Proceedings from the international conference
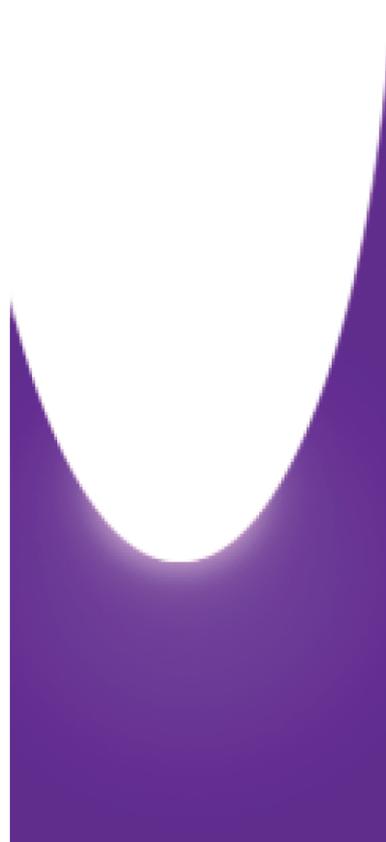
EQUALITY GROWTH& SUSTAINABILITY DO THEY MIX?

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Editor: Anna Fogelberg Eriksson

Equality, Growth and Sustainability Do They Mix?

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Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research/FAS
Thematic Group on Equality
Nordic Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Research/NIKK
Tema Genus and Forum for Gender Studies and Equality at Linköping University

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Editorial

Anna Fogelberg Eriksson, Ph. D.
Forum for Gender Studies and Equality
Linköping University, SWEDEN
anna.fogelberg.eriksson@liu.se

The conference Equality, Growth and Sustainability – Do They Mix? was made possible through initiatives, joint efforts and collaboration between actors representing JÄMI, VINNOVA, FAS, Thematic Group on Equality, NIKK, Tema Genus and Forum for Gender Studies and Equality at Linköping University.

The conference created an opportunity for academics, practitioners as well as policy makers to meet and discuss if and how questions of equality, growth and sustainability can be reconciled in organisations and implemented in general practice. 15 years after the Beijing Platform for Action the conference provided academics, policy makers and practitioners with an international and interdisciplinary forum for exchange.

The purpose was to explore and disseminate knowledge and experiences on gender equality, gender mainstreaming, diversity management, growth and sustainability, inclusion and equal opportunities. The ambition was to discuss these key concepts and issues from an intersectional perspective, and in theory and practice, in order to rethink and find new ways to move on. The conference provided new research results, policy discussions and presented new ideas on how to advance the practical and theoretical work through collaborative/joint ventures between academia and society.

The conference consituted a mix of presentations and discussions with the 165 participants, from all over the world. The interactive conference format contained eight interactive workshops and eleven parallell paper sessions, see appendix. The paper sessions contained academic paper presentetions while the workshops offered forums for listening practioners' presentations and taking part in discussions.

The four key note speakers, as well as the concluding panel, addressed and discussed the conference topics from their view points as policy makers, researchers and/or practitioners. Key note speakers included Ms Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission; Mieke Verloo, Professor of Comparative Politics and Inequality Issues at Radboud University Nijmegen; Jeff Hearn, Professor in Gender Studies with a focus on critical studies on men at Linköping university and Tryggvi Hallgrimsson from the Center of Gender Equality, Iceland.

The workshop was hosted by Linköping University´s Forum for Gender Studies and Equality.

The majority of the paper authors have chosen to contribute to this document, which presents the proceedings from the conference.

Linköping April 2011

Key note address

Equality, Growth, Sustainability: Adding Some More Ingredients to the Mixture

Jeff Hearn
Department of Thematic Studies (Gender Studies),
Linköping University;
Department of Management and Organisation,
Hanken School of Economics, Helsinki

ABSTRACT

In this paper I discuss some ingredients that may be overlooked in considering, or constructing, the mix of equality, growth, and sustainability. First, the mixture of equality, growth and sustainability appears rather differently depending on the scale and scope of concern (for example, global, national, organisational, personal and interpersonal). Second, there are a number of more specific ingredients that can easily be forgotten. These include: not just gender equality but also equality around sexuality; violence and violation; intersectionalities; and a critical engagement with men and masculinities. To neglect such questions may leave a stodgy and unresponsive mixture.

KEYWORDS: corporations, "eqrosus", equality, global, growth, nations, personal life, sustainability

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I examine some tensions between equality, growth and sustainability; the different meanings of equality, growth and sustainability; the importance of different levels of analysis; and some elements that are often missing from these debates. Equality, growth and sustainability are not easily reconciled; they are not easily held together as a focus of attention (Fig. 1).
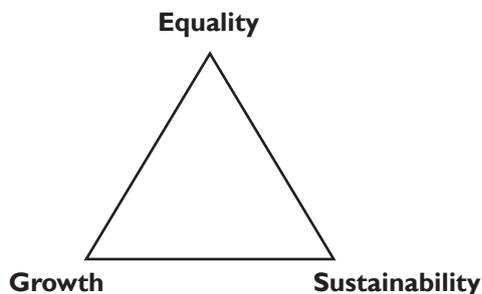
Fig.ure 1. Equality, growth and sustainability

There may even be some fundamental conflicts, and assumptions of conflict between them, especially between equality and growth, and growth and sustainability (Fig. 2).
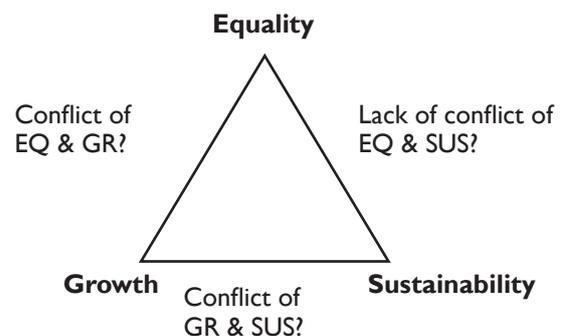
Figure 2. Relations between equality, growth and sustainability

But this is only a start, as equality, growth and sustainability are all highly contested concepts, and can all mean quite different things, and operate at different levels.

Equality can refer to, first, equality of process, as in fairness, fair procedures, and what is often referred to as equity; and, second, equality of outcomes, in terms of distribution of resources, power. To develop the latter approach in any depth, necessitates attention to intersections of social divisions, rather than one single social division, be it gender, class or race. This is

because equality of outcomes along one line of social division may be disrupted or undermined by inequalities along other lines of social division.

Growth can refer to, first, economic growth, in terms of products, profits, surpluses, wealth; and, second, human growth, in terms of satisfaction, care, safety, well-being, and "happiness". The latter approach has become remarkably popular in recent years (see Cronin de Chavez et al., 2005, for a comprehensive transdisciplinary review of published work on the concept of well-being) ((Fig. 3).

Equality 1&2

Growth 1&2   **Sustainability1&2**
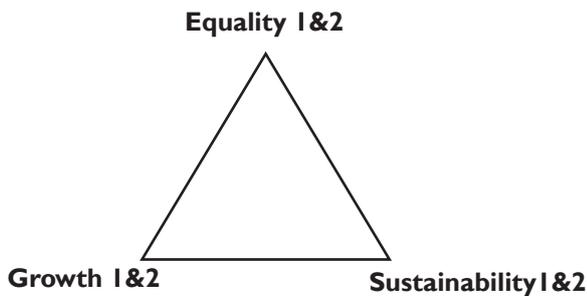
Figure 3. Equality, growth and sustainability 1 and 2

And sustainability can refer to: first, socially sustainability of relationships, organisations, institutions; and, second, the environmentally sustainability of nature (including humans), the world. Moreover, social sustainability can be human (bodily), cultural, economic, or seen in terms of the maintenance of different forms of social relations of many kinds. This thus complicates the question of the relations of three concepts, and the tensions between them (Fig. 4). In some formulations (future) sustainability is seen as at odds with (present) human growth and well-being, and indeed there have relatively few attempts to integrate human and environmental sustainability (see Rondinella et al., 2009).

Equality 1&2

Conflict of EQ & GR

Lack of conflict of EQ & SUS

Growth 1&2

Conflict of GR & SUS
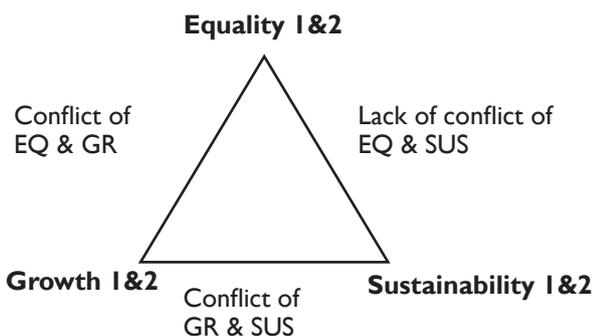
Sustainability 1&2

Fiure 4. Relations between equality, growth and sustainability 1 and 2

To think of all these relations together and at the same time is not easy. This is a complex configuration of connections, tensions and conflicts. So, it may useful to think about this nexus of relations between these various forms of equality, growth and sustainability in a shorthand form, as EQ, GR & SU, and so a new word: "EQGROSUS". But this becomes much more complex with moves from surface EQGROSUS #1 to deep EQGROSUS #2 or 3 or 4 or 5 (equality of outcomes, human growth, together with social, human, cultural,

economic and environmental sustainabilities). First, the complex mixture of equality, growth and sustainability -"EQGROSUS" - looks different, depending on scale/scope of concern, and in considering how these different levels of "EQGROSUS" connect and contradict. Second, even in this broad relational approach, some ingredients are easily forgotten. There is a need to be concerned not just with gender equality, also equality around sexuality, absence of violation, care/caring, intersectionalities, critical engagement with men and masculinities, what is sometimes called "gender+" or gender and diversity or intersectional gender. To neglect such questions may mean a stodgy, unresponsive mixture.

"EQGROSUS" operates at many different levels:

• Personal/Interpersonal/Communal

• Organisational/Corporate

• National

• Transnational/Global

… and in the intersections between these levels.

Positive relations at one level may not make for positive relations at other levels ... happy, "equal", sustainable families can still be fascist; sustainable organisations can still exclude many others, as can prosperous more "equal" nations. There may indeed be contradictions not only equality, growth and sustainability, but also between these relations at different levels of analysis, spatiality or temporality. In particular, when considering EQGROSUS, it is always appropriate to ask the questions: who is excluded? Who is missing? Who is absent?

PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL LIFE

Many studies have shown how unequal relations both within personal and private life - and indeed workplaces are harmful. Restricting people's "human growth" can undermine the integrity and sustainability of both the person and interpersonal relationships. In people's personal lives the highest levels of support and well-being tend to felt when joint decisions are made between partners, and when there is more equal distribution of housework. In that more equal couple relations are more sustainable (Van Willigen and Drentea, 2001).

As Bridges and Kimmel (2011) have reported that couples where housework and childcare is distributed more equally are healthier, with less smoking, drinking and recreational drug taking. They are more likely to stay in shape and more likely to go to doctors for routine screenings, but less likely to use casualty or miss work due to illness. They are also psychologically healthier, and report higher levels of partner satisfaction (see Mintz and Mahalik, 1996). More equal relationships, for example in terms of sharing of work, housework and childcare, are likely to be less coercive and less violent.

All this contrasts with situations of interpersonal violence in intimate relations, for there those who

might otherwise be expected to be the most supportive, most sustaining, might be very source of problem. This can apply even when people are "not aware" or "not expressing awareness" of equality/inequality, discrimination, negative treatment. For example, exposure to sexist acts, rather than women's own appraisal of them, is the best predictor of women's negative symptoms (Landrine and Klonoff, 1997). Similarly, in a US study blood pressure was found to be highest for working class black adults who accepted racism as "a fact of life" or denied discrimination (Krieger and Sidney, 1996). Consciousness or lack of consciousness of (in)equality does not necessarily translate easily or directly into sustainability.

ORGANISATIONS AND CORPORATIONS

When we turn to working life more specifically, a further set of institutional, legal and policy factors come into play, operating as the powerful arenas of policies and practices. There is increasing interest in how patterns of (in)equality within organisations are relevant for organisational and corporate growth and success: the case of business as illustrative. One of the earliest studies was that by Covenant Investment Management study in 1993, which found that companies with strong equity/ equal opportunity programmes outperformed Standard and Poor's 500 stock market average by 2.4% a year over a five year period. Meanwhile, companies with poor equity/equal opportunity records underperformed by 8% a year in same period (cited in Submission to the regulatory review ..., 1998). Equality may assist growth, and growth may assist the sustainability of companies, though of course by no means necessarily environmental and other forms of sustainability.

There is also growing research on links between the presence of more senior women and better corporate performance – and thus between more senior men and worse corporate performance. According to Terjesen, Singh and Sealy (2008), the results of recent research are mixed, but generally more positive relation has been found, although they cannot be said to be proven. In particular, given the relative lack of women at very top, making clear causal links to individual or small groups of women is very difficult. Having said that, UK companies with women on their board perform better financially and on various corporate governance measures (Singh and Vinnicombe 2004), and Finnish firms led by woman CEO 10% more profitable (Kotiranta et al. 2007). More gender equal management are also likely to impact on other aspects of "value creation" and growth, such as innovation, reputation, employer of choice for women, corporate social responsibility, employee and customer satisfaction, communication, strategy implementation – which in turn impact on financial performance and sustainability.

One of the recurrung themes in research is the importance of critical mass of women (as opposed to critical residue of men) to achieve for change. The McKinsey Corporation has conducted a series of studies in recent years, on how organisational performance depends on key leadership behaviours (which are in their research less frequent among men than women),

and how these are enhanced by a critical mass: at least three women on management team. From this, in their sample of companies they find those with more "gender-diverse" top management (that is, in effect more women in top management) are more successful in terms of both organisational and financial performance (McKinsey & Company 2007, 2008, 2010).

In short, sufficient numbers of women at management level can break the cycle of homosocial reproduction and cultural cloning. Moreover, as noted a critical mass (of women) can be contrasted with the present of a critical residue (of men) or the "excess of men" (see Sinclair, 1998). These issues are crucial in the research reported in various ongoing studies by Torchia, Calabro and Huse (2010) on the impact of women on boards' strategy involvement and innovation, with women's increased participation on company boards in Norway.

Another aspect identified in the McKinsey studies is the power and impact of leadership, and the pivotal role of the "CEO", or equivalent, and top leaders more generally. The meta-analysis of Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt and van Engen (2003) concluded that women tend to have more transformational leadership styles than men, these styles connected with greater effectiveness, but we should be cautious about over-generalising about the relation of gendered lifestyle of (top) leaders to sex/ gender of individuals. To illustrate this, I would like to refer to a study of the 100 largest companies in Finland. Of these 67 were surveyed (2000-2005). Interestingly, the presence of men and women at different levels in the organisation did not link significantly with gender policies. There was no significant relationship between presence of women in top management and gender or family-friendly policies. Women managers' impact on gender equality policy development appeared more constrained than that of women board members, with the former's greater integration into the everyday corporate system, their lesser autonomy, and their need to demonstrate their 'independence' from GE issues to maintain their own power as a gender minority (cf. Wajcman, 1999). On the other hand, having more women on the company board did have a significant relation to having a Gender Equality Plan (GEP). Additionally, with more men in middle management, it was more likely that the company had a GEP. The latter may reflect a tendency for less hierarchical, "flatter" corporations to develop such policies.

In follow-up interviews with 20 women and 20 men managers in seven of those companies in Finland, profound differences were between the domestic experiences of the men managers and the women managers. The men were all fathers, had more children (average of 2.5), made minimal contribution at home, and were generally supported by a "housewife culture", even in Finland, where this is rare. They had worked abroad more, and usually found organisational valuation of work abroad in promotion. In contrast, the women managers were typically in dual career, more companionate marriages or partnerships, and had less or no children (with an average of 1.05, and none with more than two). They had worked abroad less, though going abroad sometimes meant "out of sight, out of mind" (Hearn et al., 2008, 2009).

Such patterns may be reproduced through homosocial processes in organisations, with men's greater valuation and preference for men and men's company (Lipman-Blumen, 1976). This involves a mix of power, information, and emotional charge between men, along with the emulation and imitation, yet dispensability, of individual men. Cultural cloning: reproduce more of the same, by gender, ethnicity, organisational culture (Essed and Goldberg, 2002). To analyse these processes involves naming men as men, and deconstructing men. Men's practices often appear to just happen, as "normal", even official organisational ways of doing things (Martin, 2001). One might even see some men's leadership as a social problem, sometimes combining charm and violation. There is a major need to develop what can be called feminist, profeminist, and anti-oppressive leadership throughout all social spheres.

These gender-based considerations are further complicated by the complex question of diversity, in groups, organisations and wider social structures. In many organizations, especially business organizations, there has been a move towards diversity management in recent years. This might be illustrated by this interview with a senior Human Resources manager on a major multinational corporation.

> **Q:** What kind of gender policies do you have in your organization?
>
> **A:** I'm tempted to say that this conversation will be very short if we discuss this issue. Let me rephrase the question. Why would you have gender policies in the first place?
>
> **Q:** Well, what I'm asking is that …
>
> **A:** Yes, yes, but in our culture, everyone is equal and there isn't a need for such policies. Whether this is the reality, whether the practices promote equality is then another story [finger pointing]. You shouldn't look at gender policies but practices. That's the real issue. (quoted in Hearn and Piekkari, 2005).

Diverse groups may often lead to better decision-making (Maznevski, 1994), but showing consistent effects is actually rather difficult. According to Jackson et al.'s (2003) meta-review of the effects of diversity on group effectiveness, gender diversity can lead to better performance by women, but not men; though there can also be variable effects on performance. Similarly, age can have variable effects. Functional and occupational diversity is often positive, especially with teams that debate vigorously, while there are few demonstrated effects for ethnic diversity. But such studies are usually dealing with groups with pre-set agendas. Examining the effects of different kinds of diversity on the definition of the main aim, task, problem, priorities in the first place is much more difficult (Cockburn, 1991). One of the complications is that diversity and diversity management can mean almost anything and can relate to almost any kind of difference or division. Thus, the move to diversity and diversity management can in effect be a way of moving away from a focus on gender, gender equality and equality (Hearn and Collinson, 2006).

Thus, while there are some indications that greater gender equality in management may assist growth and even sustainability, the operation of EQGROSUS in organisations and corporations is extremely complex. These complex processes can indeed be characterised by ongoing contradictions between the case for an intersectional approach to gender and equality, possible diversions from the gender equality agenda that diversity management may bring, and the somewhat inconclusive, or at least varied, evidence on the effects of diversity on performance and creativity. Most importantly, organisations introduce a variety of legal, institutional and policy initiatives and structures, with a degree of rigidity and consistency over time, into the equation that constrain and facilitate the construction of EQGROSUS beyond the immediate interpersonal situation of workers and managers.

THE NATION-STATE

In considering EQGROSUS at the more macro level of nation-states, the first thing to recognise is the huge variation in forms and extents of (in)equality. If we take the five broadly industrialised and developed countries of Finland, Sweden, UK, USA, and the Russian Federation, we find very contrasting levels of income inequality and violence (Table 1).

In the 2009 book The Spirit Level Wilkinson and Pickett demonstrate how at the nation-state level at least societal inequality is broadly opposed to average health and well-being of the population. While wealth and income certainly increases benefits to the population, the relationship between these two factors levels off with increased wealth; in other words, with greater wealth and income marginal increases in benefits decrease. Greater equality is related to a greater extent to average health and well-being, than it is to wealth/income per capita per se. In their analysis inequality undermines trust, and is also in turn related to levels of mental illness, life expectancy, infant mortality, obesity, children's educational performance, teenage births, homicide, imprisonment rates, and social mobility. Wilkinson and Pickett argue that a key mechanism is that inequality facilitates mental distress, or more specifically the greater the social evaluation in society, the more social

	Finland	Sweden	UK	USA	Russian Fed
Rich:poor ratio[1]	5.6	6.2	13.8	15.9	20.3
Homicides[2]	2.86	1.11	1.68	5.56	22.05

[1] Ratio of the richest 10% to poorest 10%, 2002. Source: UNDP (2004).

[2] Per 100,000, 2002. Source: G. Barclay and C. Tavares (2003) (see Hearn and Parkin, 2006).

Table 1: Income inequality and violence in five countries

anxieties are experienced, with consequent harmful effects or disbenefits on people. They also raise many other associated effects and factors. For example, they seek to show that more equal societies are more innovative, with the examples of more patents registered

in Finland (36 per million people) and Sweden (30 per million people), as against the US (2 per million people). Another example is that greater recycling is found in more equal societies, as in the Nordic region and Japan, with huge implications for not just consumerism, but also global warming. More generally, there are truly major contrasts in energy consumption, for example, while India consumes 1.6 tonnes of carbon per person per year, the figure for the USA is 24 tonnes.

This analysis has some parallels with Walby's (2009) Globalization and Inequalities, and "contested modernities". She reviews inequalities across a wide range of sectors: economy, polity, civil society, and violence. She sees violence as a major arena of societal development in itself, with examining inequality through violence via levels of military spending, levels of prison population, levels of homicide and interpersonal violence, as well as the costs of inequality. In brief, she sets out two possible, one might say sustainable, societal trajectories: one social democratic, and the other neo-liberal. These two forms of "sustainability" might be related to soft power and hard power respectively. The latter perpetuates some major internal inequalities and indeed challenges and contradictions for state expenditure, for example, in the USA prison expenditure has increased since 1980 six times as fast as education.

While, overall, economic development tends to be associated with less violence, this is not so for all rich countries. Moreover, inequality can be seen as structural violence, and violence as inequality. On a global scale greater equality tends to be associated with less violence, stronger public sector gender equality and childcare regime, and greater innovation. We may compare the USA as an extreme case, with low government expenditure (except military), high inequality, and many social problems, Japan, with low government expenditure, low inequality, and what may seen as relative equality through the market, and Finland and Sweden, with relatively high government expenditure, low inequality, and equality through redistribution, especially in childcare and child well-being. Thus, at the national level EQGROSUS takes on different dynamics, especially in the role of the state in sustaining, at least in the short term, the nation-state society, whether relatively equal or relatively unequal.

THE TRANSNATIONAL/GLOBAL: POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIOS

Finally, EQGROSUS operates more globally, beyond and between nations. Global and transnational EQGROSUS is complicated by the impact of transnational organisations, multinational enterprises, militaries and militarism, migrations, social movements, and information and communication technologies on gender and other inequalities. Significnant numbers of multinational business corporations are larger than some sizeable national economies.

In considering (in)equalities, growth and sustainability, very different possible scenarios of gendered futures follow from differentiations of, first, gender equality and inequality, and, second, gender similarity and difference (homogeneity/ heterogeneity) between women and men

(Hearn, 2010). Four scenarios can be outlined through intersections of gender equality/inequality and gender similarity/difference, characterised as follows:

- the doomsday or global patriarchy scenario: men becoming more divergent from women, and with greater oppression and inequality. There is an assertion of men's difference from women, coupled with trends towards inequality stemming from neo-liberalism. This would seem to be non-sustainable in the long run.

- the bi-polar model: men becoming more divergent from women and with greater equality. In this scenario traditionalism is combined with gender equality, and perhaps 'human rights' orientation and practice. Arguably, this might be represented within some relatively static, nationalistic versions of the 'social democratic' welfare state model. This may be locally sustainable.

- the postmodern or late capitalism model: men becoming more convergent with women and with greater oppression and inequality. A contrasting possible scenario, the postmodern or late capitalism model, involves men becoming more convergent with women, but with greater oppression and inequality. In this trajectory capitalist (and imperialist) social relations overwhelm gender relations. This could be thought of as 'pure capitalism', whether in expansive or collapsing mode, as this cares not for the age, gender, ethnicity, racialisation or sexuality of workers, consumers and their exploitation. This would appear to be non-sustainable.

- the postgender model: men becoming more convergent with women and with greater equality. In this scenario, gender and gender antagonisms are transcended, whether through economic imperatives, political action, virtual realities, or some utopian change. This may be sustainable.

Such a frame can be developed further to take on board divisions and inequalities apart from those derived from gender, class and capitalism. To conclude, the mixture of equality, growth and sustainability – EQGROSUS – looks rather different, depending on the scale and scope of attention, as well as their interconnections and contradictions. In addition, in evaluating these various relations, it is important to attend not only to gender equality, but also sexuality, absence of violation (after all violence is inequality!), care and caring, intersectionalities, and critical engagement with men and masculinities, and deconstruction of gender – ingredients that are very important in moving from surface EQGROSUS to deep EQGROSUS.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Papersession A

Creating sustainability - an interplay of top-down steering and bottom-up activities

Process leaders in equality and diversity - reflections from an action research model

Elisabeth C Andersson
School of Education, Culture and Communication
Mälardalen University, Sweden

ABSTRACT

The project JämBredd at Mälardalen University offers specially designed training in process management for people with management responsibilities. The basic idea with the project is that leadership shall base on good knowledge of equality issues, even develop the ability to see deficiencies in the organization and get knowledge about tools to manage change. This is for to form successful efforts towards greater equality and diversity. The education is carried out according to a portfolio model in nine modules with a thematic focus on various components of change process. Regular documentation will be made by the participants and they are also asked to do some preparatory works before each training session. This will be opportunity to gain knowledge about working for change and about methods for identification and analysis of activities from a gender and diversity perspective. This presentation reports a part of a research study that follows this process during the year. The method is an action research model. The purpose of the study is to investigate if equality and diversity questions can be implemented in various activities through learning processes.

KEYWORDS: diversity, gender, leadership, education, action research model, organization, learning process

BACKGROUND

JämBredd is a project for education and learning within the field of gender and diversity. The project is owned by Mälardalen University, Sweden, and financed by the European Social Fund. The purpose of the project is to educate organizations in questions concerning equality and thereby fulfill regional goals within the political areas of equality and inclusion. Another key aim of the project is to create a platform for knowledge and learning within the field of gender and diversity at our university.

This article is the result of a midterm evaluation by the process leaders within this education. The education holds nine various themes throughout 2010. These themes derive from gender and diversity questions and take an active part of an individual change process. The focus of this training of skills lies with leadership and change management in multicultural workplaces. It will be implemented as a higher academic education and the participants can choose to only take part in the project and/or to obtain the credits for the exam.

The education consists of nine training modules which are composed of lectures by various scholars within gender and diversity issues, seminars, group work or role plays. Participants prepare for each theme by reading the course and reference literature and by the practical application within their own organization.

Project Jämbredd will also realize a thesis leading to a Licentiate of Philosophy degree in the subject of didactics. The focus of the thesis is on Jämbredd's education of the process leaders. The design is action research and a midterm evaluation has been carried out to establish that the knowledge process in the education fulfills its purpose. If it does not, the training should be revised for the next part of the education period.

PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

The aim of the project is to examine opportunities and obstacles in cross cultural activities.

- How do you see the project Jämbredd?

- Your own role in the process leaders' education – How do you see your involvement?

- The role of the employee in/outside of the project Jämbredd – What present and future intensions do you see?

METHOD

Mattsson (2001) describes action research as a clear intention of converting practical knowledge into tying together the interests of different parties in order to bring about a change in society. The basic idea is to try to increase the influence of groups of people living at the outer areas of the welfare state. It is important that the person carrying out the action research is free from the structures of power, but the research should emanate from the academic research principles. The action researcher is carrying out his/her research in collaboration with the concerned and should therefore be able to move in various contexts and places. Swedner (1996) calls this to exist in different contexts, and these contexts can be seen in working life, in research and in everyday life.

Action research has a long history. Aristotle discussed action research from the stance of praxis. During the 20th century, Jane Addams (1860-1934) in collaboration with George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) formed the first institute of action research. They were, in turn, working closely together with John Dewey. Thus, action research has a clear academic residence in pragmatism. Kurt Lewin (1860-1947) developed theories and methods in this direction and he is considered one of the first action researchers. Lewin elaborated a triangle of "action – research – education", which he saw as an essential tool in the process of change. Other prominent figures are Saul Alinsky D (1909-1977) and Paolo Freire (1921-1997), where the former represents the "action oriented" research methods, while the latter was working to "sensitize" them. Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), who is a contemporary scholar, gave the term "field research" a new meaning. The methods of action research may vary and they vary on the basis of theories, fields of research and research questions (Mattsson, 2001).

DATA ACQUISITION

An evaluation has been conducted in the middle of the education of this process leader, i.e. after five training modules. 10 participants have been interviewed by the approximately 35 people undergoing the training. All of these process leaders work with some form of leadership within their particular organization and/or is holding a leadership post. The choice of respondents was based on various diversity criteria, such as the size of the organization, job titles, the gender of the respondent and the respondent's own ethnicity and/or native language.

An interview guide with three themes was prepared. The interviews are unstructured and Bryman (2001) describes the starting point generally is themes and from there emanates all general topics that the interview should contain. The questions are mostly informal, which gives the interviewer the freedom to ask supplementary questions not listed in the interview guide. The selected themes are: The Jämbredd project, the participants' role in the education and finally the role of the employee. See above for purpose and questions.

Each respondent has been informed by the HSFR (1990) about the four principles of research ethics, information, consent, confidentiality and user requirements. All of them have agreed to participate and the interview was conducted in a place of their choice. The interviewer presented the code of conduct to the respondent prior to the start of the interview. The interviews themselves lasted between 35-75 minutes. Transcriptions of the interviews have been carried out and the respondents have been informed that their replies may be used in future research.

LITERATURE

Karlsson (1999) writes about different ways of looking at problems with evaluations. He points to three patterns that have crystallized historically: goal-performance evaluation, process evaluation and interactive evaluation. These correspond with either the criteria that have been set up, with the organization implementation or with the outcomes that are in focus and for whom. The author believes "that the main purpose of the evaluation is to express a value about its evaluation object" (p.17). It is of importance to try out your own grounds for value from outside of the results of the evaluation. Within the three patterns are several models for evaluation. This strategy concentrates on explanations. The emphasis of the evaluation is on assessing the stakeholder's perspective and on establishing the advantages and disadvantages without the official targets. The emphasis

What is the purpose	What are the main issues?	Who formulates the porpose?
1. Check and provide basis for decision	Have you done what you should according to objectives, decisions, laws, regulations etc?	The parent level
2. Promote and enhance	Do your efforts work as you intended? Can efforts be improved?	Professionals and users within the organization
3. Developing knowlwdge and critically examine	What can be learnt? Whose interests are met? Who is being benefited/disadvantaged?	The research community and a wider, external audience

Table 1. The purpose of evaluation at different levels of organization (Karlsson, 1999, p. 33).

of the evaluation is on assessing the stakeholder's perspective and on establishing the advantages and disadvantages without the official targets. It's a form of self evaluation.

The very purpose of the evaluation can be seen from what Karlsson (1999) describes in three different points, see table below.

The evaluation is based on the objective "to promote and to enhance" the education to become a process leader. The main thought behind the evaluation is to respond to the questions on whether the efforts are working the way they were intended to work and if there is room for improvement. The objective was formulated by the JämBredd management team but also by participants in the process leader education.

RESULTS

The result shows that the majority of respondents are very satisfied with this education for process leaders. Many emphasize that they welcome their own knowledge process in the project as it runs for a whole

year. The participants argue that they get time to reflect, read and even create networking with different people within this education but also outside in surrounding organizations.

A few of the interviewees sees participation in the action research both as positive and exciting as this is something they never had done before. Several respondents believe they have gained increased self-confidence through the education. The majority has got an increased awareness and a greater understanding of equality and diversity issues. They convey loneliness - some feel that they are the only one at work with these questions. Some participants have found new ways to see themselves. A couple of the participants say that it's important to find your own role as a leader and thereby support the business. Several participants are pleased that they have received tools to support and develop their own activities within gender and diversity issues.

There are concerns about working with these questions. For example if this work will be too large and too difficult in the future. They wonder if they have the capacity to be able to support their own employees. Some even recognize that they already have carried through different aspects in the work with gender and diversity issues in their place of work. The participants have also a thought about the education as already having corroborated that they have been working properly within their own organization. They have thus received their own confirmation of this work

DISCUSSION

A method discussion should be about implementation and the choice of design. It feels important that participants in the process leaders' education take part in the course. Therefore, action research was the right choice. Reliability in the research must also point out that the result shows the correct answers to the correctly prepared questions. In the case of this research, where open interviews with three thematic questions were conducted, the respondents were able to answer the questions relatively openly. Regarding the credibility or validity of the answers, the results are available to be seen in full and Lantz (1993) says that the respondents' replies in a qualitative research should be seen as an entirety shape or figure. Moreover, there are a relatively large number of interviews conducted. As a researcher, your own personal bias can also be discussed, according to DePoys and Gitlin (1994). The authors believe that the researcher's own personal and even unconscious perspective should result in a self-reflection. I work as a lecturer and also with equality and diversity issues, but my intention is to be neutral in my translation.

Regarding the outcome of the evaluation, there are no surprising answers, without its more are likely. In particular, the participants themselves in this education, for the most part, have shown an interest in implementing this training. The education is generous in many cases. There have been different lectures by many researchers in various niches of equality and diversity issues. The training has taken place at various conference hotels where there are beautiful surroundings, good food and also time for reflection among other leaders in different organizations. In particular, the latter has been viewed very positively by the process leaders. There have also been many occasions where the training has been implemented at sleeping accommodation and where there has been time in the evenings for discussions.

The participants themselves have also found that managers are relatively similar in appearance and age; there is not much diversity among them. Leadership is often characterized as, according to Lahdenperä (2008), that the leader are recruited from their own operation and thus generate the current structure with its norms and values. There is no capacity for innovation, but the focus is on bureaucracy!

The results also show that respondents see resistance as the main difficulty to overcome in their own operations. Several leaders have already started the work to discuss equality and diversity issues but believe they see major obstacles. The participants believe that the work is important to bridge the various gulfs in their own various organizations, but they also believe that they can imagine possibilities in creating a community for all, if only everybody was made aware of it. Mlekov and Widell (2003) believe that cultural diversity should be valued at all levels of operations and it should be seen as a resource instead of as a threat to the company.

FURTHER RESEARCH

The answers that have emerged in the evaluation has touched with some of the research questions that I have made in my research plan, and because I assume it will be easier for the reader to understand the aim with the research, see below.

One purpose of this study is to investigate how the learning process has been carried out in its own activities to raise awareness of the value of diversity issues. Another aim is to try to see opportunities but also the barriers of these implementations within the organization. Another purpose is, if possible, to create a tool from this education process to be able to convey to other organizations.

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Issues:
- Is there an ongoing a process in peoples approach to equality and diversity issues when they have study this concrete education in the subject?

- Are there changes in individual's attitude level to a more conscious level of this learning process?

- Are there changes in an individual's knowledge level to a more evaluative level of this learning process?

- Are there specific barriers within an organization, such as policy documents, that create barriers to enable implementation of equality and diversity issues?

- Are there undreamed opportunities in an organization that could enable implementation of the equality and diversity issues? (Andersson, 2010, p. 5).

What have I found that can be used in my future research? How should I proceed in my research?

First and foremost, an evaluation will be carried out when process leaders' education is finished at the end of year 2010. These responses may provide input for further reflection on how future research should be done. Right now, an idea for further research is to try to assemble the participants in the process leaders' education in the spring of 2012. It would be interesting to conduct conversations in focus groups to see whether the participants consciously worked on those issues in their own organization. If they did, another interesting aspect to discuss would be in which way they work in equality and diversity issues.

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How women's life experience influences sustainable life style

Zora Javorská
Department of Environmental Studies
Masaryk University,Czech Republic
zorienka@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to study, on the background of the ecofeminist theory, women who are motivated to lead environmentally friendly lives and to work in the environmental field based on their life experience as women. In the theoretical part, I will present, based on the findings of my master thesis, the list of environmentally friendly impacts of ecofeminism and the potential preconditions of women to work and live in an environmentally friendly manner. The theoretical part is concluded by the explanation of the term women's life experience and the methodological description. The following section is devoted to the analysis of interviews of women from two specific groups, which I have defined – women living in the countryside and women working in ecological NGOs. I will conclude by confirming the hypotheses that the women from this sample live and work in an environmentally friendly manner based on their life experience, and by doing so, they motivate others.

KEYWORDS: women, ecofeminism, sustainability, environment, life style, living in the countryside, ecological NGO

INTRODUCTION

In my master thesis research I discovered the deep connection between the subordination of women and the environmental problems. I focused on the ecofeminist theory of Karen Warren (2000), Mary Mellor (1997), Nöel Sturgeon (1997), Carolyn Merchant (1980) and others. I also pointed out the practical application of ecofeminist theory on the organizational level, particularly in the case of women's ecological organizations. I discovered fairly strong background for women's ecological activism in Europe in form of several national women's ecological organizations and one bigger umbrella organization "Women in Europe for a Common Future" which includes about a hundred environmental and health organizations from Europe and parts of Asia.

These findings led me to ask about and research the individual level of women's ecological activism, because not all women have the possibility to join such organizations. In this point I was also inspired by professor Hana Librová, founder of the Environmental Studies Department at Masaryk University, where I am currently studying, and her long-term research on environmentally friendly life style patterns in Czech households in the 90's and ten years later. The main focus of her research was voluntary simplicity in behavior of Czech society between 1992-2002. She was interviewing about 40 households in 1992 and ten years later in 2002. One of the most interesting findings in her research, especially in the 2002 review was that it is particularly women who stayed strong in their decisions for environmentally friendly life style and it is also women who motivate others. As Librová states: „one of my strongest impressions from the second round of visits [in 2002] were the positions and postures of women. It was as if they got out from the roles of supporters and creators of the family background and took on a new role in which they became the bearers and vindicators of the family life style. (Librová 2003:227)." And she added, "Women are the heroines of my research" (2003: 228).

These are my two main influences on where to focus my own PhD. research. The aim of my research is women who are personally interested in environmental protection. I chose women from two specific fields - women living in the countryside, due to their own decision that included environmental aspects, and women working in ecological NGOs. In both groups of women we can assume traits of pro-environmental behavior, which are manifested just by being a member of that group.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this part I want to sum up the theoretical background of my pre-research, which is the main body of this paper. The main influence and background at the same time is my previous research in ecofeminist theory. The most relevant results of my master thesis were environmentally friendly impacts of ecofeminism and the practical implementation of these impacts in particular women's ecological organizations. I take these as the basis for my following research.

Women's Life Experience

Before I continue, I have to explain a term, which is very important for this paper as well as for my entire work – the women's life experience. According to Mellor (1997) and Harding (1990) it is the specific and different life experience of women compared to men. The authors named these specific women's life experiences as an "embodiment". Another ecofeminist author Susan Buckingham Hatfield defines embodiment as "being more closely in touch with their [women's] bodies because of their domestic and child-bearing and rearing activities" (2000: 30). The image of dissimilarity of women's and men's life experiences incurred by living different gender roles is also one of the basics of the feminist Standpoint theory (Harding 1990: 95). The specific women's life experience is one of the starting points of my research.

Environmentally Friendly Impacts of Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism as a theoretical concept has pointed out interesting connections between the current critical conditions of nature and women's position in society. From a different perspectiive ecofeminism is also a movement, which Mary Mellor defines as a "movement that sees connection between the exploitation and degradation on of the natural world and subordination and oppression of women" (1997: 1). Ecofeminism is not a homogenous movement or theoretical concept it has many different factions, but unfortunately I cannot go into details here. But what is it that is important here and all ecofeminists agree on? It is the critique of dualistic and hierarchical thinking, and the critique of the application of the logic of dominance. Ecofeminism sees dualistic and hierarchical thinking as a theoretical basis for that kind of thinking which leads society to the non-sustainable development. If we take into consideration what was mentioned above we can move on to the environmentally friendly impacts of ecofeminism.

If we want to reconsider the dualistic and hierarchical thinking, the first things that come into our mind are the decentralization of power and economy, local responsibility, environmental friendly life style and a human dimension in everyday life. All these are included in ecofeminist theoretical and practical solutions and recommendations. Ecofeminists point out, that it is mostly women who are living in the private sphere [cp. embodiment], so they are more focused on the local issues and human dimensions of everyday life. The practical manifestation of this approach is well shown in Helena Norberg-Hodge's book Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh. She says: "Decentralized systems lead to more equal division of wealth, compared to centralized systems, focused on economic growth. Decentralized systems are reacting better to the needs of inhabitants and limited resources. If we are supporting renewing of decentralized systems, we are supporting cultural and ecological diversity as well." (1996: 142) She further adds that human dimensions support better relations among men and women as well as to the Earth (1996: 158).

Ecofeminism further emphasizes the importance of context, perception and comprehension in context. Carol Gilligan, the very famous psychologist, pointed out in 1982 the differences between feminine and masculine values. She showed that the feminine values, such as connection with others, care for others, sensitivity to the needs of others and so on, which can be collectively labeled as context-sensitive perceptions, are considered in comparison with masculine ones as immature and insufficient (2001: 47). If we look at these "feminine values" from the ecofeminist point of view, they are very environmentally friendly. Ecofeminists together with Carol Gilligan called such an ethic 'the ethic of care' and they stress the implications of this ethic for the environment. The ethic of care is one of the pivotal topics in ecofeminism. Most ecofeminists stress, however, that the ethic of care is not connected only with women, but rather it has its ecological implications as such and should be thus dignified.

The third dimension, which can be perceived as having environmentally friendly impacts, is the specific women's life experience itself. According to Buckingham Hatfield (2000), Wichterich (2000), Dankelman (2004) and Kolářová (2009) women are exposed to environmental problems earlier and to a greater extent. There are several reasons for this and the authors mentioned above discuss them. For the purpose of this paper, however, the most important fact is that women are more confronted with environmental problems and they tend more to look for solutions. Firstly, the women who notice environmental problems earlier react to them earlier. Secondly, if the environmental problems appear locally, the women touched by them get involved personally and feel personal responsibility. This principle is well shown in numbers: "worldwide, women form 60-80 per cent of the membership of environmental organizations, although this it not always evident from the leadership profile (1993: 263-4)" (Seagor in Mellor 1997:21). This shows women's involvement in environmental problems and their effort to find solutions.

To conclude this section I would like to mention several basic, yet important facts, which are connected to the above, mentioned findings. Women, on average, still take care of children and household more than men do. Thus they have quite a strong position in making decisions about these issues. This alone has relatively big environmental impact especially in the case of everyday shopping decisions, buying things connected with babies and children and also a lot of things for the household. All of these above show that women play a crucial role in carrying out environmentally friendly lifestyle.

