to examine the following questions: Which phases/situations in the appointment procedure do the players involved consider relevant? What factors are relevant here? Which players assume or are assigned which roles? To what extent is gender perceived to be a relevant criterion? What other differentiation criteria are mentioned? To what extent do university strategies or disciplinary elements play a role? The situational maps thus serve to

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6 A further development of Strauss and Corbin's (1990: 163) conditional matrix.

articulate the key actors, non-human, discourse and other elements in the situation of interest and, in a subsequent step, to examine the relation between these elements and their relation to the situation itself. The social world/arena maps serve to analyse the collective of players and their involvement in binding and discursive arenas. University strategies play a central role here. Clarke (2005) describes these maps as a 'meso-level interpretation of the situation'. The positional maps have several purposes. They are used to handle articulated and non-articulated key positions in the data regarding specific topics raised in the situation in question. The maps extend over special axes, designed to represent the differences, issues and controversial aspects of the topics raised. Not every possible position within these axes will be adopted. Consequently, we also need to analyse why specific positions are not adopted, thus touching on questions of power, dominance and authority.

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# Chapter 8

## The Paradox of Gender Equality: A Case Study on Cooling Out in Career Planning of Young Academics in Changing Scientific Organisations

*Heike Kahlert*

Influenced by an increasing international competition under conditions of globalisation and demographic changes, contemporary rhetoric in German science politics makes clear that women should and do have the same chances as men to reach high positions in universities and research organisations. (Mainly male) Elites in science politics seem to have understood that they have to act for promoting e/equality and excellence in the German science system. In 2006 the leading organisations in the German system of science and higher education signed a paper called ‘Offensive for Equal Opportunities of Female and Male Scientists’” (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft et al 2006) aiming to increase the participation of women in high positions in science and universities and to improve gender equality during the following five years in way that would be clearly identifiable. They call their initiative ‘Gender Alliance’ and have organised some activities aiming at gender equality (see Kahlert 2010). In fact, all initiatives to increase the amount of women on top positions in the German system of science and academia lead to only very small successes. In 2009 in Germany only 18.2% of professors were female. In the highest rank (C4/W3 professorships) there were only 10.5% women (all figures: Federal Statistical Office Germany, 2010). With these figures the German system of science and academia is situated among the lowest in international rankings concerning gender proportions in science and academia all over Europe.

In recent years the political attention to young academics has grown. Young academics are seen as those who are and have to be innovative and who strengthen the excellence of the German system of science and academia. In this context, the question of equal opportunities and gender equality has achieved more political importance and has been put on the agenda of science politics of the elites. However, the so-called leaky pipeline is still a problem, especially at critical points in academic careers, like the transitions during the qualification process, that is the

doctorate and the post-doctoral theses (in German this is called *Habilitation*). With regard to the figures it seems as if the openness to women in the German system of science and academia is more or less a rhetorical one. In spite of the rhetoric of equal opportunities and gender equality performed by political elites, competition, excellence and selection are the main factors that influence the recruitment of ‘the best’ in organisational practices. This leads to the fact that ‘the best’ are still mainly male while women seem to leave science and academia of their own choice during the qualification process. But why more women than men leave the science system after the doctorate and what this may have to do with the ‘paradox of gender’ has still not been analysed, as far as the German system of sciences and the humanities is concerned. The processes of career orientations and career planning of young academics have not been studied with regard to a comparison between the sexes and the disciplines.

## Theoretical background of the project: Inequality regimes and cooling out

In my research project I will relate to an organisational approach, arguing that scientific careers of young academics are not only made by individuals but also by the scientific organisations themselves. My focus on scientific and academic organisations is influenced by the insight that organisations are points of intersection between individual actions and societal structures. Although it is not related to organisations like universities and research institutions, Joan Acker’s concept of *inequality regimes* (2006) is useful for this field of investigation. In her current research Acker, who is well-known for her work on the ‘gendered organisation’ (1990), originating from the early 1990’s, develops an intersectional view on organisations, with special focus on the daily social practices of work and the organisation of work. She argues that organisations produce and reproduce inequalities and that in all organisations inequality regimes are at work – in spite of the rhetoric of equality. Inequality regimes are defined as loosely coupled practices, processes, actions and meanings, which are based at least on class, gender and race and contribute to reproducing these inequalities.

Acker defines inequalities in organisations as systematic disparities between the members of the organisation, with respect to power and control over goals, resources and outcomes; workplace decisions such as how work is organised; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employments and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations. She consid-

ers inequality regimes to be highly various. They tend to be fluid and changing (Acker 2006: 443). From this perspective inequality regimes have a 'hard' side, e.g. in relation to power, career, security and payment, and a 'soft' side, e.g. in relation to respect and work relations. Both sides are mutually connected. Viewed in this light, according to Acker inequality regimes can be conceptualised as structuring educational and professional careers. With regard to scientific careers one can assume that young academics have problems in valuing especially the 'soft' factors, whereas the 'hard' factors like employment conditions, small income and temporary working contracts are well known (see Enders 2005: 38–39).

Joan Acker's ideas can be combined with the ideas of Burton R. Clark (1960, 1980) about cooling out in different sectors and mainly in the system of higher education in USA. In his organisational analyses of educational careers Clark relates to Erving Goffman's (1952) concept of *cooling out*. According to Goffman the idea of cooling out describes the strategies developed by organisations to manage failures, the involuntary loss of certain roles and breakdown of individuals in an institutionalised manner. The loss of a certain role often goes hand in hand with a 'loss of face' (Goffman 1952: 456). This process is daily practice in many organisations, especially in the system of education, because disappointments belong to the agenda: 'The process of personnel selection requires that many trainees be called but that few be chosen' (Goffman 1952: 457). Cooling out here means the strategy that is used by the organisation to give a chance to the individual to keep his or her face, adapt his or her expectations on him- or herself and on the new, unwanted situation and develop new ways of behaving.

Clark argues that the cooling out function is 'normal' for democratic societies. The organisations of the system of education are especially inconsistent: They make people believe that they have chances that they are socially mobile and have equal opportunities, but the chances are in fact limited. So, failure on the part of some members of the organisation is already predetermined by the paradox of equality. The process of cooling out mediates between the expectations of those who are ready to be mobile and the on-going processes of selections in organisations. According to Clark, the task of educational organisations is to calm the anger of those who are rejected and who lose their roles:

A major problem of democratic society is inconsistency between encouragement to achieve and the realities of limited opportunity. Democracy asks individuals to act as if social mobility were universally possible [...]. But democratic societies also need selective training institutions, and hierarchical work organisations permit increasingly fewer persons to succeed at ascending levels. Situations of opportunity are also situa-

tions of denial and failure. Thus democratic societies need not only to motivate achievement but also to mollify those denied it in order to sustain motivation in the face of disappointment. (Clark 1960: 569)

In Clark's view, two varieties of cooling out can be differentiated: The 'strong' version is shaped by being thrown out of the organisation; failure is defined as such and named as the reason why the person has to leave the organisation. The 'soft' version offers the individual alternatives (Clark 1960: 571). The process of cooling out aims at reducing the stress in the organisation that originates from the systematic discrepancy between expectations and their fulfilment. In focus here is the process of transition that takes part in defining the new career goal and saying goodbye to the original goal. Thus, experiences of cooling out can influence subjective career orientations and the courses of professional careers.

In my research project I will combine Acker's concept of *inequality regimes* and Clark's concept of *cooling out*. Clark focuses on analysing the different strategies that are developed by educational organisations to cool people out. He relates to the ideas that cooling out is structured and mediates between organisational effects and individual actions. However, he does not discuss his concept in combination with organised inequalities. Other authors who relate to Clark's ideas make some suggestions with regard to different categories of inequality, which is class, race or gender (e.g. Bragg, 1998; Widmer et al 2008). Acker, in contrast, is interested in forms, grades and processes of producing and reproducing inequalities in organisations and in the possibilities of change in and through organisations. Both Clark and Acker emphasise the structuring role of inequalities in and through organisations for educational and professional careers. In their view, individuals seem to be influenced by the effects of organised inequalities. The idea that individuals are also actors who can analyse, revise and reject these effects, as Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration suggests (Giddens 1984), does not find a place in their concepts but it can be added to it.

What seems to be an individual decision of young academics, for example the action to leave the system of science and academia after the doctorate (or to stay in this system), also has a structural side. This side is mediated to the individuals in and by the institutions of science and academia and influenced by them. At this point in the scientific career of young academics gatekeepers, such as supervisors or promoters, can play a decisive role because they are in a position to introduce young academics to the scientific community, to teach them the rules of the academic game and to promote their careers. Acker's ideas remind us that gatekeeping is also structured by inequality regimes and able to re-

produce or change them. But gatekeepers can also participate in putting equality into action.

Recent studies on gender inequality and the influence of gender on cooling out in organisations argue, for example, that already during their scientific education and their entrance into professions women are more discouraged than men to pursue a further professional career (Sieverding 2002: 122–131). Simultaneously, they seem to have more socially accepted alternatives (Abele 2003: 174) than men who do not seem to have or see different options concerning their career paths (Sieverding 2002: 124). In their study on Max-Planck-institutes Jutta Allmendinger et al underline that the young female academics interviewed by them described their dissertation phase as a phase where they got the feeling of ‘not being wanted’ (Allmendinger et al 1999: 211, my translation). The interviewees make clear that they would have liked to pursue a scientific career in the beginning of their dissertations, but during the work on the doctorate they had decided not to pursue a scientific career after having finished the dissertation.

