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Women in science: From exclusion to (complete) inclusion

WomenInNano Winter School

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The lecture on Friday, 8 February 2008 (9.00-9.30)
1 Sexism and (male-biased) science:

- (Re)construction of W. civilization ≠ gender neutral;
- scientific knowledge = deeply gendered
- “objective = male” (1911, G. Simmel)
- exclusion of W from the production of knowledge
- women as creators of scientific knowledge:
### Women's entering universities

- **Country** | **Establishment of 1st Women allowed** | **Year**
- GB         | 12th century                          | 1876
- France     | 1257                                 | 1862
- Germany    | 1338                                 | 1908
- Poland     | 1364                                 | 1897
- USA        | 1636                                 | 1833
- Russia     | 1755                                 | 1917
- Norway     | 1813                                 | 1882
2 Cultural legacy and misogyny

2.1 Androcentric social order:
• gender division of labour and of personal identities
• reason/emotion split: public/private
• hierarchic connection of male/female activities
• unexchangeability and constraint of gender roles
Scheme no.1 Reproduction

Androcentric reproduction of meanings of actors' everyday activities on public and private sphere.
2.2 20th, 21st century: parcial decomposition of androc.:

- prevalence of woman's proper role = »natural«
- addition principle for women (»natural« + public role)
- → discrimination: »glass-ceilings/walls«, »chilly climate«
- women's activity = helper-activity → undervaluated.
Picture of mother with children
3 Women in science: contemporary situation

- mass W entering the HE and science (»male fortress«)
- horizontal segregation (»female«/ »male« disciplines)
- vertical segregation (w – »academic proletariat«)
- social isolation, marginalization
- »chilly climate« of organization (Harding, 1996)
• covert discrimination (latent androcentric order)
  → rejection of motherhood
  → postponing of motherhood
  → acceptance of motherhood & career break
  → acceptance of m. & continuous career
• family overburdened women scientists:
• special measures for women → reproduction of traditional order
• special measures for parents (=women and men)
• → decomposition of androc. order and reconstruction of the organization of society
CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? SHE WANTS TO BE A SCIENTIST! BUT SHE CAN'T EVEN MAKE A GOOD COFFEE!
4 Gender discrimination – worldwide problem

- UNO - Decade of Women (1976-1985)
- UNESCO – European Conference (Bled 1998)
  - “Women in Science: Quality and Equality”
- Council of Europe – gender equality in science
- EU – programme for implementation of GEO policy:
  - Women and Science – Mobilisation of Women…1999,
- Helsinki Group for Women and Science (1999),
5 Slovenia: Women in science

5.1 After WW II –socialist system (SFRJ till 1991):
- gender equality = objective + basis for practice
- harmonization between work and family, legal acts:
  - 1974: Constitution - women are free to decide on giving birth;
  - 1974: prolongation of mat. leave (135 days - 6 months);
  - 1976: possibility of sharing of mat./parental leave (mother + father);
  - 1986: the mater./parental leave - prolonged to 1 year;
• the 1970s + 1980s: a lot of kindergartens,
• elderly homes, health centers have been built
• (“socially responsible parenthood”).
• Since 1990 till now: multiparty democracy:
• transition + »modernization« = repatriarchalization;
• prevalent: rejection of one-bread-winner ideology;
• value priority at wom. and men: family+employment
5.2 Women in S&R:

- increase of women undergraduate students
  - (1950/51–32,3% ; 1980/81–53,9%, 2000/01–57,2);
- portion of women postgraduates increased
- master's degree 1975–18,2%, 1990–35,6%, 2003–52,7;
- PhD 1975–17,7%, 1990–26,4%, 2003–41,4%);
- increase of women researchers 1992–28,3%, 2003–34%.
- portion of women FT university teachers
• prevalent is continuous career
• since the middle of the 1970s: the extension of the time taken up by maternity/parental leave at re/elections for women and men.
• gradual inclusion of gender perspective into academic teaching (since the 1970s) by prevalent integration model;
• 1985 till now - programme »Young Researchers«:
• contributed to the increase of women young researchers;
• young researchers are employed for a specified period;
• along with the post-graduate studies, they work on basic
  and applied projects;
• within the period of training and education at home,
• they can also study abroad (from 1 month to 12 months);
5.3 Obstacles for women's career (investigation in 1996):

- at beginning - majority had no troubles
- hidden discrimination + stricter control of women
- lack of support in organization - »chilly« climate
- negative prejudices
- load of pedagogic and unpleasant work imposed upon women, worse conditions for their research
- majority of women equally efficient (on behalf of "Spartan style of life")
- overburdening of women by family work
- low women's awareness of possible changes
5.4 What to do for the gender equality in science?

• Nothing to do = status quo.
• Necessary activities on key levels:
  • a) social environment
  • b) work environment
  • c) individual value orientation (consciousness-raising)
• National Committee for Gender Equality in Science (2001):
  • gender mainstreaming in strategic policy documents
  • informing researchers and academic leading staff
  • stimulating of the networking of researchers dealing in various fields with gender research
  • ongoing detection of cases of discrimination
  • cooperation with Helsinki Group
• CEC-WYS (2006) – segmented recommendations
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• Thank you!