Ecological Organizations

In the theory part I have to mention some of my previous research findings about women's ecological organizations. As I have already mentioned above I have done a research on the practical applications of ecofeminist theories in women's ecological organization, mostly in Europe. The focus of my research was to show that ecofeminists thoughts and practical actions and proclamations of such organization are closely connected. I have described four different kinds of women's ecological organizations and their specific activities. I found out that there is a great variety among these organizations – on one hand an umbrella organization covering hundred smaller organizations and on the other hand a small local organization working in one city. Some of the famous women's ecological grassroots organizations are for example the Chipko movement in India and the Green Belt Movement in Kenya. Surely, there are hundreds of women's grassroots organizations dealing with environment worldwide. I am convinced that research has been done on the topic of women's ecological grassroots organizations, but more research still needs to be done. The biggest problem of such research is the lack of resources. Also because of that, I did not choose it; even though it would have been the logical step after my previous research in the perspective of top-down activities in this particular field. I jumped over this level of possible civil activities of women dealing with environment and I focused instead on the individual "bottom" level.

METHODOLOGY

The very first step was to start with interviews, or rather pre-interviews of two groups of women I have chosen. I decided to start with pre-interviews, because I myself live between these two groups of women. I have been working in an ecological NGO for three years and one and a half years ago I have moved to the countryside. This was the starting point for my research. Under these circumstances I am already involved in the participant observation, which I have subsequently chosen as the method of my research, and I have already collected a lot of interesting findings. It is well known that participant observation has several difficulties. The main one in my case could be quite a strong belief that I "already know". To prevent this strong belief and to be more open-minded, I started to interview women from the group of my friends. These interviews will be used as pre-interviews for my PhD research and I will also use them here in this paper.

I interviewed five women from each group. All interviewed women are between 25- 38 years old and all of them are living in the Czech Republic. All interviews were done in Czech and I am using my own translations in this paper. A very interesting factor in this pre-research is that all women in the group living in the countryside have a child or children but just one of the five from the group working in the NGO has one. I will try to explain reasons for this later in this paper.

I did the interviews with the women living in the countryside personally and they were recorded. One interview took on an average about 40 minutes. The interviews were processed using the so-called summary protocol as proposed by Hendl (2005). This method helped me to find out, collect and categorize main topics from the interviews. I chose this method to save time and to do my pre-research most effectively for the following research.

The second group of women working in the ecological NGOs was interviewed by email or Skype. Because the lack of time I used the modern technology and made interviews through Internet. The advantage of this technology is that I could go in quest of specific details, as well as I would do it in personal interviews. Because of this possibility these interviews are as valid as the face-to-face ones. But both of them are considered as pre-interviews, which will be used for pre-research in the field of my PhD research.

For both groups of women I asked the following questions, only in small variety: How do they live? Why and how did they become members of such a group? How do they perceive themselves as environmentally friendly beings? What kind of aspects of their behavior do they count into their everyday environmental decisions? What kind of obstacles do they see in their environmentally friendly life style? How would they specify these obstacles? Does their sex play any specific role?

After this was done I stared to process the material I acquired from the interviews. First, I made the summary protocols from the interviews with the women living in the countryside and from this I obtained several categories. The results from the interviews with women working in the ecological NGOs were on average one and a half page long answers. It was a bit less then the first interviews results, so they did not need summary protocol. I found similarities in the answers and I also made several categories out of them. I also found some similarities in the answers between these two groups of women.

ANALYZING DATA FROM PRE-INTERVIEWS

In short, for my pre- interviews I chose to carry out the research at the individual level of ecological activism, thus choosing women who are concerned with the environment. From all women doing something for the environment I chose women from the two particular groups – those living in the countryside and those working in ecological NGOs because they are the closest to me. They are a normal part of my social environment and I know them well. The participant observation, as I mentioned above, was carried out during my normal everyday life and it took minimum of one and a half year. Most of the findings from participant observation were confirmed by results obtained from the interviews.

Group of Women Living in the Countryside

> "Living in a house in the countryside I feel much better, I perceive it as a different life feeling, contact with elements, a possibility to be outside, a possibility to live more environmentally friendly."   (Katka, 28.10.)

I define this group as a group of women living in

the countryside by their own decision, including the environmentally friendly aspects. All participants confirmed it, just one introduce that the family tradition and her husband played an important role in her decision to come back to life in the village.

> "It was respect to family tradition, but it would be perhaps latter, where it not for Pavel." (Anita, 6.10.)

The main reasons for coming or moving back to a village mentioned by all women were children. We can see it clearly in their answers:

> "I want my family to live in nature" (Lucka, 26.10.)

> "Because of the children, so that they can be closer to her [nature]." (Katka 28.10.)

> "Our first child was the main reason to leave the city, although I wanted all my life to have a house close to the forest" (Asia, 6.10.)

> "One of the essential reasons why to live in the countryside was the choice of where I will bring up my children" (Lena 27.10.)

even Anita confirmed it:

> "I definitely did not want to live in the city with children" (7.10.).

These answers acknowledge my previous predication, that having children is part of the specific women's life experience, which play crucial role in women's environmentally friendly lifestyle strategies.

I will explain more precisely on particular examples why these women want to bring up their children in the countryside. Following answer reflects observations done by women on their own children. "I think it [cp. bringing up children in the countryside] leads to a completely different form of development of human personality" (Anita 7.10.). The most frequently stated reason was that growing up in nature, or close to her creates different personality compared to growing up in the city. For this idea there is not an unified opinion from experts. Emilie Strejčková carried out a fairly big research about the alienation of children from nature in the Czech Republic in 2006. She was one of the biggest capacities in the field of environmental education in the Czech Republic and she focused her research on "city children". Her findings clarified low connection with nature by city children. She also pointed out, that it could be reason for some disorders in development of personality, such as hypersensitiveness, loss of self-preservation, insensitiveness and also some psychological troubles such as depression, boredom, loss vitality and so on.

If we come back to the interviewed women, they specify their reason why they think it better for children to live in the countryside like this

> "I prefer when my children can naturally run out, touch the grass, trees, domestic animals" (Anita 7.10.);

> "My one and a half year old daughter knows all of the animals living in our village personally, e.g. horses, cows, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, chickens, I do not have to teach her what do they look like from the picture. She can

simulate them all, because she knows them. It is more comfortable for me" (Lena 27.10.).

Most of these women also appreciate the health factors of living in the countryside.

> "She has access to fresh air, she is hardy, she is not ill. The children of my friends who live in the city are always ill, they have a running nose all the time." (Lena 27.10.)

> "I wish the children could grow up in nature, learn from nature and be healthier. Thanks to frequent stays outside they will have better immunity, will be more resilient and hardy." (Lucka 26. 10.)

> "It is important for me what my daughter eats and when I grow vegetables myself with my husband, I know what we are eating." (Lena 27.10.)

Lastly, the interviewed women emphasized the way children learn to play, or perhaps even to live, if they are brought up in the nature. They describe it this way.

> "They are more independent, creative, and they naturally invent their own entertainment, it is not necessary to create activities for them. The urban children have to have more organized entertainment." (Anita 7.10.);

> "Children have a lot of options, and create the games themselves, whereas children in the city need more organization." (Asia 6.10.)

> "It is also important, that they [children] have natural entertainment, they do not have to invent fun, they are learning by imitation. She is carrying the wood with me, watching how I work in the garden. It is very nice for me" (Lena 27.10.)

Women from this group also perceive very positively the natural way of education by imitation. They use it for example also as a method of environmental education.

> "We do not lead children to environmental protection consciously, we do so by example, we have separate trash cans and so on. I think like this they will have a natural relationship to her [nature]." (Asia 6.10.)

As showed above, for all women from this group, the main reasons to live in the countryside are the health factors and the natural upbringing of children. These factors alone fall within the category of environmentally friendly life styles. But my interviewees also perceive themselves as consciously environmentally friendly beings. They affirmed it thereby: all of them are using wood for heating and most of the cooking, they are using ecological cleaning and washing products, environmentally friendly cosmetics for them and children, they grow their vegetables without chemical additives, they separate trash and have their own compost. As the most problematic aspect of their life style, seen from the ecological point of view, the list the usage of a car.

They perceive themselves as an important factor of the environmentally friendly lifestyles of their families. On the question "Does your sex play any specific role?" they reported that it is mostly them who pushed their family in this direction.

"It was probably me who "is pushing the saw" [cp. are more strict in environmentally friendly lifestyle]. But at the same time I was the one who advocated for leaving to the countryside" (Katka 28.10.);

"Woman leads the way of the family very much. Of course, we have to agree with my partner, but the initiative comes mostly from my side." (Lucka 26.10.)

"The whole thing [cp. coming to live in the countryside] was my idea, my mission, Adam adapted, now it is pretty balanced." (Asia 6.10.)

To sum this part up, we can identify several unifying lines in the answers of the women from this group. The most visible one is their need to bring up their children in the nature. The second one is the need to live in the nature in order to be able to lead environmentally friendly lifestyles and to motivate their families. The third one could be gathered below the category of environmentally friendly shopping, which Katka sums up like this: "I mainly determine what we buy for home, although it does not mean that everything is up to me. However, it is mainly me who selects the things for children and some other things for the household are also mainly my choice." (28.10.) So as we can see above the specific life experience of these women, mostly as mothers, leads them to have more sustainable lifestyle.

Group of Women Working in the Ecological NGO

"I can say to men, who fret us by asking how long are we going to bother them with ecology: "as long as I am afraid to bring my children to your dirty world".
(Hanka 19.10.)

I defined this group of women, as women working in the NGO on purpose, out of their personal believe. They answer the question: Why is your work important for you? Like this: "I see it as an instrument of self-affirmation of my believes, as well as the possibility to change something and make a positive PR to what I consider to be good." (Hanka 19.10.); "Meaningful work and linking employment and interest" (Katka 27.10.); "self-affirmation of my belief" (Monika 18.10.); "Opportunity to really live the values that are essential for me" (Irena 19.10.); "Interest, lifestyle, fun…" (Vera 19.10.) We can see big identification of women with their work. As a motivation to work in ecological NGO, they also mention the possibility to, by living their values, be an example for others. "Some [cp. relatives and close friends] support me and they are able to express admiration and respect to my consistency with my principles." (Irena 19.10.) or as Hanka says "The only way I see is to motivate and teach others by the example of my own lifestyle." (19.10.)

As can be seen from the previous paragraph, these women are highly motivated to support the environmentally friendly lifestyle by their own work and by their personal example. If we ask the question, which naturally follows, that is why are they so motivated, the quotation by Hanka at the beginning of this section serves as an answer for all. Other women from this group answered like this: "I think that as my "mother-instinct"

(= the awareness of the possibility to be a mother) is strengthening, I start to look at some things more from perspective of "what those poor children and potentially mine or other existing defenseless creatures." (Katka 27.10.) "Admiration for the creation [cp. also human], which directly asks for protection, just by its beauty and diversity" (Vera 18.10.) I see these expressions as containing specific women's life experience as potential mothers or carers.

I should pause here for a moment, to explain precisely what I mean by previous statement. I do not want to slip back to essentialism "women are closer to nature just by being mothers, or potential mothers". I want to show that specific life experience of women in a particular time, space, culture and political situation could motivate or lead women to behave in a specific way. What I wanted to show by previous paragraph and by this whole pre-research as well is the specific sensation and need of these particular women to do something positive for the environmental protection also because of their awareness of the next generations.

Now we can come back to this group of women and their specific mentioned in the methodology section – that is the fact that just one woman from this group has a child. This confirms the original findings and is further confirmed by the answers obtained from the interviewed women. Working in ecological NGO is quite a stressful job, even if they are doing it also for the potential children (their or foreign). Most of these women are thinking about potential moving to, or coming back to the countryside later on. For example: "I liked the lifestyle more connected with nature, in the countryside" (Katka 27.10.); "My idea is based on a lot of self-sufficiency in the countryside" (Hanka, 19.10); "I see the stress and most likely the inability to coordinate this job with the planned family in the future. In the case I had children and lived in my village, it would be impossible to commute to work, because the distance is too big." (Monika 18.10.).

There are further interesting similarities among the answers of women from this group to the question about their motivation to work in ecological NGO. Most of them indicate the importance of meeting inspiring people, for example: "Meeting with a number of very inspiring people who are active in various ecological organizations" (Katka 27.10.); "Friends, characters" (Verka 18.10.); "I met people whose enthusiasm for the cause and nature conservation impressed me" (Irena 19.10.). As we can see the encounter with inspiring and charismatic people from the field has served as a further motivation for them.

I want to sum up this section by pointing out the similar answers among both groups. What I have found interesting, above all, is the fact that women working in the NGO have the tendency to do the same as the previous group of women – to move to the countryside. As I found out during my research, some women from the group living in the countryside have been working in the ecological NGO. Here we can find some kind of continuity in living values and life strategy among these groups of women. The general connection of both groups is in the basic direction to the environmentally friendly

lifestyle. Further connection is some degree of need to motivate other people, mostly family and friends in case of women living in the countryside and broader public in case of women working in ecological NGO. The kinds of motivation within both groups of women are connected with their specific life experience as women as was shown in the particular answers.

CONCLUSION

The aim was to show, on the background of ecofeminist theory, that there are women who are, by their own life experience as women, motivated to work on sustainable future. Among the main motivation can be counted having children or the potentiality of it, or more general the care of others. They are living what they are saying and they try to live the sustainable life style by themselves. Because of this they motivate others. If they are mothers, they are shaping the family direction to the sustainable lifestyle. If they are working in the ecological NGO, they also want to be "a living example" of sustainable life style. This is coming from their life experience and they are trying to transfer it further.

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Papersession B

*Entrepreneurship and
gender mainstreaming*

The woman entrepreneur: a third sex?

The subversive potential of entrepreneurship

Karin Berglund, Ph. D,
Academy for innovation, design and technology
Mälardalen University, SWEDEN
karin.berglund@mdh.se

Jennie Granat Thorslund,
Vinnova[1]

ABSTRACT

Taking a point of departure in a poststructuralist understanding of femininity we search for new ways to answer the question: "Who is the woman entrepreneur?" A text within the policy program aimed at supporting women's entrepreneurship in Sweden is analyzed. The analysis reveals that previous understandings of how the female entrepreneur is constructed are incomplete and one-dimensional. Rather than viewing the female entrepreneur as the opposite to her male counterpart, and as a subordinated being, she is constructed in policy as a "third sex", a person that moves in between discourses of femininity and masculinity, and thus also outside the passive and subordinated position depicted in contemporary perceptions of femininity.

INTRODUCTION

Who is the woman entrepreneur? This is a question that has not been delved into as much as "Who is the woman entrepreneur in relation to her male counterpart?", not to mention the constant query that seems to work as a backdrop in entrepreneurship research: "Who is the Entrepreneur?" The answer to the last question seems, incessantly, to be the heroic self-made man of the western world who conquers his environment when building a kingdom and contributing to economic growth (e.g. Ogbor, 2000). In this article we are, however, not so interested in the notion of how this masculinity is constructed as we are curious about what kind of femininities can be shaped in contexts of women's entrepreneurship. Inspired by the call for re-theorizing women entrepreneurs from a poststructuralist feminist agenda (e.g. Ahl, 2006; Calás, Smircich and Bourne, 2007; Marlow and Patton, 2005, Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio, 2004b) our intention is not to delineate "her" in terms of a particular identity, but to investigate the subversive potential of entrepreneurship in shaping new realities.

In entrepreneurship research the Schumpeterian view of the entrepreneur as an innovator and a person breaking the norm has gained acceptance (e.g. Landström, 2005). According to this theoretical landscape, the entrepreneur is seen as a person with certain talents, a pioneer who introduces the innovation that distinguishes one business from others. Entrepreneurship research has, however, not paid much attention to the crowd of people working together in organizational contexts to produce and diffuse "newness" (Whittle and Mueller, 2008), but has instead contributed to constructing the entrepreneur as an almost superhuman masculine being (e.g. Meier Sørensen, Bent, 2008), who nevertheless seems as hard as the Heffalump to get a grip on (Jones and Spicer, 2005: 234). According to contemporary discourse, the entrepreneur stands out as an ideal human being, a God-similar creature that constitutes the missing piece in every puzzle to solve no matter what the context is (Berglund and Johansson, 2007a). Similarly, du Gay (1999) emphasizes that the enterprising individual is called for in almost all organizational settings, and du Gay, Salaman and Rees (1986: 270) assert that "the character of the entrepreneur can no longer be represented as just one among a plurality of ethical personalities but must be seen as assuming an ontological priority."

Even though enterprising individuals constitute an important model for how we perceive wo/men to behave in contemporary society, there is also an everyday conception that holds us back from identifying with the entrepreneur, which is strongly interlinked with a mythified figure (Nicholson and Anderson, 2005) This ideal picture of a human being seems, in particular, to have consequences for women's abilities to identify with being involved in entrepreneurial endeavours

(e.g. Berglund, 2007, Warren, 2004). Consequently, the discriminating effects of the entrepreneurship discourse have been criticized as being gender-biased (e.g., Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio, 2004b), ethnocentrically determined (Ogbor, 2000), but also excluding in a multifaceted way (Berglund and Johansson, 2007b).

In terms of discourse theory, entrepreneurship is argued to have reached a position in history where the concept of entrepreneurship, as well as the subject position of the entrepreneur, is open for rewriting (Berglund and Johansson, 2007a). This means that the masculinized entrepreneurial identity can potentially be shaped in new ways, which may disrupt the very construction of masculinity and femininity that makes up critical elements in our informal social ontology. Our understandings of entrepreneurship and of the entrepreneur are thus no longer stable categories, but can be contested. This means that entrepreneurial actions can work as interventions calling taken-for-granted assumptions in question. When female entrepreneurs act, they could arguably also be seen as rebels that cross borders between areas constructed as female and male, causing trouble and confusion and showing that entrepreneurship can work subversive when it comes to transforming gendered structures in contemporary society.

The subversive potential of entrepreneurship is nothing new. It upsets the status quo, disrupts accepted ways of doing things, and alters traditional patterns of behavior (Smilor, 1997). The very idea of entrepreneurship bringing about creative destruction calls attention to something that is destroyed in favor of something else. Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus (1997) argue that the US feminist movement in itself can be seen as "history-making" in disclosing new worlds. In their view, history-making unites entrepreneurship, civil action and the cultivation of solidarity. The concept of subversion we trace to Butler (1999), who discusses heterosexual norms claiming that a trans person is a third gender, which radically problematizes both sex and gender as stable political categories of description. In this article we relate to Butler's ideas on subversion, but translate it to the context of women's entrepreneurship.

Empirically, we take our point of departure in the policy program aimed at supporting women's entrepreneurship in Sweden and in a particular text aiming to promote this program, as well as making women entrepreneurs more visible in the Swedish context. The reason for studying texts is that they not only shape our understanding of how femininities are constructed in the program as such, but they also create boundaries for how a woman entrepreneur is constructed to be, as well as which feminine positions she is expected to take. In our analysis we find that the discourses applied in this text create different scopes of action, albeit in diverse ways, for men and women in our society. This is how discourses become gendered.

The initial query, "Who is the women entrepreneur?", was reformulated by Ahl (2004) into the question: "How is the female entrepreneur constructed in entrepreneurship research?" The main answer was, in short, that she is constructed as opposite to her male counterpart; the entrepreneur. Instead of focusing on similarities, differences between the sexes are emphasized and strengthened (Ibid.). Taking a point of departure in her reasoning, we are also interested in how the female entrepreneur is constructed, but search for what happens to "her" when women's entrepreneurship is turned into policy and practice. The question that guides our reasoning is thus: "How is the female entrepreneur constructed in women's entrepreneurship policy?"

The purpose of this paper is twofold. On one hand, we want to contribute to the research field of women's entrepreneurship by introducing new ways of looking at the relation between femininity and entrepreneurship. On the other hand, and in relation to gender studies, we want to show how entrepreneurship can make up an interesting perspective in the study of potential subversive practices.

Next, a gender perspective on femininity is outlined, as it is discussed how the notion of subversion can be understood in female entrepreneurship. After that, we describe the methodological approach and the empirical sources of analysis. The analysis then reveals that previous understandings of how the female entrepreneur is constructed are incomplete and one-dimensional. Rather than viewing the female entrepreneur as the opposite to her male counterpart, and as a subordinated being, she is constructed in policy as a "third sex", a person that moves in between discourses of femininity and masculinity, and thus also outside the passive and subordinated position depicted in contemporary perceptions of femininity.

A GENDER PERSPECTIVE ON THE FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR

Taking a stance in poststructuralist feminist thought, we relate to the concept of "doing gender", acknowledging that gender, as well as other social categories and phenomena, can be seen as socially constructed. West and Zimmerman (1987) propose that gender should neither be seen as a set of traits, nor as a variable or a role, but instead as the product of social doings of some sort, claiming that gender itself is constituted through interaction. One is not born a woman, one becomes a woman, Simone de Beauvoir (1949) once declared. Accordingly, neither society nor people are viewed as "natural observable facts", but as social constructions that are constantly being produced, reproduced and transformed (e.g. Berger and Luckmann, 1966/1991; Burr, 1995; Gergen 1999). A common denominator in this approach is to view conversation, language and texts not as a neutral transparent medium, but as something that produces discourse, which makes discourses performative in the sense that they both define boundaries and constitute the resources for what is possible to say and do. A discourse can thus be defined as a combination of words that together form particular versions of the world (e.g. Foucault, 1990).

Gender is made in every corner of life, with its implications and often subtle yet thorough influences on how social life can be performed. In this vein, Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio (2004a) have searched into how

gender and entrepreneurship are enacted as situated practices, emphasizing that – in practice – there are alternative forms of entrepreneurship as well as different forms of gender. Doing gender and entrepreneurship can thus be seen as a boundary-crossing practice in which the notion of femininity and masculinity become blurred.

But the construction of the entrepreneur as a male figure is claimed to make it difficult for many women to construct an entrepreneurial identity (Warren, 2004). There are women who perceive the entrepreneurial identity to be in opposite to the other (feminine) discourses they relate to, as being humble, careful, cautious and so forth (Lindgren, 2001), which creates an identity dilemma that is either dissolved by the woman herself (Berglund, 2006) or by the world around her, because she appears confusing (Fournier, 2002). When Verheul, Uhlaner and Thurik (2005) tested a model to investigate the influence of business performance and gender on entrepreneurial identity, they reached the conclusion that the content of these concepts makes it difficult for women to reconcile themselves with the identity of an entrepreneur, even if what they do can be described in terms of entrepreneurship.

Theorizing the woman entrepreneur often backlashes in constructing women and men as two different species (e.g. Ahl, 2004). The female entrepreneur turns into an "other" in relation to her male counterpart, which reproduces a gender dichotomy that goes way back in time. Hirdman (2001) refers to the Pythagorean School with its thoughts about women and men as each other's opposites, where the man is equivalent with form and the woman equivalent with formlessness. The separation between an active man and a passive woman also constitutes a key component in the gender division (Knights and Keerfoot, 2004). Similar scales have lately been introduced in the discussion about women's entrepreneurship, showing how the entrepreneurship discourse is connoted with masculinity (Ahl, 2004). As illustrated by deconstructing the "entrepreneur" concept the traits it takes to become an entrepreneur are not consistent with the qualities it takes to become a woman (Ibid.). They rather seem to stand in opposite to each other. Not only are the traits used to describe the entrepreneur considered as male, according to contemporary conceptions of masculinity, but the negation in many ways goes in line with how present-day femininity is constructed (Bem, 1981 in Ahl, 2004).

The entrepreneurship discourse seems to have material implications as well. Marlow and Patton (2005) discuss, for instance, that the lack of capital is only one part in a larger system where women are unfavored, as they cannot escape stereotype assumptions which position femininity on a lower rank compared to the unquestioned male norm. This kind of subordination limits women's access to developing resources, regardless of whether they are cultural, social, human or financial. In turn, women's possibilities of growth are restricted and their potential of generating credit histories attractive to formal lenders is impaired as well as their possibilities to engage venture capitalists in their projects (Ibid: 729).

Bartky (1990) discusses how interwoven the traditional female stereotypes are with conventional female

roles and these, in turn, with the ways in which we are socialized. She means that (white) women are psychologically conditioned not to pursue the kind of autonomous development that is held by the culture to be a constitutive feature of masculinity. She also teaches us that femininity is an artifice, an achievement that requires work. Besides the restriction on feminine body comportment, which generates a restricted spatiality in women, the female body is revealed as a task, an object in need of transformation (Ibid.). Bartky (1990) thus concludes that femininity as spectacle is something in which virtually every woman is required to participate. Andersson (2006), however, explores a new meaning for the term femininity. From a poststructuralist feminist understanding she concludes that femininities may as well enable and give room for practices, making resistance towards normative structures of gender and sexuality. She proposes that there is a queer potential in staging an exaggerated femininity and in making shifts in the imitation of gender, and asserts that a femininity that imitates "too much" or imitates "wrong" works as a subversive practice and creates a position to question patriarchal and hetero-normative structures. Butler (1999) discusses the possibility of subverting and displacing those naturalized and reified notions of gender, that support masculine hegemony and heterosexist power, to cause gender trouble "through the mobilization, subversive confusion, and proliferation of precisely those constitutive categories that seek to keep gender in its place by posturing as the foundational illusions of identity" (Ibid. p. 44).

Femininity we understand as the discursive position that gender relations give access to; a position that women are encouraged to take and use in order to "be a woman". The use of femininity, in terms of a discursive position, is however dependent on other positions such as class, gender, sexuality, region, age and ethnicity, and will either be accepted or meet resistance in different ways (Crenshaw, 1994; Skeggs, 1997, Marlow and Patton, 2005). As femininity is dependent on other social positions, it can also be constructed in numerous ways. There are thus openings for the constructions of different femininities, and for moving away from the notion of "a femininity". With Butler's (1990) terminology the work in constructing a feminine position constitutes an act of performativity. It is in everyday actions that we take different positions as women, in which conceptions of gender – everyday practices of men and women as well of their identities – are (re)constructed.

In our interpretation "doing femininity" requires action, irrespectively of whether it is seen as an artifice (Bartky, 1990) or as an act of performativity in taking up, or resisting, social positions (Butler, 1990). Regardless of standpoints, we view both as processes of internalization (Foucault, 1990), i.e., incorporating femininity in the structure of the self. But, even though femininity can be regarded as an act of performance it contains an inconsistence as the ideal femininity is constructed as passive and subordinated. To construct femininity can thereby be seen as a contradiction in terms. In contrast to "action" as the main part in masculine discourses, femininity as its contrast becomes synonymous with passivity (Knights and Keerfoot, 2004).

To conclude, we see several reasons why a feminist doing-gender perspective should be of interest in the context of women's entrepreneurship. Not only are women in focus in the policy program on women's entrepreneurship, but they are also in focus in an overwhelmingly male-connoted area, which may create dilemmas for many women, entering the route as entrepreneurs. In spite of this dilemma, this context explicitly calls for women as entrepreneurs – people that are highly sought after in our society (Perren, Lew and Jennings, 2005). How women are constructed, as well as how they construct themselves, in a program that – explicitly – addresses the need for women's entrepreneurs in contemporary society should thus be of interest, not only as an empirical phenomenon, but also for looking into theorizing for a more subversive potential for women's entrepreneurship.

DECONSTRUCTION AS A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The notion of subversion is also applicable to making sense of an anomaly; making sense of "something" in disclosing new worlds, as Spinosa el al. (1997) put it. In research we are constantly challenged to reformulate existing research questions, finding new answers and discerning new paths. In our case the questions of femininity and subversive action stem from crossing borders between academia and policy. In this respect, our backgrounds and experiences in the area are important prerequisites for our own understanding of the landscape of entrepreneurship from a gender perspective, as well as for the reader's understanding of our context. Because, while walking these paths we have both stumbled into peculiar situations, pondered on what has happened during meetings and been surprised at unexpected turns. Citing a Foucaultian quest (e.g. Miller, 1993), both of us have tried to think the unthought, but have often lacked the words. When our different paths crossed one could say that the step from walking to writing was enhanced.

The discussion in this article is based on a much broader contextual understanding of promoting women's entrepreneurship, but from considerations of space the empirical material analyses are demarcated to deconstructing the color supplement. This consists of 28 pages and was included in the biggest industrial newspaper[2] in Sweden in June 2009, in order to inform readers about how the initiative of "Promoting women's entrepreneurship "[3] can benefit business life and Swedish society. The policy program for women's entrepreneurship – and also the picture of the woman entrepreneur - was widely spread to readers who may be assumed to have a power position in industry as well as in politics. The supplement has also been used as an information document, and can be downloaded at the official website of the program. This highly political (con)text can be seen as the least possible place to search for subversion. Nonetheless, considering the openings in the discourse, it is interesting to see whether it is possible to do femininity either too much or wrongly in this context. As Foucault (in Miller, 2000:351 ff.) once pondered on how revolution could be achieved in new ways, change comes from playing with the rules of the game from within the structures. And a policy program can be described as "inside" the structures

rather than "outside" of them. We thus view this text as one opportunity to study the construction of the female entrepreneur in the policy context of promoting women in Sweden.

With a discourse perspective, the articles in this supplement do not only tell the reader about women entrepreneurs, but they also construct a picture of "who she is". Consequently, deconstruction is the text analytic method used in this research. The main purpose in using deconstruction is to, at least momentarily, break up and subvert a hegemonic discourse (cf. Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) as the dominating entrepreneurship discourse (Berglund and Johansson, 2007a). Deconstruction, introduced by Derrida (1967), is thus an operation that aims to expose the supposed contradictions and internal oppositions on which a text is founded. This approach has been influential in postmodern analysis, viewing language as inherently unstable, implying that meanings are constantly being constructed, which opens up for taken-for-granted assumptions to be re-constructed differently. In gender theory deconstruction has proved helpful in the way that it has opened up the possibility to view the woman, and femininity, not as a natural subordinated being, but as disclosing repressing structures and discourses (Martin, 1990) distorting and displacing the very notion of gender division (Butler, 1999), and contributing to emancipating the feminist narratives of the twentieth century (Haraway, 1991).

In this text we take the following steps in deconstructing the color supplement promoting women's entrepreneurship in Sweden:

1. A number of themes are identified from reading the color supplement.

2. The themes are connected with previous knowledge of the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship, which are presented in Table 1.

3. After that the themes are related to what is known a out the construction of the masculine-connoted mainstream entrepreneurship discourse, and to the construction of the female entrepreneur, which is presented in Table 2.

4. The color supplement is then discussed, taking a point of departure in Table 2 and ending up with a few conclusions.

5. Finally, a re-reading is made of the text from the poststructuralist feministic perspective outlined in the theoretical section, with an emphasis on understanding the doing of femininity "too much" and "totally wrong" as means to destabilize gender practices. Previous constructions are challenged. A complementary view of the female entrepreneur is introduced in Table 3, followed by a discussion of viewing the woman entrepreneur as a third sex.

PROMOTING WOMEN AS FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

The enclosure "Women's entrepreneurship… is important for growth" is in vivid colors with a great many pictures, only two of which representing men who both have something to say on the importance and benefit of women as entrepreneurs. The editorial has the headline "Profitability is the key to growth", stressing the importance of creating a sound business idea and strategy. It is further stressed that women and men, according to a recent study made by the agency, have the same growth ambitions. At the end of the editorial, however, women's conditions are problematized:

> Women have half as much financial capital of their own than men. Many women still take a larger responsibility than many men do. Women's networks have traditionally not been as career and business oriented as men's networks. This of course hampers women's opportunities to concentrate on growth.
> (Women's entrepreneurship, color supplement, 2009: 1)

Even though the existence of structural barriers is acknowledged, the responsibility to solve this is in a way handed over to women entrepreneurs. If only more women become entrepreneurs, there will be more role models to identify with and the critical mass of women who start and grow businesses will expand, resulting in making the woman visible as an important resource, as she also contributes to growth:

> With the growing part of women who own and run a business, women's access to financial capital and network will increase. We will also get more role models showing that it is possible to be rewarding to run a company – and we will see more and more growing businesses owned by women.
> (Women's entrepreneurship, color supplement, 2009: 1).

The male norm is obvious. The phrase women's entrepreneurship is only one example of the construction of the woman entrepreneur as an "other" (cf. de Beauvoir, 1949). This construction is repeated in the writings as women's entrepreneurship is put in relation to mainstream (or rather; male stream) entrepreneurship. The making of otherness is revealed in both qualitative objectives, where the program is expected to lead to "variation and a more dynamic business life", and in quantitative objectives, where one objective of the program is to increase the "proportion of women starting a new business by 40 percent" (Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, 2008).

Again, we recognize the man, and the male entrepreneur, as a more or less apparent norm for the female entrepreneurs. He always seems to be there, as an invisible ghost, to form or (out)perform her acting.

Analyzing this text, six themes are found that explicitly address different aspects of women's entrepreneurship, while the seventh theme – supporting entrepreneurship – implicitly links to the imperative of policy and the very idea of initiating a program directed at supporting women's entrepreneurship in the first place. Three of the themes (Relation/s, Autonomy and Organizing) relate to the construction of the entrepreneur, while the three remaining ones (Sector, Focus and Outcome) relate

Key themes	Entrepreneur	Entrepreneurship	Policy-specific
Support			Financial[4]
Relation/s	Instrumental		
Autonomy	Independent		
Organizer	Leader		
Sector		Private	
Focus		Business	
Outcome		Producton	

Table 1. Key themes in the color supplement

to the construction of the noun "entrepreneurship". In Table 1 all seven themes are presented and connected with previous knowledge of the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship.

Considering the themes that relate to the noun entrepreneurship, a common construct in research on women's entrepreneurship has been to discuss different strategies for women to overcome the conflict between caretaking and family life by starting a business of their own (e.g. Shelton, 2006, DeMartino and Barbato, 2003, de Bruin, Brush and Welter. 2006), a topic that is rare in discussions on men's entrepreneurship. The family is often addressed as either a limitation, or as a support, in women's entrepreneurship studies (Ahl, 2004). Earlier studies have, for instance, indicated that the reason "to spend time with children" has been a motivation factor for women to start their own business. Williams (2004) found, however, that the access to childcare considerably influences a company's possibilities of survival and suggested that developing structures of childcare would contribute to supporting women's entrepreneurship.

In the Swedish context, childcare is already part of the general social support system. In contrast to this reasoning, Arenius and Kovalainen (2006) argue that decision-makers should rather focus on incitements for empowerment and education, so that women can better perceive and make something out of their abilities, skills and knowledge, instead of improving structures such as the general support system of childcare. They also emphasize that their study challenges the view of Scandinavia as a consistently equal society, as this is not the case in the practices that surround support systems for women entrepreneurs in new business formations. Neither is this the case in working life, obviously, as the labor market seems to co-produce the gender system horizontally as well as vertically (e.g. Hirdman, 1990, Wahl et al., 2001, Thurén, 2003). Taking a vertical perspective, men and women are active within

Key themes	Mainstream entrepreneurship discourse	The construction of the female entrepreneur
Relation/s	Instrumental	Intimacy
Autonomy	Independent	Dependent
Organizer	Leader	Follower
Sector	Private	Public
Focus	Business	Care-taking
Outcome	Producton	Reproduction

Table 2. What is known of the key themes from previous deconstructions of thr entreprenuer and entrepreneurship.

different sectors (Statistics Sweden, 2008), and from a horizontal perspective sectors are valued differently on an organizational level.

The mechanisms triggered in discussions on women's entrepreneurship thus seem to work in a direction of polarizing the female and the male, a juxtaposition that is made against a background of the norm of entrepreneurship as a male gendered construct. As discussed in the theoretical section, many of the traits that are used to describe the entrepreneur are opposites of the traits that describe femininity in contemporary (western) society (Ahl, 2004). In relation to the independent and instrumentally oriented male entrepreneur who acts as a leader, his female counterpart is described as a direct opposite, as a dependent follower, oriented by intimacy. What is known from earlier research is that the female entrepreneur is constructed as "the other", and opposite to her male counterpart, as illustrated in Table 2, which we view as a preliminary understanding of how the two constructs – the male and the female entrepreneur – have been outlined. In the next step these themes are compared with previous deconstructions of the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship made by Ahl (2004) in order to put them in relation to what is known about the mainstream construction of entrepreneurship and the construction of women's entrepreneurship.

Next, let us now move on to discuss these themes and how they are expressed in the color supplement. What can we learn from deconstructing the entrepreneur constructs (Relation/s, Autonomy and Organizer) and the entrepreneurship constructs (Sector, Focus and Outcome) from a poststructuralist feminist perspective? Let us first take a look at the theme that constructs the very idea of supporting women's entrepreneurship.

Support

The overall need of support that we identify in the part of the program under study is the need of education and training. The main narrative in the program is the female entrepreneur's need of education and of a different kind of support (cf. X and Y, 2010). The aim of Program 1 is also to make information, guidance and measures for business development more accessible and adapted to the need and demand of women. This can be interpreted as though the program has identified a structural problem. However, the part of the program which aims at structural prerequisites not only receives substantial less funding, but also less attention. The lion's share of the funding (50 MSEK, 2008) is instead reserved for project funding for women running businesses, to give them access to advisory, coaching, mentoring, network and education or other equivalent tools and methods. According to the program, these tools and methods have in common that they are used in relation to other humans.

In this line, the enclosure stresses the need for women to become educated in order to develop their entrepreneurial competences. According to Darja Smisosky, a business counselor at ALMI[5] , women are more self-critical and aware of the risks of starting a new business, and are as a consequence more likely to gather information before starting a business. However,

it seems that a female entrepreneur cannot ever be competent enough, because in the very same article Leona Achtenberg states that in order to contribute to economic growth, women need to increase their competence in running a business by participating in courses and seminars.

> It is important for women to talk to others, a mentor. To be open to new ideas and not only see to the whole picture but also focus on the little pieces.
> (Women's entrepreneurship enclosure, 2009: 1)

The program thus constructs the female entrepreneur as less competent and in need of education and counseling. In comparison with overall entrepreneurship policy, where financial resources are addressed as important (Nutek, 2007), this kind of support addresses the weakness of women, rather than the inequity of structural conditions. The lack of financial resources that women might experience is thus not the core issue, but is rather remotely discussed as something that will be solved once women are visible in business, and thereby recognized as "real" entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneur constructs:
Relation/s, Autonomy and Organizing

The notion of education and counseling leave us, however, with an ambiguous picture. As we continue to read the enclosure, we also find an emphasis on relation and autonomy in other ways than on prevailing assumptions about masculinity and femininity. One of the interviewees in the enclosure is "Stina", an industrial designer with ideas for security solutions on the Internet. According to her, there is sometimes a lack of time for her to deal with everything but the core business. In her view a "black hole" appears. But…

> …that is a lack she compensates for with competent co-workers, while she herself develops her strong sides
> (Women's entrepreneurship enclosure, 2009: 21)

In this line the business counselor, Jimmy Wikholm, states that the demand for a mentor is greater among women than men, which he believes is because "women are generally more sensible and open for taking in external information and support" (Women's entrepreneurship enclosure, 2009: 21). Another logic is thus discernible than the idea of the (male) entrepreneur being an independent leader with an instrumental focus. As described by Knights and Keerfoot (2004), intimacy makes up one part in the logic of femininity, in contrast to instrumentality, which imbues hegemonic masculine discourses. Accordingly, intimacy "reflects and reinforces an engagement in relations, not as a means to some external end but as an end in itself" (Ibid: 437). This logic also goes in line with the way the public advisory is described in women entrepreneurship contexts (Johansson, 2008). Hence, we read this logic of counseling that has been introduced and emphasized in women's entrepreneurship policy program as being more in line with the description of intimacy. But the policy initiative in many other parts also draws on the masculinity discourses that reflect and reproduce the very opposite to what we have described here: "non-intimate, instrumental and self-regarding subjectivities and behaviors".

...är viktigt för tillväxten

Figure 1. The cover of the supplement

GREEN PAPER
Entrepreneurship in Europe

Figure 2. The cover to the EU Green Paper on Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship constructs: Sector, Focus and Outcome

The discourse analysis of the program reveals, like the main narrative, a construction of a care-taking femininity - taking care of others and/or of herself. Not only do several examples of businesses presented in the enclosure show that – as for instance a business with the idea of delivering nourishing fresh food with receipts to families for a whole week, or innovative products that facilitate everyday life for parents of small children – but the pictures also show women who apparently have invested a great amount of time and energy into their femininity (see Bartky, 1990). The cover of the enclosure (see Picture 1) illustrates, for instance, four women, remarkably stylized, representing four different generations. A little child about two years old is also on the cover, sitting in the oldest woman's lap. The child wears a red T-shirt signaling something in contrast to the black and white colors on the women. The black and white seems to be addressed to business masculinity, which is emphasized by a briefcase, held by one of the women, in the middle of the picture.

The picture constructs the women entrepreneurs as a group, perhaps running a business together. But in the information on the cover we can read that three of the women are running businesses in totally different areas and are active as a lawyer, in design and in food delivery, respectively, while the fourth (and supposedly the oldest) woman is described by the words "senior competence". The child in the picture seems not to have anything to do with the areas that they are active in. However, they are brought together on the cover, and being constructed as a group, even though they are not a "group" in the sense that they are working together, thus constructs them as differing from the hegemonic construction of the entrepreneur. The presence of the child contributes to a construction of a care-taking femininity that, at least with business areas as the only lead, seems to be only a façade.

Comparing this picture to another cover of a policy program – the Green Paper of Entrepreneurship – the male norm and the entrepreneurship discourse is manifest. The person representing the entrepreneur is not only a man, but a western man, in a business suit and with a toothy smile on his face while on the run. If
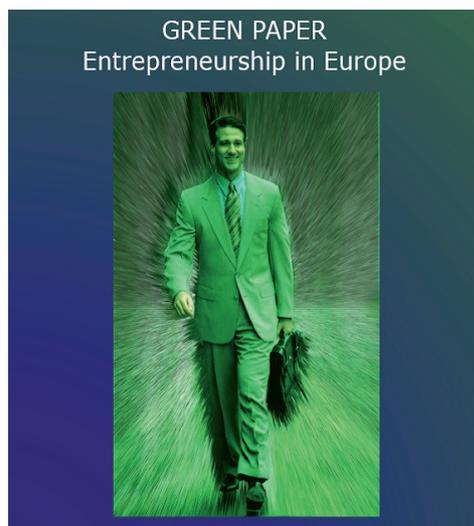
the shine around him signifies the speed of his activity, or how the entrepreneur is glorified nowadays, is open to interpretation. Picture 1 and 2 both seem connected (being all in business) and distant from each other (being women while the former is a man). Looking closer at the women of the cover above, they become a female representation of the male entrepreneur, also dressed up in a business outfit; smiling. But still, instead of being on the run for new business opportunities, they are gathered around a table. In contrast to Picture 2, a group of people is presented. Even though they are surrounded by working equipment, such as the computer, they are sitting still. In comparison with the male entrepreneur, almost running, we argue that passivity is constructed, with an emphasis, however, on the necessary investment in femininity, taking care of themselves, as well as of others (the child).