These examples show that the concept of cooling out is accepted and used in gender studies. However, a problem is that most of the studies only relate to women without comparing the results with men. So, maybe a research myth is produced, namely that only women suffer from cooling out by virtue of their sex. In my research I suppose that both women and men can suffer from cooling out. A methodological consequence is to compare the sexes.

## Research questions

In my research project I will analyse how structures like gender, organisational factors and personal aspects, in interplay, make women leave science. From the perspectives of organisational studies and gender studies I want to investigate how inequality regimes and cooling out processes in the German system of science influence scientific careers of young academics. My research questions are:

- How do inequality regimes work to change scientific and academic organisations with regard to career planning of young academics? Which role does gender play in these inequality regimes? How is gender interwoven with other inequalities in this context?
- How do young academics experience processes of cooling out during the dissertation phase? What types of cooling out can be identified in careers of young academics? Which factors contribute to being cooled out? Who is cooled out, how and why? Do all young academics suffer from cooling out? Or are there special groups of young academics, e.g. women, which are influenced more by cooling out than others?

- Who are the agents of cooling out in changing scientific and academic organisations, if there are agents? Or is cooling out deeply rooted in the scientific organisations as such, e.g. in organisational processes and organisational structures? Which role do gatekeepers play in processes of cooling out?
- How do gatekeepers like supervisors, e.g. professors, influence the loss of women in the transition from the dissertation to the post doc phase? Are they aware of their influence? What, maybe unintended, role does gender play in their strategies to supervise and promote young academics? What role do other inequalities play? Do they act for changing or do they act for stabilising the academic gender regime or do they do both at the same time?

With these research questions my project contributes mainly to the first subtheme of the call for applications, namely the paradox of change. In the project I will analyse the tensions between a normative or rhetoric model of gender equality and organisational practices that simultaneously seek to put equality into action and reproduce the existing inequality regimes by processes of cooling out.

## Empirical background of the project

To answer these questions I will first relate to a typology of career aims of young female and male academics who were all just finishing their dissertations or had just finished it when they were interviewed (Kahlert 2012). This typology emerges from an empirical study on scientific careers in political science and chemistry and is based on 60 qualitative interviews with 30 male and female young political scientists and 30 male and female young chemists in this certain career phase. It was worked out in the research project ‘Scientific careers in political science and chemistry: orientation, planning and consulting in the transition to the post-doc-phase’ under my leadership.<sup>1</sup>

Second, I will relate to 16 qualitative expert interviews with 8 full professors in chemistry (4 male, 4 female) and 8 full professors in political science (4 male, 4 female) on the promotion and supervision of young academics. Special attention in the interviews will be given to aspects of putting gender equality into action. The interviews will be conducted in late spring and early summer 2011. All interviewees can be considered as gatekeepers in their disciplines. These interviews are part of the on-going

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1 The project has been funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research in cooperation with the European Social Funds of the European Union since March 2008 until February 2011. Academic assistants were Marieke Gonschior, Katharina Nieter and Eva Katharina Sarter.

research project ‘Status passage promotion: Supervision and promotion by example of political science and chemistry’ under my leadership.<sup>2</sup>

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## Chapter 9

# Careers of Women Researchers and Engineers in Industrial Research: Between Internal Career Orientations and Institutional Barriers

*Helene Schiffbänker*

My research is about careers of women researchers and engineers in industrial research and about political interventions aimed at improving their career perspective. Analysing this field is of special interest as knowledge production in our society is changing (Stehr 2004) and institutions outside academia have become increasingly important, both in terms of employment figures and research and development investment (see European Commission (EC) 2007). Because of the Lisbon Strategy, the participation of women in S&T has become an important political goal. Policymakers at both the European and national level intend to promote women in science and technology in a quantitative (more women) and qualitative way (more women in leading positions and better frameworks for their career advancement). With this, careers have become increasingly relevant. To distribute this potential more equally between women and men, political interventions were initiated that were intended to draw more women researchers and engineers into industrial research.

In Austria, policy interventions in industrial research started in 2004, ranking Austria as ‘recently proactive country’ in gender interventions in R&D (EC 2008). Industrial research in Austria is a very male dominated field, with a low share of 15% women (EC 2009) and in leading positions especially, indicating that this sector is far less attractive for women than the other research sectors.

The two sectors with the most significant employment numbers are more sex segregated in their employment structure. 35% of all researchers in the higher education sector are women, which makes universities the most important employment field for female researchers (in terms of absolute numbers) in Austria. The business enterprise sector as largest sector with its increasing employment potential has the lowest share of female researchers. From the cross-national perspective, the share of female researchers in industrial research is at the bottom end (EC 2006).

My research is based on the observation that many women who have entered the field of industrial research – often after a long and difficult study at a male dominated technical university – leave it again after years of experience; they drop out of a leaky pipeline. To increase the share of women researchers it is necessary to stop these exists. Therefore we need to know more about the dynamics in research companies and about the reasons that make women leave. In my research the hypothesis is that in the industrial research field, careers are of limited attractiveness for women as they are based on a normative male career concept and a working culture that is based on that. The ‘ideal researcher’ puts work before private/family, is always available and spends really long working hours in the office. As women – as carers – are not able to offer so much time resources for working, they do not fit this normative working culture respectively this career. This can be seen by a high number of women drop-outs and less career progression of those employed in the field.

As for efficient policy design more information about women’s individual career concepts and a better understanding of the on-going mechanism in their working context are needed, I thus analyse both the subjective career orientations of women researchers and engineers (both active and those who have interrupted or discontinued their careers) as well as the institutional barriers that lead to exits. I am especially interested in the experiences of those women who have entered the field. I want to learn about the on-going practices and processes, about gender dynamics in the field, as you can observe that female researchers and engineers do not progress as well as their male counterparts along the ‘career ladder’; career progression is different (EC 2009; Husu 2010). Female researchers and engineers who are not satisfied with the working environment leave the field, they drop-out of the system, even in good positions (opt-outs). These phenomena indicate that political interventions need a closer link to the (changing) life circumstances and preferences of women researcher (and also of some men).

From a theoretical point of view, I understand ‘career’ as a link between the individual and society, which is continually formed and reformed in a negotiation between the external world and the individual’s subjective motivation structure. The individual is shaping his/her career but within the limits of the institution (Giddens 1992). So researchers and research institutions negotiate careers, making the individual accountable for the personal career management, following the general trend in post-modern societies where careers become *less* institutionalised and more ‘boundaryless’ (Arthur 1994). The individual is more and more enacting the career (Weick 1996) along his/her individual preferences and skills.

As the traditional notion of the 'career' has become institutionalised along the normative male life course (Kohli 1985, 2003), feminist contributions to career theory (Gallos 1989; Marshall 1989) have suggested 'alternative career concepts' relying on women's specific life circumstances and priorities, with respect to their understanding of a career, including loops, time-outs, quitting a job and transferring skills to a different field of employment, as well as on the basic level of realising personal dreams (Maneiro and Sullivan 2005). In order to present counter-outlines to male dominated notions about careers, feminist scientists have tried to develop career models which pay greater attention to the realities of women's lives. Female oriented views on careers are based on the assumption that men and women are different. Gallos (1989) postulates that women have other needs than men and that they live differently, and explores the relevance of these differences for the classical understanding of the career concept, which is based on male models of success and work. Can these observable differences be integrated into the classical concept, or is a female oriented concept necessary? She affirms the latter, because 'Women's distinctive developmental voice and needs point to fundamentally different career perspectives, choices, priorities, and patterns for women that need to be understood and appreciated' (Gallos 1989: 127). These difference theoretical conceptions should suit the plurality of women's life projects, but also that of an increasing number of men. They should embrace not only aspects connected to work, but also those that are relevant for relationships and family life, thereby coming closer to the female understanding of life. The use of traditional male career models would lead women to a dead-end, due to the difference in their understanding of life and in other interpretational patterns used in the analysis of social realities. According to Gallos, alternative strategies are not recognised as 'female career paths' for now; rather they are measured against the traditional male standards: deviations, deficits, 'career regressions' are noted. Abandonment of employment in favour of childcare is remarked upon, as is lower job-commitment or less career ambitions, since the definition of and step-by-step planning for career aims is more difficult when partnership and/or children have to be taken into account. Hence, 'career' is obviously regarded as corresponding to the reality of male lives.

By analysing internal career orientation, we learn more about the subjective understanding of career. Internal career orientations are of special relevance as career paths in the business-sector are less formalised than in academia, and thus individuals are able to follow a wider variety of heterogeneous trajectories. This puts into question the 'leaky-pipeline' as adequate metaphor for women's careers in this field of science.

