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Gender equality in research and multiplicity of structural hindrances

GENDEREA Final Conference
Maximizing Innovation Potential through Diversity in Research Organization

Session 1 /Module 1: Career paths in research – structural change

Gender inequality in career paths
Social structure – latent source of gender inequality

Cultural legacy - androcentric social order:

G. Simmel (1911): “objective=male”

- gender division of labour and of personal identities
- reason/emotion split: public/private
- hierarchic connection of male/female activities
- inchangeability and constraint of gender roles

Cultural legacy = “his story” (S. Benhabib, 1994)
Generic scientist (normative pattern) = “he” (Moir, 2006)
Scheme no.1 Reproduction of androcentric social order

active aggressive

MAN

WOMAN

passive silent suffering modest obedient pious

REASON

RELIGION

SCIENCE

HEARTH

PRIVATE

IDELOGY

ETHICS

PUBLIC

INSTITUTIONS

ARTS

LAW

RULES, PATTERNS

* economic
* political (state, parties)
* cultural
* educational
* repressive, control
20th, 21st century: partial decomposition of androcentrism

Woman’s “natural” role and scientific career:

• woman's “proper” role: scientist proper (“natural”) role
• addition principle for women (»natural« + public role)
• “he” as norm → discrimination against women (“glass architecture”, »glass-ceilings/walls«, “maze”)
• women's activity= helper-activity → undervaluated

Multiplicity of structurally constructed barriers
Woman’s “natural” role
Women in S&R: prevalent characteristics of present position

- mass woman’s entering the HE, S&R (»male fortress«)
- horizontal segregation (»female«/ »male« disciplines)
- vertical segregation (women – »academic proletariat«): under-representation on high academic posts and decision making
- social isolation, marginalization, negative prejudices
- »chilly climate« of organization (Harding, 1996)
- work-family conflict; family overburdened women/mothers scientists
- work-family balance – directed on women or on parents (women and men), reconstruction of S&R organization (and social structure)
“Good practice …”
Caricature by Božo Kos (1997)

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?
SHE WANTS TO BE A
SCIENTIST! BUT SHE
CAN’T EVEN MAKE
A GOOD COFFEE!
Slovenia: implementation of gender equality policy

1945- 1990: Yu-socialist self governmental system (1950)

Legal acts contributing to work-family reconciliation:

- 1974: Constitution grants women the free decision on giving birth;
- 1974: the maternity leave is prolonged from 135 days to 6 months;
- S&R: since middle of the 1970s: maternity/parents leave is excluded for elections and evaluation system
- 1976: the legal possibility of sharing of maternity (parental) leave; 1986: the paid maternity (parental) leave - prolonged to 1 year;
- 1985: introduction of Young Researchers Programme (side effect: more women in S&R)
Slovenia: implementation of gender equality policy (1991-2012)

1990: multiparty democracy

1991: autonome state, since 2004 member of EU

Characteristics of social context:

- Transition from socialist to capitalist economic system
- »modernization« = retraditionalization, rechatolicization
- Worsening of social position of majority of people, particularly of women (overeducated)
- Prevalent value orientation (1990-2011, POR): gender egalitarian perspective (more women than men)
- Parental leave is mainly used by women
- National Programme for Equal Opportunities for women and Men, 2005-2013.
Slovenia: Women in S&R

Features (mainly similar situation as in most EU countries):

• increase and over-representation of women undergraduate students (graduates): 1950/51–32,3%, 1980/81–53,9% (49,8%), 2008-58% (62,8%);

• portion of women postgraduates increased:
  - PhD 1975–17,7%, 1990–26,4%, 2003–41,4%, 2008- 47,6%

• increase of women researchers 1992–28,3%, 2003–34%.

Slovenia: Women in S&R

Typical academic career and **under-representation** of women at highest positions (prevalent is continuous career):

Portions of women by grade in (2004) and 2007:

- Grades: **A** (12.9%) 17.0%
  - B (25.8%) 30.0%
  - C (39.3%) 46.0%
  - D (47.9%) 45.0%

**Under-representation** of women at the post of **rector**: at University of Ljubljana (some years ago) women became rector.

**Under-representation** of women at allocation of national science **awards**, among members of Slovenian **Academy of Science and Arts**, advising bodies and research councils.
Slovenia: Women in S&R

Obstacles for women's career (surveys 1992, 1996, 2005)

- 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

Women are more sensitive to gender in/equality, give more suggestions for the improvement of organization culture
Slovenia: Women in S&R

**Diminishing of obstacles** for women in S&R

Social environment (legal acts with binding provisions to promote gender equality and responsible bodies):
- National Programme for Higher Education,
- National Research and Development Programme;
- CEC-WYS recommendations
- gender equality coordinators at Ministry of Science and Technology
- National Committee for Women in Science (since 2001): gender mainstreaming in science (networking of women researchers, stimulating of detection of discriminations, consciousness raising through various workshops, conferences, etc)
Slovenia: Women in S&R

**Diminishing of obstacles** for women in S&R – diversity of practices (in last years):

1. **Increasing of sensitization** to gender in/equality (inside the wider social context) through dissemination of un-sexist knowledge and woman-friendly practices (e.g.):

   - Research grant of L’Oreal For women in science (connected with roundtables e.g. “Family-friendly science – 2010; Women in science and media – 2011)

   - Three workshops (2008) Break gender stereotypes, give talent a chance (Chamber of Commerce RS)

   - Three workshops in the frame of RECWOWE project (2009, Faculty of Social Sciences – UL) about work-family balancing
Slovenia: Women in S&R

Diminishing of obstacles for women in S&R – diversity of practices (in last years):

2 Increasing of sensitization to gender in/equality through analysis of existing situation at concrete S&R organization

2.1 National Institute of Chemistry (Ljubljana, 2010 – basic certificate “Family-friendly organization), participator of international project Genis-Lab (EC, 7th FP): beginning engendered survey of “human resources” discovered:
- vertical segregation (share of women researcher 46%, in 60 years of existence woman has never been director),
- family overburdening of women, deficiency of ambitions at women,
- gender stereotypes (contributing to no stimulation of leading capacities at women);
- unequal possibilities at the use of specialization occasions,
- institutionally not assured gender equality, etc.

Consequence of this recognitions: set of recommendations
Slovenia: Women in S&R

Diminishing of obstacles for women in S&R

2.2 Survey “Differences in working conditions in science in Slovenia” (2010/11, Maja Remškar, Committee for women in science; sample of 179 men and 115 women in natural sciences and 116 men and 40 women in technical sciences) discovered:

- women are working in smaller and noisier offices than men
- women have less possibilities to work at home
- more women than men met sex discrimination (47%:13%)
- women are more often than men excluded from evaluation of national research projects
- Majority of women and men has no power in decision making

Among recommendations:
- necessary to complete statutes by rule of limited mandates for the stakeholder of authority positions)
- Assure and exactly determine equal opportunities advocacy
Slovenia: women in S&R

One of key issues of S&R organization is work-life balancing

Which attitudes are prevalent at holders of high authority positions in S&R organizations? (2006, CEC-WYS)

»How do you estimate the possibility of men and women (a mother and a father) equally sharing parental leave (after the first few months of maternity leave) and dividing all the parental duties and responsibilities?».

Answer of half of men (N=23) and 60 % of women (N=15):
»it is a fair distribution which is already in realization”;

- additionally: one third of men and of women answered ”it would be a fair distribution, and it should be implemented as soon as possible”.
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Gender equality in S&R is really a long-term process!

Thank you for your attention!