The pictures in the enclosure constructs women as showing a "correct femininity", a femininity that does not challenge existing power relations and that leaves patriarchal and hetero normative structures unquestioned. The text describes women's entrepreneurship mainly in relation to areas generally connoted as female, which reflects the fact that women and men tend to start business in areas where they are active (Marlow and Patton, 2005, Sundin and Tillmar, 2008), which in turn is a consequence of the gender-segregated labor market in Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2010)

Much space (in the program in general as well as in public media coverage in particular) is given to the ambassadors for women's entrepreneurship who have been assigned by the Minister of Industry. The aim is to change the picture of entrepreneurial women as well as to change attitudes. 880 ambassadors were assigned by the government to tell about themselves and their experiences and spread knowledge about women's entrepreneurship by lecturing in schools, at universities, NGOs, different networks, and so forth. It is stated that this initiative can change the twisted picture that entrepreneurship is for men only. The assignment does not give the women direct compensation, but is argued to benefit the ambassadors in other ways:

> The assignment is totally idealistic (that is, non-paid) and is of no direct business use, but many indirectly acquire new business contacts as well as contacts with media, says Henrietta Schönenstern.
> (Women's Entrepreneurship enclosure, 2009: 12)

The most important effort made by the ambassadors seems to be to create role models for women to see entrepreneurship as an opportunity. In the proposal to the program the importance of showing women as a heterogeneous group is emphasized. This could be interpreted as a wish to open up for different femininities. However, following the texts produced in the program, this task seems hard to accomplish. Women entrepreneurs are rather described as a match to the hero entrepreneur than as being innovative women who take charge in creating ideas that are important for them in their own and other people's lives.

The pictures in the enclosure reveal femininity as an artifice, an achievement, something in which virtually every woman is required to participate (Bartky, 1990). The explicit message communicated in the color supplement is the need for women to increase their competences in the area of entrepreneurship. Implicitly, however, the need for women to invest in a correct

Key themes	The entrepreneur	Female	The female entrepreneur
Relation/s	Instrumental	Intimacy	Sounding board
Autonomy	Independent	Dependent	Co-operative
Organizer	Leader	Follower	Leading other leaders
Sector	Private	Public	Private-Public
Focus	Business	Care-taking	Makes business of care-taking
Outcome	Producton	Reproduction	Reproductive production
Support	Financial[6]		Competence
State of movement	Active	Passive	Active

Table 3. The female entrepreneur cunstructing "herself".

femininity is communicated. To be noted, the stories told about women entrepreneurs in the color supplement did not raise any public debate - nor were they contested – but seemed to fit nicely in the existing structures.

THE WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR: A THIRD SEX?

So far we have been discussing the color supplement presenting the policy program initiated in order to support women's entrepreneurship in Sweden. Seven themes were identified as vital when communicating women's entrepreneurship, which were deconstructed and thus put in relation to previous research. The analysis of the color supplement illustrates how a specific femininity is constructed, as well as how easy it is to put the woman in a juxtaposed position to her male counterpart, the entrepreneur.

Now we will continue to discuss the supplement, taking a point of departure in the reasoning of subversion (Butler, 1999) and of doing femininity too much or wrong (Andersson, 2006). We thus find that the female

entrepreneur deviates from the gender norm in a more fundamental way than has been discussed earlier, and in ways that were difficult for us to imagine before re-reading the text from a poststructuralist feminist agenda.

The female entrepreneur is acknowledged for her action, whereas femininity is synonymous with passivity. As "action" constitutes the main part in masculine discourses and creativity, action, locus of control and the need for achievement constituting important traits in the description of both the entrepreneur and the male being, the female entrepreneur by her very existence can be seen to challenge the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1999). Answering our initial question - Who is the woman entrepreneur? - is at first glance an easy task from our reading of the color supplement. She is someone in need of support. By positioning "her" in need of education and support, the construction of masculinity and femininity as stable and each other's opposite remains intact. However, the notion of her activeness blurs the picture of "her" and makes us call our previous assumptions into question.

Returning to Table 2, two new themes must be added to the list. The first theme is "State of Movement", which describes the relation activity/passivity. The second theme is support, which was identified as policy-specific, and which constructs the female entrepreneur in need of competence, while general support structures for entrepreneurship emphasize the need of financial capital. In Table 3 we these how two themes are complemented by a column describing the female entrepreneur in relation to, on the one hand the entrepreneur (whom she is compared to), and on the other hand the female (whom she is also compared to). We then find that she is turning into something "else".

While the female is related to intimacy, the female entrepreneur is constructed as being in need of support and of sounding boards (see also Johansson, 2008). Furthermore, she is not the opposite – dependent – bur rather constructed as co-operative. Moreover, she is neither constructed as a leader nor as a follower, but rather as leading other "leaders", emphasizing co-operation and interdependency. Even though she is constructed in relation to creating opportunities of making business in the public sector, the private sector is also addressed, which makes her into someone who crosses the border between the private and the public sectors. The emphasis on care-taking is obvious in the color supplement, but when we read the texts she is not constructed as the altruistic care-taking mother, but rather as the entrepreneur who makes business of taking care of the self as well as of others, which include the large industries of cosmetics and fashion as well as the increasing service sector. Finally, if production is a vital construct in the discourse of entrepreneurship, reproduction is inevitably present in women's entrepreneurship. Arguably, though, when putting the female entrepreneur in the context of doing entrepreneurship, as is done in the color supplement, both production and reproduction are discernible.

Discourses tell us what to recognize. We were keen to register subordinate tendencies, while neglecting that there may also exist a subversive potential in the middle

of correct femininity. From the theoretical discussions of femininity and of the female as a third sex and the possible emancipation of power it may contain we thus ponder if the female entrepreneur can not be regarded as a third sex? As a subject that despite of – or perhaps thanks to – her correct femininity contributes to destabilizing practices and changing gender relations; from within?

The female entrepreneur constructs a femininity that is not passive and subordinated, but in the texts is rather constructed as active, even though it is "correct" in the sense that it reveals an investment in care-taking. The women in the pictures might be interpreted as constructing a "correct" femininity, but they also challenge the prevailing construction of a hero entrepreneur, by showing entrepreneurs as a group working together, in contrast to the myth of the lonely hero entrepreneur competing with other (men) to "win the world". And, outside the pictures, they play with gender rules because they are active. Hence, in our interpretation the pictures that are used in the program to make women entrepreneurs visible might not challenge prevailing constructions of femininity. But if they are understood from Andersson's (2006) notion of doing femininity too much or wrong, doing femininity "too much" is obvious. This opens up for seeing how many women have begun to develop an idea, started an organization, diffused their ideas, attracted attention and created a context where different practices that destabilize the world in different ways can be collected. These actions can in everyday discourse be described as innovative and entrepreneurial. These practices, we suggest, can also be described as subversive in constructing femininities that are no longer characterized as passive but recognized for their actions. The pictures used in the color supplement thus also tell another story that deals with challenging the construction of the hero entrepreneur.

Hence, the construction of femininity in the policy program, we suggest, can be described as a position of a third sex, engaged in a constant process of negotiations and accommodations that are part of attempts to position itself as both a woman and an entrepreneur when normative notions of femininity and entrepreneurship are radically conflicting (cf. Pini, 2005). Being a woman and an entrepreneur at the same time can thus be described as having to position a new self simultaneously in two conflicting discourses (Ahl, 2004), thus becoming the third gender (Butler, 1990).

Then arguably, the construction of femininity in relation to entrepreneurship can, at least theoretically, be described as a position of a third sex, engaged in a constant process of self-monitoring and movement in-between and across different discourses of managerial masculinity and normative femininity (Pini 2005). Contrary to femininity, as a mode of subjectivity, masculinity conditions representational knowledge, yet it remains tacit and unspoken (Knights and Keerfoot, 2004). Further, while masculinity is constructed as active, femininity remains as the opposite, passive and silenced. To construct a position as a female entrepreneur is thus a contradiction in a double sense. As Bartky (1990) showed, it takes some effort – work! – to achieve

a position as a woman, which requires action. And, to achieve a position as an entrepreneur also requires action, as entrepreneurship can be seen as the sum of actions to bring about something new.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS SUBVERSIVE ACTION

In this article we have also tried to open up for a discussion on whether the program of Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship constitutes an arena for subversive practices. The discourse analysis of the program does not, at first glance, show femininities that challenge existing power relations. The policy text describes women's entrepreneurship in relation to areas generally connoted as female, leaving patriarchal and hetero normative structures unquestioned. However, re-reading the analysis from a poststructuralist feminist point of view shows a space for women to act, and to be active, in a slightly other way than is prescribed in the traditional view of femininity. Women take charge, come up with ideas, explore them and build an organization of some kind. Further, they relate to other people in other ways, set the agenda differently for what is important in their organization and act out both their femininity and their entrepreneurial capability.

Our conclusion is that the female entrepreneur challenges the view of femininity in a more thorough way than was expected. The active female entrepreneur challenges the construction of femininity. One way to solve the contradiction of her being active, instead of passive according to the female standard, is to compensate for this by doing femininity "too much". A correct femininity is constructed when the female entrepreneur is depicted as an active care-taker. For instance, women running businesses in technical areas who do not illustrate a care-taking femininity are almost absent in the enclosure. The seemingly provocative question that forms the title of this article – whether the female entrepreneur is the third sex – can be answered as follows. The female entrepreneur positions herself in, or is positioned as, a category that radically problematizes sex, gender and entrepreneurship as stable political categories of description. The female entrepreneur, we thus propose, can be seen as a third sex.

Opening up for women to perform femininity wrong or too much would also mean to open for a more multi-faceted space for femininity. We can then start to talk about a set of femininities, rather than of "the femininity". Even though we relate to poststructuralist thinkers (among whom Foucault has inspired both of us) who seem to deny a space for an active subject, we believe that there is a much more ambivalent position to our possibilities of opposition. The way we have read Foucault, change is possible, perhaps not a revolutionary change, but the more subtle play in which irony and twisted practices work in disrupting taken-for-granted assumptions. Thereby we create new subjectivities and open up for new scopes of action. Our analysis thus seeks to contribute to feminist politics, which have fallen short by the spreading of poststructuralist reasoning, and seek a new foundation upon which a poststructuralist feminist understanding of entrepreneurship can be built.

We believe that the contexts of a women's entrepreneurship program could also create conditions for a subjectivity that "refuses to be constituted in the image of representational knowledge" (Knights and Keerfoot, 2004). By representational knowledge we refer to the subjectivity of being either an entrepreneur or a woman. A space in between is created where new femininities could be constructed, creating conditions for subversive practices. As we understand Knights and Keerfoot (2004), such subjectivity has come about unreflectively out of the conditions of its possibility. This is not in line with Foucault's motto on thinking the unthought. It is rather about doing the unthought.

The purpose of this article has been twofold, as we both wanted to contribute to the research field of women's entrepreneurship by introducing new ways of looking at the relation between femininity and entrepreneurship, and also to show that entrepreneurship can make up an interesting perspective in the study of subversive practices. Our immodest aim has been to portray gender and entrepreneurship as promising areas for studying female entrepreneurs from a slightly new perspective,

as well as imagining women's entrepreneurial activity as a possibility for social change. Our idea has been to awaken the interest in a poststructuralist feminist approach in women's entrepreneurship studies, and we hope that the idea of doing femininity "too much", as illustrated in the color supplement, can benefit future research, as well as inspire researchers to look for women who also do femininity too much in their entrepreneurial endeavors. From this point of view, regardless of women's entrepreneurs' contribution to economic growth, they may substantially contribute to de-stabilize gender practices.

Finally, while female entrepreneurship might still be an antilogy - revealed by the prefix female! - we have during our years in practice, policy and research stumbled into situations where we have met numerous female entrepreneurs who do it! And they have taught us that doing femininity too much or totally wrong can be very correct if we want to move on with our ideas.

Notes

1 The research reported here is carried out within OSIS (Organizing Societal Entrepreneurship in Sweden), a research programme financed by the Swedish Knowledge Foundation.

2 The newspaper is called "Dagens Industri"

3 The aim of the agency running the program is to work to achieve more enterprises, growing enterprises and sustainable, competitive business and industry throughout Sweden. The agency runs three programs on women's entrepreneurship, and the focus of our study is two programs – The Government's ambassadors for women's entrepreneurship and Promoting women's entrepreneurship – which have become so intertwined that it would be difficult to analyze one without the other. The programs are initiated and supported by the Ministry of Industry, and there are high ambitions behind both programs.

4,6 Our common interpretation of entrepreneurship usually requires that unpaid, reproductive work is taken care of by a wife, but as part of the private sphere it is usually made invisible

5 A government agency devoted to management consulting.

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Papersession C

*Gender issues
in digital society*

Living with robots: analysis of the impact on gender and feminist studies

Elena Irina Neaga
Systems Engineering Division
Loughborough University, United Kingdom
e.i.neaga@lboro.ac.uk;

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a reflection on the links between advancement of technology particularly, robotics, gender and feminist studies. The main aim of this paper is to provide a multidisciplinary systemic approach of gender and feminist studies shaping advancements of technology especially robotics.

The current state-of-the art of robotics domain is described, including theories, models and examples. Open issues and further cutting edge research are discussed in relation to gender and feminist studies in order to define a way forward for the development of robots which help the human beings, extend their possibilities and enhance the quality of people's lives.

KEYWORDS: social robot, gender, feminism, emotion, artificial companion, autonomous systems and complex human - computing systems, roboethics

INTRODUCTION

"Our future in a world underpinned and pervaded by digital technologies can take many forms. Countless opportunities for change of all kinds are possible – many beyond our imagination.." (Damodaran, Olphert, 2006:8).

There is no doubt that ICT has a huge potential to support the quality of life for all the people, but in order to enrich the achievement of technology some domains require to be analysed and further developed in synergy with the society needs; and considering the impact from a wider social perspective including gender and feminist lenses.

This paper presents a reflection on the relations between the studies and research on gender, feminism and the advances of information and communication technologies (ICT), cognitive systems and control engineering especially regarding complex human - computing systems operating in a virtual setting. The reflection is using as a metaphor the words "living with robots", but the paper takes a broad view on the main aspects of technology and gender based on an extensive survey of different even divergent approaches.

At the core of this paper, the links and determination between gender and robots are discussed because during the past several years, there has been significant effort to develop sophisticated robots that look, are emotionally aware; and therefore operate quite similar to humans in an endeavour of interacting / communicating and supporting the people in several activities. The robotics domain (figure 2) has evolved from computer assisted machine/tools to industrial robots, service robots, sophisticated toys, and personal robots used as artificial companions mainly providing support for elderly and disabled people increasing the quality of their lives.

The Japanese already have a multi-billion-dollar robot industry, including robots for helping the elderly. Sony has invented a robotic dog named AIBO. Honda has created an android that can climb stairs. Carnegie-Mellon University invented a robot, GRACE, which has register by itself (herself?) to an academic conference. Researchers are experimenting flexible polymers that can be used as artificial skin that is an essential leap for the creation of robots that look like humans. Advanced research targets to develop robots that will learn to behave like humans. There are also studies about robot artists that have implemented advanced emotional behaviour and creative skills. The definition of the gender for robots is still in infancy; and usually, from a technical perspective, robots are gender neutral.

Social robots are a class of autonomous systems which closely interact with the human beings as peers, companions, and assistants serving as sophisticated tools, providing socially interactive functions such as entertainment toys, therapeutic aids, office assistance,

educational guiding, and administrative helpers. Therefore the "socially interactive robots" are directed to engage, assist, entertain, and enlighten people's lives (Fong and Nourbakhsh, 2003).

Futuristic studies have described social robots belonging to "a society of robots or humans being able to recognize each other and engage in social interactions, they possess histories (perceive and interpret the world in terms of their own experience), and they explicitly communicate with and learn from each other" (Dautenhahn and Billard, 1999). An original and controversial view of the research on the interaction between humans and computers has been express by Levy (2009) who marked a culmination of the progresses of the research about the interaction between humans and computers. The fundamental idea was that, for humans who cannot establish emotional or sexual connections with other people, they might develop intimate relations with robots. Therefore the gender aspects become crucial for understanding this paradigm supported by a new technology.

This paper concentrates on analysing the complex relations between robotics, gender and feminist studies addressing ethical aspects because despite the emergence of social robots and emphatic agents their implications from a gender perspective and into a wider social context have not been studied. While there have always been concerns about "robots taking over the world", the reality might be more prosaic, but more complex.

Therefore the main contribution of this paper is to address the complexity of robotics in relation to gender and feminism; and create the basis for multidisciplinary studies on gender and advances in systems and technology particularly, human computing interactive systems mainly developed as robots. This paper also is directed to demonstrate if the robots are introduced into our social environment, we must consider gender studies and research; and its implications in this process. On the other hand gender research and feminist studies should have a more considerable impact on robotics especially, in the mechanism of interaction and exhibiting of social behaviour including: expressing and/or perceiving emotions, communication skills with high-level of articulation and natural cues (gaze, gesture, etc.), displaying personality (Lee et al. 2006), character (Fong et al. 2003); and love (Suominen, 2009). The robots should also possess learning abilities and mechanism to enhance their social skills.

Aims and Motivation

The approach reported in this paper discusses the impact of using robots as artificial companion and /or support for people with special needs (disabled, having learning difficulties, elderly, etc.) from a gender perspective. It also provides a discussion of the impact of ICT for in a wider social context.

This paper is also aiming to investigate the implication on gender studies and feminism of the research and development of socially interactive robots that represents a category of autonomous systems that people anthropomorphize for enhanced computer mediated interaction including emotional communication.

From the diverse and growing number of applications of such robots, a few distinct models of interaction are beginning to emerge and therefore these are outlined in relation to changing gender relations, intersectionalities and embodiment. The following categories of robots are defined: socially evocative (encouraging to anthropomorphize the technology in order to interact); social interface (human-like social cues and communication modalities in order to facilitate interactions); socially receptive (interacting with people), and sociable (socially participative robots with their own internal goals and motivations) (Brezeal, 2002, 2003).

On the other hand the research on gender features alongside men and masculinity might have an important impact on the development of the robotics in obtaining human-like robots displaying emotions and feelings.

SETTING THE SCENE

Wajcman, J. (1991) and Weber (2006) have introduced and discussed feminist approaches in science and technology in relation to their epistemological and ontological framework as well as from the perspective of contemporary socio political landscape, prevailing technological developments, and cultural environments.

On the other hand there are studies and research on social robots developed as artificial companions even more debates on intimate relationships with artificial partners. Generally, an artificial companion can be defined as a robot that a) is useful, that is, able to help and assist people including the ability to entertain, care and motivate; and b) acts in a socially acceptable manner.

The European FP7 Project Living with Robots and Interactive Companions (LIREC) (http://www.lirec.com) has dealt with the development of long-term relationships with artificial companions that imply creating a new computer technology that supports these long-term relationships between humans and synthetic companions. Presently, artificial companions have had limited abilities to support long-term, meaningful social interactions with users in real social settings.

Therefore embodied physically as a robot or as a virtual agent on a screen, the LIREC network has developed methods that allow a companion to perceive, remember and react to human users, thus enabling a new generation of socially aware companions.

The LIREC network has aimed to create a new generation of interactive, emotionally intelligent companions that is capable of long-term relationships with humans. However this is a controversial aspect due to psychological and philosophical implications

Figure 1 holistically presents the main categories of robots and the research domains contributing to the development of each category (Fong et al, 2003). However this approach does not include gender studies and research; and social sciences are considering to be less relevant. Siegel et al. (2009) acknowledged the complex relationship between robot and gender for a particular type of persuasive robots. Persuasive

economics   ethology   sociology

game theory   anthropology

sociobiology   developmental psychology

collective robots   social robots
robot societies   sociable robots   primatology
swarms   socially interactive robots

artificial life   arts / design

distributed AI   human-computer interaction (HCI)

robotics
engineering
computer science
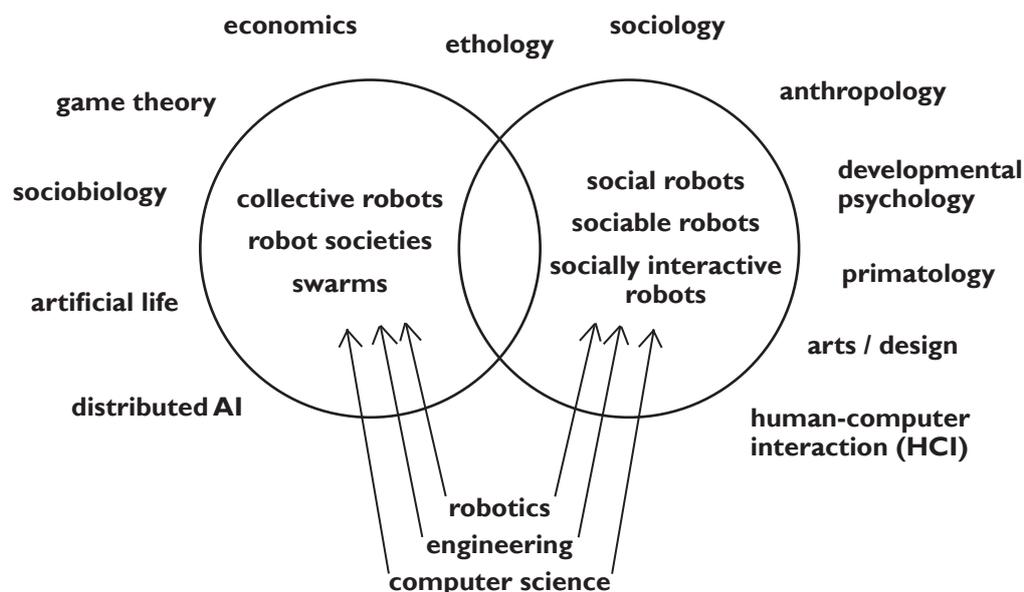
Figure 1. Classification of robots and related interacting domains (Fong et al., 2003)

robots are the application of persuasion to human-robot interaction. Persuasion can be generally defined as an attempt of convincing the main objective of changing beliefs or behaviour. The act of influencing others is essential to social interaction. The study of Siegel at al. (2009) has explicitly considered gender perspective on robot's ability for persuasion.

There are also other closely related approaches dealing with the following aspects that should be holistically considered and some domains should require additional investigations:

- Analysis the paradigm of creating "computers that care" about them and about humans based on research on affective computing (Picard, 1997), emotions and empathy (Brave et al., 2005)

- Study of the relationships and determination between emotions, communication and sex;

- Studies of the human (men versus women) emotional and sexual behavior and personality's characteristics;

- Analysis of the complexity of the relationships between men and women;

- Analysis of the impact on men and masculinity studies and critical research on men as described by Hearn and Pringle (2006).

- Identification of the benefits and pitfalls of having an artificial companion or even more intimate partners;

- Studies of different sexual characteristics and their foundations such as gay and lesbian and potentially transferring these characteristics to robots.

This paper is framing essential aspects of human – robot interactions capturing gender issues through surveying relevant approaches of robots and especially social robots.

SYSTEMIC EVALUATION OF THE APPROACHES AND SOLUTIONS

Dario et al. (2001) have proposed a framework (figure 2) for research and development of "humanoids" and social robots for close interaction with humans. They also have provided a detailed description of the efforts in the designing and implementation of prototypes of the robots. The personal robotic assistant (MOVAID) applied for the disabled and elderly has been experimented and results of the validation in real life situations are discussed describing the guidelines and lessons learned for future developments of robotics.

Despite this framework is still valid for recent research and development of more sophisticated social robots it does not refer to transferring the human emotions to machines/robots which can be seen from a gender perspectives because expression of emotion is different from men and women.

Brave et al. (2005) have in-depth investigated the origins and psychological effects of emotions embedded in agents or robots. The following types of emotions were analysed:

- self-oriented emotion and other-oriented

- empathic emotion

The findings of this research are relevant to support the debate in the human computing interaction (HCI) studies related to the emotional expressivity by computers. Picard (1997) has contended that providing computers the ability to express emotion is necessary to best

Structured environment	Robotics	Industrial automation Manufacturing Telerobotics (manipilation) etc
Unstructured environment	Advanced robotics	Space applications Underwater applications Construction applications etc
Human presence in unstructured working environment	Service robotics	Plant maintenance Inventintion applications Hazardous environments Cleaning etc
Interaction with humans in the unstructured working environment	Human-friendly robotics	Human-robot cooperation in the factory or for service applications
Personal use	Personal robotics	Human-centered applications Personal use at home Health care for disabled and elderly Companionship games and entertainment Home applications etc

Figure 2. Evolution of Robotics (Dario et al., 2001)

leverage users' life-time of experience with social interactions and machine's caring artificial behaviour. Other scholars have considered emotional expression in computers to be unnecessary at best and potentially both irritating and distracting. Although this stance is not well-represented in the literature, it is a viewpoint familiar to the HCI community.

The distinction between self-oriented emotion and other-oriented, empathic emotion also emerged as a critical factor in designing the personality of an embodied robot or agent. In particular, the presence of empathic emotion significantly increased the perceived submissiveness of an agent. Further, although not all differences were significant, the ordering of the four categories of agent with respect to submissiveness is revealing (Picard, 1997; Brave et al., 2005). According to Brave et al. (2005) for both men and women, agents exhibiting empathic emotion only have been considered the most submissive, followed by agents exhibiting both self-oriented and empathic emotion, agents exhibiting self-oriented emotion only, and finally unemotional agents.

Social robot KISMET (Brezeal, 2003) (Figure 3) developed within MIT Artificial Intelligence Laboratory is an expressive anthropomorphic head with a face with degrees of freedom directing the robot's gaze, controlling the orientation of its head, and moving its facial features (e.g., eyelids, eyebrows, lips, and ears). This robot visually perceives the person who interacts with it using cameras. A microphone used by the person

is designed to process the vocalizations. KISMET is designed to be an autonomous system "that can interact physically, affectively, and socially with humans in order to ultimately learn from them" (Brezeal, 2003) The robot is designed to elicit interactions with the human and it is equipped with rich learning abilities. Therefore a complex infrastructure has been required to enable and foster its social development and integration into a human controlled environment. These skills and mechanisms help the robot to cope with a complex social environment, to tune its responses to the human, and to give the human social cues so that he/she is better able to tune him/herself to KISMET. This allows the robot
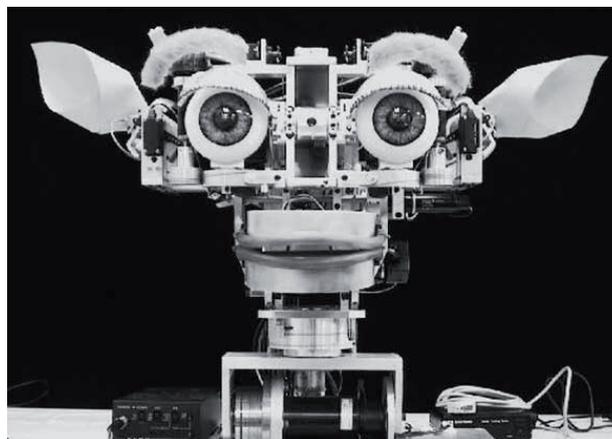
Figure 3. Social robot KISMET (Brezeal, 2003)

to operate near the humans without being overwhelmed or under-stimulated. These designed skills include the ability to direct the robot's attention to establish shared reference, the ability to give readable, expressive feedback to the human, the ability for the robot to recognize expressive feedback such as praise and prohibition, and the ability to respond and to establish a suitable learning need and environment.

Additionally, Lee et al. have studied the development of robots with personality providing a critical evidence that despite it is clearly a nonhuman personality, a social robot (e.g. AIBO) was responded to the implemented personality as it manifests this human feature. A robot's personality framework; and applied personality-based social rules in their evaluation of the behaviour have been suggested. This study also demonstrates that people's interactions with a social robot are mediated by their feelings of social presence during their interaction with this kind of robot.

Ethical Issues

Recent advances in the deployment of robots or virtual agents and affective computing, have raised problematic social, pyschological and ethical questions. Since the robotics technologies and large scale development frameworks are progressing, rather than in widespread use, there is a need of new approaches to ethics that cover the development, implementation, commercialisation and use of robots. Therefore scholars have defined a new field of interest called roboethics (Whitby, 2008). Roboethics and closely related areas are oriented towards dealing with the ethical aspects of the design, development, use and deployment of robots, virtual agents and other intelligent devices. The domains have the foundation in computer and information ethics. Progress in the field of new technology will provide robots with intelligence and emotions and they may have an enhanced level of autonomy and control. Therefore, we can forecast that in the 21st Century humanity may coexist with the "1st alien" and in this situation there are predictions informing that humans could also harm the robots and therefore mutual protection will be needed.

However as the application areas for robots are diversifying and as the robot is "coming out" of the prototyping laboratories, new challenges have to be faced and resolved. The future of robotics is clearly depending on the establishment of suitable codes of conduct and ethical principles to be applied. Not only researchers in robotics, but also sociologists, psychologists and philosophers are discussing the potentialities and the limits of the intelligent machines in relation to human beings and figure 4 attempts to suggest the duality.

BRIEF DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

"it is quite important that feminist studies continue to elaborate that the technical is the political for all the divergent fields of science and technology, showing and analyzing the ongoing co-construction of gender, science, and technology. In order to take part in the shaping of contemporary socio technical practices and discourses,

we need to engage with today's scientific, cultural, and social turbulences, to engage in contests about what counts as nature, intelligible bodies, or efficient machines. To question techno-pragmatic and hegemonic forms of rationality and the dominant logic of efficiency, usability, and common sense, we need to intervene and challenge hierarchical sociotechnical relations by developing new theories of our age of technoscience." Weber, 2006:411.

Therefore technology, gender and feminist studies should influence and shape each other in order that their dynamics to have a positive impact on the development of technology and particularly advanced ICT and robotics. On the other hand the technology should enabled solutions to critical social issues such as gender equity and smoothing the social barriers with the main aim of achieving a high level of social inclusion in the modern society.

One of the main outcomes of this approach should be directed to maximize the benefits of "living with robots", and raise awareness of pitfalls, and limits, as well as ethical and psychological barriers alongside possible social problems.

Problematic aspects are framed through an exploratory study, empirical investigations and systemic multidisciplinary approach.

Ethical aspects have to be considered and the approaches of "replicating humans" that develop robots that have a biomorphic appearance and are able to behave like human most probable should be avoided. Figure 4 attempts to capture the duality of the relationships between humans versus robots. There are still lots of debates about the future of the robots, but through careful and multidisciplinary consideration of critical issues the development and deployment of robots can have human based control.

Finally, but not the least the decisions should belong to people developing and using robots, virtual agents and intelligent machines that have the main roles of enhancing people's skills and creative abilities extending their possibilities.
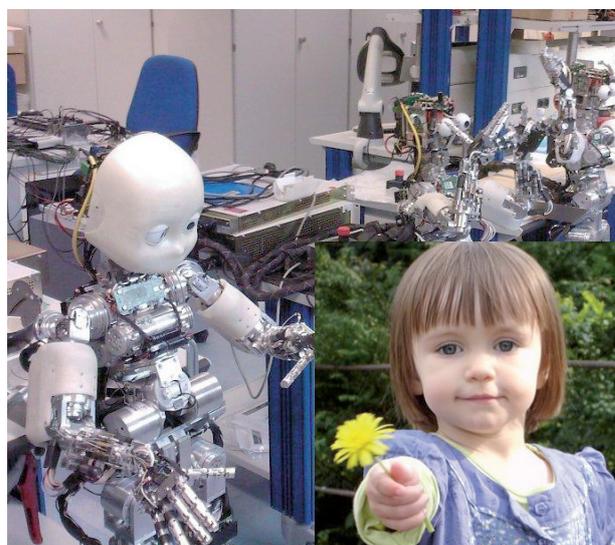

Figure 4. Human versus Robot's relationships

@ photos: Georgio Metta & Emmanuel Tanguy

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Papersession D

Gender perspectives on innovation system in policy and practice

Bridging gendered and scientific cultures in a healthcare technology context

Agneta Hansson, Gunilla Fürst Hörte, Emma Börjesson, Emma.Borjesson@hh.se,
Suzanne Almgren Mason, Bertil Svensson,
Halmstad Embedded and Intelligent Systems Research (EIS),
School of Information Science, Computer and Electrical Engineering,
Halmstad University, Sweden,
Agneta.Hansson@hh.se, gunilla.furst.horte@gmail.com,
Suzanne.Almgren_Mason@hh.se, Bertil.Svensson@hh.se

ABSTRACT

The project Gender Perspective on Embedded Intelligent Systems – Application in Healthcare Technology (G-EIS) financed by Vinnova is integrated into the research environment Embedded Intelligent Systems (EIS) at Halmstad University. EIS is contributing to the regional Triple Helix innovation system Healthcare Technology by developing new technology for application within the health and care sector, and there is an outspoken a need for a more articulated gender perspective within the research environment. The project is inspired by the Technoscientific gender research. It has a qualitative and action research approach and is oriented toward development. In the project process the difference between epistemological cultures has been obvious. In the interaction between the researchers we realize that engineering and other technological sciences not only consider aspects of science to be separate from reality, but also seek positivistic proof in research, something not always possible in the more qualitative research of the social sciences. In the paper we discuss how to bridge and create understanding between sciences and different epistemological cultures.

KEYWORDS: gender, technology, healthcare, epistemology, innovation system

INTRODUCTION

In this paper we want to bring to discussion how conflicting perspectives and cultures should be fruitful in innovation processes. The authors' main perspective is grounded in gender science both theoretically and methodologically.

Embedded Intelligent Systems (EIS) is the joint research field at the School of Information Science, Computer and Electrical Engineering (IDE) at Halmstad University. The research is integrated into a research environment within embedded systems (EIS) – with a perspective reaching from the enabling technology via new system solutions and intelligent applications to end user aspects and business models. It is an expanding research area with many applications, not least ones that exist in everyday life.

When Vinnova – the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems – in 2008 launched the programme Applied Gender Research for Strong Research and Innovation Milieus (TIGER), EIS successfully applied for the project Gender Perspective on Embedded Intelligent Systems − Application in Healthcare Technology (G-EIS). It is a three year project and we have now passed two thirds of the time. According to the call, the Tiger programme, in the longer term, aims to promote sustainable growth in Sweden. The call was directed to R&D projects in areas supported by other programmes and was based on the logic that strengthened competitiveness and sustainable growth are achieved as the numeric gender equality increases and a gender perspective is integrated. The innovation capability then is no longer restrained by current normative thinking about sex/gender (Pettersson 2010).

EIS is a research environment with a diversity of nationalities and ages. It encompasses four labs with approximately 85 employees ranging from 25 to 65 years old and originating from around 20 countries. The research budget for 2010 is around 45 MSEK, 70% of which is external funding. Despite the fact that the research environment has a better balance between men and women, among researchers as well as Ph.D. students, than most comparable environments in the field of computer science, it still operates in surroundings with a tangible imbalance. Almost all contacts with partner companies are with Swedish men, conferences on related subjects are mostly visited by men, and any teaching the researchers and Ph.D. students do is mainly for men of many nationalities. Within computer science, the

subject that dominates EIS, it has for many years been difficult to recruit students, and the numbers of women undergraduates is almost negligible.

The research environment has several aims with the project. EIS research is carried out in close collaboration with partner companies and the innovations that are generated should, when implemented, be both functional for and acceptable to both men and women. The research environment's management has realised the importance of integrating a gender perspective throughout and of working toward opening up to new perspectives and research questions among the research environment's contributors. In the pilot project that preceded the application to Vinnova, interviews with researchers, Ph.D. students and collaborative partners in business showed a need to carry out development work for a more gender equal and gender aware operation and work environment. Interest in understanding what knowledge about gender and gender equality could generate, especially in the link between research and application, was high.

In the long term, the project is also expected to lead to more students (men and women) being attracted to an education within the field. The pilot study showed that the researchers and Ph.D. students all believed that both the research and the educational programme would be considered more attractive and would reach a broader recruitment base if one could make visible applications used in everyday life as areas of computer technology. An even gender distribution among co-workers and work groups is also expected to lead to a better working environment.

THE G-EIS PROJECT ORGANISATION

The G-EIS project is organised with a management group, a steering group, a gender group, and a group of change agents, all of which together make up the project team.

The project leader is the professor of computer systems engineering who is also chairman of the steering group for the research environment EIS. The management group involves the leaders of the four laboratories within EIS; "Centre for Research on Embedded Systems"; "Intelligent Systems Laboratory"; "Man and Information Technology Laboratory"; "Centre for Applied Mathematics and Physics"; and further the leader of the regional "Centre for Health Technology", located in the EIS environment.

The project team also includes another eight persons involved in different working groups; the change agents and the gender group. The gender group together with the project leader form the steering group.

Four young researchers, one from each of the four laboratories, together form the team of change agents. Their role is to interpret and translate the meaning and relevance of bringing a gender perspective into the EIS environment. The change agents meet regularly and have, in the beginning of the project, been trained by the gender researchers in basic gender theory.

The gender group consists of a gender researcher, a project secretary and two gender researchers/consultants who both act as senior advisors and process evaluators. The members of the gender group bring their gender competence into the project and support the project team in the process. Work meetings and seminars are regularly organised and it is in the dialogue and knowledge exchange between the change agents and the gender researchers that concrete gender problems are discussed and the main interventions and actions are planned.

This article is the result of a joint reflection by the members of the steering group, where the change agents have also taken part in a reflection process about the project.

INNOVATION SYSTEM IN HEALTHCARE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

EIS is contributing to the regional Triple Helix innovation system Healthcare Technology which the region has pointed out as a prioritised development sector. With its strong connections to both established and new expanding firms hived off from the university, the research environment is active in the Healthcare Technology Alliance , a network of around fifty companies, counties and healthcare providers in south-western Sweden with the aim of developing the region into a leading arena for the development of health technology products and services. Several projects together with these participants concern both research and technology transfer.

EIS involvement in the G-EIS (G for gender) project is built on the assumption that an integrated gender and gender equality perspective in innovations within the health technology area is necessary in order to be able to meet the needs of a population and especially in an ageing population. Here the relevancy of a gender perspective is clear in relation to the fact that the great majority of all those older than 75 years are women. Older women are on average cared for in hospital twice as long as men, partly due to differing disease panoramas, but also because men are more often cared for in the home by a woman while the women who live longer more often live alone. With the expansion of home-help and home nursing new needs follow and it is likely that a gender perspective will become necessary for the development of products and services that can make daily life easier for the elderly. The gender perspective also has relevance from the point of view of care staff. New technology is developed for application within the health and care sector where the larger professional groups consist mainly of women. The technology, most often designed by men, is used by women. With this in mind it is clear that an important aspect of good innovations is that the end users are involved in the innovation process. Thus the G-EIS project is designed to involve both end users and those who work in the health care sector.

As a consequence of our membership in the EU, the regional perspective has become more prominent in Swedish growth politics. Economic growth is

increasingly focused on as an important part and prerequisite for regional development. The growth potential of regions rests in their ability to utilise the special competencies that companies and other parties in the region have, as well as in coordinating these and thus supporting innovative processes that generate new products and services. In so called Triple Helix collaboration (see Vinnova's website for key concepts), politics, companies and universities interact in regional innovation systems and clusters. The idea is that innovations are created in these collaborations, which in turn leads to those regions where innovation systems exist becoming competitive on an international market.

There are a number of studies that in different ways view clusters and innovation systems from a gender perspective and that show that these are "male" arenas where both those who make decisions and those who are active and receive support from regional policies mainly are men. Researchers argue that clusters and innovation systems tend to view the male as norm and are also gender blind (Lindberg 2009, Hallencreutz, Lundequist & Pettersson 2003, Forsberg & Lindgren 2010). The innovative entrepreneur tends to be seen as a man (Nyberg 2009 och Gunnarsson & Westberg et al 2007). The technical, traditionally male dominated, base industries receive a disproportionately large amount of support from innovation policies, despite other industries having great growth potential. As Lindberg points out, two of the most successful Swedish trading companies are IKEA and H&M (Lindberg 2010).

Women are heavily underrepresented within IT and computer technological education, research and professions. Men have symbolic power over technology, i.e. it is a clear majority of men who research and develop technology. This majority is also a relatively homogenous group of men who develop technology based on their conceptions and life experiences. It is not difficult to argue that this is problematic from a democratic fairness point of view, but it also creates problems from a technology perspective. Women and men in general still have life patterns that diverge and bring differing experiences. These experiences and perspectives on life are consciously or unconsciously brought into one's work and professional role. An increased share of women within IT and computer technology would likely induce new questions for and perspectives on technology and thus also influence research focuses. Breaking up the homogeneity and having a greater diversity among those who produce technical solutions would reasonably lead to a technology that satisfies more needs and appeals to more groups in society, and thus contributes to sustainable growth (KTH 2006).

Many feminist researchers question even the concept of technology itself: that mainly what men do is considered technology, but seldom what women create or use (Berner 2004). The understanding of technology and technics in western culture mainly focuses on men's artefacts, activities and fields of knowledge.

Considering that the lines of business usually identified as successful often have a distinct masculine character with focus on sectors that traditionally create growth,

as for example the engineering industry and IT-based companies, it is interesting to study health technology as a field of expansion. In the regional development program the field is described as "A cross-disciplinary area where engineering and natural science meets health care science and social and behavioural science" (Region Halland 2005). What characterises the field of health technology in relation to many other areas where innovation systems and clusters are defined is that it brings together male dominated areas such as manufacturing industry, electronics, biotechnology and chemistry with the female dominated areas of healthcare and home care services. Lindberg argues that the field of health technology has a potential in challenging the dichotomies and dualistic gender constructions that the present innovation policies build upon – she calls it a boundary-crossing potential (Lindberg 2009). In the G-EIS project we study this boundary-crossing potential by introducing a gender perspective to the innovation system Healthcare Technology.

GENDERED AND SCIENTIFIC CULTURES

In the G-EIS project we apply theories from gender and feminist research, and also methods from an epistemological perspective that differs considerably from the scientific perspective in which the natural science participants have been trained.

Our view of gender is that it is ongoing process where we, men and women together, construct gender. We are here inspired by the work of Joan Acker (1992) and have in the project used her model of analysing gendered organisations both as theory and method. As the context of the G-EIS project is technology and computer science, we are also inspired by the Technoscientific gender research (Trojer 2002), developed in Sweden and internationally, that studies the basis for classic engineering science with its indisputable classifications, standardisations and formalisations from a critical perspective.

Our research is action-oriented; we want change in actions and in thinking. We here take our standpoint in the epistemology of action research, which on a very general level can be described as the study of, and with, social systems in action. It is not a method in the limited or traditional sense of the word. It is the co-acting and the joint learning that is the focus for action research (van Beinum et al, 1996, Svensson et al. 2002).

Doing Gender

In the design of the G-EIS project we were inspired by a research and development project accomplished at Vinnova, The Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems, from 2003 to 2006. We saw similarities between the incentives for Vinnova and EIS to take part in a gender project: to strengthen gender equality in the organisation and to integrate the gender perspective in the definition of research questions and evaluating projects and project results (Gunnarsson & Westberg et al 2007).