On the institution level, gender barriers in the scientific field have already been identified (Schiebinger 1997; Caprile and Valles 2010), but ‘translating’ these findings (= scientific gender knowledge (Wetterer 2008)) into policies is rather difficult. At this point it has to be mentioned that the implementation of gender equality intervention in industrial research is realised on a very different level compared to academia: while at universities equality initiatives have been implemented since decades, there is hardly any tradition of gender equality measures. In these research institutions, there is little awareness about structural barriers in women’s careers and their social construction (Matthies and Simon 2004). For men and women researchers and managers, professional success is often considered to be objective, based on merit only, with science in general considered as gender neutral. So the actors’ ‘doing gender’ (West and Zimmerman 1987) is related to personal experience in everyday life (= ‘everyday-gender-knowledge’, ‘alltagsweltliches Geschlechterwissen’ (Wetterer 2008)) what makes gender stereotypes wide spread and the promotion of gender equality difficult.

My empirical analysis is based on interviews with 18 women researchers and engineers employed in research and technology organisations in the business-enterprise-sector in Austria, either in research units in industrial companies or in cooperative research organisations. I did not select women in leading positions, but regular employees differentiated by (career) age, position and discipline. Another 17 interviews were conducted with women who dropped out of the research system, intending to learn more about the reasons why they left. All semi-structured interviews have been fully transcribed and analysed by qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2002).

I am putting the individual’s career orientations in the centre of my analysis, as they are ‘drivers’ for professional activity (Derr and Laurent 1989). Derr and Laurent’s concept of internal and external career orientations describes five ‘career success landscapes’ that leave behind a normative understanding of ‘career’ as linear, hierarchical movement. I analyse these ‘career success landscapes’ for women researchers and engineers in industrial research institutions and companies. During my field research, I have asked specifically about their subjective understanding of career, the importance of professional success and the relation between work and private life. How far can these internal career orientations be realised? What is going on in research teams, at the institutional level? What is the basis for professional success? What does the institution reward? How is the relation between individual merit and equal opportunities? Knowing more about these factors makes it possible to address them more precisely with gender equality interventions.

First results show that all five career orientations can be found in my sample: most characteristic for women in the field is the ‘getting high’-orientation. The fun in doing technical work, finding the best technical solution is giving motivation, the content of work is most relevant and makes researchers and engineers ‘high’. For women, a special challenge is in becoming an expert in a male dominated working environment. So beside the orientation along an expert-career, the technical – and by this also the social – acceptance by male colleagues is an important factor of orientation.

The ‘getting ahead’ orientation can be observed at young female researchers and engineers. They often have experienced hard times with clear gender discrimination in male dominated schools, but as they have managed to overcome them and have succeed in developing adequate coping strategies, they are convinced now to be prepared for leading functions. They do not see their own discriminating experiences as systematic approach of a male dominated working environment; they do not link their own discriminatory experience to further career development. On the contrary, women who already are or have been in leading positions know well that being a woman in such positions brings a lot of difficult and sometimes hard experiences that they are not always willing to live with. So they argue that it was not possible to realise their individual form of leading or that – after a while in the leading position – they get tired and frustrated by the rules of the game and so decide to leave the field, they opt-out. Other women’s getting ahead orientation is similar to those of men; they tend to have a status career like traditionally men have it.

Interestingly, one orientation could be found in my data that is not described by the dimensions Derr and Laurent suggested: I call it ‘getting self-developed’ as it can be described by the ambition to have a satisfying and interesting life, discovering the own personal interests within and outside work. Sometimes that leads to a modification in the job content, trying to change the focus of work within industrial research, sometimes this search for own interests and personal developments is the reason for dropping out. ‘Making sense out of my work’ becomes more important for female researchers in their mid-careers.

Reconciliation of research work and care for children, elderly or ill persons was not mentioned as main challenge. According to Derr and Laurent, ‘getting balanced’ is a career orientation that is more focusing on the private sphere. Just two of my interviewees who have small children are mainly focusing on the balance between work and care. A few others have mentioned reconciliation-problems in former days when they could not get a job or were fired because of care responsibilities. But

in general, the interviewees have made arrangements that make work-life-balance possible. Beside these negative experiences, there were no complaints about difficulties with working time and private time. Mainly based on private arrangements like grandparents, most women have accepted the normative standards concerning working time in the research field. Some mention that they have little time for the child/ren, but do not put into question the duration of working time that is necessary for doing the job well. The normative concept of the ideal worker/researcher (Acker 2009) is internalised and not put into question.

So the internal career orientations of female researchers in industrial research in Austria show a wide heterogeneity, but also a strong evidence for later dropouts. Analysing the time when women drop out, three different moments can be identified:

- The first is after finishing university: when women do not succeed in developing a professional self-identity, a research interest and a social network, it can become difficult to gain access to the labour market. The elitist male dominated university system and the way it has presented 'science' makes women feel that they are not part of this system.
- The second time the career-pipeline is supposed to become leaky is in mid-career for different reasons: one is reconciliation with child care, another is geographic mobility (either to follow a partner and give up a job for this or to see the necessity to move to another place for the personal career and do not want to).
- The 'glass-ceiling' is another moment that makes women think about change and opt-out: either they notice active discrimination, as being not nominated for a leading position or earning less while working more. One female manager in a big research-company who applied for a top-position was said: 'You do not have enough power for leading in a male dominated area' even though she was leading projects since almost 20 years. She mentions that this makes working there senseless. Others miss a challenge, a goal they see realistic to realise or even miss any sense of their doing. This is the point when the opt-out-option comes in mind or even becomes real.

These first findings need to be looked at more in detail, but they will face a limitation methodologically because of my sample construction: for further research, it will be important to include men also and so be able to observe similarities and differences in career orientations and drop out reasons by gender.

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# Chapter 10

## Gender Paradoxes in Corporate Leadership: Through the Lenses of Executive Selection

*Monica Wirz*



Gender parity in processes of decision-making and in positions of formal power and influence is recognised as a topic of universal relevance for the achievement of gender equality. Not only a human right, it is also seen as a precondition for justice and democracy and as a requirement for women's interests and rights to be taken into account (UN 2007). Nonetheless, by the end of the first decade of the 21st century the participation of women directors in the most influential corporations in the UK, namely the FTSE 100, had plateaued around the 12% mark (Vinnicombe et al 2010). The estimate then was that it would take at least 66 years for gender parity at top corporate levels to materialise (EHRC 2008).

My research endeavours to address this paradox by critically assessing conventional epistemologies and methodologies relating to gender in corporate boards, with a particular emphasis on multinational organisations. The starting presuppositions are: first, leadership positions in high-end organisations are key sites of knowledge production with an impact on wider societal issues that goes well beyond the organisations themselves. Second, when systems of knowledge production encompass previously absent groups, the expectation is that new avenues open up for the negotiation of interests, political agendas, and, in the specific case of gender, of more equitable gender relations (Phillips 1998). Accordingly, the scarcity of women in positions of power has a detrimental symbolic and epistemic impact at all levels of society: it affects how we all make sense of and conceptualise the world around us, whichever our location within the social order. Inquiries into this area are at thus the crux of not only any attempt to theorise social change, but also of any project aiming at gender equality across different sectors and levels of social life. In the corporate sector, women's participation in positions of leadership tends to be framed within the context of organisational diversity. This debate posits that knowledge is best produced by means of a variety of viewpoints and belief systems, which in turn lead to a more textured quality of decision-making. In sum, diversity in positions of

decision-making allows for the reframing of institutional problems and objectives in a way that more closely reflects our complex world.

The question remains, however: if both diversity and gender parity are such desirable goals, why are they so difficult to achieve? Given a context of well-established anti-discrimination legislation and corporate policies, the underlying reasons for the relentless dearth of women in high-status positions and the paradox of women in corporate leadership can be partly attributed to the inability of mainstream analytical frameworks and workplace practices to address ingrained background assumptions about ‘femininity’ and ‘leadership’. These are the issues this project aims to explore.

## Project aims

This project explores this subject through a two-fold approach. Theoretically, it looks into the mainstream business literature to explore how gender and leadership are conceptualised, as well as how the epistemologies and methodologies within this field might be implicated in reifying the gender gap in positions of corporate seniority and influence. The literature on management and organisational studies is quite extensive, but until as recently as the last quarter of the twentieth century it rarely took gender into account as a category of analysis. Even within the current context of increasing interest, ‘gender for many seems to be a theme that has to be included and ticked off so that expectations of what needs to be addressed are met and critique is avoided’ (Alvesson and Billing 2009: 6). On the whole, research in this area is still mostly premised on a gender-neutral framework of knowledge production (Acker 1990, 1992, 1999; Martin, 2000). The development of a feminist critique within the field of management studies has been instrumental in challenging this paradigm; this project is inserted within and aims to add to this body of research.

On an empirical level, this project focuses on executive recruitment<sup>1</sup> and the executive search sector as a site where these epistemologies are

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1 This refers to the selection of the “‘top-x group’, where x is the number of senior executives constituting the critical leadership pool in the company” (Fernández-Aráoz, Groyberg and Nohria 2009: 76). Leadership selection focuses mostly on the top three tiers of organisations: the C-level executives (Chief Executive Officer, C. Operations O., C. Finance O., etc.), their direct reports (Marketing Director, HR D., Finance D.) and the layer below that which comprises divisional heads. The actual number of executives/leaders varies depending on the size and scope of the organisation in question. Multi-national corporations (MNCs), for example, may have as many as 1,000 key people, whereas in a mid-sized company the leadership pool may be in the range of 20-50.

put into practice. Executive search firms play a vital role in the selection of elite corporate executives, one which has become ‘institutionalised’ in the eyes of both clients (the hiring organisations) and candidates (Beaverstock 2007: 28). They are deemed to have become ‘the single most influential form of management consulting engaged by organizations’ (McCool 2008: xvii). Nonetheless, it is still the case that selection processes tend to be reactive and unsystematic rather than part of a succession planning strategy. Fernández-Aráoz, Groyberg and Nohria’s survey with MNCs’ CEOs and search consultants pointed to unreliable practices that ‘relied heavily on subjective personal preferences or on largely unquestioned organizational traditions, often based on false assumptions’ (2009: 76). Over 50% of the respondent companies, for example, still relied on the hiring part’s ‘gut feeling’ and their understanding that the selected candidate had ‘what it took’ to take on that position.