The Vinnova project was based on Acker's thinking

on organisations as gendered and her understanding of gender, not as a personal, individual and social role, but as a social construction. In her "doing gender perspective" Acker talks about the gender we do, instead of the gender we are and argues that gender is embedded in the processes that constitute the way we organise our lives and our institutions and that inequalities between men and women are continually reproduced through our interactions to keep organisations going.

Acker focuses on four different processes through which the construction of gender in organising settings can be discovered and analysed, which has inspired Scandinavian gender researchers to develop a model that functions both as theory and method (Andersson, Amundsdotter & Svensson 2008, 2009; Gunnarsson, Westberg, et al 2007). The four processes are gender division, i.e. women and men have different task assignments which position them differently within organisations and thereby in different subject positions; symbols and images constructed to express and explain these divisions; interaction and spatial closeness between the sexes and, within each category; identity and personal constructs.

We have in the G-EIS project used these four processes as an analytical tool in order to penetrate the EIS environment and to highlight where interventions are motivated. We have also been inspired by Vinnova to work with change agents from the organisation who function as intermediators of knowledge and "translators" between the different scientific cultures of the EIS staff and the gender researchers (see below "the G-EIS process").

Epistemological Encounter

Traditionally one can see a conflict between researchers in technology/natural sciences on the one hand and gender researchers on the other. However, it is more multifaceted than that – within the cross-disciplinary EIS-environment we find several different scientific traditions and viewpoints. It is interesting to see how all these different approaches, when set against each other, can contribute to the whole, which presumably is important in an innovation system. In other words, it is not about how to handle conflicts, but rather about how different approaches complement each other and are needed in various parts of the innovation system.

The EIS researchers often fetch their theories, concepts and methods from the science and technology tradition which claims that science is objective and value-free, and that there exists a truth to discover. This perception of knowledge has over the last century formed the traditional academic research ideal where the academic subject with professional rules and hierarchic relations is central. The aim is objective, theoretical and generalisable knowledge. This positivistic perception of knowledge (developed by the 19th century sociologist August Comte) is described by Mårtensson and Nilstun (1988) with the following characteristics:

"…produces knowledge about relationships that follow laws.

…is objective and requires freedom from preconceived notions.

…is the opposite of non-verifiable speculation.

…prefers quantitative methods to qualitative methods.

…has its value in its technological and social applications."

The positivistic perception of knowledge is distinguished from the research ideal of the humanistic social sciences which the gender researchers and research represent, and it is not self-evident that it is sufficient for handling the demands placed on today's universities to meet new knowledge requirements, collaborate with politics and industry, and to contribute with expertise in a rapidly changing development process. These latter roles characterise work in the EIS research environment to a high degree and the environment is therefore not unaccustomed to – though not necessarily in a conscious manner – handling several different knowledge and science paradigms. Over the last few decades, an alternative ideal to the traditional science ideal has emerged and had an increasingly strong impact both within universities and research councils and foundations. A few international researchers who have challenged the traditional academic perception of knowledge have had importance for our Swedish research policies. One of these is Henry Etzkowitz (1997) who launched the Triple Helix model (see above) which has had an impact on Vinnova. Others are Michael Gibbons, Helga Nowotny and Peter Scott (1994, 2001) who set an alternative model, which they call "Mode 2", against the traditional perception of knowledge ("Mode 1"). "Mode 2" is mainly determined by the benefits, effectivity and usefulness for the participants. It is characterised by a processual way of working where researchers and experts collaborate in an open, flexible and equal manner. The research takes place in an interaction between different parties: "Proximity to practice is an important factor which can contribute to developing research /…/. The development of theory is stimulated by meetings, developmental processes, networks, collaboration, debate – not by detachment and isolation /…/. New groups must be included in the formation of knowledge, not be excluded from this by an unreflecting perspective constituting the template for questions and analysis." (Svensson, Brulin & Ellström 2002 s.7).

This action-oriented model is characterised by an aspiration for change and for research to contribute to development, problem-solving and joint learning for those involved. When combined with a gender perspective the aspects of power-relations become visible and possible to handle (Gunnarsson & Westberg, 2008).

Technoscientific Gender Research

On the same grounds as described above, feminist researchers in the field of technoscience are critical of objectivity paradigms and of the researcher as the neutral and objective observer – i.e. that it is possible to map and observe a true reality. Feminist researchers do not accept the ideas of science and the scientists as neutral and objective or the idea that abstract and theoretical thinking

and knowing ("knowing that") is considered superior while bodily knowing and practical thinking ("knowing how") is seen as inferior (Björkman 2005, Trojer 2002). In her article about feminist research and computer science Björkman criticises the role of abstraction in computer science. She wonders how computer science can understand the world via a rationality based on abstraction while the products of computer science are very concrete. She argues that technology is culturally situated, like all processes that produce knowledge. Objects and processes are situated in the context where they are created and this situating brings with it valuable knowledge about the different circumstances surrounding the creation (ibid, p.183). She refers to Sandra Harding who explains the technoscientific bias in this way:

> "Most engineers would argue that their technologies are not social at all in any meaningful sense of the term (….). By excluding from their definition of a "technology" not only its social applications and meanings, but also the knowledge of how to make it, use it and maintain it, they can perpetuate the illusion that technology is not cultural at all".

By broadening the concepts and understandings of technology, feminist research brings a new perspective and an added value to technoscience that may contribute to an ethical and more sustainable future. Feminist research, in other words, contributes to bringing technoscience beyond the positivistic knowledge tradition, a tradition that becomes more and more inadequate in the research and technology-dependent society of our time.

Pitting these knowledge traditions and scientific approaches against each other is experienced as positive and creates interesting discussions in a multi- and cross-disciplinary environment like EIS. Even if, for example, computer scientists value and are dependent on the power of abstraction for the development of new methods, tools and approaches, they are generally, through the collaborative projects (within as well as outside the research environment) they are often involved in, highly conscious about technology developing in a social context. Within the project we, the gender researchers and the EIS researchers, have had many interesting, rewarding and conflicting discussions about e.g.; what is true knowledge; evidence based results; epistemological views: the core of science; and how to translate theories and abstractions into application in social contexts.

THE G-EIS PROCESS

Our point of departure has been a mapping work based on Acker's model to find change potentials in the EIS organisation. This work has entailed a learning process for both the change agents and the gender researchers as well as for the whole project team.

One of the first tasks the change agents took on was to map the gender distribution at the School of Information Science, Computer and Electrical Engineering (IDE) where the project is located. The mapping was valuable mainly from a learning perspective. The change agents also used observation as a method to study interaction patterns at meetings. Following the mapping and observations, a report was written that contained not only statistical results, but also reflections from the change agents mirroring their acquired knowledge about gender and hence a new way for them to view and interpret their environment. As the mapping and observations did not touch on gender equality aspects of the work environment at IDE, however, the change agents also developed a questionnaire that went out to all personnel. The object of that was to capture the existing moods and opinions about gender equality as well as to make visible needs and desires concerning gender equality measures among the staff.

Parallel to the work of the change agents, regular meetings and educational opportunities have been held with the entire project team. The majority of the gatherings have been seminars where inspirational external lecturers relevant to the project have been invited to speak. Other than this, the project team itself has held a number of so called future seminars where various possibilities for integrating gender in the development processes facing the research environment have been discussed. These have also led to decisions on the focus and delimitations of the project.

The pilot study that preceded the project application showed that the employees at the School of Information Science, Computer and Electrical Engineering (IDE) at Halmstad University chiefly desired increased knowledge about gender and gender equality. Therefore the process has to a large extent been knowledge-enhancing; we believe that basic knowledge about these issues followed by gender awareness is a first step toward changed patterns of behaviour and alternative processes which eventually bring about a more inclusive and gender equal research environment.

The change agents' interest in gender issues has both increased and deepened during the mapping of the organisation and thus the project, so far, has became more education-oriented for the change agents. We saw this as a prerequisite for the continued development of the project and the aim of achieving a more gender aware organisation.

We have gradually become aware of the fact that it is a complex and rather impracticable task to gender integrate a whole research environment. When we, halfway through the project period, started the phase where we were to intervene in real action, we had reached the conclusion that the project requires a clear delineation and instead agreed to focus on some of the new development processes in the environment where we could be engaged early in integrating a gender perspective. We perceived it as better aimed to be involved in the start of new processes than to try to change those already existing. One such new process was the Centre for Health Technology, which, connected to the EIS environment, provides a platform for industry-related research and development leading to new products and services in the area of health technology. From autumn 2010, halfway through the G-EIS project, gender mainstreaming the newly started Centre for Health Technology has therefore been the primary empirical task for G-EIS.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As there still remains one third of the project time it is too early to judge in what way we have been successful in implementing gender mainstreaming in the research environment and the regional innovation system.

All through the project the meeting of two epistemologically opposed theories of science has caused confusion to the project participants. The understanding within gender studies that research and production both create reality and are informed by it is not always accepted within the areas of natural science. Engineering and other technological sciences seek positivistic proof in research, something not always possible in the more qualitative research of the social sciences.

Despite the project being taken seriously by those involved and a strong commitment from the management of the research environment, our efforts to reach the whole organisation have not been entirely successful, partly because of a shortage of time. The EIS-researchers are expected to teach, to administrate, to attend meetings, conferences, research seminars and to supervise students and doctoral candidates, and when all these demands clash, the gender project is not always prioritised.

We have also struggled with the problem of inclusion. At first the project was politely welcomed, but more as a parallel process to the regular mainstream R&I activity. Our conclusion was that the project would be more successful if we could join R&I processes when they start instead of trying to make changes in ongoing processes. We decided to put our focus on the concrete health technology process which has resulted in a clearer focus on actions to be taken. Our expectations are that successful integration of a gender perspective in some processes will have positive spin-off effects on the research environment as a whole.

Bridging scientific cultures is not a quick fix task. The project has a qualitative and action research approach and is oriented toward development and change. With a relatively open approach we expect the project to be innovative regarding how a gender perspective can be applied and have an impact on a computer technological environment and on an innovation system based on the theme healthcare technology.

We expect innovative research questions to arise as a result of the meeting between

- The male-dominated technical culture and the women-dominated field for applications

- A positivistic research tradition and the interactive action research

- A technological rationality and a humanistic responsible rationality

The intention is to follow the emergence of new procedures in the organisation that lead to gender integrated innovations and to develop a model for how to continue working with the issues after the completion of the project.

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Doing gender in Sweden's innovation policy when transforming academic theory into regional practice

Malin Lindberg
Luleå University of Technology, Sweden
malin.lindberg@ltu.se

ABSTRACT

Since 2000, the Swedish government has promoted innovation by means of regional innovation systems. In this paper, the matter of how gender is produced in Sweden's innovation policy is discussed in the light of a survey brought out on the pattern of prioritization among regional innovation systems in Sweden. The survey exposes how 75% of the regional innovation systems subject to public promotion via the Vinnväxt programme concerns groups of industries that primarily employ men. From a 'doing gender' perspective, this pattern implies that gender is done in a manner that distinguishes men from women in relation to regional innovation systems. A seed of change is to be seen, however, in the project Lyftet (The Raise). The project is a bottom up initiative to organize regional innovation systems around women's entrepreneurship and innovation. Lyftet introduces the view that it is unnecessary and undesirable to distinguish women from men when it comes to public promotion of regional innovation systems.

KEY WORDS: doing gender, innovation policy, regional innovation system, triple helix, quattro helix

INTRODUCTION

Since the establishment of the new governmental agency Vinnova[1] in 2001 and the initiation of the regional growth agreements in 2000, the Swedish government has promoted innovation by means of regional innovation systems[2]. In research, the concept of innovation system was introduced in the late 1980's, turning into a flourishing stream of empirically and theoretically informed research during the 90's and 00's (Eklund 2007). Ever since the introduction of the innovation system concept in policy and research, there has been a debate about gendered aspects of these endeavours, especially in relation to the transformation of academic theory into regional practice (Lindberg 2006). This debate has lately been pursued within the nascent stream of gender research focusing innovation policy and innovation systems (e.g. Blake & Hanson 2005, Balkmar & Nyberg 2006, Pettersson 2007). The interest for gender in relation to innovation policy and innovation systems reflects the fact that the Swedish government, during the last decades, has developed a gender equality policy aiming to "create the conditions for women and men to enjoy the same power and opportunities to influence their own lives" (www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/4096 Dec 3, 2008). 'Gender mainstreaming' is the government's primary tool for achieving this goal, which implies that the Swedish gender equality policy is to be implemented in all policy areas (Sterner & Biller 2006, p 32). This provides a background to the government stating - in it's instructions from 2004 and 2007 - that Vinnova should promote gender equality between women and men within their areas of activity.

In this chapter, I hope to contribute to the expansion of the field of innovation policy research by employing the perspective of 'doing gender' in order to scrutinize how gender is produced in Sweden's innovation policy when transformed from academic theory into regional practice. The empirical data I base my discussion on comprises policy documents and transcripts from six dialogue seminars carried out in the project Lyftet. In the first part of this chapter I give an introduction to the theoretical stream of 'doing gender' and its implications for theory and policy regarding regional innovation systems. In the second part, I present some theories on regional innovation systems together with the results from my survey of the pattern of prioritization within Vinnova's Vinnväxt programme, which I relate to the gender segregated labour market in Sweden. The pattern I reveal underline the need for empirical data representing an extended range of actors and areas constituting regional innovation systems. In the third part, I highlight a seed of change originating from a bottom up initiative focusing women's entrepreneurship and innovation. Finally, I draw some conclusions about the doing of gender in Sweden's innovation policy when transformed from academic theory into regional practice. Thereto I provide some thoughts on how different measures of gender

mainstreaming influence the doing of gender in the regional practice of innovation policy programs.

DOING GENDER

"Gender is manifested at many levels: in the case of individuals, as an aspect of their own personalities; at the cultural level, in figures of speech, metaphors, categories; at the social level, as a principle for organization of work and decision-making processes." (The Swedish Research Council's Committee on Gender Research 2005, p 3)

According to the theoretical stream of 'doing gender', gender can be understood as a constitutive part of organizational processes and organizations (Acker 1999). Gender is then regarded as an ongoing activity and interaction performed among and between women and men. This perspective relates everyday practices and activities to an institutional and structural level. The origin and developments of doing gender is found in works by West & Zimmermann (1987) and Fenstermaker & West (2002). For a Nordic overview of doing gender research in organizations, see Gunnarsson et al (2003). One of the main contributions of gender research is the exposure of how gender often is done in ways that creates dichotomies e.g. between 'men' and 'women' or between 'femininity' and 'masculinity. At a structural level, this leads not only to segregation - e.g. on the labour market - but also to hierarchies where areas associated to 'men' and 'masculinity' often are ascribed higher value - e.g. by higher wages and faster careers. In practice, this implies an uneven distribution of power and resources between women and men (Butler 1990).

This ongoing construction of segregating and hierarchical gender categories is present in Sweden's innovation policy too. In the promotion and development of regional innovation systems, gender is done when distinguishing different actors and branches of industry and ascribing them different value in relation to economic growth. I will illustrate this mechanism in the account of my survey of the pattern of prioritization within Vinnova's Vinnväxt programme further on. First, I wish to highlight yet another aspect of the doing gender perspective, namely the subject of change. This aspect is principal in the doing gender perspective, as the focus on everyday practices underlines the possibility of doing things differently (Gunnarsson et al 2003). It is not compulsory that the doing of gender ends up in segregating and hierarchical patterns. It is quite possible to act in ways that break this trend, opening up for a more dynamic and nuanced perception of the world. Concerning promotion and development of regional innovation systems, I suggest that such a change in the doing of gender could imply that sites of innovation are decentred "from singular persons, places and things to multiple acts of everyday activity" (Suchman 2007, p 1).

FROM ACADEMIC THEORY TO A REGIONAL PRACTICE

In this part of the chapter, I present some academic theories on regional innovation systems together with the results from my survey of the pattern of prioritization within Vinnova's Vinnväxt programme, which I will

relate to the gender segregated labour market in Sweden. In academic theory, two different approaches to regional innovation systems can be detected: one where a broad scope of actors, areas and factors are regarded to be crucial in such systems and another where a more narrow scope is applied. The broad approach is reflected in the following quotation, highlighting the importance of several forms of innovation as well as several kinds of knowledge:

"The innovation system approach reflects that innovations are not solely a question of scientific or technological research or development of technologies and products put into use. Innovation is to equal parts dependent upon access to organizational, social, economical and market based knowledge, arranged in a successful interplay." (Frykfors 2005, p 6)

In the narrow approach to regional innovation systems, the importance of research based innovation, technological infrastructure and market driven research is emphasized (Lundvall 2006). Another example of the narrow approach is to be found in the model of 'triple helix', where the roles of public, private and academic sector in regional innovation systems are highlighted (Lavén 2008). In the broad approach, such delimitations of actors are regarded as undesirable. There, the roles of different actors are to be proven empirically, rather than being determined theoretically in advance (c.f. Carlsson 2000). Consequently, academic theory provides two possible approaches to regional innovation systems.

Is the theoretical scope of approaches reflected in regional practice, then? Existing research testifies that this is not the case. When academic theory is transformed into public policy promoting regional innovation systems in Sweden, research exposes how policy programs primarily employ a narrow understanding of such systems - and thus concern quite a homogenous group of actors, areas and factors - at the expense of a more inclusive approach suggested in the original research on this area (Lundvall 2006, Lindberg 2008). My survey of the pattern of prioritization among regional innovation systems in Vinnova's Vinnväxt programme illustrates this situation. Since 2001, regional innovation systems have been invited to compete for long term financing. The maximum amount granted has been ten million SEK (appr. 900 000 Euro) per year during a period of maximum ten years. In 2001, five pioneering projects were selected. These were followed by a row of official winners in 2003, 2004 and 2008. The prioritized formations are listed in Table 1 below together with the area of activity that each formation involves. The table also contains a column with my assessment of which group of industries each formation adheres to. The three groups of industries are: Basic /Manufacturing industries (BM)[3], New technology industries (NT)[4] and Services/ Experiences industries (SE)[5] .

According to Table 1, 11 of 17 formations in the Vinnväxt programme are active on areas within industries based on new technology. Yet another 8 are active within basic or manufacturing industries. Only 4 of the formations are active within services or experiences industries. As the table shows, some of the formations belong to more than one group of

Programme	Formation	Area	Group
Vinnväxt 2001	Bioteknik (Biotech)	Biotech	NT
	IT-konsultsektorn (ICT Consulting Sector)	ICT [11]	NT
	Underleverantörs-samverkan (Suppliers in Cooperation)	Telecom Vehicles Manufacturing	BM/NT
	Innovationsstaden (Innovation City)	Start-up of businesses Business development	No data
	SISU - Samverkan industri, samhälle och universitet (Cooperation Industry, Society and University)	Industry	BM
Vinnväxt 2003	Innovation i Gränsland (Innovation in Borderland)	Food Biotech Health Commerce	NT/SE
	Robotdalen (Robotic Valley)	Robotics	BM
	Uppsala Bio	Biotech Pharmaceuticals Diagnostics	NT
Vinnväxt 2004	ProcessIT Innovations (Process ICT Innovations)	Process industry Manufacturing ICT	BM/NT
	Biomedicinsk utveckling (Biomedical Development)	Biomedicine	NT
	Triple Steelix	Engineering workshop Steel	BM
	Fiber Optic Valley	Fiber optics	NT
	Hälsans nya verktyg (New Tools for Health)	Care Health Medical technology	SE/NT
Vinnväxt 2008	Framtidens bioraffinaderi (Bio Refinery of the Future)	Bio refinery	BM
	Peak of Tech Adventure	Tourism Sports ICT	SE/NT
	Smart Textiles	Textiles Fashion	BM/SE
	Printed Electronics Arena	Paper electronics	BM/NT

Table 1. Prioritized formations in the Vinnväxt programme 2001-2008 [6]

industries. A closer look at different combinations of groups reveals that 3 formations are active on areas within basic or manufacturing industries in combination with industries based on new technology. Another 3 formations are active within new technology as well as services or experiences industries. Only one formation combines basic or manufacturing industries with services or experiences industries. Concerning formations active within only one group of industries, 5 of the formations are active solely within industries based on new technology and 4 formations are active solely within basic or manufacturing industries. None of the formations are active solely within services or experiences industries. This pattern is illustrated in Figure 1.

From a gender perspective, this pattern of prioritization within Vinnväxt is somewhat problematic. Even if the act of prioritization in itself may be motivated in Sweden's innovation policy, a question mark appears when it's revealed that the pattern of prioritization coincides with the pattern of gender segregation on the Swedish labour
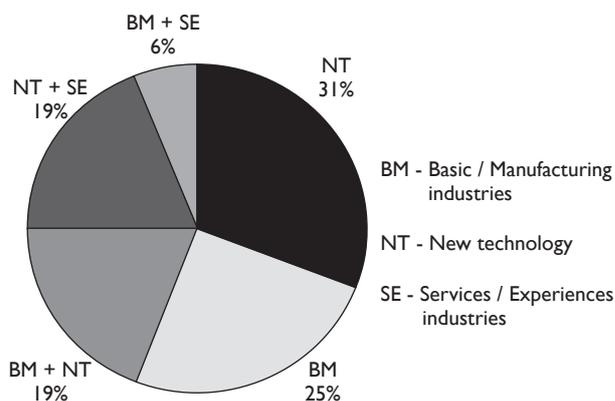
Figure 1. Groups of industries represented in Vinnväxt 2001-2008

market. The division between paid and unpaid work has been reduced since women entered the working life en masse, but men and women are still, to great extent, to be found in different groups of industries (Gonäs & Karlsson 2006)[7]. Table 2 shows the distribution of women and men on Sweden's labour market.

Distribution	Areas
Dominated by men (> 60%)	**Mainly Basic/Manufacturing industry & New technology:** ICT, Cars/Trucks/Machines, Mining/Metal, Chemistry, Forestry, Telecom, Transportation, Other industry, Agriculture, Manufacturing industry, Steel, Biotech, Wood, Computer technology, Electronics, Telephone/Television/Sound technology
Balanced (60/40) [12]	**Mainly Services/Experiences:** Health care, Consumer goods/Commerce, Media/Entertainment, Services, Textiles/Clothes, Recreation, Restaurants/Hotels
Dominated by women (> 60%)[13]	**Mainly Services/Experiences:** Biomedicine, Nursing care, Child care, Elderly care, Health care, Personal services, Education/Research, Retail trade

Table 2. Distribution of women and men on Sweden's labour market [8].

Comparing Figure 1 with Table 2, it is revealed that the formations that have been granted funding in the Vinnväxt programme are predominantly the ones being active within groups of industries employing primarily men, namely the groups of Basic/ Manufacturing industries and New technology. In 75% of the formations these areas are represented separately or in combination. The group of Services/Experience industry, employing most women, is comprised only in 25% of the formations. None of the formations include this group of industries as their sole area of activity. This encompassing pattern of prioritization in Vinnväxt in relation to gender distribution on the Swedish labour market is exhibited in Figure 2.
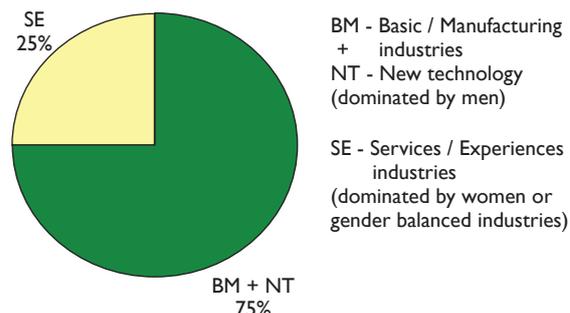
Figure 2.

In relation to academic theory, it seems like only one of the two research approaches to regional innovation systems has survived the transformation into regional practice. The approach applied in Vinnväxt seems primarily to have been a narrow one, only considering a certain type of actors, areas and factors to be of importance – namely the ones employing mostly men.

In terms of a 'doing gender' perspective, this pattern of prioritization within Sweden's innovation policy contributes to a hierarchical construction of gender where groups of industries employing primarily men are ascribed a higher value in relation to regional innovation systems than the ones employing mostly women or a balanced number of women and men. Thereto, the pattern reveals that the policy decisions made rest upon a segregating understanding of gender, where it's regarded to be fruitful to implicitly distinguish the categories of 'men' and 'women' in relation to economic growth. According to Pettersson (2007) and Blake & Hanson (2005), an innovation policy constructed upon such restraining gender perceptions runs the risk of excluding actors and areas with innovative potential. And since Sweden's policy on gender equality prescribes gender mainstreaming into all policy areas (Sterner & Biller 2006) - including equal power in terms of economy and influence in society - the prevalent pattern of prioritization could be reason enough to review the priorities made within the innovation policy programs.

A SEED OF CHANGE

The pattern of prioritization revealed in my survey underlines the need for a regional practice of innovations policy representing a broad approach to regional innovation systems, including an extended range of actors and areas. In order not to reproduce the prevalent segregating and hierarchical gender constructions, this broad approach should reach beyond the distinction between 'men' and 'women' and provide the grounds for an equal esteem of different groups of industries, irrespective of their gender distribution. In this part of the chapter, I highlight an example that I think represents such a broad approach. This seed of change originates from a 'bottom up' initiative (Matland 1995) taken by researchers and participants in the project Lyftet, which was managed by Luleå University of Technology and financed by EU structural funds and Vinnova via their call on the area of gender perspective on innovation systems.

In the project Lyftet (The Raise), four regional networks came together in order to raise their experiences of promoting women's entrepreneurship and innovation to a joint platform of knowledge. Participating at dialogue seminars arranged in the project, the network members came to challenge delimiting assumptions within Sweden's innovation policy, which was a subject they hadn't been encouraged to reflect upon elsewhere. The challenge consisted primarily in widening the narrow scope of actors and areas being promoted in the public policy programmes, where their own efforts to organize networks similar to those being branded regional innovation systems and clusters had been neglected. Each network had a specific background to their involvement in the project. In 2002, a local resource

centre for women named Emma Resurscentrum (Emma Resource Centre) - situated in the county of Västerbotten - initiated a project in order to scrutinize the concepts of regional innovation system and cluster from a gender perspective. Despite the fact that Emma Resurscentrum had been organizing networks among entrepreneurial women during an entire decade, they experienced that these concepts had been imposed in the regional growth agreement in a manner that excluded the branches where most women in their region were active as entrepreneurs or employees, such as tourism, handicraft and culture.

Around the same time, three other regional networks located in other parts of Sweden started to investigate if and how the concepts of innovation system and cluster were relevant to their own activities. SAGA (Sámi Network Connectivity Gender Allocation) was initiated by a gender researcher at Luleå University of Technology, in order to secure women's influence upon and profit from the innovation system she was organizing in the region on the area of network connectivity. SAGA consisted of women from different spheres of society - working in private companies, public authorities, local resource centres for women, development groups etc - all of them living in Norrbotten. Lika Villkor (Equal Terms) was a project managed by the County administration of Södermanland, situated in the mid-parts of Sweden, constituting a regional network for cooperation and development among local resource centres for women. The aim was to make use of the ideas of women entrepreneurs in local and regional development policy. This was achieved partly by their investigation and support of a cluster within the healthcare sector, where many women are employees or entrepreneurs. They also introduced an understanding of resource centres for women as constituting innovation systems. Företagsamma kvinnor (Entrepreneurial women) in the county of Västmanland - located in the mid-parts of Sweden - were managed by the local resource centres for women in the region. Promotion of women's entrepreneurship by means of mutual inspiration was the main purpose of this network, consisting exclusively of women running their own companies. One of their achievements was a survey of clusters within branches of business with many women.

At the dialogue seminars we strived to create the prerequisites for a mutual sharing of experiences among the network members as well as between them and us researchers, which is congruent with the tradition of 'dialogue conferences' introduced by Nordic working life researchers in the 80's (Shotter & Gustavsen 1999). We wanted the participants to express themselves in many different ways in order to get a rich empirical material, which is why we brought pens, papers as well as whiteboard markers. The dialogue seminars were also recorded with an mp3-player. In the first round of seminars, arranged in the spring of 2006, the network members got to present and discuss their organizations from three different angles of approach. In the second round of seminars, arranged half a year later, the main task was to discuss their activities in the light of public efforts to promote entrepreneurship and innovation. There, I presented some of the data from the first seminars and from available text material concerning their strategic organization of actors, areas, activities

and innovations. In this way, we got a rich empirical material about their endeavours, verified by the network members themselves. I consider our mode of procedure to be a practical example of interactive gender research methods (Gunnarsson 2007), in that we strived to include previously excluded actors and areas in a discussion on innovation policy by means of a joint knowledge development between researchers and participants.

The results from the dialogue seminars exposed how the four networks had organized a sort of regional innovation systems around women's entrepreneurship and innovations. In this, they had involved actors from all areas of society - industry, public sector, academia and non-profit organizations. The areas they were active on were predominantly the ones employing mostly women, or a balanced number of men and women, belonging to the group of services and experiences industries. But there were also examples of strategic promotion of innovation within the area of ICT, which is a industry employing mostly men, according to Table 2. There, some of the network members in SAGA were developing an entirely new system for connectivity in sparsely populated areas. In their pursuit of promoting women's entrepreneurship and innovation, several efforts to develop new knowledge were made by the networks, which manifested itself in reports and anthologies as well as in the arrangement of seminars and conferences. As a result of the networks' endeavours new enterprises and innovations were created.[9] Several of the innovations had the form of new services and methods, e.g. within business counselling, surveys/inventories, loans/ credits, organization, innovative processes, wedding arrangements, recruitment consultancies, restaurants, tourist information, Internet connection, handicraft retail and home-help services.

Comparing these examples of regional innovation systems with the kinds being prioritized in Sweden's innovation policy and in the narrow approach to regional innovation systems, four distinguishing features appear:

- Beside the public, private and academic sector, a fourth sector was involved in the innovation systems organized by the networks, namely the civil sector. This is why I've chosen to launch the concept 'quattro helix' (in contrast to 'triple helix'), in order to describe the organizational rationale of these regional innovation systems.

- The knowledge development has not primarily taken place in cooperation with academic institutions, as the concept of triple helix indicates. Instead, the new knowledge has been developed by the network members themselves, sometimes with the assistance from non-profit educational associations (studieförbund), consultants or researchers.[10]

- The groups of industries in focus differ from the ones being prioritized in Vinnväxt. The networks have in most cases been active within Services/Experiences industries, which are women dominated and gender balanced industries. This contrasts with the heavy dominance of Basic/Manufacturing industries and industries based on New technology in Vinnväxt.

- The innovations being realized as a consequence of the networks' efforts to promote women's entrepreneurship and innovations have mainly taken the form of new services and methods, in contrast to the technological and material focus in the narrow approach to regional innovation systems.

According to me, these features of the four networks involved in Lyftet can be interpreted as representing the type of approach to regional innovation systems that within academic theory has been labelled as a 'broad' one. This constitutes a seed of change regarding the possibility of doing gender differently in Sweden's innovation policy, since it reaches beyond segregating and hierarchical gender constructions by including groups of industries occupying many women in the same frame of policy measures that up to now have prioritized industries employing mostly men.

CONCLUSION AND ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

In this last part of the chapter, I draw some conclusions about the doing of gender in Sweden's innovation policy when transformed from academic theory into regional practice. Thereto I provide some thoughts on how different measures of gender mainstreaming influence the doing of gender in innovation policy programs. In academic theory, two different approaches are suggested in regard to regional innovation systems. One where a narrow range of actors, areas and factors are considered to be of importance to such systems, and another where a broader range is taken into consideration. When transformed into regional practice, however, only the narrow approach seems to subsist. This has implications for the gendered aspects of innovation policy and the regional innovation systems it is intended to promote. In this chapter, the matter of how gender is constructed in Sweden's innovation policy has been discussed in the light of my survey on the pattern of prioritization among regional innovation systems. The survey exposes how 75% of the regional innovation systems subject to public promotion via the Vinnväxt programme concern those groups of industries that primarily provide employment for men, given the present gender segregation on the labour market. From a 'doing gender' perspective, this pattern implies that gender is done in a manner that distinguishes the categories 'men' and 'women' in relation to economic growth and ascribes the former category a higher value on the area of regional innovation systems.

A seed of change is to be seen in the regional innovation systems organized around women's entrepreneurship and innovation originating from the project Lyftet. I interpret this seed of change as an alternative to the segregating doing of gender in Sweden's innovation policy, introducing a way where it is unnecessary and undesirable to distinguish women from men when it comes to public promotion of regional innovation systems. This initiative was financed via Vinnova's call on gender perspective on innovation systems, but has not yet led to any attempts to mainstream women's entrepreneurship and innovation in the Vinnväxt programme. Instead, Vinnova has launched additional

funds in order to encourage the inclusion of a gender perspective in the formations already being prioritized in the Vinnväxt programme. Since the great majority of these formations belongs to groups of industries primarily occupying men, this measure of gender mainstreaming introduced ad hoc might at its best imply a more equal distribution of influence and benefits among women and men within the organizations. But the encompassing pattern of gender imbalances in the estimation of these groups of industries will not be altered. The gendered aspects of the pattern of prioritization itself will thus remain unchallenged in gender mainstream measures introduced ad hoc in already prioritized formations. However, I discern some gleam of hope in recent calls made by Vinnova targeting national and sectoral innovation systems on the areas of innovation journalism, e-services as well as innovations within health and healthcare. These efforts might be extended to encompass regional innovation systems as well, thus striving to bridge the gender segregated labour market and prevent segregating and hierarchical constructions of gender within Sweden's innovation policy.

Notes

1 Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems

2 For an explanation of different types of innovation systems, see the chapters by Jukka Teräs & Håkan Ylinenpää and Lars Coenen & Annika Rickne.

3 e.g. forestry, wood products, mining, steel/aluminium, cars/trucks, biofuels, robotics, electro-mechanics, electric power, pulp, packaging, light materials, polymer/plastics

4 e.g. bio technology, ICT and fiber optics

5 e.g. care, tourism, commerce, education and entertainment

6 www.vinnova.se Oct 9, 2007 & Apr 7, 2009

7 A public inquiry on the sex segregated Swedish labour market (SOU 2004:43) shows that women and men primarily choose to work in different occupations. However, the segregation has been somewhat reduced during the 1990's, as a result of an increased number of women in those men dominated professions that require higher education.

8 www.folksam.se/testergodarad/jamstalldhetsindex Nov 2, 2007
Balkmar & Nyberg 2006, p 24-26
På tal om kvinnor och män 2006, p 64-65
Balkmar 2006, p 54

9 See the chapter by Lars Coenen & Annika Rickne for a discussion about whether innovation should be regarded as an outcome or as a dynamic activity.

10 That the knowledge development within innovation systems can take various forms, is also discussed in the chapter by Lars Coenen & Annika Rickne.

11 ICT = Internet and Communication Technology

12 In larger companies, the balanced distribution between men and women is only valid for the employees, not the management.

13 These statistics are only valid for the employees, not the management, except in personal services where the main part of the entrepreneurs are women.

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Building on diversity to enhance the leverage power of innovation on the German economy

Wiebke Schone, Pascale Bruno, Kordula Kugele, Ulrike Busol
Hochschule Furtwangen University, Germany
wiebke.schone@hs-furtwangen.de

ABSTRACT

In times of economic crisis, it is mandatory for innovative industries to maintain a competitive advantage. No economy can afford to leave aside well educated subgroups of the knowledge community. Up to now, the potential of female work power in R&D (research and development) is not fully recognized. Furthermore, female scientists and engineers do not seem to contribute according to their full potential (Kugele, 2010). Women appear less often as inventors compared to their occurrence as researchers in R&D within the German industry (Kugele, 2010). In the search for structural influences that prevent women from inventing, we found that the innovative power of female inventors is strongly influenced by the fact that organizations oftentimes miss to create a proper base to manage teams according to both male and female inventor's needs and priorities.

KEYWORDS: innovation, team diversity, gender, efficiency

INTRODUCTION

The industry in Germany is based on its innovative power in research and development. There is a growing demand for highly skilled workers in science and technology, such as researchers and engineers (BMBF, 2010). The aim is to include the whole range of the innovative and inventive potential. Especially women represent a high educated potential labour force, while the share of women in R&D is still quite low.

In science and technology, team-based work structures are favoured to solve creativity demanding problems and to stimulate innovation. There is a lasting debate on the benefits of gender diversity regarding teamwork in R&D. Some studies observe advantages and a better performance for gender-heterogeneous teams solving complex problems as the different team members represent a larger spectrum of ideas and perspectives (e. g. Frink, Robinson & Reithel 2003; Hirschfeld, Jordan, Field, Giles & Armenakis, 2005). Other studies conclude that the performance is inferior to the one of gender-homogeneous teams as gender differences provide sources of friction (e. g. Jehn, 1995; Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999; Randel, 2002). As women are still a minority in R&D even in the most industrialised countries, many studies compare homogenous male teams with heterogeneous teams that are still male-dominated (e.g. Burris, 2001). In order to compare gender-balanced heterogeneous teams both to homogeneous male teams and homogeneous female teams, Pearsall et al. arbitrarily proceeded by assigning students to foursome teams (Pearsall, Ellis & Evans, 2008). The conditions were therefore quite artificial, which makes it difficult to compare on with real working conditions in R&D departments of companies. There is a strong need to investigate homogeneous female teams in R&D, as this is the only constellation where women are asked to experiment and perform in their own way of teamwork. For the sake of higher performing teams, it might be more accurate to address contributions that women are providing when they are part of heterogeneous teams.

Furthermore, teams in R&D are seldom consistent and they are certainly not independent from their surrounding conditions. There is a huge difference between the product development department, where narrower deadlines and a higher pressure for the achievement of objectives are enforced, and a fundamental research department where more creativity, lateral thinking and rethinking of old beliefs are tolerated (Schone,2009). Difference in work-time as overtime work or part-time work might influence the team performance as well as difficulties with inadequate childcare facilities or ancient role stereotypes.

Comparatively, the measurement of R&D team performance, i. e. creativity, innovation power, efficiency and net output, is difficult. Pearsall et al. measured the amount of idea generation of their student teams and assessed the creativity of each item on an idea-list of a 6-point-scale (Pearsall, Ellis & Evans, 2008). Others measured the performance of university scientists by their scientific output, i. e. scientific publications (e. g. Martín-Sempere, Rey-Rocha & Garzón-García, 2002). The industry in turn depends more on the innovative productivity and patents are needed to protect new

inventions. Patent applications reflect the successful inventive achievement of individual researchers in science and technology, especially if the patent application is not limited to only one country but includes more countries as e. g. European patents do. Patents are therefore an output indicator for R&D teams in industry (Busolt & Kugele, 2009). Patents differ in the effort and the creativity of teams and it is barely possible to assess the "real" value of a specific patent. Previous knowledge would have to be considered and earnings from products generated by patents are not known well.

In Germany, the share of female researchers in R&D amounted to about 12% in 2003 (European Commission, 2006a), whereas the share of German female inventors of European patents only amount to 6% (Busolt & Kugele, 2009). This gap leads to the question of how inventor teams are working. Are there structural barriers that prevent female researchers from inventing?

RESEARCH FOCUS AND METHODOLOGY

In our study, we focus on inventors in R&D industry, not only because they need to work in high performance teams, but also because the outcome of their effort - patents - is tangible.

Inventor teams work together for a limited period of time to generate a solution to a certain problem. Therefore they represent ideal teams for the investigation of team work. In the German industry, there are a limited number of homogeneous female inventor teams. This allows a comparison between homogeneous female teams with homogeneous male teams and heterogeneous teams. We classify teams as successful when they have been granted a European patent, without further assessment of the actual patent value.

We concentrate on the specific determinants of gender impact on R&D inventions in the German industry. Hereby, our main research questions concern the four subgroups:

- homogeneous female inventor teams

- homogeneous male inventor teams

- eterogeneous gender balanced inventor teams

- heterogeneous male dominated inventor teams

In order to gather data and to contact the inventors, an SQL data base for all European patent applications within Germany for the years 2001-2006 was created. Based upon raw data, which was specifically extracted by Eurostat for the EFFINET project, the following steps have been applied on the data base:

- gender specific attribution (due to classification of the inventor's first name)

- correlation of inventors to institutions or companies

- correlation of inventors to specific industry branches

- determination of inventor team constellation according to the above described team characteristics (by gender specific attribution)

The data base includes the inventor's name, home address (as appearing on the patent application), company or institution and industry branch as well as the differentiation into the different team constellations.

Our study was conducted in two main parts: a qualitative interview phase in order to gain deep insight into the innovation environments and to generate first hypotheses, and a quantitative online survey to verify and deepen our findings.

In the qualitative phase, twenty expert interviews with male and female inventors were conducted. The percentage of interviewees from each of the four target groups above is distributed evenly (5 interviewees of each team constellation). The interview participants should have had at least one industry patent that is created within a team consisting of at least two inventors.

Our research interest during these interviews lies on team work, innovative and organizational environment and communication structures imparting on the innovation- and patent creation processes.

Based on the hypotheses generated by these expert interviews a quantitative online survey served to verify our findings. A total of 570 inventors participated in this survey. Since the total amount of homogeneous female inventor teams is very limited (app. 300 European patens in Germany within the past 10 years) and a significant amount of those patents can be found in chemistry, pharmacy and medical equipment, our focus for the quantitative research lies on these industry sectors in order to guarantee an equal distribution of participants among the four team constellations (homogeneous female inventor teams, homogeneous male inventor teams, gender balanced heterogeneous inventor teams and heterogeneous inventor teams with higher percentage of male inventors).

Step 1: Expert interviews. Methodology of qualitative approach

For the expert interviews with the inventors, we focused on the problem-centered interview (Wintzel, 1996), a theory-generating method ranging between the narrative interview style and structurally guidelined interview. This semi-structured approach allows the experts (interviewees) to share knowledge based on their very own value system within the structural and content boundaries of the research focus.

The structure - or guideline - of the interview served as an orientation framework for the interviewer, although the interview process itself was generic and could vary from interview to interview, according to the individual experiences and value system.

It included a warm-up phase including the interviewee's general characteristics, such as professional career and current job position. Furthermore, the recreation of the specific innovation settings of the granted patent is split into on organizational-, team- and individual level with focus on the inventor's perceptions of team work, innovation- and efficiency determinants.

The whole interview was recorded and subsequently

transcribed. Additionally, a postscript of the interview was generated, in which situation-dependant and non-verbal aspects, interpretation ideas and special characteristics of the interview are noted.

A summarized and anonymized case description serves as a basis to concentrate the data and investigate central motives in order to generate theory. The interpretation of the data was intended to maintain its explorative, qualitative approach and is not intended to conclude quantitative, generalizing statements. It was however the goal to develop first hypotheses to be further tested, verified and developed with the subsequent quantitative online survey among a larger group of participants.