Executive search firms aim to address this erratic approach to selection and turn this gap into one of the unique selling points and competitive advantages of their offer. In advocating a ‘rigorous, strategic and objective’ approach to hiring (ibid: 77), executive search organisations position themselves as a highly regarded strategic partner who can add value to their clients’ business through their professional, systematic and ‘scientifically-based’ processes. In doing so they also construct a professional identity and reputation which is based upon discourses of objectivity and impartiality. In sum, the executive search sector has the potential to be an important tool in replacing the old-boy network and advancing more meritocratic and equitable forms of selection. Alternatively, if a more sceptical standpoint is assumed, it may be seen as a wider, more efficient and far-reaching instrument acting on its behalf.

By observing the practices through which candidates to some of the most senior and influential positions in this world are selected my research aims to build a picture that helps to decipher what lies behind the paradox of gender and corporate leadership. In my approach to the overall topic of the GEXcel Fellowship, Theme 11–12 – ‘Gender Paradoxes in Changing Academic and Scientific Organisations’, my goal has been to draw from my current topic of research in order to explore some of the paradoxes that can be found in this area:

## Addressing the overall theme: Gender paradoxes in organisations

Looking at the selection/recruitment process, what are the discourses that operate at a macro- (societal, legislative), meso- (organisational policy), micro- (daily selection practices, interpersonal interactions among

selection consultants and between consultants and candidates) level? How do they intersect with gender and with mainstream assumptions about gender? Moreover, how are these discourses related to the gender gap regarding top-level participation in organisations? For my doctoral research, I identified two specific processes of change that are currently topical in the West (albeit at different stages and without having reached a consensus across different countries): *the drive towards organisational diversity and the gender quota debate on company boards*. The research being conducted during the GEXcel fellowship focuses primarily on the analysis of how Scandinavian countries and the UK are positioned in relation to these two processes. It does so by critically assessing the similarities and differences that emerge from within these different socio-political national contexts, as well as how theoretical traditions contribute to the political, corporate and academic debate.

The aim here is to explore the opportunities for cross-learning that exist by transnationalising research in this area. In addition, by concentrating on a specific and clearly demarcated organisational activity, namely the processes involved in the recruitment and selection of senior executives, this research strives for a nuanced and in-depth exploration of the gender dimensions that are part of this organisational activity, albeit not necessarily an explicit one. As such, this analysis aims to provide helpful insights into the discourses and processes surrounding the topics of gender diversity and quotas for organisational boards, and, ultimately, to inform the wider social debate on gender parity.

## Addressing sub-theme a: the paradox of change

As far as their selection processes are concerned, multinational organisations, including those in scientific or high-tech segments, are inserted in a global competitive market for talent. The global market environment reflects increasingly fast-paced research and technological developments, changes in demographic profiles which affect the demand for different products, emergence of new markets, consumer groups and working patterns. Internally, organisations' selection decisions must be able to respond to such changes: the talent pool must be as wide as their market context and conditions, as well as be able to respond to the demand for a different type of worker. Organisational discourses have already aligned themselves to this rhythm of changes by adopting discourses such as 'the war for talent' (McKinsey 2007) or 'the gender bilingual organisation' (Wittemberg-Cox and Maitland 2008).

This research looks behind these discourses to assess how thoroughly organisations are scrutinising the gender elements within seemingly gender-neutral processes (Benokraitis and Feagin 1995). For example,

let us imagine the scenario in which a pharmaceutical company decides to recruit a new executive to their team in order to reinforce its competitiveness in the fast-growing Indian market. What are the barriers for predominantly white, middle-aged, middle-class, Western, male boards prepared to identify and retain talent that may be different in gender, racial and ethnic terms? How are the expectations regarding the candidates' competencies and experiences constructed? How do gatekeepers on the side of the executive search firm (through their consultants, competency criteria and other selection processes) as well as on the client side (the scientific organisation itself) promote or prevent, overtly or covertly, consciously or not, gendered processes of change?

### Addressing sub-theme b: the paradox of excellence

In the search for 'talent', the executive search sector has engaged with different excellence programmes designed to provide a solution to the fast and unrelenting stream of change that organisations have recently been going through. Providing the backdrop to this, organisations are acutely aware of the importance of introducing leaders who, among other reasons:

1. Can relate to customers (McAteer 2002). Women are the main decision-maker for purchases in most categories of consumption
2. Reflect new market profiles. With the development of countries such as Brazil, China and India, among others, as increasingly significant markets, organisations are aware of the need of having representatives of different national, ethnic, racial backgrounds in their teams
3. Respond to a change in demographics. The baby boomer generation, which incidentally forms the backbone of most current corporate boards, is reaching the point of mass retirement. New leaders have to be found and the potential lack thereof has led to what the executive search sector has named the 'crisis of leadership'.

Programmes and initiatives aiming at excellence and diversity in the talent pool have become common occurrences in organisations. With the ingress of new 'bodies' in positions of decision-making different forms of power relations are likely to emerge, bringing with them the potential for *new systems of truth* (Foucault 1991: 184) and new stratifications of power. As for how gender fits into this picture, organisations deal it in a paradoxical way. The use of discourses of meritocracy, talent and potential attempt to reinforce a degree of objectivity and an assumption of a gender neutral organisation (Acker 1990) in which the 'best' candidate is sought after and where the gender of the candidate is downplayed. At the same time, conflicting new theories argue for a supposedly 'female

leadership advantage' in which, notwithstanding their problematically essentialist assumptions, suggest that gender diversity in positions of decision making would result in distinctive organisational benefits leadership (Eagly & Carli 2003; Sealy, Vinnicombe and Doldor 2009). This is a crucial moment for feminist and critical theory projects to question the problematic ontological, epistemological and methodological foundations that are at play in the constitution of the debate on the ideal leadership prototype of tomorrow's organisation.

The GEXcel fellowship offers a unique opportunity to explore these topics simultaneously at a theoretical and empirical level. Empirically, one of my aims is to investigate how executive search in Scandinavia differs or not from the UK context, particularly in the areas of change, excellence and interventions. Theoretically, the exchange with other GEXcel research fellows provides a fertile ground for an analytical debate on these areas. In doing so, the objective is to critically assess how existing theoretical frameworks in the Scandinavian and the UK environment relate to the potentially different embodied realities of professionals in scientific organisations.

## Addressing sub-theme c: the paradox of interventions

Similar to the previous sub-theme, rapid changes within the organisational environment have led to a series of social interventions: if excellence in diversity initiatives may be understood as the effect at a meso-, namely organisational, level, the debate on gender quotas on corporate boards is the equivalent example at the macro-level, given the role that States play in the coordination and regulation of the playing field. As such, Scandinavia has been at the forefront of this debate, both in the cases when Norway chose to introduce legally binding gender quotas for company boards and when, in Sweden, the business community has gathered together to repeal legal intervention while delivering the second highest participation of women on company boards in the world (Heidenreich 2012).

I am particularly interested in the analysis of how different socio-political paradigms have a bearing on how gender equality should be promoted and, consequently, on the effect they have on selection/appointment processes for senior positions in scientific organisations. My current research looks at the comparison between different settings, ranging from the non-interventionist neoliberal US model to the Scandinavian model of adopting quotas as a tool to level the playing field, as well as the UK model, which finds itself divided between these opposing strategies and is still in a process of self-definition. During the GEXcel fellowship my focus lies mainly on the historical and local discipline

traditions that have informed and influenced knowledge production in Scandinavian countries. The aim of this project is to reflect on such epistemologies in order to better be able to compare to the different traditions that are present in different countries. Through this the ultimate goal is to critically analyse how seemingly non-gendered interventions regarding the promotion of gender equality in positions of high status in organisations not only come to be, but also have a better change of alignment with feminist liberatory aims.

## Conclusion

Gendering executive search has become extremely topical within the political and corporate debate. The GEXcel fellowship, through its featured theme and subthemes, is a unique opportunity to research this topic and promote a transnational analysis of how the paradoxes within gender and corporate leadership may be approached. This project aspires not only to contribute to this debate at a theoretical level, but also to provide a better understanding of the subject in a way that may be relevant and practical enough to promote gender parity and social justice.