Step 2: Online survey. Methodology of quantitative approach

As stated, the online survey served to test, verify and further develop the hypothesis generated from the qualitative expert interviews. In order to obtain reliable results from the group of homogeneous female inventor teams, we focused on industry sectors with a high percentage of female researchers, such as pharmacy, medical engineering and chemistry.

To approach a large amount of survey participants, several methods of contact have been used:

- Creation of a European patent database of the past 10 years with filter function for team constellation among the inventors according to our four target team constellations (see above) as well as filter function for industry sectors. Contact with 300 inventors of each target team constellation via post mail with attached printed survey and response envelope or opportunity to complete the survey online.

- Call for participation in newsletters and on homepages of respective professional associations, such as VDI (Association of German Engineers)

- Call for participation via patent departments of large companies with R&D departments located in Germany.

The content of the 35-question survey included a general section on the innovators' characteristics, such as professional education, career and family situation, followed by a generalized section on the participants' own opinion on organizational-, team- and individual influence factors on the innovation culture and efficiency determinants within the R&D environment. Finally, the survey explored the innovation environment of one specific patent in its development and team processes. The survey questions here presented were so far answered by about 320 persons, representing team members of the four different inventor team constellations. The question concerning childcare was an exception: As not every interviewee has children, the number of answers to these questions were lower.

RESULTS

The evaluation of the expert interviews leads to several hypotheses that are further explored in the quantitative online survey. In order to establish a base for a functioning diverse team culture, the following findings of the expert interviews are further assessed.

Results of the expert interviews

The inventor team might be a subgroup of the bigger project team but as well its team members often originate from different departments. Inventor teams are rather small teams as the mean team size is about 2-3 researchers, depending on the industrial sector.

While the constellation of a project group is created for long term teamwork (typically for at least the duration of one project, but also for several follow up projects) and oftentimes is defined by the organizational management (department- or project leader), the forming of an inventor team underlies spontaneous characteristics, in most cases issued by the inventors themselves: an "ad hoc team" is formed to perform one concrete task or solve one concrete problem. Once the task is completed and a patent application is filled, the ad hoc team breaks up back into its assigned different project groups. This observation leads to the first hypothesis:

Thesis 1: Oftentimes, the inventor team is not identical with the project team.

While institutionalized communication structures (such as regularly scheduled team meetings) guarantee a comprehensible flow of information, communication paths among the inventors are dominated by informal, spontaneous communication patterns, independent of the composition of the inventor team. The second hypothesis therefore is:

Thesis 2: Communication structures of inventor teams are independent of the gender composition of the inventor team.

Male and female individuals show similar innovative potential at the beginning of their professional life. Both female and male inventors show the same characteristics regarding overtime work and devotion to their projects within the first years of their professional career. Both typically start their career and create their first patents in R&D departments as development engineers or scientists. Regarding the further career development of men and women, the similar paths diverge: the family phase significantly influences the women's career path. It seems that priorities of female and male inventors diverge, as soon as "inventors" turn into" parents". Concluding this observation, the hypothesis is:

Thesis 3: Parenthood influences the innovative performance of female inventors.

Often, the creation of inventions and patents is realized by overtime work, since the priorities during normal work hours focuses on project work. Part time employees suffer from less time flexibility (e.g. due to fixed child care hours) and have less time for creative brainstorming. For part time employees, it is therefore more difficult to actively participate in the innovation process.

However, in our expert interviews, we were astonished to find one best practice example, were the invention as well as the patent were created within the normal working hours. All members of the inventor team, including the head of the department herself, were part-time employees. Our fourth hypothesis is:

Thesis 4: Innovative performance of part time employees is strongly influenced by organization's management abilities.

Results of the online survey

In order to investigate how to create a base that allows the inventors within a diverse team to perform at their optimal innovative level, the insights of the expert interviews have been further investigated in the online survey. The aim of the online survey was to identify the different needs and values for the diverse inventors within a heterogeneous group as well as for the homogeneous groups.

The results of our online survey support three of our four hypothesis and clearly indicate that female inventors oftentimes do not perform according to their innovative potential due to external as well as internal influences.

Table 1 gives an overview of the participants of the online survey and their industry branch. Different industrial sectors might have different working conditions or cultures. For better comparison, we therefore aimed to survey male and female team members of similar industrial sectors. Table 1 establishes that our sample is quite balanced.

Industrial sector	female	male
Chemical industry, Pharmaceutical industry, Biological industry, Medical industry	62,3%	62,8%
Medical and Environmental Technology	7,5%	5,2%
Electrical Engineering	4,1%	2,9%
Mechanical Engineering	4,1%	9,3%
Biotechnology, Process Technology, Process Engineering	7,5%	7,6%
Others	14,4%	12,2%
	total female: 146 total male: 172	

Table 1. Participants of online survey in correlaion with industry

The results of the online survey support our thesis 1. In over 50% of the cases, the survey participant's inventor team (inventors named on the patent) has not been identical with the actual project group.

In figure 1, team members of different team constellations are asked to rate the importance of regular communication and team meetings for innovation. The result is presented for heterogeneous (mixed) teams that are gender balanced, heterogeneous teams that are dominated by men, homogeneous female teams and homogeneous male teams. The aggregated answers "very important" and "important" show a rather low share for the team members of homogeneous male teams (70%), whereas the team members of heterogeneous teams (75% and 78% resp.) and of homogeneous female teams (80%) rate the influence higher. 28% of the members of homogeneous male teams answer that regular

communication and meetings have no impact at all on innovation. This answer ("no impact") is given by 16% of the members of homogeneous female teams and by 17% and 18% of the members of heterogeneous teams.

We questioned male and female interviewees regarding the influence of "open communication with superiors", e.g. with the group leader or head of department, on innovation. 80% of the male interviewees and 87% of the female interviewees rate the influence as "very important" or "important".

If we take a close look at the members of the different team constellations in figure 2, it is notable that only 74% of the members of homogeneous male teams rate the influence as "very important" or "important". Members of all other sorts of teams show a higher percentage of answers that rate the influence as "very important" or "important" (gender-balanced heterogeneous team members: 84%, members of heterogeneous teams that are male dominated: 88%, members of homogeneous female teams: 86%). 24% of members of homogeneous male teams state that the open communication with superiors has "no impact", compared to 6% for the gender-balanced heterogeneous team members, 10% of the members of heterogeneous teams that are male dominated, 12% for the members of homogeneous female teams.

As presented in figure 1 and 2, there is a lower percentage of homogeneous male team members compared to the percentage of all other team constellations rating the influence of "regular communication and meetings" and "open communication with superior" as "very important" or "important" for successfully creating their invention (and turning it into a patent). This result is a hint that generally members of homogeneous male inventor teams tend to lesser value the communication with other colleagues and leaders. They seem to be more independent from meetings and leading persons. Members of all other team constellations generally seem to more appreciate "regular communication and meetings" and "open communication with superior". Therefore it might be sometimes more complex to integrate oneself into the team communication pattern of homogeneous male teams, as they tend to work as a closed team.

Interestingly, the answers of members of gender-balanced heterogeneous team, of heterogeneous teams that are male dominated and of homogeneous female teams reveal a similar percentage. This is valid for both questions (figure 1 and 2).

The female inventor's appreciation - or need - for open and regular communication is reflected in the communication structures of inventor teams with (partial) female inventors. This indicates that the presence of women in teams, even when the teams are male dominated, reduces the communication barriers regarding regular communication and meetings as well as for external communication with the management. Therefore, thesis 2 of our expert interviews has not been verified. Apparently, communication structures within the inventor team as well as the communication to management vary in its style and appreciation in dependence of gender.
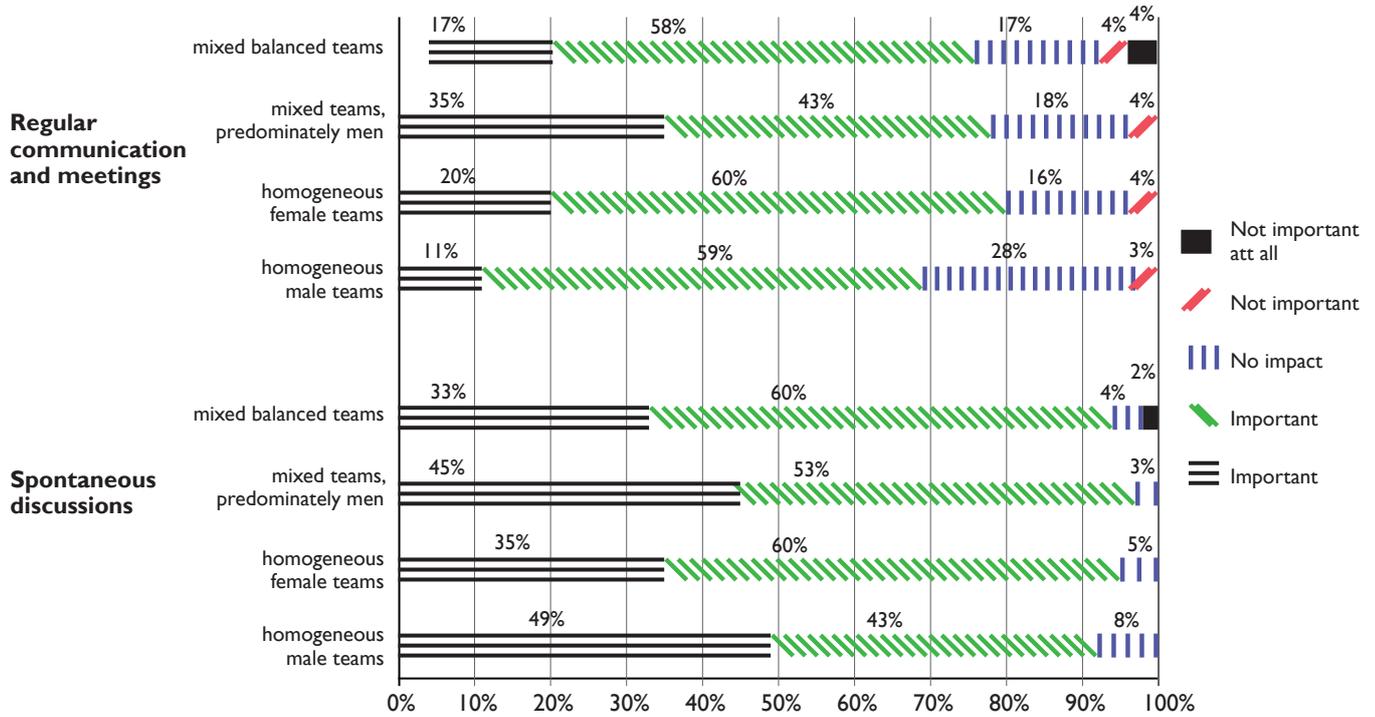
Figure 1. Influence of communication structures in correlation with inventor team constellation

As indicated in the expert interviews, also the male inventors and female inventors without children reveal comparable characteristics regarding their work attitude and priorities. However, figure 3 illustrates that when having children, 67% of the female inventors change their work contract conditions to work part time or participate in home office programs, while only 5% of the male inventors seize this opportunity. Furthermore, only 19% of the female inventors have a partner who actively participates in childcare while they work, whereas 81 % of the male inventors leave the care of children to their partners.

While 50 years ago, a high academic education of women was an exception, and her role as a stay-home mother was clearly defined, it seems that despite the high academic qualification of the women nowadays, in Germany, childcare is still an issue clearly affecting women.

The impact of this classic role model in combination with highly educated female scientists and engineers on the industry is revealed in figure 4: it shows the direct influence of childcare worries on the inventor's innovativeness. While 43% of all female inventors state that the fact of having a valuable and reliable childcare is a strong direct influence factor on her perceived innovativeness at work, only 13% of the male inventors seem to be that strongly affected by the worries of childcare. Moreover, almost 50% of all male inventors contradict the statement of the female inventors, stating that childcare has "no" or "rather no" influence on their innovative potential. Therefore, thesis 3 and 4 of our expert interviews are verified by the online survey.

CONCLUSION

In the R&D environment, success is strongly dependent on a) teamwork and b) constant innovation. Taking advantage of the positive influence of diversity is mandatory for a company to survive in today's industry. When successfully managed, the company gains a powerful tool for competitive advantage by stimulating innovative ideas and leading high performing inventor teams.
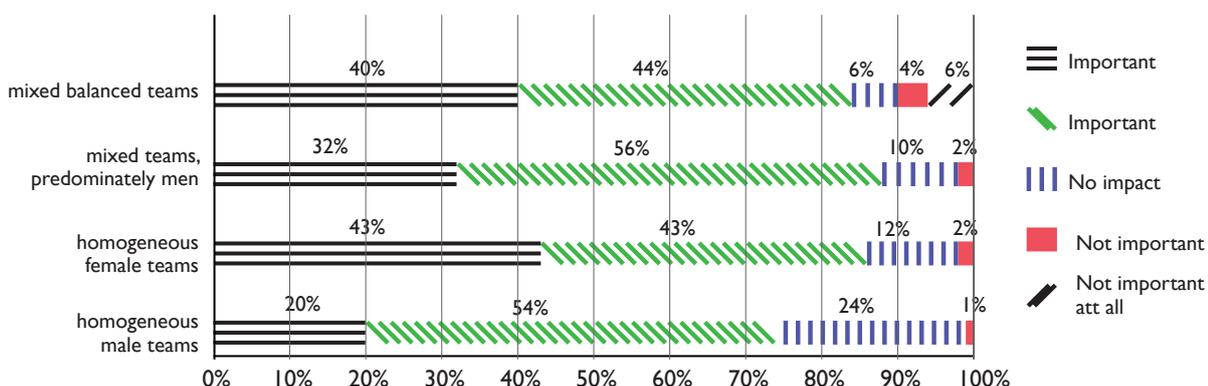
Figure 2. Appreciation of open communication with supervisors and management in correlation with inventor team constellation
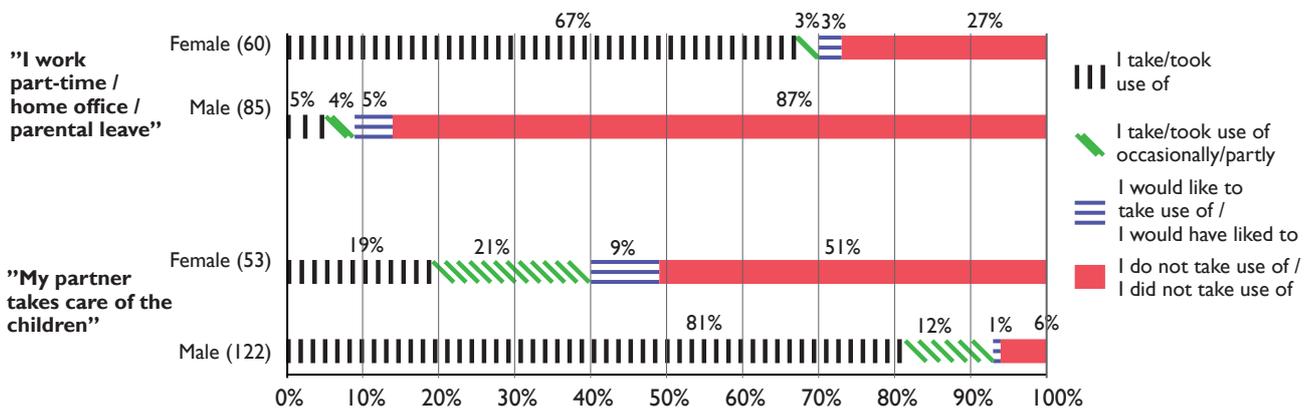
Figure 3 Influence of external childcare on innovation climate in correlation with gender

The presence of women in teams, even when the teams are male dominated, reduces the communication barriers within the team as well as for external communication with the management. Apparently, communication

Figure 4. Influence of child care on innovativeness of inventors

structures within the inventor team as well as the communication to management vary in its style and appreciation in dependence of gender.

Our study clearly indicates that in diverse teams, different needs, values and priorities concern the specific subgroups. The worry about childcare has a major impact on the innovative performance of female inventors, while hardly touching the performance of the male inventors. Hence, it is mandatory to 1) gain awareness of the fact that there are different needs and priorities for each member of a heterogeneous team, 2) identify those needs, and 3) apply appropriate measures on organizational-, team- and individual level in order to satisfy the individual needs within the team to create an innovation environment that allows the industry to gain maximum benefit from the high potential inventors.

The results of the study show that female inventors oftentimes do not perform at their perceived maximum of innovative potential. As a key element, this innovative potential is reduced as soon as female inventors turn to mothers (see figure 4). Suboptimal support for childcare leads to additional worries, while this energy could

otherwise be transformed into innovative power. Politics, academy and industry therefore need to find the most appropriate measures to allow researchers to better cope with their family obligations.

While industry and companies can hardly have an impact on the traditional family role model in the private life of its employees, it is even more important to offer a relief of childcare worries at work. This could be achieved by not only offering childcare institutions, but also by enhancing the reintegration process of inventors after parental leave. Furthermore, encouraging the male inventors to actively participate in childcare and parental leave reduces the women's unilateral burden of childcare worries (see figure 3).

Furthermore, the innovative performance of part time employees is strongly influenced by organization's management abilities. As we could see in a best practice example during our expert interviews, with proper management, it is indeed possible to run a successful, profitable and innovative business without the need for overtime work. This company manages also to integrate innovation- and patent processes into the regular work time, and offers a large variety of successfully applied part-time work solutions for researchers as well as managers.

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Papersession E

How to facilitate gender aware organizational innovations?

Learning community in an innovation system

Eva Amundsdotter, PhD
Division of Gender and Innovation
Luleå University of Technology, Luleå
SWEDEN
eva.amundsdotter@ltu.se

ABSTRACT

This paper examines how a Learning Community within the Innovation system Fiber Optic Valley is conducted. The group consists of people from 10 different organisations, both private and public. The project is a result of the knowledge and results of the R & D project Gender Network (Andersson 2009).

Methodology from Action Research has been used in framing the processes. In particular, Action Learning (McGill & Brockbank 2004) has given both a theoretical basis and methods for building on the relationship between reflection and action. Learning from and reflecting on experiences opens new possibilities to reconsider past events, making sense of one's actions and finding new ways of behaviour at future events (ibid: 13).

Learning Community is part of an approach called Action-Oriented Gender Research. It is a merger of gender research and learning theories from Action research. It is placed in the intersection between practical equality work and gender research – with the so-called doing gender-perspective (West & Zimmerman 1987, Acker 1992).

KEYWORDS: action-oriented gender research, learning community, intervention, doing gender, reflection and action

PRESENTATION AND BACKGROUND

The group in Learning Community is one part of a bigger project about applied gender research in innovation systems. It started in 2009 and runs until the end of 2011. It is performed within the regional innovation system called Fiber Optic Valley, and is financed by Vinnova (The Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems). The project aims at creating gender aware organisations within the innovation system.

An earlier project, called the Gender Network, which lasted from 2006 to 2008, formed a basis for the current project. That project consisted of 13 middle managers from different organisations, which performed joint learning about gender in different ways (Andersson et al 2009). My role in that project was as process leader.

The current research and development project is built on the foundation of the former project. Three of the organisations that participated in the former project are now case studies where we conduct co-research and work with middle managers as change agents, or "Innovative Leaders" as they are called ("we" in this case is myself and Susanne Andersson as gender researchers and Marita Svensson as project manager).

The overall aim is to deepen the work that started in the Gender Network. In addition, we also wanted to broaden the scope of the Innovation system. One part of that aim was to design the Learning Community.

Ten different organisations from both the private and public sector are participating with 2 – 4 persons in the Learning Community. It is a group of 26 participants, 15 women and 11 men. Almost all of them are middle managers. The group meets two days every six months. In total, there will be four large meetings as a part of the project. Local meetings in between are also organised by the group.

Because of the history of the Gender Network, several of the participants have an earlier understanding and knowledge of gender and organisations. The participating organisations and several of its members in the Learning Community have been a part of the Gender Network and /or other seminar and knowledge processes about gender connected to that project. The three organisations forming the case studies are participating,

and form a base for knowledge creation in a bigger context. That element is an important part of what has been possible for the group; a group "new" to gender theory and research would be something very different. With an inexperienced group of participants, we would have needed more time to create a common knowledge base to build from. While we have done that in part, here we were able to go directly to a joint learning and knowledge process, which I will get back to.

Andersson's (2009) research with these 13 middle managers as change agents showed that they had the power to both allocate different tasks and influence values at the workplace around them. It was also observed that some of the managers were able to admit that they had different expectations of female and male employees. That was often not reflected, but it emerged in the research project. The kind of knowledge processes made in the network, combined with the researcher being located at the organisation, created a lot of possibilities for gender awareness and new possible patterns of actions.

This paper is about thoughts and perspectives in the Learning Community within the R & D project that aims for gender aware organisations and exploring the role of gender connected to innovations. Theoretical perspectives are presented and then an example of a joint learning process in the group follows.

ACTION ORIENTED RESEARCH

The gender study framework is based on theories of gender systems (Hirdman 1990, 2001) and the so-called doing gender perspective (West & Zimmerman 1987, West & Fenstermaker 2002). Gender is created in organisations through interactions. A model of how gender is created has been used (Acker 1999, Gunnarsson et al 2003, Andersson et al 2009, Linghag 2009). The model was developed by Joan Acker (1999) and has been expanded by Nordic and other researchers (Gunnarsson et al 2003, Gunnarsson et al 2007, Andersson et al 2009). It was used as the point of departure for the participants' studies and consists of the following four processes (Acker 1999):

- Procedures, activities, and divisions

- Interactions between Individuals and Groups

- Images, Symbols, and Forms of Consciousness

- Internal Mental Work

The model helps to focus not only the counting of women and men in an organisation, a quantitative measure (Andersson & Amundsdotter 2010) but also the qualitative aspects of gender processes in an organisation – which comes out as conditions for women and men – how you can move in the organisation, what kind of work tasks you get to do, how you are listened to, what kind of competence you receive feedback on, etc. This paper follows an example of a shared knowledge process after the participants have made different gender observations. This model and gender theory was thought to be a practical tool to conduct co-research in

the various organisations. The model can help to anchor gender equality work in gender research so that all kinds of aspects and conditions based on gender become subject to change (Ibid, p 7).

We call this kind of research Action Oriented Research. It has been developed in the Gender Network (Andersson 2009, Andersson & Amundsdotter 2010) and in my dissertation work (Amundsdotter 2009b). The Action Oriented Research is a merger between Gender Research and Learning Theories from Action Research (Andersson & Amundsdotter 2010). Using gender theories and methodologies in processes of change is an important part of addressing power relations and how gender is constructed in various organisations. However, the use of gender theories – which in itself often can be both challenging of the every day life of the organisation and by that can create both possibilities and strong tensions – does not automatically lead to people wanting to start change processes. A combination of Gender research and Action research can support this kind of research where focus is both on how gender is handled and how changes can be created – and knowledge about the change processes as a part of the outcome.

Theories of how gender is constructed is used to frame co-research among the participants. Theory and methodology from Action Research is combined, not the least concept and methods on joint learning (West & Zimmerman 1987, McGill & Brockbank 2004, Johannisson, Gunnarsson & Stjernberg 2008).

Joint Learning

In the anthology about joint learning—the interactive research practice—ideas are developed about interactive research in Sweden (Johannisson, Gunnarsson & Stjernberg 2008). The concept of "joint learning" means different things. Johannisson (2008) discusses the concept and says that the choice of the verb form, 'to learn jointly', does not only indicate dialogue as a path to increased insight, but also the idea that life is shaped by an interplay of concrete action and reflection. The research can create a collective voice through which a variety of groups can be heard. Svensson (2008) points out that it is a democratic project; a counterforce to an elitist knowledge production. Johannisson (2008) maintains that interactive research needs to challenge the prevailing ideas that structures in society determine the conditions for people's actions in different ways (Johannisson 2008). He argues that this is necessary in order to liberate people and their ideas, and so that joint learning is a way of creating meaning in a process in which everyone is a subject or co-actor (Amundsdotter 2009 b).

Action research is not a set of principles with clear theories and methods, but is rather a perspective on how to conduct research (Amundsdotter 2009b). It does, however, have an action orientation and supports normative change in one way or another (Aagaard Nielsen & Svensson 2006). At the same time, new knowledge should be created, which is a challenge to combine different purposes. The participatory research conducts research with the participants, not for or on them (Svensson et al 2002).

Action research has many common values with democracy, participatory, growing, emancipation, a better world, sustainable development and more (Aagard Nielsen & Svensson 2006, Reason & Bradbury 2001, Greenwood & Levin 2007, Hansson 2003, Härnsten 2008, Maguire 2001). Some of the action research is, for me, closer to a feminist perspective, notably the part that emphasizes democracy and criticizes authoritarian structures and cultures in society (Aagaard Nielsen & Steen Nielsen, 2006).

> "We cannot choose the commitment—as human beings in the real world we are committed. Commitment is a basic structure of any kind of human living." (Skjervheim in Aagaard Nielsen & Steen Nielsen, 2006, page 70).

Research requires relationships, according to Skjervheim. Reflection is not generalities, but is used in order to deconstruct the current reality and create new realities. Society is frozen in several ways and the challenge for action research is to defrost it. The reality will be deconstructed and the goal is to create something new beyond just improvements and instead go for dreams, utopia and visions (Ibid, page 78). The combination of the gender research and the action research has helped me to have a theoretical framework and methodological ground for different group processes (Argyris & Schön 1974, McGill & Brock Bank 2004, Aagard Nielsen & Steen Nielsen 2006). The methodology includes dialogue, critical reflection, and a search for a transformative change. In a survey of action research—Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change—the researchers argue that there are major opportunities in the meeting between action research and feminist research (Greenwood & Levin 2007). Action research can offer feminists a greater awareness of a variety of intervention and group process techniques that have been developed through participatory research. These techniques can support the feminist commitment to activism and social change goals (ibid, page 166).

To use a gender theoretical frame is not common in Action Research. Andersson (2009) stresses that action research that has been criticized for a lack of gender awareness and power relations (Maguire 2001) would benefit from using gender theory in power analysis. The development in the Nordic countries with clear democratic ambitions has to some extent challenged the uneven relation between researcher and participants (Gunnarsson 2007).

One purpose with a shared knowledge process is to create a reflecting community (Svensson 2002). Researcher and participants explore problematic situations together and the thinking and action is intertwined (Ibid). The theory can contribute to learning from experiences and through that reach reflected knowledge. But the practice is necessary to give the theory content. Svensson (2002) stresses that theory can liberate experiences, which can contribute to change. The theory can guide the development work.

LEARNING COMMUNITY

One inspiration behind the use of the concept "Learning community" comes from Community Action Research (Senge & Scharmer 2001). The action researchers have developed a theory and methodology about learning as a community of practitioners, consultants and researchers. The following refers to their description (Ibid): Community action research focuses on fostering relationships and collaboration among diverse organisations and to "…creating settings for collective reflection that enable people from different organizations to 'see themselves in one another'". (ibid: p 238)

In order to create new knowledge, you need a shared understanding for theory development, tools, and practical knowledge as equally important parts that are dependent on each other (Ibid).

Different kinds of reflecting teams (McGill & Brockbank 2004) help to create a space for reflection and challenge. Going deeper into an organisation gives an opportunity to shared perspectives that can contribute to new insights and learning. One important aim is to create knowledge through critical and creative reflections. This also means that interventions are welcome, from all in the group. Interventions can be performed in different ways. One way is to conduct critical reflections that challenge or undermine norms and things taken for granted. Another type of intervention is to make observations and simply feed back what you see and hear. That kind of reflection can be seen as intervention as well.

Experiences taken from the Gender Network were the importance to build a group for support and reflections, a group that could function effectively together. One way of building the group was to make agreements within the group. This was an experience we took into the next group, the Learning Community. At the first meeting, the following agreements were made. At the second meeting, these agreements were reflected upon, to see whether they work, if something is missing etc. In summary, the agreements made were:

- Contribute to the group,

- Be open to experiments,

- Be present,

- Do not judge or give answers/solutions,

- Confidentiality,

- Listen to each other and allow everyone the chance to be heard,

- Be honest and open,

- Challenge constructively,

- Emotions can be expressed and will not be rejected,

- Have respect for time frames,

- Awareness of diversity,

- Maintain the high priority of our meetings.

And finally – it is ok to change one's mind. The agreements were sent out to everyone and during the meetings, they were on the wall and reflected upon afterwards.

Successes from Community Action Research, that Senge and Scharmer (2001) point out, come from a group of people committed to linking deep change at both a personal and organizational level, using tools based in deep theory and wanting to integrate research and practice. In order to connect the different knowledge and experiences that researchers and practitioners have, a genuine partnership is needed.

One part of this understanding is also to reflect and learn about the knowledge-creating process itself, which, in practice, meant to have regular time for reflection on different levels – individual, group, and organisation – to enhance the awareness, learning and possible change of actions.

Senge and Scharmer stress that people learn best from and with one another; in other words: Learning is social. A commitment can grow in those processes, which means that they come alive in what we do, not what we say (2001).

The Group: Its role and importance

The Learning Community has met two times as a whole group. Words from participants when we have reflected over learning and outcome of the meetings have been about the power of hearing others thoughts and experiences and getting a chance to reflect about one's own organization and one's self as a part of that organisation. It has been possible to conduct reflections and learning at several levels, which, by my experience, takes a while to build before it is possible to do. It was very clear to us in the Project team and some others in the group that we built a foundation on earlier work. I will therefore go back to the Gender Network in order to understand more.

One important part of the processes in the Gender Network was the opportunity that through this network form, the participants are given the opportunity to reflect with others about their own organizational lives (Amundsdotter 2009a). By learning from experiences through reflection with others, possibilities open up for the reconsideration of past events, making sense of one's actions and finding new ways of behaving at future events (Ibid: 13). One part of this education is recognizing the link between action and learning. The other part is making the action learning process supportive and challenging.

However, in order to not only confirm each member in a group but also be able to create a constructive climate of challenge for each other, confidentiality is an essential precondition. Cultivating trust is another crucial aspect of the work in order to function well and be able to learn through knowing, doing and feeling (Ibid: 19).

McGill, Brockbank and Beech (2002) stress the importance for the potential learning relationship of giving opportunities for uncertainty and unstableness. This is what can happen if we reflect on organizational contexts that are taken for granted, for instance. The openness, with feelings or emotions, is needed in order to trust the learning context:

> "When we really learn, particularly that which is potentially transformative, we lay ourselves open to uncertainty and can be temporarily unstable." (Ibid: 9)

To challenge embedded discourse is to uncover the taken-for-granted status (McGill et al 2002). One important part of building a group where this can be possible – to uncover power relations and interactions – was to build both support and critical reflections. Support is necessary, but not sufficient, to challenge prevalent assumptions and norms in a group (McGill & Brockbank 2004). The learning process gave a possibility to make power relations and norms clear (Andersson & Amundsdotter 2010).

A commitment in the group, of wanting to contribute to each other's learning, made it possible to do different kinds of creative and critical learning processes. The point is also that by sharing observations and analyzing them, for instance, insights and thoughts around norms, interactions and power relations in their respective organizations are possible.

What guided this learning process, how it was facilitated, had a ground in the connection between reflection and development. A learning process that is built on reflection and closely related to development is evident in development strategies built on innovations systems and networks (Svensson & Sjöberg 2009).

How things were done in the network was very important. The different knowledge processes, stories from actions, surveys everyone did and gender observations were all starting points for the knowledge process.

Process leading is meant to guide the learning process about gender and to create knowledge not only about gender in the different organisations and about the focus on the middle managers' agencies but also about change processes themselves. A central part of action research is a basic optimism concerning the human ability to learn from joint experiences in groups (Berge & Ve 2000).

Using gender theory meant a critical reflection and understanding of everyday life in the organisations. A tendency to "censor" the role of gender, which can be seen as a form of resistance, makes it especially useful for finding ways to intervene in order to create learning through creative and critical reflection (Amundsdotter 2009b). In order to enhance that joint learning and sharing, trust and commitment were the cornerstones for building the group.

Experiences from the Gender Network has been transferred into the Learning Community, not least the least of which was the fact that eleven of the participants – including researcher, process leader and project leader – were a part of the Gender Network. That fact contributes a lot to the fact that the group was able to form a foundation for joint knowledge production quite quickly. In the example from Action Community Research (Senge & Scharmer 2001), they met for several

years, which makes our example a smaller version – and still possible with the background in the former R & D – project. That means that several of the participants started their "journey" in 2006, when the former project started. The word journey has been used of several participants in different networks, often to describe a big impact on that person (Amundsdotter 2009b). A journey can be seen symbolically as what moves one to another point, changes perspective, sees other things. Participants in the community action research also use the word journey, to describe the strong impact the work on sustainable development had on them (Senge & Scharmer 2001).

ONE MEETING WITH THE GROUP OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

The group met for the first time as a group (as I mentioned, many had been in the Gender Network together) in December 2009. There was a meeting between the next big meeting during following winter. The empiri, which will be presented, took place in May 2010, the second big meeting.

The participants got the task between the first and second meeting to conduct a gender observation of something they wanted to explore. Gender theory and the earlier presented model of how gender is created in organisations was a foundation and the agreement was to observe something they wanted to study in their organisation from a gender perspective.

They also had that task before the first meeting. It was then clear that quite a few of the participants didn't really know what to look for. But after having had two days in the group, with thoughts, lecturing about gender theory and sharing experiences of different things, it seemed to get more clear. In addition, training, to do not one, but several observations, is also learning to look for gendered meanings and expressions.

Earlier work with gender observations in groups of change agents show a big potential to create awareness and interventions in norms and things taken for granted (Amundsdotter 2010).

The process of working with knowledge processes from the gender observations was done in several steps. The first step was to meet in smaller groups, mixed with participants from different organisations. They shared their observations – what they had done, what they saw and reflections around that. The smaller groups, who all had an appointed group leader, then looked for patterns and variations in their stories. Examples of questions to the stories were: Was something surprising? Was something told again and again? .

The second step was then to gather all groups for a joint session. The group leaders, four people, formed a small circle in the middle. The task was to have a dialogue in the inner group about what had happened in their respective group, which I will get back to soon.

The third step was to let the "outer" circle, the rest of us, have a dialogue about what we heard and thought of the conversation in the inner circle – we became a "reflecting team". Reflections were made within the framework of what we heard, what we did not hear, or perhaps something that was left out that was striking, for example.

The group in the middle did not join, but listened to the conversation around them.

The fourth and final step at the time was to conclude with a joint dialogue of the whole group – the inner group then moved their chairs and joined the rest.

The Dialogue in the Inner Circle

One observation that was described was an example of what the observer thought she would see, but did not occur. She observed the interaction of a gender mixed group working with education around construction work. She thought the male colleagues would dominate the meeting. Instead she observed a climate of listening, paying close attention to each other and equal sharing of the time space. She was surprised.

Another observation was about a group of men visiting an industrial workplace. The man who showed the group around also took the men to the dining room for some coffee. This man had to leave earlier so he left the group of men in the coffee room. Eventually the men left and the man went back to clear the coffee room. The room had been totally cleared, the dishes were washed and the tables were cleaned. He was proud that the group of men had taken responsibility for that.

The next morning he met with a female employee who told him that she had worked late and had gone to the dining room to have dinner. The room was rather messy, so she cleaned it up before she had her dinner. Another man, who, like her, had been to some training on gender equality, asked her why she did it. He had also been in the dining room late and seen the mess, but had not done anything about it. It was the other man's group visit and he should do it.

One commented that it was typical that the woman took that responsibility. Another said it was good that the man asked her why she did it, as a way of questioning gender marked activities. A third one suggested that, on the contrary, the man's reaction was very "typically" gendered: He saw the mess but left it, for it was not "his".

The observation was reflected upon and new perspectives and interpretations were made. One important outcome, as stated by the observer, was that now the three people at the company (the two men and the woman) had a joint language to talk about interactions between men and women at the workplace. A language based on knowledge about doing gender and power relations connected to gender.

The group continued with an observation: It was a meeting for managers that were supposed to last for one hour. It was said that a special topic was the most important part of the meeting, and one of the women was suppose to talk about new concepts. A man was supposed to talk about something else, so in all there were two presenters. The man started, and talked for half an hour.

When she finally got the attention, he interrupted her and talked several times. She didn't have time to finish what she was going to say, so she sent her presentation out by mail instead. The observer was one of the managers in that group. She saw this and was very frustrated that she didn't act and wondered why. Why didn't she support the woman so she got the time she was supposed to have? Why didn't anyone else do that? She felt disappointed in herself.

The group talked about how easy it is to do nothing, mostly from fear of conflict. Another said that this was a typical example of gender relations that stopped the business. The woman was going to talk about business concepts, which instead was mailed to the group, and could probably be seen as a less effective way of communication than a managers meeting. That the man got the time without being stopped could be seen as an effect of the gender order, with men, as a group, as superior.

Another observation was described. There was a meeting about strategies, with five people, four men and one woman. They were supposed to present their field and then talk about strategies and priority. The format for the meeting was that each person would get 10 minutes to present his or her work. When the woman started to present, she was interrupted after one minute by one of the men who totally devalued her area. She finally got the floor again, but then after a couple of minutes the leader of the meeting interrupted her and supported the previous man's critiques. The woman felt very bad and felt that no one in the room was aware of what was happening; or they were aware but didn't oppose what was happening. She felt she was treated disrespectfully.

One participant said, 'what do you do when you are "alone" in seeing or experiencing some treatment?' No one answered, and another participant continued with a new observation: At an industrial workplace, one person had observed how often men were gathering around a machine. When one man has problems with a machine, other men come to support that man. When a woman has a problem with a machine, men do not gather – and neither do women. She has to go to the manager and ask for help.

Different interpretations were made in the group – bonding between men but also expressions of lack of effectiveness. The men can allow themselves to leave what they are doing. While women, as one of the women from a similar workplace said, are "good girls" and deliver what is expected of them – what they sense is expected, often this kind of expectations is in "the air" and therefore subject to different interpretations, was also said.

The Outer Groups Dialogue

When the outer group was having their dialogue, someone asked, 'what would happen if a group of women gathered around a machine like that? Would that be accepted? Would that ever happen?' Several in the group agreed that that would simply not happen. Women would not do that – and if they did, it would be met with outside reactions; they would challenge a space that the men have taken.

Others suggested that men really have a need for bonding, for feeling the importance of belonging to a group. When the men gather round a machine, it is to support and watch the man who is the expert in fixing the machine, one of the men claimed. The message is then "we know you can fix this, so we will watch and support you doing it". Other men agreed to that description.

The outer group observed that women seemed to work with things that had a lower value than what the men did in the organisation.

Finally, in the concluding part of the process, comments about doing gender were done – how apparent it is that gender is done in interaction. Interesting, learning but also upsetting – a lot of inequalities and unequal conditions were uncovered.

THE RESEARCHER ROLE

I perceive my Researcher role in the Learning Community with inspiration from Aagaard Nielsen and Steen Nielsen:

> "The Action Researcher's role is to intervene in social and cultural processes trying to organise them in the form of a knowledge creating process" (2006: p. 67).

I use the concept of Participating experience (Hastrup 1995); instead of participating observations she wanted to contribute to a more equal relationship between the researcher and the researched. The knowledge process, based on gradually acquired personal experiences and insights, moved to the centre of her attention (Eikeland 2006). In other words, I, like the others in the room, share thoughts and experiences that I have.

Since we are two researchers, this gives an important opportunity to reflect on what is happening in the group. We have meetings in between, also with the project manager, and make reflections and interpretations of what is happening. We also plan the meetings, together with inviting all the participants to express needs and ideas, which also is done in the group. The meetings are then designed.

The meetings are taped, which give an opportunity to deepen our interpretations. The plan is to feed back these interpretations to the community, and make joint analyses of outcomes and experiences made.

Everyone in the group, which the agreements open up for, can make interventions. That is also as I see it, a way of addressing power relations in the group: The network agreement is a design where everyone has a voice, and by contributing to each other you challenge power relations. Also outspoken in the Learning Community, in a couple of organisations, some of the participants are there with their manager. In that kind of power relation, it can often take courage to be "outspoken".

Also, in the roots from Action Research, experiments in groups with democratic processes were central (Aagaard Nielsen & Steen Nielsen 2006). Lewin wanted democratic cultures to grow, through joint learning (Ibid). The participants received training in the democratic method of working in a group.

This is something I see in Learning Community – the way we work in the group opens up for active listening, new perspectives and awareness. The participants from one of the industrial, male dominated workplaces for instance, have openly expressed that HOW we do things in the Learning Community is very new – and inspiring – to them. They took some of the processes and methods they learned at the Community to their own organisation and used it with other colleagues.

CONCLUSIONS

I think that how the learning and knowledge processes is performed affects both what we can understand and see as well as how the group can develop in its function.

By using theories and methodologies from the different research fields opens up the possibilities to create more sustainable change processes, which can contribute to gender equality and gender awareness in organisations. The kind of learning processes and researcher role in use, opens up for different kinds of interventions in the Learning Community, which aims at uncovering norms and things taken for granted which function as resistance to a normative change.

One key conclusion is that it matters both WHAT we do and HOW we do it. By using knowledge and experiences from the two research fields, change processes can be developed that challenges images of women and men and different construction processes in the organisation that limits people including the ability to be innovative. It is connected – the organisation itself and what it produces. If the interactions look a certain way, it will affect what is possible for humans to do in that context, or as certain humans can do, power relations that exclude women for instance. Can it even be so, that a gender aware organisation can be seen as an innovation in itself? If you start to go outside normative thinking, which often means exclusion of perspectives but also possible humans, will you not only see new ways, new possible patterns of actions, but also new thought patterns that can open for new insights and possible new innovations?

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Facilitating gender awareness in everyday organizational life through co-research with managers[1]

Susanne Andersson, PhD Researcher,
Centre for Gender Studies
Stockholm University, SWEDEN
susanne.andersson@gender.su.se

ABSTRACT

The paradoxical part of doing gender in organizations is while managers in the myriads of formal and informal decisions in everyday organizational life do gender with precision, which creates certain gendered subject positions and unequal conditions for development and careers for co-worker, this is not something that they are generally aware of and reflect upon (Andersson et al 2009; Martin 2003, 2006). This is a methodological challenge when working with developing gender aware organizations. Performing co-research with managers on their own workplaces has proven to be a method to reveal not just how managers describe but also the ways they actually act and what conditions these actions creates for co-workers. The method described in the article is a way to facilitate reflection processes to increase the gender awareness for managers. For gender awareness not to be just lip service, everyday behaviors also need to be changed. The method can contribute to transformative learning where new behaviors emerge.

KEYWORDS: doing gender, action-oriented gender research, co-research method

INTRODUCTION

People in organizations construct gender with recursive precision, constructions that are integrated with everyday organizational life (Acker 1992). Even though gender constructions are constantly done and permeate everyday organizational life, they are not conceptualized in that manner. The paradoxical part of doing gender in organizations is while people do gender with precision, which creates certain subject positions and unequal conditions for development and careers, doing gender is not something that people are generally aware of and reflect upon (Martin 2003; 2006). The social construction of gender is instead usually integrated with what is understood as the natural order and therefore taken for granted. When working with development processes in organizations, with the aim of creating gender-aware workplaces, the social construction needs to be scrutinized with the focus on power and power relations. How those with formal or informal power act will then be of special concern, because they can decide what gender should imply (Andersson 2003). In this kind of development work, it is also necessary to address and challenge the taken-for-granted, such as norms, ideals and notions, which appear to be gender neutral yet maintain a gendered order in which men and certain forms of masculinity predominate and women and femininity are marginalized (Brockbank & McGill 2007; Connell 1987; Meyerson & Colb 2000).

ACTION-ORIENTED GENDER RESEARCH

In the work of developing gender-aware organizations, an important first step is to reveal how gender is done and with the ambition to make people to act in new ways. The lack of awareness that exists around gender is a methodological challenge that needs to be overcome. Thus, action-oriented gender research has been developed as a new approach (Amundsdotter 2009; Andersson, Amundsdotter & Svensson 2008; Andersson & Amundsdotter 2010). Action-oriented gender research is placed at the intersection between practical equality work and gender research with the ambition not only to create a gender-aware organization but also to theoretically conceptualize how gender is done in organizations and how the social and constraining unaware constructions of gender, which give rise to unequal conditions, can be changed.

Action-oriented gender research is a merger of two theoretical perspectives (Andersson & Amundsdotter 2010), both the perspectives of "doing gender" (West & Zimmerman 1987, Acker 1992), with an under¬standing of gender as an ongoing accomplishment, and learning theories from action research with a focus on reflection, learning and especially reflective learning for transformation (McGill & Brockbank 2004).

To achieve transformative learning, reflective dialogues with others are important (Brockbank, McGill & Beech 2002). A fruitful way of organizing these reflective processes is to form networks of participants who meet on several occasions, where the reflective and transformative processes are led by a process leader using proven methods (Amundsdotter 2009). Further, co-research performed together with the practitioners is another characteristic that has proven to be a fruitful way of organizing for knowledge production and transformative learning.

To achieve learning for transformation, it is also necessary to challenge the discrepancy between what people say - and really think they do - and what they actually are doing. Argyris and Schön (1974), central theorists within the action research tradition, distinguish between what people say, and even genuinely believe; they are doing in a given situation, "espoused theory"; and what they actually do, "theory-in-use". For example, people in an organization describe it as an equal organization, and genuinely believe that this is the case and that they act in ways that create equal conditions for women and men. A detailed study of the same organization shows that this is not so. In the everyday interaction, people of power are acting in ways that give rise to unequal conditions, without being aware of their behavior. When working with creating gender-aware organizations, an important first step is to organize learning processes to uncover the implicit understandings of gender (Amundsdotter 2009). However, to create gender awareness, talking about equality is not enough. For it not to be just lip service, new and gender-aware behaviors must emerge: i.e., interactive practices in the everyday organizational life that create equal conditions for women and men.

However, according to Ellström (2009), who argued with references to Argyris and Schön (ibid.), it is much easier to influence how people talk about something than to make them change their actual behavior. During our development work, this has also been an issue; i.e., it has proven to be difficult to get practitioners to not just talk about equality but also act in new gender-aware ways. Therefore, in a research and development project called the Gender Network, a special co-research method was developed, which was a way to address the problem of the discrepancy between talk, beliefs and actions. Another key issue that contributed to the development was that the practitioners - in our case, middle managers - had difficulties understanding the gender theoretical knowledge that managers, from their power positions and in everyday interactions, created unequal conditions for co-workers. In the article, the developed co-research method will be presented. Before that, the context in which the method has been used will briefly be described.

CONTEXT: THE GENDER NETWORK

The co-research method was developed during the course of a research and development project called the Gender Network where the majority of the thirteen participants, women and men, were middle managers. The project was conducted from 2006 to 2008 and was financed by Vinnova, The Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems. The aim of the project was to

- spotlight the role of middle managers in how gender is constructed in organizations and

- how how gender can be changed at that level.

Of special interest was to look at how middle managers acted on a daily basis, on what grounds and which conditions for development this created.

The Gender Network was, as the name suggests, organized as a network that met on thirteen occasions. To begin, the meetings were organized as a two-day gathering every sixth week. The number of meetings was then gradually reduced to two every six months, alternatively two days and one day. All of the meetings were facilitated by the process leader, Eva Amundsdotter. The development process revolved around three phases: revealing the doing of gender, mobilization strategies for change and working with change (Amundsdotter 2009; Andersson et al. 2009).

The three phases was structured around Joan Ackers's (1992) model consisting of four different processes:

1. gender segregation patterns

2. symbols/discourses/notions

3. interaction

4. identity work

This model systematized the analysis of the organizations and anchored the R&D work in gender research so that the quantitative as well as the qualitative aspects of the workplaces became focused. These analyses later formed the basis for reflective discussions between practitioners, the process leader and researchers; for more elaboration on the usage of the model, see Andersson et al. (2009).

During the network meeting, I, as the researcher, mostly kept a relatively low profile, documenting the processes but sometimes, after analyzing the processes and what restricted them, intervening. Between the network meetings, I carried out participant observations for three days at each middle manager's workplace. Following in the article, I will present a co-research method that was developed during these occasions. The co-research method proved to be useful for increasing gender awareness and spotting the discrepancy between what people believe and say they do and how they actually act in everyday life.

CO-RESEARCH OF THE INTERACTION DURING MEETINGS

Over three days, I, conducted observations at each middle manager's organization. Given that the middle managers spent a large part of their working day in meetings, this became one of the contexts that often were observed.

The middle managers were usually the chairpersons of the meetings and there¬fore had a significant influence on how they were organized: for example, influence and power over the subject discussed and who was integrated in the discussions and who was marginalized. The interactions during the meeting were later on analyzed as examples of reoccurring acts that created certain and often unequal conditions for development and careers for women.

Throughout the actual meeting, I maintained a low profile. Immediately after, with the meeting still fresh in my mind, I and the middle manager sat down and discussed it. The meeting came to be the common ground on which reflection evolved, which made it possible to illuminate the interaction during the meeting from several perspectives.

In the beginning of this talk, I gave the middle manager the opportunity to describe how she/he had experienced the meeting. I asked what the middle manager had specifi¬cally thought of and if there had been any specific situation that had caught her/his attention. Only after the middle manager had the opportunity to describe her/his actions did the researcher present her interpretation from a gender perspective. This presentation, however, was carried out so that the manager was able to participate in a dialogue and add to, confirm or modify.

Thus, the interactive actions during the meeting performed by the middle manager from his/her power position in relation to the co-workers and what conditions these actions created were the common ground for the reflective and knowledge process. For the middle manager, this created the opportunity to reflect on his/her actions. Generally, the middle managers in the project rarely had the opportunity to reflect on their own practices, which was therefore experienced as positive. Further, performing research in this manner gave the practitioners an opportunity to reflect upon their own behavior from different perspectives, which also contributed to a better understanding of the theoretical knowledge that gender is something that is constructed and that they from their power positions are key actors in these constructions. This, too, was seen as positive.

To conduct an ethnographic study with an observation of the meeting and possibly a subsequent interview with the middle manager, without telling the researcher's interpretation, would have been a more traditional way of conducting research. Instead, performing research in this other manner, facilitating reflecting processes on everyday interactive actions, proved to be more fruitful, and this method was therefore used. A method by which as well the middle managers talk about and unawareness of their actions during a meeting and how the same actions could be understood from a gender perspective was revealed.

During the course of the discussion, the meeting was highlighted from diffe¬rent perspectives, which gave rise to mutual learning with many "Ah ha!" experiences. The picture that emerged was shar¬per and more nuanced than the initial interpretation because even the middle managers' understanding of certain actions was clarified. At the same time, the meeting was illuminated from a gender perspective, which increased the middle manager's understanding that his/her actions in everyday life created certain conditions for development and careers. Further, the middle managers came to realize that it was essential for managers to be gender aware; otherwise, there was a clear risk that the middle manager in his/her everyday interactions created unequal conditions for women. With the use of the co-research, using Argyris and Schön's (1974) conceptualization, one could conclude that the espoused theory and the theory in use became subjects of the reflective processes, which contributed to transformative learning where new behaviors emerged.

SUMMARY

In the Swedish context, equality is a strong normative discourse in the sense that it is not appropriate to say that you are against equality between women and men. In many organizations in which we have worked, we are told that they have previously been engaged in equality projects and the organizations therefore genuinely believe that they today are equal organizations. When we have studied the organization, we have found that this is not the case. These creates a special challenge, when people actually think that it is an equal organization and believe that they are acting in ways that create equal conditions, but this is not the case.

From a feminist point of view, with the ambition to create gender-aware organizations, uncovering how gender is done in organizations is an important first task of research that needs to be performed in different steps. In development work, an important first step is to make the doings of gender visible, which is a methodological challenge.

Co-research in everyday life together with middle managers has proven to be a fruitful method to make visible not just the way people describe but also the way people actually act in everyday life and what conditions this creates for co-workers in relation to gender. For gender awareness not to be just lip service, everyday behaviors also need to be changed. For people with formal power, this is essential; otherwise, there is a clear risk that the managers create more favorable conditions for men than for women for their development and careers.

Notes

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Action research with dual agendas

Martha Blomqvist,
Centre for Gender Research,
Uppsala University, Sweden
martha.blomqvist@gender.uu.se

Hans Frennberg
Div. of Information Systems
Swedish Defence Research Agency

ABSTRACT

This paper compares two action research projects, each with the twofold objective of advancing gender equality and improving organizational productivity and competitiveness. One of the projects took place in the late 90s at a global retail and manufacturing company in a non-specified commercial sector and location, most likely somewhere in the US. The other is an ongoing project at a Swedish technology-oriented research and innovation organization. This paper first problematizes the dual agenda approach and looks into empirical findings supporting it. It then compares other aspects of the two action research projects. A great deal of similarities, such as the dual agenda and the collaborative research approach, but also significant differences as regards the way the projects were initiated, contextual factors like the character of the workplaces, employees' educational level, and the design of social security benefits regulating working conditions, are identified and reflected on. Our conclusion is that initiation and introduction at an early stage are of utmost importance for the outcomes of an action research project.

KEYWORDS: gender equality, action research, collaborative research, organization, dual agenda

THE TWO ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS

In a thematic issue – "Beyond Armchair Feminism" – of Organization (2000:7), researchers involved in an action research project offer a detailed and self-critical analysis of the problems their project faced and of their (sometimes failed) attempts to handle them (Meyerson and Kolb 2000; Coleman and Rippin 2000; Ely and Meyerson 2000). As stories of success are so much more common than those of failure, the generosity of these researchers in sharing their experiences of a failed project is all the more important and their analysis is of great interest to any change-oriented project. In the same issue of Organization two prominent organization theorists, Joan Acker and Jeff Hearn, comment on the project, contributing to the analysis with their somewhat different theoretical understandings (Acker 2000; Hearn 2000.) The project in question is hereafter referred to as the BAF[1] project.

The BAF project was initiated by feminist researchers, concerned about how little has actually changed within organizations, despite the considerable contributions of researchers in academia to organizational processes, structures and knowledge from a variety of perspectives. One researcher had developed a relationship with the founder and CEO of a large global retail and manufacturing company, who shared their goal of creating a gender-equitable workplace and was willing to open her company to the researchers. The Ford Foundation funded the project jointly with the company. One of the company's manufacturing sites – an old-fashioned and highly regulated production facility, run along very traditional lines – was selected for concrete changes in work practices. This division employed some 300 people and was hierarchically highly sex-segregated. It is very likely that the average educational level at this factory was low.

In 2008 VINNOVA – the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems – launched the programme Applied Gender Research for Strong Research and Innovation Milieus (Tiger), the purpose of which is to integrate knowledge gained from calls for proposals in R&D projects in areas supported by VINNOVA under other programmes. The FGF project (Change and gender in FOCUS) at FOI, the Swedish Defence Research Agency, is one of the projects funded by Tiger. Most of the employees in this project-based research organization have university degrees in engineering or natural sciences; hence most of them are of course men. The research environment participating in the project

is concentrated to the Swedish Institute Excellence Centre FOCUS, presently co-funded by Vinnova, the Knowledge Foundation (KK-stiftelsen) and participating industry. FOCUS is hosted by the Information Systems Division of FOI, and the FGF project works mainly within this structure. The initiative for the FGF project was taken by the Information Systems Division. A gender researcher and a consultant were attached to the project after the decision was made to apply for funding for the project. The Information Systems Division employs approximately 300 people, of whom slightly more than 13% are women.

DUAL AGENDA APPROACHES

According to the call, the Tiger programme's longer-term aims are to promote sustainable growth in Sweden. The call is based on the logic that strengthened competitiveness and sustainable growth will be achieved while the numeric gender equality increases as innovation capability is no longer restrained by current normative thinking about sex/gender (Pettersson 2010:4). Not surprisingly, the Tiger programme-funded FGF project is concerned with organizational interests like enhanced organizational competence and the development of new applications. It aims at increased awareness and knowledge of gender-related patterns and to initiate processes in an attempt to change gender-related mindsets and actions that may restrain creativity and innovation within an organization. Its objectives are thus twofold: the advancement of gender equality and the development of productivity and competitiveness of an organization.

Likewise, the BAF project highlighted a twofold objective to advance gender equality and to improve organizational goals. Based on experiences from previous projects, the researchers in the BAF project saw the value of a "dual agenda", meaning that their approach was framed as being capable of advancing gender equity and, at the same time, increasing organizational effectiveness. They stressed that "the same assumptions, values and practices that compromise gender equity often undermine effectiveness as well, despite the organizational purposes they are intended to serve" (Meyerson and Colb 2000: 555).

The reports on the BAF project do not mention whether this link was questioned by the participants in the project or problematized by the researchers. In the FGF project we had recurring discussions about the matter, which eventually resulted in our addressing the question and conducting an overview of research on the issue.

GENDER EQUALITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL INTERESTS

If gender equity is shown to increase growth, competitiveness, productivity etc., it gives us the ultimate argument for determined efforts to increase equal opportunity. So, what kind of support does research offer for a correlation between gender equity and other organizational interests? Below we give an overview of studies looking into the effects of gender composition on company profitability.

Women on the board of directors

In Sweden, the question of how to increase numbers of women board members has regularly come up on the political agenda for at least the past 15 years. Since Norway's introduction of gender quotas for board members in 2004, Swedish interest in the question has grown all the more. Correlations between company productivity and numbers of women as managing directors and board members of companies quoted on the exchange have attracted much attention and are fairly well researched, probably because data are easily accessible from companies' annual reports.

Shortly after the publishing of a Catalyst report – The Bottom Line: Corporate Performance and Women's Representation on Boards (2007) – claiming that companies with three or more women board directors perform notably stronger than average, the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv 2007) published a review of studies claiming a relationship between numbers of women in top positions and companies' financial results. According to the review, seven of 14 studies show no correlation between numbers of women in top positions and financial results while six show a co-variation but no causal correlation. Only one of the 14 studies shows tendencies towards a positive effect between the numbers of women and the financial performance of the company (Kossowska et al. 2005).

Possible explanations for the co-variances shown by several of the studies, and also mentioned by some of the studies' authors, are that companies that are performing well may be more inclined to recruit women, and that it is the mix of women and men – not the women themselves – that results in better financial performance.

As our focus is not only on women in top positions, we now turn to studies discussing the relationship between the composition of women and men in the workplace and organizational interests. Two quantitative Swedish studies have looked at efficiency effects of the composition of women and men at work. One relates the composition in occupational categories to sick leave (Alexanderson 1995), and the other looks into the relationship between companies' gender equality and their profitability (NUTEK 1999a, b, c).

Cutting costs by cutting sick leave

Sick leave means direct costs for the employer; thus, cutting sick leave rates should generate profit. Kristina Alexanderson's (1995, 2001) study of sick leave in different occupations shows that average number of days of leave, for women as well as men, is very low in gender-integrated occupations and higher in male- and female-dominated ones. Women had higher sick-leave rates than men in all occupational categories, but exceptionally so in the extremely male-dominated group of occupations. As other studies, using other definitions of sickness, have confirmed the correlation between this and numerical gender segregation (Alexanderson 2001), a statistical correlation seems to be well verified. The question is what it means. Is it the gender segregation of the occupation, or is it the working conditions, that influence the sickness levels? Most gender-integrated occupations require a high

level of education, are comparatively well paid, involve work that is mostly not physically strenuous and are conducted in an environment without severe physical work environment problems. It seems reasonable to assume that patterns of sickness in different occupations are connected to the content of the work and to the work environment, rather than to an abstract gender distribution of the whole occupational category. Looking into plausible explanations for her findings, Alexanderson acknowledges these factors related to the content of work, as well as other possible mechanisms, most of which are related to the work organization (Alexanderson 1995: 54). Still, she finds it

> "well worth mentioning, without knowledge of the underlying mechanisms, that gender integration might have a sole, positive effect on health and on sickness absence"
> (Alexanderson 1995: 59).

Finding it problematic to use the gender composition of the occupational category as a proxy for the composition of the workplace, Arne Mastekaasa (2004) set up a study which made it possible to simultaneously consider workplace and occupation. His study shows that the results turned out very different depending on whether the gender composition was measured within the workplace or within occupations. For example, women's sickness absence was lowest at male-dominated workplaces but relatively high in male-dominated occupations. Controlling for differences between occupational categories, men's sickness absence turned out to be largely unrelated to the gender composition of the workplace, whereas for women the level of sickness absence turned out to be higher in female-dominated workplaces, though the relationship was weak. The overall impression of Mastekaasa's analysis is that sickness absence is only weakly related to the gender composition of both the workplace and the occupational category. Controlling for occupational category is an important strength of this study. A limitation is that data are available only for a sample of individuals at each workplace. The study therefore does not rule out the possibility of a correlation between the gender distribution at the workplace or team level and sick leave. However, such a correlation has yet to be shown.

Gender equality and profitability
A study by the Swedish Business Development Agency (NUTEK) uses organizational level data to investigate the link between gender equality and profitability (NUTEK 1999a, 1999b, 1999c). Almost 14,000 companies in the business field are encompassed in the study, relating three quantitative variables measuring gender equality – representation, levels of parental leave and job structure – to company profitability.

The first variable, representation of women and men with different educational qualifications, measures how the companies correspond to the overall situation in the labour force as regards women and men in different educational categories (1999a: 24ff). The second variable, employees' use of parental leave, is assumed to mirror the gender equality climate in a company. NUTEK takes its point of departure in the use of temporary parental leave days for the care of

sick children (ibid: 39ff). The more equal the number of days drawn by men and women in a company, the better its gender equality climate is assumed to be. As there are no data available on job structure (the placement of men and women in different hierarchical positions), it is measured with the distribution of income between men and women (ibid: 32ff). The more evenly incomes are distributed between men and women, the more gender-equal the workplace is assumed to be. Finally, profitability, to which the three gender quality measures are related, is defined by the company's earning power and productivity (ibid: 47ff). Productivity, in turn, is determined by the net value added per employee.

Correlations between the gender equality criteria and profitability are not unambiguous. The more gender-equal a company is, in terms of representation of women and men with different educational levels, the better its profitability. Companies whose workforce in different educational categories mirrors the total composition of men and women in these categories are thus more profitable than other companies. This correlation is the only one stressed by NUTEK:

> "This is taken to mean that a company with a representatively balanced workforce is organised in such a way that a greater number of staff feel disposed to perform well, that the company takes into account the skills of each individual regardless of gender, and that opportunities for synergy effects are properly exploited."
> (NUTEK 1999c: 7).

Exactly what the gender equality attitude, in recruitment mirroring the total composition of women and men in these educational categories, consists of is somewhat difficult to understand, however. Companies, whose workforce deviates from the average representation of the labour force in a "positive" direction, like those where the share of women with a qualified technological education greatly exceeds the average of the labour force, are namely considered just as unequal as those whose share is below average. We believe that this definition of gender equality differs from common understandings of the concept, and would have preferred a definition that considers the direction of the variance. The correlation can actually be understood as implying that companies that recruit non-traditionally, employing more than the average number of women, are less profitable.

Also, the distribution of women's and men's use of temporary parental leave to look after a sick child is shown to correlate with profitability. This link, too, is somewhat problematic. When the difference between women's and men's drawn days of temporary parental allowance is small it has been shown that this is because women make use of comparatively few days, and when the difference is large it is because women make use of comparatively many days. Men's use of temporary parental leave varies very little between workplaces. The correlation thus shows that companies, at which women draw few days of parental allowance, approaching men's lower level, are more profitable than other companies. A climate in which neither men nor women use their right to stay home with a sick child can hardly be labelled gender-equal. What NUTEK here shows is that the employees' use of parental leave negatively affects the

company's profitability. A more reasonable definition of gender equality in terms of use of parental leave would take its starting point in variations in men's use of parental leave.

Between job structure (or rather the distribution of income between women and men) and profitability, no obvious or uniform correlations are found. According to NUTEK, "this could be taken to mean that women are neither better nor worse than men as managers and specialists" (NUTEK 1999c: 8).

The study is unique in that it is based on data from the company level, that is, work organizations. Although NUTEK's conclusions are relatively careful (with the exception of the impact of the share of women and men in different educational categories), the study is diligently referred to and it is assumed to offer evidence that gender equality is profitable. It does not, however, give credible arguments for a correlation between gender equality and profitability. Also, if such a correlation exists it may be difficult to quantitatively establish, and it may be even more problematic to prove its causality.

Most gender researchers with access to quantitative data, which would allow the demonstration of a correlation between profit and gender composition, have certainly done what they could to show it. However, few quantitative social sciences studies failing to show expected and desired correlations receive broad attention. The shortage of studies showing the link thus tells us that those who have investigated it have had little success. The number of studies actually carried out but not showing a link probably greatly exceeds that of those claiming to do so.

Profitability, like sickness, is influenced by many factors. Although the degree of gender equality may be one of these factors, it is very doubtful that in a statistical study it could surpass influences from other factors for which data are lacking and which therefore cannot be taken into account, like the company's history and competition relationships as well as other environmental conditions. In studies of real work organizations it is not possible, like it is in experimental studies, to keep constant all factors except those one wants to study. However, somewhat more control of influencing factors can be attained through studying teams working with the same tasks.

Results of teamwork

In a study designed almost as an experiment, Graham D. Fenwick and Derrick J. Neal (2001) investigate the question of the effect of gender composition on group performance. Groups of students first performed simulated managerial activities and then submitted written group reports on their performances. The managerial decisions part involved too much work for one person and required frequent intra-group interaction, for information sharing and joint decision-making. The written group reports involved individual writing skills, and success presumed that one or two people would take on leadership roles, coordinating tasks and making decisions for the group as a whole. The number of women per group turned out to be positively related to the economic outcome of the managerial decisions,

while there were no significant correlations between gender composition and the quality of the written group report. Thus, only genuine teamwork seems to thrive in gender-mixed groups.

An obvious advantage of Fenwick and Neal's study is that it examines the meaning of gender composition for different types of tasks; on the one hand, tasks that require interaction within the group, and on the other hand individual work tasks performed within the group. Another point is that they try to identify the mechanism behind the correlation. They explain the superior performances of mixed groups with women's more interactive, people-oriented and co-operative work styles, combined with men's more analytical decision-making tendencies and competitive orientation. The results suggest that certain kinds of performances by workplace teams could be enhanced by paying attention to their gender composition, while other kinds of work tasks have nothing to gain through integrating women and men.

A fresh study identifies a group-based intelligence, a distinctive collective intelligence, in groups facing difficult tasks (Woolley et al. 2010). The groups in the study were made up of two to five people working together on tasks that ranged from visual puzzles to negotiations, brainstorming, games and complex rule-based design assignments. The collective intelligence has little to do with the IQs of individual group members but rather stems from how well groups work together, and arises from the interactions between the members. Groups whose members have higher levels of "social sensitivity" turn out to be more collectively intelligent. Social sensitivity has to do with how well group members perceive each other's emotions. Groups in which one person dominates are less collectively intelligent than those in which the conversational turns are more evenly distributed. Teams containing more women demonstrate greater social sensitivity and in turn greater collective intelligence than do those containing fewer women. This effect was explained by the higher social sensitivity exhibited by women on average, not by their sex.

As regards work tasks being dependent on interaction and communication, and therefore better performed by teams made up of women as well as men, Fenwick and Neal's as well as Woolley et al.'s results are fully in the line with what was revealed in an interview-based study of computer and advertising industries (Blomqvist 1994). For interviewees holding managerial positions in these industries, a mix of women and men on the teams appeared desirable for several reasons. A gender balance was judged to contribute to better social relations and an open work climate, which in turn enhanced productivity and served as a control instrument. Work at these companies is organized in a way that makes it difficult to monitor hierarchically. The management's possibilities to control the work presume an open work climate and good relationships at the workplace. Well functioning social relations are therefore particularly important for these businesses. Work in these industries is often carried out within project teams. By mixing women and men in the teams, the management felt it could broaden the perspective.

These kinds of understandings are, however, quite contested today. Thinking in terms of differences between women and men is understood as legitimizing sex segregation and thus risks underpinning the gender order. Because of this, researchers anxious to avoid the "essentialist trap" reject the whole idea that integration may lead to profitability or contribute to a better work climate. The offset from politics and justice to market and economy is assumed to encourage the construction of a special women's qualification (Hirdman 2001: 183). This situation is somewhat paradoxical. In order to destabilize the gender order, the segregation must be weakened. One of the most viable arguments for a weakened segregation – the business-related one – may instead strengthen the gender order.

However, here we believe that we have a case of confusion of analysis levels: that of the team and that of the individual. Team characteristics should not be understood as the sum of what characterizes the team members. Groups have a dynamic of their own, which is of course influenced by their individual members, but which also influences the individuals' thinking and behaviour. The study conducted by Wooley et al. demonstrates this very clearly. Therefore, we argue that the claim that gender-mixed teams function better does not necessarily reflect essentialist thinking. Fenwick and Neal's and Wooely et al.'s results could just as well be given a non-essentialist interpretation.

However, all studies do not support the idea that sex-mixed teams function better than others. A meta-analysis of diversity effects on performance conducted by Wise (2000) shows that the relationship is highly ambiguous, and a study by Cady and Valentine (1999) failed to show an impact of sex composition on the quality of group innovations.

Though results from studies on how the composition of women and men in the workplace or on the team affect the outcome of work are far from conclusive, we believe we have found at least some valid support for a link between the output of teamwork and gender composition.

STRENGTHENING AND LOSING GENDER

Though the overview above does not give a conclusive answer to the question of whether and how the composition of women and men affects work results, it has initialized important discussions within the FGF project. The outcome of these discussions is that we more and more have come to underline the importance of achieving gender equity per se, whether or not it leads to the achievement of all the initial organizational goals of the project.

Mats Alvesson and Yvonne Billing (1997) have identified four lines of argument for increasing the numbers of women in managerial positions: the equal opportunities line, the meritocratic line, the special contribution line and the alternative values line. These four stances correspond to different assumptions about gender – emphasizing either similarity or dissimilarity between the sexes – and focus on either ethical or efficiency concerns of the organization.

Ethical/political concerns
(equality, workplace humanization)

Emphasis on gender similarity	Equal opportunities	Alternative values
	Meritocracy	Special contribution

Emphasis on gender difference

Concern for organizational efficiency

Figure 1.. Lines of argument (Alvesson & Billing 1997:171)

As arguments for increasing the numbers of women in male-dominated professional jobs largely follow the very same lines, the analytical scheme can be used to discuss motives behind interests for the recruitment of women to these jobs as well. In our project we can thus see a movement towards a greater emphasis on ethical and political concerns. This means that we no longer see evidence for a link between gender composition and organizational efficiency as vital to our project; the gender equity part has become stronger.

The BAF project, on the other hand, moved in the opposite direction. In discussions with executives within the organization the BAF project researchers always emphasized the dual-agenda approach, attempting to show points for intervention that could both benefit the business and promote gender equity. They told success stories from other projects, including how interventions strategically designed to enhance gender equity had also led to reductions in absenteeism and had shortened product development cycles. By the time the project had worked concretely to set up an experimental self-managed team at the factory they had "lost the gender focus of the project to such an extent that every time we [the researchers] raised it by asking them [the workers] what their approach had to do with advancing gender equity, they simply looked at us, puzzled" (Coleman and Rippin 2000: 583). In the end they lost the gender equity part altogether.

We believe these different paths taken by the two projects are connected to how the group of internal collaborators was formed and how they were introduced into the project. Furthermore we believe that differences in the outcome of the two projects are connected to the very different kinds of organizations and nature of work conducted within them, and with the educational level of employees, and not least the initiation and ownership of the projects.

INITIATION – OWNERSHIP

The FGF project was insider-initiated, whereas the BAF project was initiated by outsiders entering the organization. We believe this difference is crucial to the legitimacy of a change project. It is obvious also to an external observer that the FGF project enjoys a high degree of legitimacy in the workplace, not only among those actively involved in it.

INTERNAL COLLABORATORS – CO-RESEARCHERS

Both the BAF and FGF projects built on collaboration between researchers and organizational insiders. In order to make it possible for the organization to continue the work once a project is finished, it is necessary to build internal capacity.

An initial group of internal collaborators for the BAF researchers – all women in various staff functions, including the director of the department responsible for employee training and development, the person charged with maintaining the company's 'corporate culture', and the new director of Organization Development – were assigned by the CEO. This group was to act as the project's gatekeepers and champions within the organization.

When the BAF project started its experiment at one of the company's factories, a second group of internal collaborators was formed to work in their own work setting. This second group – convened by the manager – consisted of ten people who represented the different grades of line workers, other shop-floor jobs that supported them and supervisory staff. "The group consisted of people who seldom got an opportunity to be listened to by managers or to take any sort of initiative" (Coleman and Rippin 2000: 578). The manager gave his explicit support to the initiative, but had no active involvement. Later, when the internal partners recruited and prepared staff for the new self-managed team, the responsibility of the initiative was delegated twice, each time to less senior people.

In the FGF project the team members, or co-researchers, were handpicked on the basis of expected interest in the issue and were invited by the project management to work in the action research project. Participation is thus entirely voluntary. The group consists of 13 people, about as many women as men, middle managers as well as researchers, project managers and administrators, representing both different parts and functions of the organization. The educational level of the co-researchers (and of the organization in general) is very high.

The Head of Department is part of the project's reference group and is thus involved, though not very actively. The group of co-researchers has been highly stable over the almost two years the project has lasted. No one has quit the group, and most team members attend all meetings. Most of the co-researchers are highly committed to the project and feel a responsibility for its outcomes. We believe this is a consequence of them not being assigned by top management, but because they are interested in the issue. As Joan Acker writes:

> "Collaboration implies voluntary participation, but, when collaborators are assigned to participate by their superiors, as happened in this [the BAF project] such participation is somewhat less than voluntary."
> (Acker 2000:626)

In the FGF project the participation of co-researchers is genuinely voluntary.

INTRODUCTION OF COLLABORATORS

Researchers in the BAF project immediately faced the problem of translating armchair theory into practice. One form this took was that the initial group of collaborators had a hard time understanding the researchers.

> "They understood the term, 'gender', to mean 'women'. Our meaning was broader and more complicated, but we did not have a straightforward way to help them shift their understanding to something more like our own." (Meyerson and Kolb 2000:557).

At an early stage the gender researcher[2] in the FGF project gave talks to the co-researchers on gender theory, e.g. women – versus gender, and also led the discussions following these. We thereby avoided a focus on women, which made it fairly easy to follow up with seminars and discussions on men and masculinities and thereby develop the understanding of gender. Most of our co-researchers are researchers, albeit in physics and the natural sciences, and are used to reading scientific texts. This experience makes it possible to also take in texts from a very different field like gender research, and we have read and discussed such articles. Though there are definitely differences between these disciplines, there are also important similarities. What we have in common is a critical and problematizing approach, to the effect that we frequently ask questions about why and how. Such an explorative attitude has a host of benefits in the context of a change project. A willingness to carefully map the organization and the processes taking place within it, in order to gain an understanding of the current situation before taking action, is one. A readiness to challenge established truths and scrutinize fundamental aspects of the organization like its values, language, practices and norms is another.

Based on the theoretical knowledge thus obtained, the co-researchers function as gender researchers, making observations on gendered practices and masculinity performances at their own workplace, and identifying and investigating points and processes deemed to be of relevance to the gendering of the work organization and therefore calling for change.

TIME

A second problem faced by the BAF researchers was that their group of collaborators at an early stage

> "kept asking for outcomes, deliverables, metrics, timetables – all reasonable requests to make of people who were asking them to collaborate on a significant and time-consuming research project from which they were supposedly to benefit. But we could not yet furnish them with anything concrete."
> (Meyerson and Kolb 2000:557).

The collaborators in the BAF project seem to have expected the researchers to serve them with a beforehand-planned project and with outcomes known in advance.

In the FGF project our co-researchers, working in a research organization, know very well that research is time-consuming, that many answers are not known

beforehand and that researchers and research seldom deliver quick fixes. They have taken responsibility for an ongoing identification of goals and targets for change, and have given the change process the time it needs.

POINTS AND PROCESSES THAT CALL FOR CHANGE

In the FGF project organizational matters and processes to facilitate change have been identified and categorized under the headings Internal processes, Organizational culture and Dissemination. Some of the points have already been subject to intervention while others are still under analysis.

We have taken a closer look at career paths and the procedure for the internal appointment of project leaders. An examination of the previously informal promotion practices has resulted in increased transparency and in a much more widespread use of the position of assistant project leader. This will give more employees the chance to try their hand at leading a project and shouldering responsibility. Salary developments are followed up regularly. We are also trying to deepen our theoretical knowledge of what characterizes a creative work environment. Outlines of staff development talks, held regularly by managers with staff, have been assessed, and suggestions for how to modify them have been developed. The wording of job ads has been reviewed and new templates have been suggested.

As is obvious from the above-mentioned activities, the FGF project is not attending to woman-specific issues; our actions actually concern the whole workplace and all its employees. This is probably the reason we have sometimes felt we are not talking much about gender. However, we do deem that the points and processes we are aiming to change are precisely those that gender inequalities in organizations are embedded in.

DIFFERENT NATIONAL CONTEXTS

At the factory where the BAF project tried to establish a self-managing team, the mostly female production-line workers were heavily overseen by the predominantly male supervisors.

> "In order for line workers to achieve any degree of flexibility or discretion in the timing of breaks [...] or taking holiday or sick leave, it was necessary to stand out from the crowd and become known to the supervisor. The first prerequisite of getting ahead in this environment was to be 'mouthy' (noisy, outspoken) and show commitment by doing overtime."
> (Coleman and Rippin 2000:579)

> "Sick leave was paid on a discretionary basis, depending on supervisors' judgements of the genuineness and acceptability of line workers' reasons. In order to establish whether the sickness was genuine, the worker was obliged to report to the supervisor on the day she returned to work and explain her reason for being absent. Since the great majority of the line workers were women, many of them young, and all the supervisors on the dayshifts in the factory were men, this often meant young women having to describe illnesses that embarrassed them to older male supervisors. Rather than do this, they would sometimes

forego the explanation and risk not getting paid for the time they had been away from work."
> (Coleman and Rippin 2000:583).

This process of payment for absence due to sickness was one in which the project identified a clear gender dimension. One of the goals when planning for the self-managed team was that its members would deal with their own absences and sick leave. However, it was eventually made clear that this element in the proposal would not be accepted, and the notion was abandoned.

From a Swedish perspective this report on how sick leave was (or was not) granted is surprising. A situation like this is simply not possible in a Swedish context, at least concerning employees on a regular contract. They are not at the mercy of their supervisors' discretion to this extent when it comes to sick leave or holidays, as the health insurance system and holiday legislation give all employees certain rights.

Less surprising are the accounts from the BAF project on masculinity performances. At both the factory and corporate headquarters, success seems to have required stereotypical masculinity expressions.

> "Despite the large numbers of female workers [in the factory], the dominant model of success was a masculine one, in which workers were promoted for being ever-present, fast, individual and mouthy. Rigid working hours [...] precluded people with care-taking responsibility for dependants from being able to demonstrate extraordinary commitment to their job, despite the considerable effort they put into being at work on time."
> (Coleman and Rippin 2000:579).

At the company's headquarters, employees adopting a heroic strategy were highly valued.

> "Company heroes demonstrated immediate results, promoted themselves, promised to solve the company's problems, worked long hours, and got the attention of powerful people:"
> (Ely and Meyerson 2000:596).

> "The emphasis in this company on immediate results, for example, kept heroes from spending time developing others or building the infrastructure required to sustain and carry forward their work."
> (Ely and Meyerson 2000:596).

These accounts of successful masculinities are definitely recognizable in a Swedish context as well, and they are also at hand at the organization within which the FGF project is working. However, we deem that their scope is somewhat inhibited here. Individuals are often free to plan their own work, and working overtime is normally neither expected nor supported. Fairly generous parental leave insurance relieves the tension between work and family. Further, as the management encourages employees to use their parental leave, there has developed a norm at the workplace about men as well as women using it. Fathers who choose not to stay home with their children are challenged. This norm, we believe, discourages some traditional expressions of masculinities.

RESISTANCE AND POWER

Unlike the BAF project, the FGF project has met with very little visible resistance. Some gender activists seem to assume that unless a change project experiences resistance it is not actually changing anything. Researchers in the BAF project themselves, in retrospect, conclude:

> "We have learned, then, that the form of collaboration that is most effective is one in which we challenge more and agree less, disrupt more and acquiesce less, while at the same time building and maintaining trust. This, we learned, is far from easy."
> (Coleman and Rippin 2000: 587).

Mieke Verloo (2005), analysing the conceptualization of gender mainstreaming within the Council of Europe, notes that the presentation of harmony, used to help smooth the process of change, is counterproductive in the end. "The logic of the dual agenda of mainstreaming calls for a more explicit analysis of […] power" (Verloo 2005: 345). Likewise, Jeff Hearn (2000) questions the possibility of an approach that is capable of advancing gender equity and simultaneously increasing organizational effectiveness. He places the approach

> "within a long tradition that argues for a convenient virtuous circle between both positive human change and technical change in capitalist organization. This can be traced back to early organizational psychology, Human Relations, systems theory, Socio-technical theories, action research, change management, Organizational development, and more recently Total Quality Management, Quality Circles and Business Process Re-engineering. However, all of these are subject to critique, not least for their treatment and perhaps obscuring and reinforcement of dominant power relations:"
> (Hearn 2000: 615)

Also, Joan Acker writes:

> "Gender equity of necessity redistributes power and rewards. Thus it may undermine the efficiency and job satisfaction of those whose relative power and rewards decline. And those so affected will oppose changes that challenge their advantage, unless they are unusually altruistic." (Acker 2000: 628).

Does the fact that the FGF project has met with little resistance mean we have not confronted relations of power? Does it mean we have fooled ourselves and that the change already implemented as a result of the project does not affect gender relations? We believe that the FGF project does deal with issues of power in the organization and that it does affect gender relations within it. We also realize that an action research project can only be one part of the process to fully change the gender relations, but then again we never expected it to solve the problem altogether.

CONCLUSION

This comparison of the FGF and BAF projects clearly shows how privileged the FGF project has been. Its advantages are largely due to the different characters of organizations and the employees' different educational levels. Some of the advantages are attributable to other kinds of contextual factors, like very different social security systems. However, some of the advantages are results of how the project was initiated and introduced and also its ownership. These latter aspects of a project are decided on at a very early stage, and they are irrevocable. We would therefore encourage anyone setting up an action research project to carefully think these first steps through. We deem them to have significant consequences on the outcome of a project.

Notes

1 As the articles discussing the project do not give it a name, we named it after the "Beyond Armchair Feminism" issue of Organization (2000:7) in which they are published.

2 Kristina Eriksson was the gender researcher when the project started and worked with it the first year.

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Openings for innovations and change?
Issues of masculinity
in the world of engineering

Magnus Åberg, Cecilia Nahnfeldt & Ulrika Jansson
Centre for gender research
Karlstad University, Sweden
magnus.aberg@kau.se

ABSTRACT

In this paper we will report from a recently finished collaborative research project, Applied gender research in the engineering industry. The scientific aim of the project was to find mechanisms that aid or hinder gender equality work in the engineering industry. Throughout the course of the project we have found a range of hinders but also some openings for gender equality work within the particular engineering company investigated. These competing versions of masculinity bore seeds to gender aware innovations at the company. Our conclusion is that what occurred in the project was the start of a long process of change within the company, thus making way for more gender aware innovations.

KEYWORDS: gender, engineering industry, innovations, interactive research, masculinities

INTRODUCTION

It seemed that the project on gender equality had come to its end prematurely. Only a few months after its take-off an all-male steering group rejected the project plan, developed by the HR-department, a consultant on gender equality issues, and us, the researchers. What happened? Was the male steering group's arguments plausible, that the project was to large in scale, to time consuming in a time of economic recession and bad revenues? Or did we face a classic case of male resistance to gender equality projects? Could it be both? Or something else?

In this paper we will dwell on the notions of masculinities and innovations. Our purpose is to investigate what and how different versions of masculinity can work for or against gender aware innovations within the engineering industry.

Project background
Today, we allegedly live in a so called knowledge economy. Many governments have recognized that this affinity between knowledge and finances demands more useful outcomes of scientific work. The call is for collaboration, the co-production of results of mutual benefit for the industry and for science. In Sweden, a major funder of collaborative projects between industry, science and liberal arts is The Knowledge Foundation (TKF). Currently, TKF is financing a range of projects aiming to develop collaborative models, models that could improve Sweden's position on the European and global market. The empiric material in this paper is developed within one of these projects. Differing from other TKF-projects this one is focusing issues of gender and gender equality.

The project was initiated by the company, a multinational engineering company located in mid-Sweden. At the early stages of the project, in preparing for an application to TKF, economic recession had not yet struck globally. On the contrary, the company was flourishing, as was world economy at the time. A couple of executives at the company's human resources-department (HR) were engaged in issues of gender equality, and they felt a strong need for revision of their outdated gender equality plan. They got in contact with one of us researchers (with whom they had worked before) and soon a project plan started to develop.

The actors in the project had different reasons for participating in it. The goal for the company was to develop a model for systematic equality work adjusted to the conditions in engineering industry, while the scientific goal was to find mechanisms that aid or hinder gender equality work in that business sector.