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# Chapter 11

## 'the Eye of the Storm': Gender Scholars Within Gender Change Interventions in Academia – A Sustainable Approach?



*Marieke van den Brink and Jennifer De Vries*

Despite numerous initiatives that aim to transform universities into more inclusive and gender equal workplaces, change remains – at best – slow (de Vries 2010; Eveline 2004; Husu 2000; Morley 1999; van den Brink and Benschop 2012). Pursuing gender equality within the academy 'involves working against the grain of academic wood, moving against the flow of the malestream' (Fogelberg et al 1999: 11). We concur with Fogelberg et al; pursuing gender equality is 'hard work' where we, as gender scholars or consultants, find ourselves at the forefront of the struggle when we engage in gender equality initiatives. When we ourselves are attacked or discredited and our change efforts meet with the inevitable backlash and resistance it is easy to become frustrated, discouraged, and disempowered. Of concern is that strategies we have on occasion engaged in the past, for example retreating to the 'ivory' tower, blaming the stupidity of the other, becoming hostile, or behaving like 'good girls' to avoid conflict, have been counterproductive in furthering the gender change agenda. In addition we observe the cumulative effect of this work on ourselves and our colleagues, fearing that they or we may subsequently choose to disengage from gender equality work.

Our gender scholarship prepares us intellectually for the inevitability of the difficulties we experience, however we are still personally impacted by our experiences and roles within this struggle. While this is often a topic of conversation amongst gender scholars engaged in gender change interventions, there is little in the literature that reflects and analyses these experiences to assist us in coping with this 'hard work'. Our focus is predominantly on the other actors within the gender change intervention, often at the expense of ourselves.

We are aware of scholars who have examined their role within the intervention, noting the difficult power relations and the subsequent difficulties in holding onto the gender agenda when fearful that the project might be discontinued or relationships be compromised by pushing



gender too hard (Benschop and Verloo 2006; Charlesworth and Baird 2007; Coleman and Rippin 2000). We see our work as complementary to theirs, which has a predominant emphasis on their impact on the intervention. Through maintaining a rigorous focus on the impact of the intervention on us and by adopting an experimental approach to our roles, we aim to make our approaches both more personally sustainable and more effective for engaging with the hard work of building more gender equitable universities.

## Aim and research questions

Our assumption, to be explored, is that through more explicitly positioning ourselves as actors within the intervention we may be able to transform our difficult and disempowering experiences. Our aim is to build a firmer foundation on which to stand, where we reflexively incorporate the gender scholarship that we use within the change intervention. Our research questions are:

- What are the personal experiences of ourselves and other gender scholars in doing this ‘hard work’, as we engage in gender interventions in academia?
- What theoretical frameworks and approaches can be usefully applied in making sense of these experiences as actors in the intervention?

## Theoretical frameworks

As gender scholars we bring a variety of theoretical frameworks and tools to assist in understanding the perseverance of gender inequality and the resistance to change initiatives. Marieke van den Brink uses the notion of paradox (van den Brink and Stobbe 2009) and a detailed analysis of the constant interplay between gender equality practices and gender inequality practices (van den Brink, Benschop and Jansen 2010; van den Brink and Benschop 2012) to further our understanding of the complex way gender is done in organisations. This revealing of the micro processes of doing gender may be equally applicable to our own circumstance which seem full of paradox and contradiction, and where we feel caught up in the vortex of gendering equality and inequality practices.

Jennifer de Vries (2010) through her application of the fourth frame approach (Meyerson and Fletcher 2000) to a women only program has a more explicit focus on capturing the ‘small wins’ in the organisational change process. Her focus on leadership, change agency and culture change, and her combined roles as researcher and practitioner have made her adept in the application of tools and methods that have

proved valuable in assisting others to ‘see’ gender and themselves as gender change agents. The application of these frameworks and tools, for example ‘small wins’ (Meyerson and Fletcher 2000), ‘tempered radicals’ (Meyerson 2001; Meyerson and Scully 1995), the identity work of leadership (Sinclair 2007) and self-reflective inquiry (Marshall 2004) may be useful in providing different frames and strategies for seeing ourselves and our role in the gender change process.

We see the usefulness of combining this work, explicitly examining ourselves in the gendering (in)equality practices which are occurring in these difficult encounters, *and* incorporating a focus on change and change agency in order to reframe our role in gender interventions.

## Methodology

Our starting point is to make ourselves, and our experiences as researchers and the focus of our inquiry. We are following in the footsteps of Judi Marshall (1999: 157) when she adopts ‘self-reflective and action-oriented “research” approaches’. The ‘small wins’ iterative cycle, of naming, diagnosis and experimentation provides an appropriate overarching tool for the research process, providing a structured process of reflexivity within an experimental approach. We also draw on ‘some of the principles of action research as a method for developing effective professional practice’ (Eden and Huxham 1996: 528) where action research is seen as a ‘systematic form of enquiry undertaken by practitioners into their attempts to improve the quality of their own practice’ (Whitehead 1994: 138 in Eden and Huxham 1996: 528). The focus however does not remain on our individual practice. Our commitment is to ‘opening up the frame’, in order to contribute to both theory and practice (Eden and Huxham 1996: 531).

The ‘small wins’ approach introduces the structure of three phases to the research. In the naming phase we gather the stories of these difficult encounters we have had in our gender equality work, for example, invitations to present research as a gender expert, working with universities in delivering gender equality strategies, and interviewing research participants. In the diagnosis phase we aim to make sense of these experiences using the frameworks introduced previously, and in experimentation phase we will apply our new insights to our on-going gender equality work. We see the GEXcel scholarly community as an ideal forum for inviting additional collaborators, sharing stories and deepening our analysis through drawing on the expertise, frameworks and approaches of others.

## Conclusion

We assume that our gender knowledge will provide us with credibility and a foundation on which to stand and to build, however it is this very knowledge that is contested, and our discipline which is often discredited. When we work for gender change within the academy this incongruity is heightened. This paradox of gender knowledge could be considered an aspect of the broader paradox of interventions.

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# Chapter 12

## The 'Bifocal Approach': (Re)Positioning Women's Programs

*Jennifer De Vries*

One of the welcome tasks associated with my GEXcel research project has been meeting with Swedish gender and organisation scholars whose work I have admired from afar or caught glimpses of in conference presentations or proceedings. Only a small proportion of this scholarship has been published in English language journals and the opportunity to meet and discuss theory and practice personally has been a highlight.

I knew that I was amongst scholars of a similar ilk when at my first meeting the Professor present noted in passing 'we would call that a mixed gender program'. She was referring to the use of male and female mentors in a program where women were targeted as the mentees. In the Australian context, and indeed in many other European contexts where I have presented my work, these programs, even when men are engaged as mentors in the program, continue to be referred to as 'women only' programs because the intended beneficiaries of the program were the women, not the mentors. The majority of programs are so firmly stuck within the 'fix the women' paradigm that the inclusion of senior men and women as mentors remains incidental and the potential that their intentional inclusion could bring remains unexplored and unutilised.

In large part my doctoral research explored the re-orientation of women only programs away from this women as deficit approach, towards becoming vehicles for building more gender equitable workplaces. In a mentoring context this re-orientation includes working with male and female mentors to develop their gender insight and activism, in order to engage them as leaders in the organisational gender change process. This inclusion of the mentors as intended beneficiaries in the program design, therefore changing it from a women only program into a mixed gender program, was apparently assumed by the scholars present at that first meeting, and seen as unremarkable.

I left that meeting feeling like I had, at least in terms of my contribution, 'taken coals to Newcastle'. Originally a British idiom used to describe a pointless action, as coal was produced in Newcastle, it works equally well from an Australian perspective as we also mine coal in Newcastle, just north of Sydney. Despite this, there is something comforting about arriving at the same place, via a different journey, through build-

ing on the shared tradition of the work of scholars such as Candace West and Don Zimmerman (1987) and Joan Acker (1990, 1992). Like familiar friends they were the known gems listed in bibliographies, alongside the tantalisingly unknowable (written in) Swedish entries. While Swedish scholars were able to build on a rich vein of Scandinavian scholarship ‘within the so called doing gender perspective in organisation research’ (Gunnarsson et al 2003: 6), I in turn, built on the work of others, most particularly scholars associated with the Centre for Gender in Organizations<sup>1</sup> (see, for example, Meyerson and Fletcher 2000) using these same foundational scholars. Using common foundations we were all engaged in exploring ‘how the use of gender theory can contribute to deeper, sustainable gender equality’ (Amundsdotter 2009: 1).

Paradoxically, bringing coals to Newcastle may be of value, if the journey and next steps can be shared and collaborations formed. In the interests of engaging further in this conversation I will outline a little of the journey that brought me to the meeting where so much of what I had learnt along the way was already understood.

## The ‘bifocal approach’: Re-positioning women’s programs

My thesis, titled *A realistic agenda? Women only programs as strategic interventions for building gender equitable workplaces*<sup>2</sup> examined the capacity of a women only (WO) leadership development program to move beyond a sole focus on developing the women, to become a transformative gendered change intervention.

Playing on the notion of bifocal spectacles, I coined the term, the ‘bifocal approach’ to emphasise the necessity of maintaining a simultaneous focus on individual *and* organisational change. The bifocal approach became a way of operationalising a transformative agenda specific to WO programs to keep both foci clearly in view. The on-going challenge was to design these two foci into the program curriculum, design and implementation to become simultaneous, interdependent and compatible goals. Maintaining two foci effectively becomes a pairing of what Cynthia Cockburn refers to as the short or limited agenda of ‘equality

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1 Researchers associated with the Centre for Gender in Organizations (CGO), Simmons Graduate School, Boston, include Gill Coleman, Robin Ely, Joyce Fletcher, Deborah Kolb, Debra Meyerson, Rhona Rapoport, Ann Ripplin and Maureen Scully. See also the special ‘Beyond Armchair Feminism’ edition of *Organization*, vol. 7, no. 4, for a critical overview of their work.