THEORY AND METHOD

A central concept in the study is gender, i.e. shared preconceptions of sex and sexuality which are constructed and sustained through social relations (Connell 2009). These social relations are upheld by speech, texts, artifacts and bodily practices. Gender is often done in unintended ways, through unreflexive gender practices (Martin 2003, 2006). This means that practices and actions that can appear to be random, well-meaning and non-gendered can affect men and women in different ways, often resulting in power asymmetries between the sexes. Men and women can be equally responsible for creating gender. But the distribution of power can be uneven, as a result of the construction of gender. This concerns also relations within the sexes, not all versions of masculinity are sanctioned in culture (Connell 2005).

Keeping this general notion of gender in mind, we have used a collaborative framework to investigate and challenge the gender order in the company. Collaboration implies e.g issues on theory, method, power and ethics. Methodologically, collaboration continues the trajectory which started with action research and interactive research. The interactive research aims for a more equal exchange of experience, teaching and knowledge between practitioners/participants and researchers (see e.g. Aagard Nielsen & Svensson 2001) The purpose has been to to make a theory based analysis that at the same time is practical and relevant for the participants. Our roles as researchers has been both investigating and supporting. This collaborative approach has in large respects been informed by the interactive research process.

Ideally collaborative or interactive research shifts power from the researcher to the participants. In real life situations however, power is not stable and resting within one person. As Michel Foucault (2002) has pointed out power could rather be regarded as an unstable network of relations, which is acted out in most social situations. Further on in the paper, we will show some examples of power shifts within the project.

Ethics has for a long time been a crucial part of the research process. But just as with the question of power, ethics does not only apply in field work situations but rather extend much farther than that. Ethnographer Norman K. Denzin has written an inspirational book on his hopes on how ethnography should change in the 21st century[1]. He speaks in favour of a feminist, communitarian ethics and states: "The feminist, communitarian researcher does not invade the privacy of others, use informed consent forms, select subject´s randomly, or measure research designs in terms of their validity. This framework presumes a researcher who builds collaborative, reciprocal, trusting, and friendly relations with those studied…Feminist communitarian research is judged by its authenticity, its fairness, and its ability to provoke transformations and changes in the public and private spheres of everyday life – transformations that speak to conditions of oppression" (Denzin 1997:275).

Denzin's emphasis on trusting and friendly relations have been crucial to the project. Our collaborative process has followed a circular pattern consisting of four stepping stones; Trust, Guidance, Expectations and Offer. The process has been slow, a lot of energy have been invested in building trust in relations (cf. Andersson, Amundsdotter & Svensson 2009). After having established a platform of trust a guiding moment has occurred, where goals and time frames have been developed. With that expectations on outcomes develop, and an offer (promise) have been put forward. In the course of the project we have made several laps in this collaborative circle.

MASCULINITIES AND THE WORLD OF ENGINEERING

What has been described this far are the vantage points for the project. As stated earlier our scientific aim was to map hinders and possibilities in gender equality work within the engineering industry. One major issue has proven to be the historical bond between men and technology.

It is certainly not novel to point out the connection between masculinity and engineering. Through upbringing and socialization expectations are created on what should count as typically male or female. Traditionally, technical professions have become associated with men, while nursing and caring professions are connected to women (Mellström 1995, 1999). This has affected the recruitment to technology educations. Many of them are male dominated. The steel and engineering profession sees few women. The partiuclar company of this investigation can be desrcibed as 'traditional' when it comes to gender labour divisions. Generally, there are few women working in production, somewhat more on the engineering side, and quite many women working with administrative tasks. Early on, we recognized the companys' traditional roots in a typical male oriented engineering industry, and also that the company was not at the fore-front of organizational reform or of gender equality issues. What we seemed to meet was a hegemonic masculinity, keeping issues of gender equality at arms length.

The notion of hegemonic masculinity was developed by Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell. For her macsculinity is always a relational concept, developed in social contexts, and always in relation to other masculinities and femininities (albeit she first and foremost focuses attention to relations between masculinities) (see e.g Connell 2005). A central thought for Connell is that the dominating, hegemonic form of masculinity is not necessarily occupied by that many physical male beings. Rather, it should be considered a norm which organises – and is organised by (since norms are always relational) – other forms of masculinities. Some of these support hegemonic masculinity, while others are subordinated to it. This way, some men draw benefit from hegemonic masculinity, without risking being scrutinized as being "in power". Also, and importantly, these 'complicit' masculinities (which is the concept used by Connell) can act out power positions which seem to have nothing to do with gender. From this position men can confess to feminist, anti-discriminatory pratices and ideas, without their own masculine privilege being questioned.

The question was, how uniform was this masculinity which we met up-front, this seemingly hegemonic masculinity?

The project and the changing context
Companies and higher education institutions live in a changing reality. When the project started in January 2009 the setting had already changed quite a bit from when the project was planned. In just a year, from May 2008 to May 2009, the company had seen three different CEOs, our primary contact persons had left the company and the company's human resources department was reorganised. In the midst of this, economic recession struck the company.

The ongoing global economic recession is certainly a fact. Although stock exchange has recuperated during the last few months, many companies in the engineering industry still struggle, and continue to lay off personnel. For some companies, it's a matter of survival. At the same time however, the economic recession also works as a discourse. Discourses are what conditions and make possible the way we think, talk and act on certain subjects in certain situations. A concept such as 'leader' is not stable and independent of context, but is rather differently comprehended within different discourses (Martinsson 2006:25). In order for 'leaders' to remain their positions they have to act and talk according to the discourse which sustains the notion of 'leadership'. At the same time, the discourse itself only remains as long as people act and speak in a way which correlates with it. Accordingly, the global crises of today is also a social construct, recession is understood and played out in different ways through different discursive understandings of it.

When the project launched, our job as researchers was primarily to follow the company's own work with developing a new gender equality plan. Together with a consultant on gender equality issues the HR-department had developed a project model which was similar to how the company normally structured other projects. Therefore we expected that the steering group of the company would accept the model. The steering group met once every week and the gender equality project was going to be presented by one of the staff of the HR-department. However, the project presentation was lifted from the agenda, and postponed until next weeks meeting. The following week the same thing happened and the newly recruited HR-officer responsible for the project at the company got more and more nervous. Why was it postponed? she wondered. After being postponed two times the project was finally presented for the steering group. Contrary to our expectations however, the steering group asked the HR-department to reorganize the project. They claimed it was too time consuming and drained the company of energy in a time of financial pressure.

As participators of the project we were disappointed that the steering group had rejected the original project model. Scientifically though the event was interesting. Looking at the isolated incident, the rejection perhaps does not tell us that much. It can surely be interpreted in many different ways. However, discourses are not sustained by single actions alone but must be iterated over time, by many voices (Butler 1990). And in the course of the project we have become aware that this rejection was one of the iterations of a discourse on masculinity.

Looking at the situation from a gender perspective it tells us quite a bit of the conditions for conducting gender research in an engineering company, and of the conditions for producing gender equality work within such settings. In the situation, the economic recession in fact plays an important role. A company within a capitalist economy such as Sweden must certainly be understood as an organisation with primary focus on selling goods, earning and accumulating money. The company is not in business for gender equality, but for engineering. At the same time however, goods are not produced, sold and delivered without effort. It takes humans and human skills to do it. These humans are to some extent governed by an established gender order, which split men and women, ascribing them different qualities and competencies (Connell 1987:98-99). In the current gender order men and masculinities are most often associated with the world of 'hard' values, facts and figures, (economic) results, competitiveness and machines (Connell 2005). The all male steering group therefore acted upon an established discourse were production seemed to have nothing to do with the producers. The situation, and the way 'economic recession' was used as a discursive tool, told of how gender equality issues were conceived of within the steering group. In one of the interviews later conducted with a member of the group he stated:

Leader: … Perhaps we haven't been engaged in these questions. … We are very much focused on the customer. The strongest quality in [our company] is the importance of the customer. … In this department we talk about orders, delays, billing and all that. Technology too, of course. … this goes for the entire company too, it isn't engaged in questions on ethics or gender equality. Projects have been planned but haven't come through, and we go 'We haven't got time!'.

The quote sums up what has proven to be a more general world view in the company. The company rests on a proud tradition, where key words are punctuality, efficiency, customer orientation, service mindedness and technology orientation. According to this world view issues of ethics and gender equality get marginalised.

These ideals can be described as core values of the company, and thereby also values building the hegemonic masculinity which had been developed in the company for over a century. This masculinity was intersected by a discourse on nationality, a local identity was cultivated in relation to the new multi-national owner of the plant in Sweden. Both leaders and other staff members often raised critical voices on the rather novel owner, claiming that it did not understand nor respect the traditional ways of the Swedish engineering industry. In interviews several leaders claimed that this 'cultural clash' also impacted on issues of cultural diversity and gender equality. For example, at the Swedish plant there circulated a narrative of how the mother company in the home land gave out special monthly awards to employees of color. The leaders in

Sweden were amazed by this, and it seemed they not only found it strange to point out race, the award itself came across as odd. This meritocratic way of high lighting employees seemed to not resonate with the Swedish company's tradition of maintaining a relatively flat organisation, putting more emphasis on the 'team' rather than on the 'individual'.

Lena Abrahamsson (2009), Swedish scholar on gender and work life issues, has shown that work organisations contain there own symbolic 'hero narratives'. In our study, these stories high-lighted certain individuals. But these were not out-right show pieces for the company, but rather mythical stories of employees who were liked and appreciated for there loyalty to the company, for their sturdiness, and for their skills. In the course of the project we found two main narratives circulating between employees (including leaders). The first was of Sven, who came to signify his particular technological department. He was particularly praised for his extensive technological knowledge on a certain product. The other story was of Anna, the company nurse, who had worked at the company for many years, and was appreciated for her way of doing more for employees' health than duty called of her. The story about her came across as particularly romanticized since the company had outsourced their occupational health department since a couple of years. Sven and Anna were real persons, but in the context of hegemonic masculinity, they came across as stereotypical figures, telling a lot about the gender order established within the company. Following Connell (1987), the scaffolding of hegemonic masculinity relies on the construction of 'emphasised femininties', i.e versions of femininity which could contrast with hegemonic masculinity, stressing the differences between the sexes and moulding out a preferred version of masculinity.

Masculinity and the notion of innovation

Another element of the story about Sven was the way his interest in technology became associated with innovativeness. Sven was not only friendly, loyal and intensely obsessed by technology, he also knew how to develop technology. Both Sven and Anna were depicted as active figures, knowing their way about things, but while her skills were tied to caring and social relations, his skills were conceived of as innovative. Sven was technologically shrewd, somewhat of a nerd (in a positive sense) while Anna became more of a 'sturdy woman', a 'house keeper'.

In the company technological expertise, competence and innovativeness were linked together, thereby establishing a particular version of hegemonic masculinity. This has historical roots in the company. When studying the company's own memorabilia two things stand out. First, the documentation focuses almost entirely on the products. Acheivements are measured on the physcial technical products made within the company. And from the pictures and texts, it seems these achievements have included almost no women at all. Page after page are filled with descriptions or pictures of men surrounding or producing technological artifacts. The other thing that stands out, given the nature of the documentation, is that it was compiled by a woman. At the very end of the text a female person directs a thanks to everyone who had made the historic documentation possible. The text gives no clue as to who she is, this writer. From a masculinity point of view the text is an example of the construction of hegemonic masculinity, and of how both physical men and women can act to sustain this norm.

One of the mid-level leaders interviewed in the study rather cruelly criticised – what he called – the 'technical masculinity' that had been cultivated within the company for years. He tied his reasoning to innovativeness, explaining how all solutions, all development within the company took its vantage point from the technical products. To his mind, this way of acting and thinking, offered a narrow scope of getting around tricky junctures, or different types of crises. His point was that the company would do better business, had it access to a more varied set of masculinities. As a researcher it was interesting to follow the leader's line of reasoning, the way he talked about masculinities in plural, thus confirming masculinity as a social, cultural and historical construct.

The ground for innovations

Eva Amundsdotter (2010) has emphasised that the first step to change the gender order within companies and organisations must be to induce it. This can be a difficult, lenghty and painful process. Also, one can rarely expect to take major leaps at once, the focus must be to take one (small) step at a time. Thus, patience and endurance are crucial (Mark 2007). In gender segregated companies, such as the one investigated by us, there is an overwhelming risk that all attempts to organisational change meet resistance, what Lena Abrahamsson (2009) has called restorers. Restorers are conscious or unconscious acts which makes an organisation retain its previous form after changes in the organisation has been made. The leadership has a strong responsibility to send out clear signals on the importance of changes in the organisation, in order to avoid restorers (Andersson, Amundsdotter & Svensson 2009).

Given the historical context of the company, it was clear that it had a lot to deal with in order to develop its work on gender equality, and at the same time giving itself opportunities to address questions of innovation in a novel way. In interviews with top leaders in the company it became clear that there existed many different ways of defining the concept of gender equality. Several of them saw gender equality (jämställdhet) as synonymous with the wider term equality (jämlikhet), thereby including categories such as ethnicity and class. It was also common that gender equality was interpreted as 'body count'-routines (Alvesson 1997). In one interview the leader was actually angry with us, even before the interview started. He was critical of us coming in attempting to change things, how could we know that a 50/50-representation would make anything better he asked. It was only after having talked with him for an hour or so, that he came to realise that perhaps we were actually interested in investigating the situation at the company, rather than teaching them how they would view the world or go about their internal issues. Some leaders were also curious of how it was possible to

adress issues of gender equality, in a company which was so dominated by men. In these leaders' view gender equality was a question of relations between the sexes, and a problem more for women than for men.

Coming half way through the project we presented our results of the interviews for the all-male steering board (these men had also been interviewed). We concluded that their existed different definitions of gender equality in the company, and we also addressed the issue of the rather narrow scope for masculinities and femininities within the company. In the meeting it was clear that the talk about masculinities was somewhat of a revelation for them. They certainly saw themselves as indivdiuals, as different from one another, but they had not reflected on the possibility that they were different as men, and that there actually existed exlusions of certain versions of masculinity within the company.

A NEW BEGINNING

So, going back to the beginning of this paper. How can one interpret the steering group's rejection of the original project plan? And what happened next?

The project plan was presented for the steering group by a young female representative of the very small HR-department at the company. At the meeting neither the consultant, nor us researchers were present. She was on her own. As shown by other research many HR-departements lack of legitimacy within the company. Currently, there is a debate between management scholars on whether or not female HR-personell contribute to increase or decrease the status of HR-departments (Reichel, Brandl & Mayerhofer 2010). In this particular situation, it seemed that the presence of a woman did not help to persuade the steering group to go on with the project. The overall context did not help the female HR-representative. Also, early spring 2009 was a time of crise for the company. The order stock did not grow, and a major rather problematic implementation of a new business system was on-going. It was probably also important that the presentation was made for the entire group at once (which consists of seven men in their 40's and 50's). When the steering group was assembled, hegemonic masculinity seemed to become more powerful. When we talked with the leaders in one-to-one interviews the differences between different types of masculinities became more obvious. In group discussions however, these differences were under-played, leaving space for more traditional male concerns. All these things combined enforced the hegemonic masculinity, which saw gender equality as something outside of what the company was all about, selling products.

The female HR-member was devastated by the rejection of the project plan. She and the rest of HR could not see any way forward, and they ran out of energy. Emotions certainly play a vital role within all organizations (see e.g Sevón & Sjöberg 2004). The rejection of the steering group was not a major set back for the scientific part of the project. It altered however relations between the two main co-producers of the project, us and the HR-department of the company. The HR project manager had invested much energy and work to succeed with the

project presentation when the steering group met. As a newly employed young woman in an all male setting and representative of a very small HR-department, she was, and felt, pressured to succeed in her efforts. The set back at the meeting was both a professional and emotional blow for her. When we set up the project our different roles were quite clearly outlined within a non-hierarchical model. We were to co-produce without any one actor being 'in charge'. When the project model fell through it created a set of negative emotions in the HR-department. Building up on this was the fact that the hired consultant on gender equality issues abandoned the project all together, claiming that he could only work with the original model he had helped to design. 'Were do we go from here, is there a way forward?', asked the HR-department. We needed to help come up with an answer, rather quickly.

As is well known within interactive research, equal power relations between participators is an ideal seldom to be realized when it comes to actual collaborative work (see e.g Reason & Bradbury 2001). A more realistic description of the co-productive process must incorporate the power struggle and renegotiations constantly going on amongst participants. When the project model was rejected by the steering group, it contributed to the pessimistic mood in the HR-department. It ran out of energy. At that point our role as researchers was redefined. We were dependent on our relation with the HR-department. To push forward the scientific project leader entered somewhat of a therapeutic or coaching mode, working hard to get spirits up at the HR-department. This included coming up with suggestions for a new project model, which would please the steering group more. The dialogue between us and the HR-department increased at this time and the scientific leader also aided one of the HR-staff members to external coaching assistance. During this time it was we who held much of the initiative for making progress. Involuntarily, we'd got more power than asked for. The paradox was that at the same time as we got more power over the project, we were subjected to the gatekeeping power of the HR-staff, who themselves felt they had no power at all. Power seemed to be everywhere and nowhere (Foucault 2002).

Gender equality projects need promotion by leaders to be successful (see e.g Pincus 1997). However, the 'leader' position is as unstable and negotiated as other positions within an organisation (Martinsson 2006). The power of the leader does not 'belong' to him or her, but is rather an effect of the wide array of power relations structuring all organizations (Foucault 1980). The leader has to reaffirm power through negotiations with lower level leaders, personnel, trade unions, the company board, media and other relations to the world outside the company premises. Viewed this way, men have skillfully worked to make the notion of leadership intimately connected with masculinity. This connection has been iterated time and time again over the last century, making it difficult for women to make an entry as leaders (Jansson 2010). For us, it was therefore a dubious manoeuver when we turned our attention to the male CEO of the company, hoping a more direct approach on him would be a fruitful way to later get the consent from the rest of the steering group. Two of us researchers met with him at

his office, in a meeting of a rather informal character. The informal setting was important. It created room for a reflexive dialogue, a sense of 'working together'. At the same time the meeting was set in his office, and this underlined him as 'in charge', as if he was The Leader. We thereby contributed to sustain the notion of a strong connection between leadership and masculinity.

The CEO however went along with our proposal. The first step of our suggestion was to interview the steering group and trade union officials on their thoughts on the gender equality project. If we could not work simultaneously with revision of wages, work life balance, health issues and more, what should be prioritized?

Moving on

In Eva Amundsdotters (2010) thesis she describes a process model for inducing and changing the gender order within an organisation. The model consists of three different stages: 1) Processes of induction, 2) Processes of mobilisation, 3) Processes of change. In short these stages involves raising knowledge and awareness of gender, of the own organisation and the need to act from actions plans towards clear and outspoken goals. In a much less comprised way than Amundsdotter our new project plan involved elements of the model described by her.

The individual interviews with the leaders and the union representatives aimed at mapping their way of thinking around certain concepts connected to the notion of values. We asked them to define concepts such as ethics, equality, diversity, gender equality and so forth. This part of the interview was originally designed to serve our scientific purposes, but in the interviews it became clear that reflexive processes started amongst the informants. They rarely had time to consciously reflect on these matters at office hours, especially not in the presence of scholars, who could mirror their reflections. The next part of the interview was more hands on. We simply asked them to prioritize amongst a set of possible actions for gender equality in the company. After processing the interviews we had feed back meetings with the steering group, with the trade unions, and with the so called leader forum, a monthly gathering were all executives of the company (in total around 50 leaders) met.

After this feed back a key persons group was established, a process sanctioned and supported by the steering group. The group consisted of twelve people, representing most departments of the company, both blue and white collar, six men and six women. It also included one member of the steering group and a couple of mid-level leaders. The task for this group was to focus on the topic of "developing careers for both men and women" and come up with ideas of how the company should work to improve the possibility for female and male staff to develop in their work life. The group worked for a few months and then presented a range on ideas on the following topics: 1) Mapping possible career paths (vertical and horizontal), 2) Career and Family, 3) Blue/White collar (border work), 4) Leadership. All suggestions on these themes were related to the over-arching topic of how to develop careers for both sexes.

The key persons group can be said to represent the mobilising process in Amundsdotters model above. The group meetings represented a rare opportunity for a mix of staff and leaders to focus on questions where issues of gender equality were integrated, but not always articulated. The process was more and more lifted from the HR-department and two 'group leaders', one woman (trade union representative) and one man (mid-level manager), emerged as 'holding' the process. At this point, our task as researchers was to support the process, and aid their thinking, e.g to point out the gender aspects of the suggestions they made. The meetings with the group followed the pattern of assessing the present situation (what has been done so far in the company), making suggestions, analysing these suggestions, deciding on a proposal to the steering group. Many fruitful things came out of the group meetings. For example:

- The process became more integrated in the company (the marginalised HR-department was still involved, but not 'from the side' as before).

- Two leaders of the process evolved in the process, with another type of legitimacy in the organisation

- The learning process within the group. Much was gained by the mix of the group. Everyone learned from each other, and could develop a reflexive approach on their own role and part in the organisation

- Reflexivity on issues of gender. In the discussions on careers, the dialogue shifted from the very concrete, to the history of the company and more abstract notions of the culture of the company, including its gendered background. The time was to short to dwell on these matters, but to our judgment a reflexive work on gender started, leading at least to the suggestion that all leaders should get more knowledge on gender and gender equality (which has been proposed to the steering group, and the steering group has acknowledged this).

- The group lay the ground for writing a gender action plan which had a more solid ground, compared to the desk top product action plan now resting silent at the HR-department. The new plan was developed at the end of the group's work, by one of the HR-staff, with the aid from one of us researchers.

One key question

Within the project, the key persons group represented a break-through. The question of career development for women and men, had been a narrow entry which had produced wider effects. Through the discussions the gender order started to be induced, a ground began to be laid, but most of the work still remains, though the project itself has come to an end. Crucial for the company is to continue its learning process on gender issues. One way to go about this is to deepen discussions and work on the role of hegemonic masculinity within the company.

This investigation could focus on the connection between masculinity and leadership. The dominating version of leadership within the organisation seem to be closely connected with traditional male virtues, such as knowledge on engineering technology, dedication for the job, flexibility ('being available'), looking ahead (instead of contemplating on the past), and a sharp distinction between the 'soft' and 'hard' aspects of the work organisation (marginalising not only gender, but also for example ethical issues as long it did not fall in the business ethics category).

Our encounter with top management was scientifically interesting. Hegemonic masculinity appeared in different ways. Most leaders claimed that our project was important. But in different ways they also resisted the project. Some said: "Your project is important BUT we don't have problems with gender equality HERE" (cf. Mark 2007, Bondestam 2003). Some said: "It might be an issue for us, but I have no such indications". A rare few were out-right sceptical to the whole thing, as the angry but misguided leader quoted earlier. Or as another leader put it, in a straight-to-the-point kind of manner: "I don't believe in that". He saw his special area of responsibility as a thing for men, and he didn't really see any problem in that:

Leader: … one of my best engineers … worked abroad for 253 days last year.

Researcher: Well, 153 days, that's…

Leader: 253.

Researcher: 253? I heard 153.

Leader: No. 160 is fairly normal for [these engineers]… And that is why we haven't got one single female [engineer].

Researcher: No…Because?

Leader: … I believe that children need their mum more than their dad. … The mother is more important for the children.

Researcher: Would it be a good thing? To recruit women for this job, I mean?

Leader: I have never seen any woman apply for it.

This particular leader was certainly aware of the traditional labour division between men and women in society. For him it was not a question of a gender order, it was a simple fact. At the same time, when asked to prioritize among the offered possibilities for action, he claimed work-life balance to be the most important question. "A happy worker, is a good worker", he stated. For the company, he saw it as important that the staff had good home-lives, but he claimed this was not a responsibility for the company, but for the individual. This way he marginalised the question of gender equality again. However, during the course of the project, in meetings with leaders and other staff, issues on work-life balance have come up regularly. For example, the key persons group lifted the theme "Career and Family" as important when talking of career development. But very

often, work-life balance has been articulated in a more subtle and informal way. Through this issue, we have also spotted some cracks in the otherwise quite robust window of hegemonic masculinity.

The leader quoted here symbolizes how hegemonic masculinity was played out formally within the company. This was the homosocial collective masculinity talking, stressing the need for dedication to the job, pushing to get products out, emphasising the individual responsibility. But in those spaces 'in between' – e.g at coffee breaks, in one-to-one-situations, in small hardly noticeable remarks, other alternative ways of comprehending masculinity could be put forward. After one meeting with the steering group, on a 'get-away' were leaders met at a conference center an hour-drive from the plant, we small-talked with one of the leaders. One of us researchers commented: "Nice to get away and change setting, ey?". The leader first smiled politely, but then frowned and said with a troubled voice: "Hm, well. But this causes problems at home. I am needed there". In the formal meetings with the steering group, emotions were nowhere to be seen. The notion of leadership was here tied to notions of individuality, the devoted leader with full focus on the job and getting products out (cf Fogelberg Eriksson 2005). Emotions seemed to leak out other ways instead, such as in small informal comments.

However, in the key persons group, which consisted of a gender blend of top management, mid-level leaders and other staff, emotions were more present, and the boundary between work and home could be more challenged. When the steering group met alone, the established way of talking about work-life issues, was that it was a delicate 'balance'. 'Sure, staff need to have good home lives, but they must focus on their job as well'. In this group, work-life balance were conceived more as a nuisance, than a resource. They recognized that more fathers than before wanted parental leave, but this was treated as something concerning the individual employee. As Elin Kvande has pointed out, the risk is that these individuals are treated as 'time deviants' (Kvande 2009), as if parenting was a luxury robbing the company of valuable resources. A more progressive way of thinking, seeing home och work life as unavoidably intertwined, seemed to be far off. In the key persons group, the matter became more problematized, thus leading to the suggestion to the steering group that action should be taken on this issue.

Challenging hegemonic masculinities

So, why was the issue of work life balance a key question, and how is it tied to the notion of gender aware innovations?

What we found was a major obstacle to gender equality work within the company was the stern focus on the company as a 'world of its own', as if societal norms on gender and equality did not really impact on the company (Mark 2007). Focus were on the company, on the team, getting things done. More personal emotions and values seemed to be left at the reception. This should not be confused with how staff and leaders actually felt about their work, or of how they appreciated each other. What we describe here is a norm for masculinity, which regulated the possibilities for men and women for

being 'themselves'. The hegemonic masculinity became visible in the issue of work life balance, it became an indicator for the stability of the norm. Questions on the relations between home and work life, had a hard time finding its way to the official agenda. Nevertheless, it was manifested in informal and more subtle ways, as described earlier. Hegemonic masculinity was reluctant however, with its focus on getting goods out on the market, doing more of the same to produce and distribute the same goods as earlier. But the question on work life balance indicated that the company could be about other things, more things. It offered a space for employees to start to reflect more widely on the nature of their work. What was the company all about, how should it develop, what was and should be its core values?

When the steering group at the early stages of the project rejected the project plan presented for them, the response was a defence for the established hegemonic masculinity. In a time of crise for the company, the steering group certainly recognized the need for innovations, or at least solutions. But the conditions for thought, were regulated by the historical, cultural and social construction of masculinity, which had made innovations synonymous with technical ingenuity, ruling out social skills from the notion of competence.

For the company to focus more on work life balance would offer a challenge to hegemonic masculinity. Getting this topic on the agenda forces the organisation to do reflexive work on how societal norms impact on the company. And clearly their exist other ways of defining the question of the relation between work and home life. One example was the mid-level management leader quoted earlier, who spoke in terms of plural masculinities, and was critical of the narrow scope for being man within the company.

What needs to be further challenged within the company is the established link between masculinity, competence and innovation. The company need to gain a wider conception of innovation (c.f. Lindberg 2010),

expanding it beyond the realm of technological products. To do this, the organisation can learn much from itself. This organisation is neither static or dynamic (Kvande 1995), nor does it follow in any pure way organisatory trends such as Lean Production or The Individualized Corporation (Abrahamsson 2009). Rather, as we learned from discussions in the key persons group, the organisation was somewhat compartmentalised, showing a lot of organisational differences between different sites in the company, between different departments, between production and white collar. While the male top leaders in the company were more likely to manifest 'transnational business masculinities' (Connell 1998), thus being totally committed to the company (we saw many examples on them being 'on line all the time' (Kvande 2009)), mid level management and other staff weren't as inclined to leave home life to a wife, partner or maid.

At the same time, this multi-national company had in Sweden for a long time cultivated a local culture, only reluctantly adapting to the mother company abroad. This culture has certainly developed a hegemonic masculinity, but it relies on another base than the individualised flexible, totally committing, transnational masculinity. The local culture is more patriarchal in its focus on subordinance, collectivity, and social responsibility from the company for its employees. Building on Joan Acker (2006), one could argue that the hegemonic masculinity is never only about gender, but involves categories such as class and race. The intersections of such categories are dependent on the historical context, sometimes leading to the establishing of local gender regimes (Connell 2011). The company could benefit much from recognising the complexity of the gender order. This would mean that it must acknowledge that demands from customers, technological developments, pressure from the mother company, fathers wanting parents' leave, women wanting to work abroad are interconnected spatial, temporal and political issues. They are all gendered.

Notes

We would claim that Denzin's remarks on ethnography should be valid also for other research methods. In fact perhaps it is even more important for researchers using statistical methods to not forget the "human dimension" of their research. Just as the question of ethics should be more important for historians dealing with persons who have left our earthly living long ago. Distance to the research "object" does not support objectivity so much as insensitivity.

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Papersession F

Is gender equality always gender equal?

Women in Romanian local politics - Researching political activism at the local level

Laura Georgescu
Babes – Bolyai University, Romania
laura_georgescu@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Women's participation in local politics incited rich scholarly work over the years both in Europe and outside the European space. Following this endeavour the present paper suggests a perspective on women's involvement in local politics at the local level in Romania, inspired by the theories on gender relations formation during socialism and post socialism. The purpose is both descriptive and analytical, as it tries to construct a profile of the women involved in local politics by observing the daily activities of the organizations. In accomplishing this research goal I'm starting from the women life histories and try to uncover their motivation for becoming politically involved. I'm also interested in the strategies they employ as well as the solutions they foresee to women's issues. After obtaining this perspective I look at the commonalities as well as at the differences among women in order to identify the dimensions on which they occur.

KEYWORDS: gender, local politics, inequality, activism, mobilization

THE MAIN DYNAMICS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER DURING SOCIALISM AND TRANSITION

The general theme of the research concerns the relation between gender and politics, and the particular form it took in the case of Eastern Europe and Romania. Women's involvement in politics was intensely debated in the context of transition and one of the main conclusions was that, in terms of women's political participation, we are facing disengagement with formal politics in comparison with the socialist times when, at least in terms of descriptive representation, the problem was partially solved. I approached this theme from the perspective of the theories addressing the construction of gender relations in socialism and in transition, and I'm particularly interested in how the transition period transformed the gender regime of the socialist state and particularly the impact it had on women. At the theoretical level, the research is informed by the feminist theory on women's participation in party politics and as a more general framework I'm looking at the construction of gender during socialist and post socialist times (Jalusic and Antic 2001), (Jaquette and Wolchik's 1998), (Norris and Lovenduski 1993), (Matland 2004) as well as (Gal and Kligman 2003), (Pasti 2003) and (Einhorn 1993). The research is situated at the crossroad of feminist and cultural studies paradigms. This aspect will be more broadly discussed in the section where I present the methodology.

When I approached this theoretical goal, namely trying to understand the kind of gender regime the socialist states constructed as well as the gender arrangements it produced, I started with Barbara Einhorn's already clasic work Cinderella Goes to Market - Citizenship, Gender and Women's Movements in Eastern and Central Europe. Than I looked into Gal and Kligman's works and their discussion of the gender arrangements present in transition. I was also interested to see how the theories developed for Romania and more precisely what is out there in terms of the theoretical approach I use.

Barbara Einhorn starts from the permise that the socialist state was extensivelly preocupied with women's emancipation. The author supports this view by discussing the main marxist perspective, from Marx and Bebel to Kolontai and Armand. Indeed, marxism, as an ideological position pointed to the existence of inequalities between women and men and saw its abolishment in the disolution of private property consequently with women's participation in the labour market[1]. According to marxists, the mechanism for women's opression consisted in the accumulation of surplus value from the capitalist production by men[2]. Engels was the first to notice that gender inequalities cannot be equated with class inequalities and that women were suffering a double opression. On the other hand the ideea that the industrialization would free women from domestic burden was expressed in Bebel's work Women and Socialism. Lenin also criticized the arrangement that determined women to face the domestic burden by

themselves[3]. Alexandra Kolontai and Inessa Armand favoured the ideea that the socialization of domestic work is very important in order to transform the family and free the women. Kolontai's attempt to transform the institution of the family by questioning the nature of personal relations was silenced because Babel and Lenin did not favour the dismantling of the institution of marriage[4]. Therefore the socialist state was the first form of political organization which proclaimend equality among women and men and also gave women the right to vote, but failed in fully challenging inequalities embeded in the interpersonal relations. The rationalle of involving women into the workforce had mainly economical justifications. However, Einhorn shows that women's participation in the economy did not have an emancipatory effect because the structure of interpersonal relations and what can be defined as the private sphere was never questioned. Multiple roles were almost instantly imposed on women as they entered in the economy and the perceived inablity to live up to the expectations of each was accompanied by a feeling of inadequacy or guilt[5]. The working day of the women from Eastern Europe was more extensive than anywhere in the world and seven times higher than men's in the same region[6]. Women were disadvantaged both because of the domestic arrangemets and by the occupational ones. The occupatioal segregation was a phenomena almost uniform in the socialist states. For example in Germany eventhough the curricula was not gendered and girls attended technical schools the gender imbalances were obvious when entering in the workforce. Girls entered in the workforce as unqualified workers in larger amounts than men. Moreover for women the occupations from the public sphere reproduced the domestic occupational structure, placing them in the caregiving, supporting roles[7]. In the case of men this situation never occured therefore they were less conditioned in taking jobs that resembled their personal/domestic condition. Despite these difficulties, interviews made with women showed that they still see their occupation as something valuable, something that gives them selfworth.

The view of what would be the multideveloped socialist state translated in a series of policies that were also aimed at addressing women's dual role. In this context it was acknowledged by the policymakers that as a result of women's involvement in the workforce the birth rate declined[8]. Therefore the legislation adopted positive discrimination measures in the workforce, especially concerning health and maternity leave. These measures could be interpreted in the sense that the state was aware that the general egalitarian legislation was not sufficient. The result was that the enforcement of the dual role perpetuated gender inequalities. For example not allowing women to perform heavy physical tasks kept them away from those industrial branches that payed the highest salaries. In reality women were still performing difficult tasks like road cleaning or agriculture[9]. Concerning the reproductive policies, the eastern states adopted a multitude of strategies. For example the German Democratic Republic would let women to choose the time when they want to have kids while in Romania the abortion was banned starting form the 60s[10]. The socialist states shaped the public roles of women in a way that could be considered just to a certain extent. Still the profound inequalities laied in

the domestic sphere. The state proclaimed a judiciary equality concerning the free choice in marriage, property rights, and free movement inside marriage. All these measures were not aimed to challenge the patriarchal model of marriage which was still considered the greatest achievement[11]. The aspects related to the private sphere such as housewives income, the living conditions and sexuality were negleted[12]. The shortage in living spaces favoured a traditional form of cohabitation with the exteded family at the centre[13]. Sexuality was considered of lesser importance because the whole energy had to go into the public activities. Heterosexual behavior was considered the norm, while homosexuality although not forbidden was not visible[14]. Women looked prematurely aged because of the multiple burdens and were also professionally disadvantaged. The dream of socializing domestic work did not come into existence and the services supply was scarce. The marxist writers that showed how family was an oppressive environment did not acknowledged the very impact that gender inequalites contained here would impact the lives of women as a whole[15]. Freeing the working woman from the domestic constrains failed because it did not deconstructed the assumption concerning the „natural" character of gender relations. Both socialism and transition's processes enforced the gendered division between the public and private sphere. Women from the GDR voiced this condition of inadequacy and guilt in literature and art. The individuals valorized the private sphere as the state's restrictions grew. Family and friends were constructed as a safe space against the state and equality goal was rejected at the individual level[16]. At this point the author brings into discussion the case of Western Europe. There a reversed process happened since the private sphere was seen as disadvanteging women because of its unpayed and alienating character. As a consequence it supported women's involvement in politics and payed work. They tried to validate women's subjective experiences by accepting them as a public concern[17] . On the other hand, socialist women suffered the injustices from their personal lives with serenity because of an idealized notion of what the private sphere stood for.

At this point, after reviewing the main features of the socialist times in terms of the dynamic it imposed on the gender relations one would legitimaly ask: how does the transition period look from the perspective of the gender regime of socialism? The explanation of the socialist period helps understanding the reverse postsocialist phenomena. The new actors that were brought to the scene after the revolutionary upheavels of 1989 were the church and a state that embraced a nationalist ideology, proclaiming the family as the main social institution. Motherhood is now exacerbated by giving it a sacre mission in the community. As a consequence women were withdrew from their public roles and made responsible for the domestic sphere. They were the first to be dismisssed for not beig trusthworthy because of the priviledges they enjoyed during socialism[18]. Other reason rest in the disagregation of the local and central bureaucratic systems where women occupied the lower ranks[19]. Transition meant a return to the private patriarchy by empasizing a unitary model of motherhood. Family is brought in the first line as a response to the false equality.

As far as the political activity is concerned, Einhorn considers several dominant tendencies and proposes a comparative perspective among socialism and postsocialism. She is talking about the perceived disengagement of women with formal politics and a possible explanation she sees rests in the multiple roles that women had in the socialist times. The newly emerged states worked however in the same way by subsuming this time women's lives to the national cause. This represents a continuation with the practices of the past. The socialist state granted women formal citizenship and in the same time cancelled them by organizing facked elections. The postsocialist countries did not offered opportunities for participation and women were almost invisible in the new governments. At the begining of the 90s no single political party represented women. On the other hand, women were less compromised than men during the past regime and this could constitute an advantage. However women preffered to particiate in the newly formed movements from the civil society. The comparisson with the West is less relevant here considers Einhorn because the percentages concerning women's representation are simmilar. Therefore we should look again at the socialist times in order to understand the present[20].

Romania is one of the countries where the greatest gap in representation occured[21]. In socialism as in the other countries the state manifested preocupation for women's representation, but mainly in a quantitative form. The process started in 1973 when the Central Commitee launched an extended campaign for the promotion of women in public positions. By 1979 a greater number of women than men are reelected in the Central Commitee, the main executive body of the Communist Party. However women were still filling the lower ranks both in the Central Commitee and in the Great National Assembly[22]. Women also held the lowest positions in the disident movements and this aspect represented a continuity with the old regime[23]. In the same time, the rest of the socialist countries shared the unanimous opinion that women's organizations become obsolete. Starting with the year 1930, the Soviet Union dismanteled the women's organizations[24]. Once the class was abolished it was assumed that gender equalities will follow suit. This approach lasted until the end of the stalinist period, in the 50. Shortly after, the first women's organization was created but it was never really responsive to women's needs considers Einhorn. Women's local councils were also something imposed from above, but this was true only in the case of the Soviet Union. In the other eastern countries the fact that equality was guaranteed under the law, made the formation of women's organizations impossible to exist untill the late 1960. It started with the German Democratic Republic, rejecting the assumption that women and men were equal and asking for the formation of a separate women's organization[25]. Therefore in 1967 a new women's organization was recreated based on the ideea that the conflict among social groups is enduring and that it was legitimate for certain groups to protect their interests. Before 1989, women's organizations become already obsolete. The newly formed women's organizations and the old ones did not worked together. A misunderstood concept of solidarity prevented women of seeing themselves as a group with distinct interests[26].

The situation of the German Democratic Republic could be easly replicated for the other socialist countries and for Romania, too. There are several aspects that need to be taken into consideration when women's political activity is discussed: were women more politically active than men in socialism and why? Do they participate more at the regional and local level than in the national structures? Were they pushed back by men?[27]

First the author tries to deconstruct the asumption that during socialism women were represented manly formaly. She quotes Sharon Wolchik which claims that the decline in political representation was not so spectacular in terms of its public visibility, and in the same time women did not took a stand because their educational and social background learned them to be passive[28]. Women's more extensive involvement in local politics was justified by their higher ability to influence decissions. Political participation is much more accesible at this level and it can be balanced with the domestic responsabilities as well. Norris thinks that the conventional studies ignore women's involvement in politics. She thinks that it is important to see how women got involved, what are the untraditional channels for participation and not so much how they don't act and behave like men[29]. There is still a discontinuity between the past visibility and the present invisibility. The authors consider that the explanation, rests in the specificity of the socialist experience and the difficulty of adapting to the new structures, lack of time, alergy to feminism and male supremacy. Because of the above imposed emancipation and no tradition of political activism for rights such as in the Western Europe all the benefits of the socialist times were not considered gains until taken away. The right to choose was something women thought they didn't have in socialism and with the arrival of the new regime they saw this possibility taking shape. In the past, the official women's organizations acted for emancipation. Now the organizational landscape is composed of small organizations, problem solving oriented and nonfeminist together with women's unions and other socialist organizations[30].

 The authors consider that one can better understand gender during transition if we see politics as an esentially masculine defined domain[31]. Gender as a concept encompasses culturally defined norms concernig differences among women and men, power and inequality[32]. Gender arrangements are much more diverse during transition. The gender regime during socialism was replaced by multiple discourses that are constructing the relations between women and men[33]. Searching for models that explain the configuration and dynamics of gender relations in transition, an interesting one came out of a stratification study that investigated women's expectations about gender in a rural town of Hungary. The asumption of the study was that women's expectations about gender relations usually intersect with economical and political processes leading to new models in class formation[34]. The authors go on to analyze how the equality ideal, as a socialist inheritance works against the present conservative one which seems to prevail. Their study identifies mainly three classes in the making each carring a different model of gender relations[35]. The hypothesis is that the ideas about femininiy, self, and expectations about the

relations with men are all related with the formation of class. In the same time, gender advantages justify and legitimize any social position that people claim. Talking about women's political participation, they also notice women's tendency to withdraw from politics after 1990, but it is more to this than the numbers[36]. One of the conclusions of the research was that women perceive their femininity as being opposed to politics and this opinion was influenced by the definition of the political itself. The Hungarian political discourse is also constructed on a gendered notion of political action. Women may asume political roles but do not feel fit for them. They see themselves as private individuals even if active and politically aware[37]. However women are not very much interested in politics not even in this contradictory way shows the author. The study's conclusion is that the formation of the new classes and the kind of relation with politics that this process implies does not mean a return to a traditional arrangement, eventhough the women from the occupational elite are pushing their men to the fore of the political action. The new mixture that results becomes the marker of the high social status, the definition of the new elites[38]. In the case of women antreprenors, the second class in formation, the media consumption implies the formation of a class culture, a sense of distinction and taste that distinguishes them and explains their success. They also rejected husbands that did not have the necessary qualities[39]. The industrial workers, the third group identified was created and gained selfcounsciousness during socialism. The socialist practices made this group predominantely depedent of the socialist factory. In the same time, the social benefits allow women to gain some independence but as the benefits were cut they remained dangerously isolated. They didn't develop any social network and did not have any cultural expectations. Their political activity was almost inexistent. The women who were pushed away from the public sphere are in the same time the beneficiaries of the gender models produced by socialism and they represent the antreprenorial class, the most dynamic one and the most progressive. The policies that socialized their functions also strenghtened their dependency. The fact that men and women are living in a partnership is an expectation and part of a socialist ideal. One could see how the old models mix with the new ones in the formation of classes in Hungary and how the expectations concerning gender play an essential role[40]. I considered this chapter as being usefull here and I will show how the premises of this study are connected with my own research.