2 [http://repository.uwa.edu.au:80/R/-?func=dbin-jump-full&object\\_id=13090&current\\_base=GEN01-INS01](http://repository.uwa.edu.au:80/R/-?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=13090&current_base=GEN01-INS01)

for individual women' with the longer agenda of a '*project of transformation* for organizations' (Cockburn 1989: 218, original emphasis). By pairing WO development with the transformative agenda, the bifocal approach opportunistically aims to build on an existing intervention.

I argued that WO programs offered potential advantages as a platform for an organisational gender change intervention in addressing commonly experienced difficulties with transformative interventions (Rao, Stuart and Kelleher 1999): organisational access and the way the radical transformative agenda was 'sold' to the organisation; the process of engagement with organisational partners; and, making the intervention robust and sustainable. WO programs provide a different organisational rationale for a gendered change agenda; with the seeming palatability of WO programs (Devos, McLean and O'Hara 2003), as evidenced by their continuing popularity, easing organisational access. WO programs have the capacity to be on-going, repeated year after year, while providing opportunities for partnership building with a diversity of organisational members at all levels, including senior men (as mentors and champions).

The critical work of the bifocal approach focussed around these partnership building opportunities, seeking to facilitate organisational members' development of gender insight through their program involvement. The development of gender insight was considered necessary to underpin engagement in the work of transforming the gendered organisation. LDW was seeking to recruit, using the words of Deborah Kolb (2003), 'constituencies for change'.

## Examining the effectiveness of the 'bifocal approach'

My research examined the 'bifocal approach' as applied by the Leadership Development for Women program (LDW) delivered in two historically masculinist institutions, the University of Western Australia and a policing organisation. Qualitative data from the three potential constituency groups that form the heart of the bifocal approach – executive level champions of the program, senior female and male mentors, and the female participants – was used to examine the effectiveness of the bifocal approach.

The difficulty of developing gender insight and agency became increasingly obvious as each new group (executive leaders, mentors and participants, in that order) was examined. Yet with each group there were individuals, always only a small minority of the potentially large group, who engaged with the gendered change agenda. I will illustrate this with a few examples, firstly drawn from the mentor and then participant interviews.

‘[A]nd gender, if it has relevance...’, the words of Clive, a male Professor, became symbolically representative of much of the mentor interview material in both organisations. Male and female mentors largely lacked a critical lens to examine their own organisation, and this impeded their development of gender insight. Interviews were marked by a degree of complacency and overly optimistic assessments of progress made towards gender equality. These were out of step with the institutional data and the experience of the more junior female participants on the program. Most at UWA considered it a ‘good place for women to work’ and not ‘anti-female in any way’. Police mentors focussed on how far they had come, with the most enthusiastic endorsement of progress coming from Simon, a Superintendent, who stated ‘we have gone ahead in leaps and bounds...’. What emerged in the interviews were many ways of diminishing and denying the importance of gender as an organisational issue, reducing systemic gendering processes to problems that individual women could address. The focus of the mentoring relationship became assisting women to more closely fit the ‘ideal worker’ in order to succeed within the defined masculine parameters of the role. Mentors, in large part remained unchanged by their mentoring experience, learning little from their exposure to the stories of women within their organisation.

Trevor, an Inspector in policing provided the exception. Trevor’s approach was marked by a thoughtful questioning of the status quo within his organisation, combined with a capacity to speak up and challenge assumptions and practices when he considered it was important to do so. He brought what he described as a healthy cynicism to his role as mentor, and was open to hearing the women’s accounts. Trevor mentored three women in succession, developing a much greater understanding of the situation for women in the organisation. He observed consistent patterns and commonalities, particularly in the way that women were denied access to and overlooked for opportunities that were important to their development and career success. He challenged this gendering of opportunity wherever possible, seeking out opportunities for his mentees and women in his team, and challenging the allocation of opportunities by the management team of which he was a part. Trevor’s mentoring approach could therefore be described as bifocal – bringing both the women’s development and the institutional gender change process sharply in focus. Already a ‘tempered radical’ (Meyerson and Scully 1995), an insider working for organisational change, Trevor was able to translate his developing gender insight into action.

The leadership development work with women participants remains at the heart of the LDW program mandate. True to its bifocal intent the program aimed to develop leaders who were capable of not only

critically 'seeing' the gendered culture of their organisation but were also equipped as leaders and change agents. The curriculum incorporated gender and organisation scholarship and an emphasis on leadership as a gendered construct and practice. Much of the work of the program revolved around re-visioning and reclaiming leadership, through explorations of identity, power and culture.

Interviews with the women, in their peer learning groups provided strong affirmation of the effectiveness of the program in supporting participants' leadership development. They embraced change agency as part of their leadership development, and had enthusiastically adopted (and adapted) the idea of 'small wins' (Meyerson and Fletcher 2000) as an empowering concept. Their enactment of leadership challenged the gendered status quo, yet the women did not appear to be guided by an overt or articulated gender insight. Their development as leaders was an ongoing and robust change, still evident between one and three years post program completion.

## A realistic strategy for organisational change?

Developing 'constituencies for change' (Kolb 2003), those who could see 'gender', who could hold onto a gender narrative, proved elusive although not impossible. This difficulty is not surprising; indeed it is to be expected. Rendering gender relevant and visible is an enduring difficulty within transformative gender interventions. Recent scholarship exploring organisational gender change interventions has increasingly focused on the ways in which gender becomes lost or is rendered irrelevant (Benschop and Verloo 2006; Charlesworth and Baird 2007; Eveline and Bacchi 2009; Rao, Stuart and Kelleher 1999). As Eveline and Bacchi (2009: 566) observe, obeying the organisational 'rules of relevance' serves to disappear gender, situating it 'below the horizon' of what matters. This lack of gender relevance is normalised, and is symptomatic of the gendered organisation (Benschop and Verloo 2006). Organisational gender change projects encounter this lack of gender relevance and the incapacity to 'see' gender as the first hurdle.

As expected, this re-fashioning of a WO program into a transformative intervention, met with only partial success, often falling short of the transformative ideal. A focus on gender and the gendered organisation was often lost, with the spotlight frequently returning to the 'short' agenda of a focus on the women. Despite this there were those who moved towards the 'long' transformative agenda, with Trevor an exemplar of this possibility.

I concluded that despite this slippage between theory and practice, WO programs can provide the vehicle for transformative interventions.

As a strategy currently employed by organisations they can be built on in both modest and far-reaching ways to further the transformative agenda.

## Recommendations and links

This detailed study of the effectiveness of the bifocal approach has resulted in recommendations for practice. These cluster around the development of gender insight and how this can be further facilitated with mentors and participants, an increasing focus on developmental mentoring where two-way learning can occur, strengthening possibilities for collective action, and connecting and supporting those who are working for gender change. These areas for further inquiry and development dovetail nicely with a number of Swedish scholarship strengths, as I currently perceive them to be:

The innovative design of interventions linked with the use of action research approaches (Amundsdotter 2009; Eriksson 2009). This facilitates engagement with multiple players within organisations, including men, and focuses on organisational change.

Innovative approaches to, and an emphasis on, building the gender competence of organisational members (Amundsdotter 2010; Höök, Wahl and Holgersson 2009; Lövkrona and Widén 2009).

The contribution of these strengths to the sustainability of gender interventions (Gunnarsson, 2009).

## Conclusion

My hope is that by ‘taking coals to Newcastle’, paradoxically possible only because of our shared theoretical understanding, rich possibilities for cross-pollination, future collaboration and future publishing will emerge. Ultimately this can enrich the theory and practice of gender change interventions for all involved.

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# Chapter 13

## Negotiating the Status of Knowledge in Changing Academic Organisations: The Paradoxical Case of Women's and Gender Studies

*Maria do Mar Pereira*

During the last decades and in several countries, there has been a significant increase and strengthening of research and education on women's, gender, feminist studies (WGFS) (Griffin 2005; Hemmings 2006). In these processes of institutionalisation of WGFS, the *epistemic status* of the field has been a key object of contestation (Pereira 2008). Diverse discourses circulate in academic communities about the extent to which the knowledge produced by WGFS scholars can be recognised – and funded, certified, and included in degree programmes – as 'proper' scientific knowledge. In many communities, WGFS scholarship has been and is sometimes, or often, described as less scientific, credible or relevant than work produced in other academic disciplines (Boxer 1998; Coate 1999; Evans 1982; Morley 1998; Stanley 1997a). As a result, the field tends to be positioned 'toward the bottom of the hierarchy of regard and status of academic disciplines' (Price and Owen 1998: 185) and WGFS scholars are sometimes more or less openly dismissed as 'not academically qualified' (Chen 2004: 245). These discourses about the epistemic status of WGFS scholarship have decisive effects on the institutional conditions for research and study in WGFS, and the degree to which, and terms on which, research on gender is supported by academic communities, funders or policy-makers. Moreover, the framing of WGFS in several sites as a field that is not always able to produce proper scientific knowledge has been shown to have a detrimental impact on WGFS scholars' and students' self-confidence, grades or career progression, and their access to funding and publishing opportunities (Corrin 1997; Griffin 2005; Griffin and Hanmer 2005; Marchbank and Letherby 2006; Morley 1998; Packer 1995; Seller 1997; Silius 2005; Tuori and Silius 2002; Worell 1994).

In my recent work, I have been interested in analysing how research about gender, and the scholars who conduct such research, become marked as not quite properly scientific, and how those processes of de-

marcation are being reconfigured amidst restructurings of science and higher education (HE). In my doctoral thesis (Pereira 2011), I articulate feminist epistemology (particularly Code 1991; 1995; 2006), feminist analyses of academic work (such as Amâncio 2003, 2005; Bellacasa 2001; Butterwick and Dawson 2005; EC 2004; Evans 1995, 2004; Gillies and Lucey 2007; Messer-Davidow 2002; Morley 1995, 1998, 2003; Morley and Walsh 1995; Reis et al 2001; Stanley 1997b; Strathern 2000), research in Science and Technology Studies (Amsler 2007; Beaulieu 2010; Gieryn 1995, 1999; Kerr et al 1997; Mayer and Garstenauer 2006; McNeil 2007), and Michel Foucault's discussions of *epistemes* (1980, 2003 [1976]), to study how the epistemic status of WGFS is being negotiated in the changing academic landscape in Portugal. I conceptualise scientificity not as an intrinsic property of a field, claim or individual, but rather as a contested category that is the object of on-going *boundary-work* (Gieryn 1995; 1999), and I ask: how are boundaries of scientificity demarcated in daily academic interactions in Portugal? Where is WGFS scholarship, and WGFS scholars, positioned in relation to those boundaries? To what extent, and in what conditions, is their epistemic status recognised? How are all these processes affected by broader academic transformations? And how do they impact on the working conditions and career progression possibilities of WGFS scholars? To answer these questions, I conducted fieldwork in several universities in Portugal during a period of ten months in 2008/09. This included participant observation in over 50 WGFS and non-WGFS public, semi-public or closed events (such as conferences, classes, book launches, meetings and public PhD defences), 36 interviews with academics, students and with staff working in research funding bodies, several visits to institutions, and archival/library research.

Through this ethnographic study, I found that a range of national and transnational processes – changes in funding of research and HE, the globalisation of academic production, etc. – are causing significant transformations in discourses circulating in Portuguese academia about what scholarship is worthy of space in academic institutions, and the extent to which research on gender qualifies as such. These transformations have not, however, been straightforward. As Louise Morley has argued, '[t]he academy, like any other organization, is full of contradictions – structures are both fixed and volatile, enabling and constraining' (1995: 180); this has been the case also in what concerns changes in the epistemic status of WGFS in Portugal. One of the key features of these trends of change is that they are *paradoxical*, in at least two senses: a) it is possible to identify trends both of continuity and of change in WGFS' epistemic status in Portugal in the last decade; and b) there is both an

acknowledgement and a denial of the field's epistemic value. I want to briefly discuss these paradoxes here.

During the last decade, successive centre-right and centre-left governments in Portugal reduced funding for HE institutions and pressured universities to expand and diversify their sources of income, namely by creating new postgraduate degrees as part of the restructurings associated with the Bologna Process<sup>1</sup> (Cabrito 2004; Graça 2009). The increased orientation within Portuguese universities towards profitability as a central criterion in the planning and assessment of scientific and HE initiatives (Santos Pereira, 2004) has both animated and constrained the development of WGFS, as has been observed also in other countries (Hemmings 2006; Holm 2001; Skeggs 1995). In many institutions, it has enabled the expansion of space for WGFS. Because many Portuguese WGFS staff are highly performing, well-networked scholars with a good track-record of securing funding, and WGFS courses and degrees attract some student interest, many university administrations have become more accepting of WGFS work and more supportive of feminist scholars. This recognition that WGFS has *financial* and *institutional* value seems to be dissuading many institutions from publicly questioning its *epistemic* value, and thus there is in contemporary Portuguese academia an increasing public recognition of the epistemic status and relevance of research on gender.

However, this public climate of openness to WGFS does not always match what happens in university 'corridor life' (Hurdley 2010; Rabinow 1986). It has been argued that when studying scientific and academic organisations it is necessary to consider the 'more covert, informal and subtle cultural structures and processes that produce and reproduce inequalities' (Husu 2001: 176; see also Morley 1998) and indeed, examining these micropolitical processes is also key to understanding negotiations of the epistemic status of WGFS in Portugal. Through interviews with WGFS scholars and students, I found that this growing public recognition coexists with a regular unofficial dismissal of WGFS. Claims that research about gender cannot count as proper knowledge are frequently made informally and in humorous tone, creating what one interviewee called a 'culture of teasing' around WGFS. In other words, affirmations that WGFS is less, or not at all, scientific are now rarely heard in official discourse, but are still very present as a form of *corridor talk*, in

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1 The Bologna Process, initiated by the signing of the *Bologna Declaration* in 1999, is a transnational process of educational reform aimed at creating a European Higher Education Area, namely by standardising academic degrees and quality assurance procedures and promoting the geographical mobility of students and staff. It currently has 47 signatory countries.

Gary Downey et al's sense: they are 'the unsaid, but frequently said anyway (though not to everyone)' (1997: 245). In addition, many (mostly female) WGFS scholars report being blocked in their career progression due to their commitment to WGFS research. This unofficial 'culture of teasing' and the lack of academic and professional recognition of WGFS scholars' work has significant and problematic effects. It means that even when WGFS is formally institutionalised as an equal field, WGFS scholarship and scholars may be invested with a halo of unscientificity and lack of credibility that works to position them as an 'other' vis-à-vis supposedly more serious scholarship and scholars.

As part of my ethnographic study, I also observed non-WGFS scholars speaking in classrooms and conferences. I found that feminist work is rarely mentioned by them, and that when they do refer to it they almost always describe it as capable of generating credible and valuable knowledge, *but* only in some instances and up to a certain point. This boundary-work, I argue, produces a representation of WGFS as a field that is partly within, and partly outside, the space of proper knowledge. The aspects of WGFS which are recognised as proper knowledge are usually its empirical and analytical insights, particularly the formulation of the concept of 'gender' and its framing as a key axis of inequality. However, the feminist critiques (of mainstream theory, epistemology and methodology or of gendered inequalities within and outside academia) which ground those analytical insights are often described as being too political, and therefore going too far beyond the boundary – or, as I call it, the *epistemic threshold* – that is seen to separate scientific from non-scientific knowledge. That means, according to these mainstream scholars, that feminist critiques can be reasonably ignored or dismissed because they do not fulfil the requisite criteria to be considered valid and valuable scholarly contributions. This *epistemic splitting* thus enables non-WGFS scholars to engage selectively with WGFS, because it gives them a recognised epistemological rationale for taking into account the feminist insights which broadly fit mainstream frameworks, while simultaneously rejecting as epistemologically unsound the feminist critiques of those frameworks. (For a more detailed discussion of this, see Pereira 2012.)

The contemporary status of WGFS in academia – in Portugal and several other countries – can thus be described as one characterised by an intricate weaving of dynamics of recognition and dismissal. A public climate of acceptance of WGFS coexists with a semi-public 'culture of teasing'; certain dimensions of WGFS are accepted and quoted as proper knowledge, while others are repudiated as un-scientific. This coexistence is more than just a sign of the heterogeneity of academic communities,

or a demonstration that some dimensions of epistemic practice change faster than others; it is, rather, a key mechanism in boundary-work. As I analyse in detail elsewhere (2011; 2012), when non-WGFS scholars explicitly affirm the value of some aspects of WGFS, it becomes possible for them to openly dismiss other aspects of WGFS with less risk of being seen as unreasonable, biased or anti-feminist. One might say, then, that the recognition of some parts of WGFS helps to legitimate the dismissal of others, and makes that dismissal harder to denounce. This coexistence also allows institutions or communities to access some of the benefits that WGFS may yield – namely funds or research ratings – without always fully recognising the epistemic status of WGFS.

Rosalind Gill (2007) and Angela McRobbie (2009) have argued that current representations of feminism in media and popular culture are contradictory and that this makes their analysis particularly complicated. I would add that discourses about the epistemic status of WGFS in these times of profound academic restructuring can also be described as *contradictory* and *paradoxical*, and that this not only makes them hard to analyse, but also extremely difficult to challenge in everyday micropolitical interactions and institutional negotiations. I therefore join GEXcel Theme 11/12 and authors like Liisa Husu (2005) or Marieke van den Brink and Lineke Stobbe (2009) in calling for close attention to the gendered *paradoxes* that characterise changing academic and scientific organisations. It is crucial to analyse how such paradoxes function and what effects they have. It is especially important to make visible how *transformations* of discourses and climates can to some extent enable the *continuity* of discriminatory structures and practices, meaning that many gendered paradoxes in contemporary academic work are much less paradoxical than they may seem at first glance.

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# Chapter 14

## Successes and its Paradoxical Effects: Gender Research and Processes of Institutionalisation

*Mia Liinason*

Gender researchers in Sweden have, from different disciplinary backgrounds and theoretical departures, argued for the importance of a safe institutional base for gender research in the academy. In the process of institutionalising the subject field, gender researchers have articulated a critical and persistent attitude against attempts to weaken the transformative potential of the subject field. The strong impact from the state has been met with a critical and reflexive attitude among gender researchers to the understanding of historical narratives, conceptual tools, objects of study and modes of working. Suggestions – both from the state and from within feminism – to stabilize or disciplinarise gender research, have among gender researchers been met with a hesitance to, among other things, the fixation of proper names, proper objects or notions of feminism (Liinason 2011). The institutionalisation of gender research can thus be described as a successful creation of an oppositional space in the academy. At the same time, though, does the relationship between feminist knowledge production, the academy and the state involve a range of on-going negotiations, with paradoxical implications for gender research.

Gender researchers have, for instance, provided the state with knowledge about gendered experiences, relations and structures, knowledge that was used by different, both left and right wing, governments to develop policies for increasing a form of gender equality built on a dual-sex notion and a complementary relationship between the sexes (Liinason 2011; de los Reyes, Molina and Mulinari, [2002] 2006). In addition, the strong production in gender scholarship in Sweden around women's conditions in society and history has contributed to the production of a hegemonic national gender equality discourse in Sweden – an exclusionary discourse in which Sweden is presented as an ethnically homogenous country and internationally marketed as an equal, just and good society (Tuori 2007; Arora Jonsson 2009; Carbin 2010; Yang 2010; Hellgren and Hobson 2008).

These examples illuminate a context for gender research where gender researchers take part in different discourses – both dominant and oppositional. Understanding the ambition in academic feminism and among gender researchers as one where dominant discourses and oppressive strategies and structures are studied, visualised and challenged, I find it relevant to analyse how gender researchers negotiate around analytic tools and power relations in the further process of institutionalising the subject area. During my time as a visiting fellow at GEXcel Theme 11–12, I plan to engage with these questions, through analyses of, on the one hand, the relationship between gender studies and gender research in the further process of institutionalising the field and, on the other hand, of methodological dilemmas in transformative knowledge production. In the following, I give an in-depth presentation of these.

## **Article 1: Presence in the periphery. The politics of place in gender research in Sweden**

The double organisation of feminist knowledge in the academy in Sweden – where the subject field is both integrated into established disciplines (i.e. gender research) and organised as a subject area in its own right (i.e. gender studies) – has historically been presented as a very successful strategy for the integration of gender into the academy (e.g. Göransson 1989). Today, though, this relationship is diagnosed as being in bad shape (Hirdman 2010; Göransson 2010). Significant issues positioned in the core of this discussion are, among others, the professionalisation of academic feminism and the segregation of the feminist community in the academy. Debates over these issues display some central paradoxes about the process of institutionalising gender research into the academy that is part of the historical baggage that prevails in gender studies in Sweden. However, in order to counteract a forced segregation of the feminist community in the academy and to further develop sustainable radical environments for gender research, these emerge as areas in the need of further analysis. In addition, the current changes of academic cultures raise particular challenges to oppositional subject fields like gender research/gender studies.

At present, the higher education policies in Sweden are undergoing a change from an earlier semi-autonomous system to more autonomy for the different universities (Prop. 2009/10:149). This involves a situation where the attitude to gender at every single university will determine the further institutionalisation of gender research and can thus give both positive and negative consequences for gender research. The current changes in higher education policies can be understood as taking place

within the frames of a neo-liberal shift in the academy (Shore and Wright 1999; Essed 2004; Morley 2005). Described as performed through increased forms of bureaucratisation, standardisation and quantification of learning, these changes have also been understood as new forms of governmentality (Shore and Wright 1999: 564, 567). This situation raises challenges for all academic branches of teaching and research. Gender researchers, however, face particular difficulties within this policy shift. The effects of the current changes have in the recent years, among other things, involved an expansion of student numbers in gender studies without a similar expansion of the departmental resources, resulting in a high burden on the staff (Liinason 2010). In addition, since the survival of the departments depends on an active engagement in diverse decision-making committees at the university, also the numbers of meetings increase. Now, for gender research, this is problematic, because a great amount of the staff that populates these subject areas do this out of a sense of political commitment, which often means ‘doubling their responsibility, their administration, and their teaching’, as Beverly Skeggs notes (Skeggs 1995: 479).

At this point, these challenges are increasing and are particularly paradoxical for gender researchers, because gender researchers often are driven by a political commitment and a critical attitude to the academic site, but also because they to a higher extent need to submit to the rules of the university, seeing that this is how the department is allotted with more institutional resources and increased stability. For gender researchers this involves, among other things, a difficult balance between on the one hand, the need for continued and strengthened institutional security which might invoke a process of professionalisation of gender research, and on the other hand, gender researcher’s political commitment to social change, where a critique of the homogeneity and the hierarchies in the academy as a site as well as the disciplinary organisation of knowledge in the academy, are central components.

As of today, gender researchers often present the relationship between gender research and gender studies through references to a polarised relationship between the two forms of institutionalisation into the academy (Niskanen and Florin 2010). In such a polarisation, gender studies is often described as attracting all the feminist students and feminist teachers, while integrated gender research is described as facing a decrease of feminist students and teachers (Liinason 2010). However, even though this might be the case, I would suggest that this is not primarily the result of a successful institutionalisation of gender studies. Instead, this can be understood as a result of a continued resistance towards feminism in the academy. There are, for instance, examples of brilliant scholars

who have not been awarded stable positions in their discipline but that have found a secure position in gender studies. Thus, many scholars that inhabit gender studies departments are there not because this was something they primarily, or solely, wanted but because they did not have any other choice, due to the need of decent working conditions and job security. Against this background, however, there is a risk that the successful institutionalisation of gender studies as a subject area in its own right has involved a forced segregation of the feminist community. This is a development that not only locates gender studies in the academic periphery, but also creates a situation where the traditional departments become more homogenous: normal, masculine and white (Essed 2004; Husu 2001; Lykke 2011). Such a development could risk to resulting in negative effects for diversity in the academy, as Philomena Essed writes: 'A limited measure of gender and or racial diversification, if happening at all, seems to reinforce rather than to undermine, cultural homogeneity at the top' (Essed 2004: 114).

Drawing on material that I have collected during the work with my PhD-dissertation on the process of institutionalising gender studies in the academy (Liinason 2011), I want to inquire into these paradoxical effects of the process of institutionalising and integrating gender research, in order to explore the dilemmas that are raised by these challenges but also to visualise strategies used to address them. I hope that such an analysis can deepen our understanding of the paradoxes following from the efforts of establishing a radical space in the academy and contribute with knowledge that can further support a successful integration of gender research.

## **Article 2: Methodological dilemmas in transformative research. Power relations and politics of location in academic feminism**

The institutionalisation of gender research has succeeded in creating oppositional spaces in the academy, where a critique of dominant discourses and oppressive structures can be performed. However, whether or not the knowledge constructed and the strategies used in these spaces really produce such critiques depends on the practices of teaching and research carried out. During my time as a visiting fellow at GEXcel theme 11–12, I would like to further analyse the methodological dilemmas that are actualised by the power relations that also feminists are involved in. Such dilemmas can take form through a number of different performances of feminist scholarship, but perhaps most often established by an overshadowing aim to produce emancipatory knowledge, which may bring along

a weak reflection over the boundaries constructed by the own points of departure and the theoretical or methodological models, for instance. By way of this, feminist research can result in knowledge that may be emancipatory for a particular group, but at the same time result in research that excludes, marginalises or silences other groups – such as has been the case with the strong production in gender scholarship in Sweden around women's conditions in society and history which has contributed to the production of a hegemonic national discourse in Sweden, where Sweden is internationally marketed as an equal, just and good society – despite the fact that structures of inequality and forms of discrimination are increasing in the Swedish society of today (Tuori 2007; Carbin 2010; Yang 2010; Hellgren and Hobson 2008).

I am interested in inquiring into the dilemmas that arise as a result from the efforts of producing transformative research. I plan to further analyse the methodological implications of a politics of location in academic feminism (Rich [1984] 1994), through inquiries of how also we as feminists are entwined in and co-producers of power relations. In 'Toward a More Feminist Criticism', Adrienne Rich writes about this as paradoxical effects of power relations: 'Essential for the feminist critic who believes that her work is "a pursuit with social meanings rooted in the 'real world'" is a clear understanding of power: of how culture, as meted out in the university, works to empower some and disempower others' ([1981] 1994: 94). Now, at a time and in a context where feminist knowledge production is successfully institutionalised in the academy, I would suggest that this is particularly relevant to take into account. In this context, academic feminists themselves produce criteria for the validation and authorisation of feminist knowledge. This has been studied, for example, through analyses over the constructions of geopolitical power asymmetries and the production of theoretical canons, where U.S-UK feminist scholarly conversations are located as canonical whereas European or Asian feminist conversations are pushed to the periphery of feminist scholarship (Griffin and Braidotti 2002; Mulinari 2002), or through analyses of the production of a dominant historical narrative over feminism, where a heroic story takes shape in the telling of feminism's recent history (Hemmings 2005). I want to continue these reflections over power relations in feminism, using material that I collected during the work with my PhD-dissertation, but also reflect over own experiences from participation and presentations at feminist conferences and seminars, and believe that such an analysis can allow a deeper reflection over how feminists manage the construction of power relations within feminism as a transformative endeavour, and how we

can understand the boundaries that are constructed through our own knowledge production.

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