One has to wonder how these theories can be integrated for the Romanian case. I will approach this task by reffering to another theory that also speaks abut gender relations this time in the Romanian case. Vladimir Pasti's paper, The Last Inequality. Gender Relations in Romania developed the theory of the three patriarchal systems that are inhabiting the civilizations present in Romania: rural, industrial and capitalist. The description of each as well as the mechanisms that help reproducing patriarchy are usefull for understanding gender relations in the Romanian case[41]. Its upper structure is inhabited by the political patriarchy that manifested by eliminating women from politics[42]. Pasti also thinks that both communism and transition were permeated by patriarchy. The communist regime eliberated women in order for

them to serve an economical purpose and granted them a formal equality with men. This doesn't mean that the society wasn't male dominated. What communism did was to adapt this relationship (patriarchy) to the market requirements and to leave the opressive character of gender relations unquestioned. The case is simmilar for transition because patriarchy as a "primitive" social relation easily adapted to the new social landscape[43].

FEATURES OF THE ROMANIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

These are some of the questions that I consider suitable for this section. Before getting to the field work part of my research I will present a short overview of the Romanian political system, its main developments and features after 1989. Because the focus of the paper are the political parties, and the research units are the women's organizations from the local political parties I will start by saying that they've been considered the most important institutions during transition because of the role they played in enabling the democratic process. Nevertheless the party system that emerged at the beginning of the 90s could be distinguished by several distinctive features such as: great turnover rates, lack of connections with the civil society, fierce competition due to the great number of parties, electoral volatility[44]. Romania is also a semi presidential republic, meaning that the president has extended attributions towards the parliament and the government. The first political party was The National Salvation Front who also won the first "free" elections[45]. The Democrat Liberal Party which has a centre right orientation won the last two elections in 2004 and 2008. The country is a semi presidential republic, therefore the president has extended attributions compared with the government and parliament. The electoral system has changed in the last legislature from a proportional representation on party lists of candidates to a single member district election.

How does women's representation looks like in this political landscape? As it was mentioned earlier, women's representation witnessed a significant drop in the post socialist period with only 4% representation in the Upper Chamber and 3% in the Lower Chamber. After the 1996 elections there was a slight increase to 6% and in 2000 it reached 10%. After the last elections, Romania is situated behind the EU average concerning the level of women's representation in political bodies.

As far as the local level is concerned there's also the claim in the literature that women would get involved in the local organizations since this is more compatible with their daily responsibilities. But the percentages at this level are not very high either. After the 2008 elections we are facing a drop in women's representation from 15.37% in 2004 to 12,6% at the county and council's level. After the last elections Cluj County is among the cities with the highest number of women mayors. The success of the women mayors from the rural areas can be explained by the Romanian political system that carries patriarchal features. Since the influence of parties is less pronounced in the rural areas and small cities, it is easier for gifted women to be elected and parties cannot deny or prevent this from happening.

FEW GENERAL REMARKS CONCERNING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN. RESEARCH THEME, QUESTIONS AND DATA GATHERING METHODS

The main research questions that motivated this enterprise are informed by the above theories. More specifically I'm interested in finding out who are the women participating in the local politics from the perspective of their social background? How do they see themselves, define the problems they are facing and what solutions do they foresee? Which were the circumstances that determined them to be politically involved?

My research uses the qualitative techniques from the social sciences as well as its interpretative paradigms. The domain of qualitative research comprises the disciplines as well as the interpretative paradigms that are circumscribed to it; the research methods and strategies, the research process and the relation of the researcher with the empirical reality. Its domain is interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and sometimes even counterdisciplinary[46]. Each empirical endeavour is challenged by two types of tensions: on one hand it is prone to a broad interpretative approach, which sometimes takes a postmodern or feminist form and on the other hand is confined to a narrower positivist and post positivist perspective on human experience[47]. This means that the qualitative research encompasses tensions about its goals, including the methods it uses and interpretation of the results[48]. Qualitative means emphasizing process and meaning which are not rigorously measured concerning quantity, intensity or frequency, the tools of quantitative approach[49]. The characteristics of the qualitative research rest in the fact that it implies more than one method, has an interpretative approach on the research subject, uses a variety of empirical materials such as case study, personal experience, introspection, life history, interview and observation[50]. A couple of theoretical paradigms are using the qualitative research from constructivism to the cultural studies, feminism, Marxism, and the ethnic models. There is also more than one version of the feminist or ethnic, Marxist or cultural studies[51]. The research approach and the methods are situated at the crossroad of feminist and cultural studies paradigms.

Usually the research strategy implies using the sum of the skills, assumptions and practices in order to go from the research paradigm to the empirical world. What matters in this process are the methods the researcher is using in order to understand reality. The qualitative research doesn't have a distinct set of methods. It uses semiotics, narrative, content analysis, discourse and even statistics. It emphasizes the constructed nature of reality and different situational constrains[52]. These more general considerations allow for a more detailed discussion of the research design. I approached the construction of the research design from the perspective proposed by Joseph Maxwell in his paper Designing a qualitative study and also Denzin și Lincoln's, Entering the field of Qualitative Research. I considered Maxwell's model as well as Denzin and Lincoln's observations as being appropriate for my research plans and I decided to adopt them. As a data gathering method I'm using participant observation and unstructured interview. It is considered that they are the most useful tools when researching a culture from within. The goal of this approach to the research process is to obtain the viewpoint of the participants; recording the events live, developing interpretative theories and an in depth study of the lives of the participants. The advantage of direct observation is that as the time goes by the participants will not alter their behaviour in the presence of the researcher and this would allow them a better observation of the context[53]. This is why the stance that the researcher has to take is more one of the observer than of the participant. The unstructured interview it's considered to be the main means by getting insight into the lives of those researched[54].

FIELD WORK DESCRIPTION. THE METHODS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

For gathering the data I used a qualitative approach that combines field work with documents' analysis. Because this research started from my interest concerning women's participation in the local politics and it concretized with field work in the City of Cluj – Napoca, Romania I start with few general information about the city and then I will describe the main phases of the field work. Cluj Napoca is the biggest town in Transylvania with approximately 318.000 inhabitants, situated in the north – western part of the region. It is ethnically diverse and considered to have one of the highest degrees of local democracy in Romania. The city is also religiously diverse, approximately 15% of Romanians are Greek Catholics and Protestants and the rest of them orthodox. It is also an academic centre counting approximately 80.000 students, the highest number of students when Bucharest excluded. The most important industrial branches are the processing, food, mining, pharmaceutical and cosmetics. As far as political life is concerned, the local political parties are collaborating among themselves and with the media but the link between them and the citizens is weak. In the last elections for the local council, seventeen parties ran, but only four obtained seats, namely PD-L, which retains the majority of the seats, followed by other three parties. Concerning the number of women councillors, PDL has 3, while the other parties have one. The number of women involved in the local parties' organizations is small, PDL has the greatest number of active members (around 50 members). As far as LNP is concerned the president of the organization reported having around 50 members, but the observations I made during the meetings showed that the active participants are around 15. The other party I looked at, DUHR does not keep records of women's members and they don't have a women's organization in the party. The last party investigated was SDP which has around 20-30 women active in the organization. These organizations are usually relaying upon members' contributions for logistics and activities.

After obtaining this more general overview the next step was to establish contact with the local parties' organizations and to participate in their meetings. I contacted seven such organizations, namely the organization of Social Democrat Party, Democrat Party,

Liberal Party, The Democratic Union of Hungarians, The Greater Romania Party, The National Peasant's Party and the Rroma Party. I concentrated my analysis on four of them, namely SDP, DP, LP and UDMR. This implied weekly and monthly observations of the meetings and activities. I also engaged in debates with the participants and took interviews. From the four organizations that I contacted only in the case of two was I able to observe their meetings regularly. In the case of the last two, the observation consisted in attending their annual congress, and also in activities organized by the women's organization for certain events. With the later two, (NLP and DUHR) I mainly conducted interviews with the women members and therefore the information about the organization's activity was obtained indirectly. In the case of the two organizations that I observed regularly the participation was not easy either. Not all the meetings are open and this can represent a problem, especially when the purpose is to get as much information as possible. The field work lasted for eight months. Each activity was recorded either through field notes or audiotape. Initially the purpose was to learn as much as possible about the activities of these organizations and to generate discussions on issues that I considered of interest. Gradually I realized that generating discussions intervenes in the research process in a manner that affects the interpretation and construction of the data. I reached this conclusion after such a meeting. The members criticized the way in which the issue was approached as well as the fact that it was too "feminist". After this feedback and the feedback I received from other researchers in the field I decided to limit my interaction to the observations and interviews. The decision was not an easy one and there were convincing arguments for continuing this activity. When I planned the field work part I considered that the organization of the seminars and discussions on gender equality issues will constitute the cornerstone of entering in these organizations. As the research developed I also realized that the participants were more collaborative when they have the possibility to talk about themselves and held a meeting in which persons from outside the organization could take part.

As for taking the interviews I used the snowballing technique. In the same time I extended the interview guide in order to include questions about the family, consumption and recreational habits, along those concerning the political activity. In this way I hope to obtain richer information and to be able to reconstruct the life history would also provide more access into the circumstances in which the women got involved in the political activity. Concerning the research process, the data was gathered simultaneously and was also dependent on the dynamics of the organizations' activities. The age of the interviewees varies between 35 and 60 therefore their experiences are covering the socialist period, too. Several women were interviewed at their working place, especially those with position in the local political structures. I could also observe them with the occasion of different events or in their own organizations. Given the tendency observed by the studies that are proclaiming women's disengagement with formal politics I'm interested in finding out whether these women who choose to participate have something in common or on the contrary are diverse in terms of their social, economic or ethnic background. Even if the majority of the leadership positions are occupied by men, some of the women I interviewed managed to ensure positions in the local administration. There is also the category of small entrepreneurs and the workers in the local factories. During the participant observation I tried to identify the key informants that could provide me with access into the organization and also share valuable information.

FINAL REMARKS

These are some of the aspects that I'm concerned with in this research. I'm starting from the question: who are the women involved in local politics I study this from the perspective of the feminist theories of gender and politics. In order to answer to this question I'm using the techniques of qualitative research, namely participant observation and interview. In the end I hope to be able to get a profile of the organizations and especially of the women members.

Notes

1 Ibidem 50, p.19

2 Ibidem 50, p. 20

3 Ibidem 50, p.19

4 Ibidem 50, p. 30.

5 Ibidem 50, p. 117.

6 Ibidem 50, p. 117.

7 Ibidem 50, p.118

8 Ibidem 50, p.83

9 Ibidem 50, p. 83

10 Ibidem 50, p.89.

11 Ibidem 50, p. 49

12 Ibidem 50, p.46

13 Ibidem 50, p. 55

14 Ibidem 50, p. 46.

15 Ibidem 50, p. 47

16 Ibidem 50, p.60

17 Ibidem 50, p.63

18 Ibidem 50, p. 129

19 Ibidem 50, p.130

20 Ibidem 50, p. 148

21 Ibidem 50, p. 151

22 Mary E. Fisher, „Women in Romanian Politics: Elena Ceauşescu, Pronatalism and the Promotion of Women" in *Women, State and Party in eastern Europe*, ed. Sharon Wolchik and A. Meyer, Durham: Duke University Press, 1985, p. 131.

23 Ibidem 50, p. 159

24 Ibidem 50, p. 184

25 Ibidem 50, p. 185

26 Ibidem 50, p. 186

27 Ibidem 50, p. 152

28 Ibidem 50, p. 163

29 Ibidem 50, p. 165

30 Ibidem 50, p. 170

31 Gal Susan, Kligman G., "Introducere" în *Reproducerea diferenţelor de gen. Politici, sferă publică şi viaţă cotidiană în ţările postsocialiste*, Ed. Efes, Cluj – Napoca, 2003, p. 11

32 Ibidem 82, p. 12

33 Ibidem 82, p. 12

34 Katalin Kovacs, M. Varadi, "Traiectoriile de viaţă ale femeilor şi formarea claselor în Ungaria" in *Reproducerea diferenţelor de gen. Politici, sferă publică şi viaţă cotidiană în ţările postsocialiste,* Ed. Efes, Cluj – Napoca, 2003, p. 238

35 Ibidem 87, p. 238

36 Ibidem 87, p. 244

37 Ibidem 87, p. 246

38 Ibidem 87, p. 252

39 Ibidem 87, p. 258

40 Ibidem 87, p. 267

41 Pasti Vladimir, Ultima inegalitate. Relaţiile de gen în România, Ed. Polirom, 2003, p. 230.

42 Ibidem 96, p. 214.

43 Ibidem 96, p. 106

44 Birch Sarah, *Electoral Systems and Party Systems Stability in Post Communist Europe*, accessed at 15.dec. 2002, www.essex.ac.uk

45 Tom Gallagher, „ The Emergence of New Party Systems and Transitions to Democracy: Romania and Portugal Compared" in *Establishing Fragile Democracies – Comparing New Party Systems in Southern and Eastern Europe,*ed. Geoffrey P., and P. Lewis, Routledge Press, 1996, p. 20.

46 Norman Denzin, Lincoln Y., *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage: Thousand Oaks, 1994, p. 3.

47 Ibidem 1, p. 3.

48 Ibidem 1, p. 4.

49 Ibidem 1, p.4.

50 Ibidem 1, p. 2.

51 Ibidem 1, p. 13.

52 Ibidem 1, p. 4.

53 Ibidem 31, p. 45.

54 Shulamit Reinharz, „Feminist interview research" in *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, p.18.

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Gender equality and gender mainstreaming in corporate cut flower production in China

Cai-yun Wang, Abu Kargbo, Ya-fei Li, Mahmoud M. El-habbaq,
Shi-mao Li, Rong-zhangMai, Qiang Fu.
Huazhong Agricultural University Wuhan, China
wangcy@mail.hzau.edu.cn

ABSTRACT

The extent gender equality is practiced in the cut flower industry in China as provided by the 1982 China constitution is explored. A sample of 20 companies is purposively selected and 200 workers from these companies are interviewed. The data suggests that despite the constitutional prescription of gender equality, male and female workers' roles and benefits differ significantly ($P<0.05$) at various levels. Male mean participation in administrative tasks is 7.8 higher than female. 32.4% and 24.1% of males and females respectively are permanently employed and largely enjoy welfare benefits. Male and female permanent workers' mean wages are significantly different by RMB 17.35 and RMB 14.60 from male and female casual workers respectively. Means contribution of men and women in flower production are 5.1 and 4.9 and domestic are 2.5 and 7.5 respectively. This paper concludes that gender equality has not been mainstreamed in the industry thus, provides the basis for gender mainstreaming approaches establishment.

KEY WORDS: gender equality, gender mainstreaming, male, female, cut flower, China

INTRODUCTION

China's economy maintains (Xinhua,2009) steady growth however, the country profile shows that economic development does not ensure equality between men and women though its labor force participation and income disparity are smaller than Japan, Russia and United States of America (Xing,2007). The country gender empowerment measure is 0.533 ranking 72 out of 109 countries (HDR, 2009) and 81 out of 177 countries in gender development index (UNIFEM, 2007).

China labor laws contain clauses that promote gender gaps such as the regulation on retirement age for state employees in which the retirement age for women is 50years and men 60years (UNIFEM, 2007) . The Chinese government having realized the inequality that prevails between men and women in the social and economic spheres and with an intention to close the gap in inequality, proclaimed in China constitution (1982) equal rights for the sexes in all social and economic sectors of the society. Article 48 of the constitution states "Women in the People's Republic of China enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, in political, economic, cultural, social and family life. The state protects the rights and interests of women, applies the principle of equal pay for equal work to men and women alike and trains and selects cadres from among women".

In most countries, large proportion of the male labor force continues to migrate to urban towns leaving the women behind who are largely engaged in agriculture. In China, agriculture employs over 50 percent of the labor force (UNDP, 2003) and women account largely of the farm labor.

Studies have been conducted on gender; however there is currently a gap in the knowledge of gender relation in floriculture in China. The available data is limited to production, export and import values of floricultural products (China flower international trade, 2007). In fact, the literature on agriculture in China is centered on food crops and livestock (de Brauw et al., 2008) contrary to popular perception that flower production has become principally a feminine activity as flower production becomes a major part of Chinese economy.

However, as the Chinese flower industry grew rapidly in the past 15 years, the questions about labor conditions and gender issues in flower production became a cause for concern for government, consumers and several international organizations. The flower industry is noted as a sector where poor labor conditions and environmental damaging production processes are widely practice (Dolan et al., 2002). In China, the questions that remained to be addressed include whether, the cut flower companies have practically

incorporated the constitutional provisions of equality in their operations and what impact has that had on gender relations and employment conditions for the workers? What is currently lacking in the floriculture literature is a clear mapping of the issues in a way that will help show where equality and inequality exist.

We intend to address these questions by using two approaches; first we develop a theoretical and conceptual framework and second, carry an empirical research on twenty flower companies.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Social role theory explains that the behavioral sex differences stem from differential social roles found in male and female ((Eagly et al., 2000). In the past, Harrison et al, (2005) attributed the assigning of labor tasks to male and female in accordance to their physical features due to economic, ecological, social, and technological considerations. Thus, according to Harrison et al, (2005), men were more likely to perform tasks that needed speed, strength, and the ability outside the home while women were likely to stay home and perform domestic chores. Due to the differential roles in male and female based on the division of labor, gender roles developed. The belief of many cultures is the assumption that, beyond biology, women and men possess essentially different capacities and functions. Understanding this assumption helps make sense of the perpetuation and even institutionalization of male/female difference with regard to behavior expectations, position within the family, legal rights, public status, education, and types of work (Women in World History Curriculum, 2010).

In China the concept of gender differences is rooted in Confucianism ideology. The assumption that men's and women's social places and expected behaviors are quite distinct is based on Confucian hierarchical precepts (Campion, 2005).

However, the challenges of social and economic trends have caused shift in gender roles. Large male migration from rural to urban areas in China for paid labor has brought about a large number of females entering the market labor leading them to play the triple roles in present day society (Syed et al. ,2003) and floriculture is the sector which has attracted that labor . Therefore in China flower production is thought in the public domain as an activity that is principally feminine in nature but Saghir et al., (2005) disagree, considering flower production a gender activity in which women and men participate actively.

The division of gender roles can be a premise for inequality between men and women both at domestic and productive sectors. This study seeks to find out whether the social role theory can show how division of gender roles in cut flower production may be source of inequalities. In addition, the research seeks to investigate the extent the constitutional provisions on equality have been mainstreamed in the Chinese flower industry. Whilst gender equality concept is recognized as essential for economic and social growth, many people find it

as a secret revolution aiming at deconstructing society natural values (Kuby, 2008). As Grosser and Moon (2005), we adopt the conclusion of Dickens' (1999) that opportunities for females in the work place will be advanced by legal compliance and social regulations such as the constitution. Therefore our conceptualization of gender equality in China involves legal compliance of organizations to the 1982 constitution.

This paper brings in gender mainstreaming (Gm) and considers its relationship with the China constitution in addressing gender inequalities. To do that, we investigate the extent the provisions in the China constitution on equality have been mainstreamed in the flower companies.

We predict the existence of significant inequalities in the industry in four levels; administration employment status, production and remuneration in which gender inequalities are perceived to exist. We map these levels on a gendered pyramid (Figure.1).
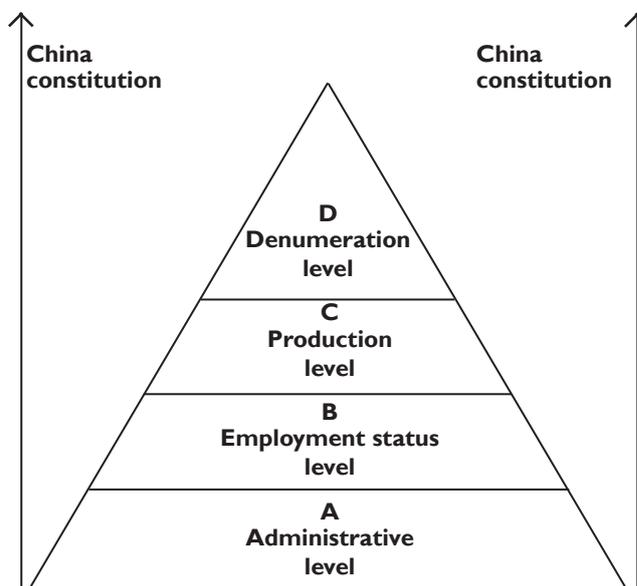
Figure 1.

The pyramid in Figure.1 divides the major issues related to formal employment in flower Company into four connected levels; administrative level (segment A); employment status level (segment B) production level (segment C) and remuneration level (segment D). The segments are arranged according to the level of influence from A to D. This analytical framework helps us understand how inequality in one segment propels inequality in the next segment vertically. Segment A is the level where power relations play, planning and decisions about the operations, use of resources and tasks are conducted. It is the most important segment because it determines the growth prospects and directions of the business and how the benefits for participation are distributed to the employees.

Here, the proportional gender representation in management, board and workers' committee is investigated. The involvement of males and females in performing tasks at segment A is imperative for gender

equality. Gender equality is inscribed in article 48 of the 1982 constitution. Decisions at segment A affect the productivity and status of every employee in the company.

Segment B of the pyramid, covers the type of employment status that a worker holds. Segment B has two categories of workers: 1.Permanent worker: This type of worker is contracted for a longer period not less than a year, may have higher wage and enjoys wage and non-wage benefits like housing, medical insurance, leave pay, severance leave, social security and a host of others.2. Casual worker: This type of worker is contracted on daily basis and will not have the same benefits and rights as permanent worker. The employment security and status influence the economical and social status of an employee and is reported to be more important for female workers (Barrientos et al., 2000) because they combine productive and reproductive work. The employment status of a worker at segment B may influence the type of tasks of a worker at segment C.

Segment C of the pyramid covers the productive tasks assigned to workers. Normally at this segment the division of labor by gender is visible. Here the type of task/role may affect the amount of wage a worker earns.

Segment D of the pyramid covers the remuneration (wage and non-wage benefits) provided to workers. The amount of remuneration and the number of benefits provided to workers have impact on their family livelihoods. The regulations of wages and labor benefits are covered by article 48 of the 1982 constitution and sections 44, 45, 62 and 68 of the Labor act (1995).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Approach
The gender analysis (GA) approach method (Peter, 2006) is used in the study. GA is a useful tool that helps show differences and similarities in roles of men and women. Related literature is reviewed. We use pre-tested structured questionnaires (SQs) for companies and interview schedules (ISs) for workers as suggested by Kumar (2005).

Selection of the study population
Twenty flower companies are purposively selected and contacted for the study. The criteria for selection include companies with established administrative structure, legally registered with the central or regional governments, applying codes and willing to take part in the research.

The sample of two hundred workers is selected from the twenty companies. Only married workers are selected. An even number of one hundred males and one hundred females is selected using a stratified random sampling method based on gender and employment status (permanent, casual). The total number of workers in these companies is 1298. A ratio was calculated using the formula=n/N as described by Dolan et al., (2002) where F=ratio of the sample population, n=sample size and N=population size. Therefore: F=200/1298=0.1540, this ratio is used to determine the number of workers selected from each company.

Data Collection and Analysis
All SQs and ISs have a cover letter explaining the relevance of the study and seeking the consent of the participant. Follow up telephone calls and emails are made to the companies after one month. The SQs for the companies are filled by the manager or director of the company. Clarification of some questions is made by email and telephone. The SQs are collected when the enumerators went to interview the workers. The workers are interviewed face to face by the enumerators and all the responses recorded in the recording schedule by the enumerators. The recordings are clarified and confirmed by enumerator and the interviewees. Among many questions the key questions the participants are asked include:

1. What is your level of participation in carrying out the following productive and domestic tasks; picking, packaging, grading, spraying, irrigation, clearing of site, nursery maintenance, packing in cold store, filling pots, transplanting, flower maintenance, marketing of flowers, procurement of equipments, cleaning of greenhouse, supervision of unit workers, construction/maintenance of greenhouse, transportation of flower products, child care, care of family elderly, house cleaning, washing clothes, food preparation, house decoration repair of house furniture? Please rate on an eleven point count 0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 for each task between male and female. Please note 0 indicates no participation and 10 the highest level of participation. Participation level increases from 0 to 10

2. Indicate the time in hours you spend daily in each of the activities listed in numner.1

3. How many men and women form the management and board structure in your company?

4. What is the daily wage for male and female workers in your company?

5. State by employment status (permanent, casual) the number of male and female workers in your company.

6. Is there gender committee in your company?

7. What welfare benefits are provided to flower workers?

8. Are you a member of trade union organization?

9. Do you understand the term gender mainstreaming? Please use the following guide for your answers (1=yes, 0=No)

The data is quantified and inputted as nominal or ordinal and analyzed using Gen stat software package edition 3.

The results are shown as descriptive statistics. Non-parametric and parametric statistics are done to interpret the data.

RESULTS

Demographic and Socio-economic Variables of the Workers

In the twenty flower companies studied, 51% and 49% of the workers are males and females respectively but not significantly different (P<0.05 The sample interviewed represents 15.4% of the total number of workers in the companies. 100% of the respondents are married. All the males are 100% head of households and none of the females is head of house hold. None of the respondent belongs to an organized religion though over 50% believe in life hereafter. In terms of age composition, 30% is older than 50 years, 32.5% of the respondents are between 40-49 years, 22.5% are between 29-39years and 15% are between 18-28years old. 0.3 % of the respondents have no formal education, 1.5% has primary education, 9.3% had gone through middle school, 16.3% have high school education, and on average 26.25% have vocational education and 46.29% tertiary education. There is twice the number of male with tertiary education than female. In terms of income disparity, 43.45% of the respondents earn RMB (renminbi) 34.30 and 56.55% earn RMB50.43 mean daily income.

In all the twenty companies, 90% and10% of the managers interviewed have an understanding rate of very well and average respectively of the provisions in the Chinese constitution and Chinese Labor Act on employment conditions related to gender equality. Surprisingly 100% of the managers and directors have no understanding of the concept gender mainstreaming.

Representation by Gender at Administrative level

Companies are asked to indicate the representation by gender on the Board of Trustees, on the management and worker committee levels. The level and mean number of males and females involve in the planning, execution and management of the companies are presented in Table 1.

Task	Representation by Gender		Significance level
	Male	Female	
Planning	3.6	1.4	0.008*
Management	6.2	2.3	0.001*
Workers' committee	2.5	0.8	0.044*

*Significant at P < 0.05

Table1.Mean score on administrative participation by Gender (t-Test)

Our results indicate significant differences (P < 0.05) in the number of representation at the Board of Trustees, Management and worker committee levels for the companies. The number of male involved in planning, managing and making decisions was greater by a mean of 7.8 than that of the females (Table 1).

Gender division of Labor in Flower Production and Domestic tasks

Respondents are asked to locate 11 points on the basis of gender division of labor between male and female level of participation in each activity in Table 2.

Task	Mean. level participation/task		Significant level
	Male	Female	
Productive roles			
Picking	3.600	6.400	0.001*
Packaging	3.337	6.663	0.001*
Grading	3.525	6.475	0.001*
Spraying	8.975	1.025	0.001*
Irrigation	5.138	4.875	0.023*
Clearing of site	6.038	3.963	0.001*
Nursery maintenance	3.800	6.200	0.001*
Packing in cold store	5.987	4.013	0.001*
Filling pots	3.425	6.575	0.001*
Transplanting	5.013	4.987	0.697(n.s)
Flower maintenance	3.525	6.475	0.001*
Marketing of flowers	3.712	6.287	0.001*
Procurement of equipments	5.600	4.400	0.001*
Cleaning of greenhouse	6.325	3.675	0.001*
Supervision of unit workers	7.188	2.812	0.001*
maintenance of greenhouse	5.225	4.775	0.005*
Transportation of flower products	6.775	3.225	0.001*
Domestic roles			
Child care	1.087	8.912	0.001*
Care of elderly(family)	4.050	5.950	0.001*
House cleaning	2.075	7.925	0.001*
Washing clothes	1.113	8.887	0.001*
Food preparation	3.925	6.075	0.001*
House decoration	2.538	7.463	0.001*

* Significant at P<0.05 level. n.s. not significant.

Table.2 Participants level of participation on flower and domestic tasks (t-Test).

The results in Table 2 show significant differences at (P < 0.05) in all flower production and domestic tasks except in transplanting. Male workers differ significantly in spraying, site clearing, supervision of unit workers and transportation from female workers. Women contribution is higher than men in picking, packaging, nursery maintenance, filling pots, and marketing and in all domestic tasks. The mean contributions of men and women in flower production are 5.13 and 4.87 respectively and are insignificantly different (P > 0.05) However female domestic contribution is 7.54, thrice that of men 2.47 and is significantly different (P < 0.05) .Overall means participation for female and male in both productive and domestic tasks are 5.57 and 4.43 respectively. In percentage, women contribute 55.7% of labor and men 44.3%. Thus female participation is 11.4% higher than men daily.

Time-used in Flower Production and Domestic work

In order to determine the time (hr) spent daily by male and female in flower production and domestic roles, a time allocation study is done. Respondents are asked about how much time in hours they spend daily on the tasks listed in Table 3.

Task	Mean hours spent/day		Significance level
	Male	Female	
Productive roles			
Picking	0.1	1	0.001*
Packaging	0.5	1	0.001*
Grading	0.2	1	0.001*
Spraying	1	0.1	0.001*
Irrigation	0.3	0.28	0.724(n.s)
Clearing of site	0.3	0.04	0.001*
Nursery maintenance	0.5	1	0.001*
Packing in cold store	1	0.5	0.001*
Filling pots	0.3	0.52	0.001*
Transplanting	0.54	0.5	0.569(n.s)
Flower maintenance	0.1	0.3	0.001*
Marketing of flowers	0.2	0.43	0.001*
Procurement of equipments	0.4	0.39	1.0(n.s)
Cleaning of greenhouse	1	0.2	0.001*
Supervision of unit workers	2	0.36	0.001*
maintenance of greenhouse	0.2	0.12	0.168(n.s)
Domestic roles			
Child care	0.28	1.40	0.001*
Care of elderly	0.20	0.25	0.248(n.s)
House cleaning	0.11	2.15	0.001*
Washing clothes	0.04	0.56	0.001*
Food preparation	0.05	2.07	0.001*
House decoration	0.04	0.59	0.001*
Total hrs/day	10.12	14.99	

* Significant at (P<0.05) level. n.s., not significant

Table.3.Mean time-use in flower and domestic tasks by Gender (t-Test)

The results show significant differences (P < 0.05) in all tasks except in irrigation, procurement, care of the elderly and maintenance of greenhouse. Men spend 9.35 hr and women 8.09 hr daily on productive tasks but insignificantly different. However, a woman spends 7.02 hr and a man 0.72 hr on domestic tasks daily and the time use is significantly different. Females and males spend a total of 15 hr and 10 hr a day respectively on flower and house tasks but females work about 5hr more than men daily.

Remuneration by Gender and Employment status

The daily wage for male, female and permanent and casual workers is investigated. There is significant difference (P < 0.05) between a permanent and casual worker irrespective of the gender. No significant difference between a male and female permanent worker and a male and female casual worker as shown in Table 4.

Status of Employment	Gender		Significance level	Nature of worker		Significance level
	Male	Female		Permanent	Casual	
Permanent	53.55	47.30	0.251 (n.s)	50.43	34.30	0.001*
Casual	36.00	32.60	0.471 (n.s)			
Significant level	0.003*	0.004*				

*significant at P<0.05, n.s - not significant

Table 4. Mean daily wage by gender and employment status (RMB).

DISCUSSION

The study on gender equality and mainstreaming is conducted on twenty companies and two hundred workers .The total number of male and female workers is almost equal. This is different from the general trend in which cut flower companies are typically known to employ largely female labor (Meier, 1998). This is likely because the companies investigated included pot flower companies that employ normally larger number of men than women. We find sixty-three percent of the labor force in these companies is people age above forty years a common scenario in the floriculture and agriculture industries (Saghir et al., 2005).

The study identifies four levels designated as segments A-D (Figure 1) where inequalities exist either due to gender, nature of the task or the employment status of the worker. Firstly, at the administrative level (Segment A) such as Board of Trustees, management and workers' committee, men significantly (P < 0.05) dominate (Table 1). Women are not actively involved in the planning and decision making of the companies. In one company all the board members and management team are men but the majority of the employees are women. This contravenes article 48 of the China constitution which calls for equal gender representation in all levels and at all sectors in economic, social and political.

Secondly, at the employment status (segment B), the survey finds that 32.4 and 24.1 percents of males and females respectively are permanently employed while 18.3 and 25.2 percents of females and males are respectively casual workers. It indicates that female workers provided largely the casual labor force.

In addition at the productive level (segment C), the level of participation and roles of women in certain tasks such as picking, packaging, grading, filling pots and marketing are twice higher than men (Table 2). This is probably because flowers are delicate and luxurious products that require people with special handling qualities/skills like care and high mental concentration which women are thought to possess. However, men participation is higher in task such as spraying, cleaning and transportation which demand physical strength, similar to Lastarria-Cornhiel (2006) and Harrison et al, (2005 suggestions in accordance to social role theory notion.

As expected female workers do most of the domestic chores and spend 5hr daily working more than the men (Table3).This high-lights the burden women undergo when they are engaged in the wage labor market and it also shows that roles at the domestic level are still well defined for female in the Chinese society.

Furthermore, at the remuneration level (segment D),we find out that male worker's wage is slightly higher than female worker's by a mean of RMB 6.26 daily even though male and female workers perform equal task, a similar situation to coffee workers in Mesoamerica (Lyon et.al,2009). What is more interesting is the mean daily wage difference between the permanent and casual workers irrespective of gender. The means daily wage of a male and female permanent worker are higher by RMB 17.35 and RMB 14.60 than a male and casual worker respectively even though both perform the same task, work equal number of days and hours (Table 4).This suggests wage discrimination is not strongly rooted on gender but on the employment status of the worker. This is contrary to the employment act in China which strongly demands equal numeration for the same job.

Also welfare conditions are largely provided to permanent workers. Casual workers provide a great share of the overtime labor but the remuneration in several cases is grossly low contrary to section 44 of the provision of the Labor Act (1995) which stipulates between 150-200% remuneration of the normal wage for any extra work done after the normal hours work. None of the companies provides paternity leave and child care facilities/allowance for workers. The concept of paternity leave is new and in Chinese culture child care is largely a feminine role. Childcare facilities are especially essential for female migrant workers who have no relatives to take care of their children while at work. All casual workers are excluded from maternity leave. This suggests a discrimination against female workers and a breach on the Labor act provision which provides 90 days maternity leave for all female workers. Thus female workers are more deprived of the welfare benefits since they form greater portion of the casual labor.

Permanent workers are free to join the workers union but casual workers are forbidden to join the union depriving them the protection against arbitrary decisions of the companies. The International Labor Organization (1998) core conventions called for freedom of association and rights to collective bargaining. In addition, China law demands employers to allow workers to freely be members of a union.

CONCLUSION

Our study shows how division of gender roles is a premise for inequality between men and women both at domestic and productive sector like cut flower production as suggested by social role theory. There

are evidences to support our hypothesis that despite the constitutional prescription of gender equality, gender segregation and wage gap exist in the flower industry at.

- Administrative level: low proportion of female participation in management, committee and board.

- Employment status: more women in casual labor than men.

- Production level: men and women differ significantly in level of participation on individual tasks.

- Remuneration level: men earn higher wage than women even though, they use equal time and do equal work, permanent workers earn higher than casual workers even though they perform equal tasks and use equal time.

Large proportion of women is denied maternity rights. No child facilities or education allowance for child, this is a problem for women migrant workers with no relative to care for their children while at work. Training is provided for supervisors who are mainly men. Also we find evidence of discrimination irrespective of gender; casual workers are grossly denied benefits that permanent workers enjoy.

There has not been any basis for tracking progress on gender equality in the sector and it seems that the pronouncement in the constitution of equality is limited to statement of intent. It shows that gender equality as prescribed by the constitution does not always mean gender equal in practical terms.

Thus, the study provides the basis for the establishment of gender mainstreaming approaches such as gender committees, training women for management tasks and instituting policies that promote equal opportunities like changing the present agricultural policy to be gender sensitive and enforcing the constitutional and labor act provisions that will ensure the socio economic and social rights of women and other workers are respected.

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The heroines of sustainable development. Gender and sustainable development in a critical perspective

Marianna Szczygielska
Department of Philosophy,
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland
mariannaszczygielska@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Sustainable development is often portrayed as an alternative to mainstream developmental discourse, which is based on the idea of linear progress driven by economic rationality. This paper examines recent debates in developmental discourse and applies a critical gender perspective to the concept of sustainable development. It addresses this question: How does the idea of sustainable development challenge the modernization approach and developmentalism as discourses of power?

I argue that in the developmental discourse of international aid agencies, women are portrayed in an idealistic way – women from the 'Third World' countries became target groups of donor agencies and their link to nature and local economies has been essentialized. The paper draws from theoretical work on development, including mainstream and feminist perspectives, and critically addresses the ecofeminist perspective on development.

KEY WORDS: sustainable development, gender, ecofeminism, environmental risk, environmental discourse

INTRODUCTION

Last fall at a meeting with Dennis L. Meadows, the co-author of the famous 'Malthusian-like' report The Limits to Growth (1972), a woman from the audience asked him a question: "What can I do to be more sustainable?" His answer made my jaw drop. The world-famous advocate of the promising idea of sustainable development began his answer with these words: "Basically, everyone can be sustainable: you can be sustainable in your kitchen, and I can be sustainable when I travel." Annihilating in less than one minute years of feminist struggles to deconstruct the private/public division, Meadows' answer made me realize that the idea of sustainable development, in some of its versions, is very problematic.

Sustainable development is often seen as an alternative to mainstream developmental discourse that is focused on the idea of linear progress driven by economic rationality. In the face of environmental risks and limits of growth, the idea of sustainable development emerged as a proposal for a better, greener future. It also seems to go beyond the project of modernization with regard to its impact on the natural environment and its impact on the living conditions of people in post-colonial societies, but I argue that it still contributes to the production of global inequalities. Moreover, sustainable development often seems to be an oxymoron, just like the idea of green capitalism. Is this view legitimized?

Currently the debate on sustainability manifests itself in discussions about the global threat of climate change that are focused on such issues like reduction of GHG emissions, mitigation, adopting green technologies and innovations. At the international climate change conferences and summits (UNFCCCs), where important negotiations take place and making or not making political decisions influences many lives all over the world, one can hardly ever find any reference to gender. Are women significant actors in determining the future of our planet? Does sustainable development present a real alternative in this case? What are the feminist responses to the idea of sustainable development?

I would like to pose this question: how does the idea of sustainable development challenge the modernization

approach and developmentalism as discourses of power? Many times in the developmental discourse of the international aid agencies women are portrayed in an idealistic way as better producers, better parents (always ready to sacrifice for their families/children) and as better ecologists, leaving smaller ecological footprints on 'Mother Earth'. Can we talk about gender-specific differences in access to resources, patterns of consumption and lifestyles? Can a feminist perspective on sustainability help to deconstruct the peculiar figure of a 'virtuous woman' that mirrors the mythical 'noble savage'? Are narratives of sustainable development essentializing women by equating them with nature? What is the role of the household economy and the gender-based division of labor in sustainability and in changing the patterns of consumption? To answer these questions, I will use discourse analysis to scrutinize some international organizations' documents on development.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The term sustainable development was first popularized in 1987 by Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, who was the Chair of the UN World Commission on Environment and Development. The commission published a report entitled Our Common Future, known as the Brundtland Report, in which sustainable development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."[1] The recognition of the limits of economic growth and the need to redirect exhaustive mainstream development triggered a search for alternative solutions. I would even risk stating that since the Brundtland Report, almost every reference to development had to be preceded by the word 'sustainable'. Since then what is also observable in neoliberal development theory is a shift towards more localized approaches, seemingly more concerned with participatory democracy, empowerment and civil society as a site of social change.

In 1992, at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Agenda 21 was introduced. It is a program for action to be taken globally, nationally and locally, with the long-term goal of achieving sustainable development. Along with the official United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), social movements from all over the world organized a parallel conference in Rio de Janeiro – the Global Forum. Within this heterogeneous Forum, women organized a separate event, called Planeta Femea, in which they presented their own Women's Action Agenda 21.[2] This version of the action plan for the next century was critical of the dominant development model, which privileges the industrialized North, leads to increased poverty of the South, and plunders the natural resources of the Earth. Women united across the national, racial, class and religious boundaries argued:

We have listened to each other speak of the ills of our societies, our families and children, our sacred Nature. We have been inspired by the courage and commitment of our sisters throughout the world who protect and repair our natural heritage. As caring women, we speak on behalf of those who could not be with us, the millions of women who experience daily the violence of environmental degradation, poverty, and exploitation of their work and bodies. As long as Nature and women are abused by a so-called "free market" ideology and wrong concepts of "economic growth," there can be no environmental security.[3]

Representing one half of the world's population, "women of many nations, cultures and creeds, of different colors and classes" demanded that responsible decisions be taken on behalf of future generations. They criticized the military industry and the lack of will amongst world leaders to include women in decision making bodies and policy-making organizations. They also criticized structural adjustment policies (SAPs) adopted by major donor organizations that by following the path of economic growth only contribute to the deterioration of Earth's life-giving systems, and increase the poverty of women, children and indigenous people in so called 'developing countries'. The actions that women from Planeta Femea proposed, among many others, included demands of accountability, full and equal participation for women and men in public policy analyses, introduction of environmental ethics, cancellation of foreign debts by loan agencies, assuring food security, and a ban on food irradiation and nuclear power production. Pointing out the gender-blindness of major developmental actors they called for "the transformation of development strategies and development cooperation agencies. In every new or already established aid-giving mechanism or program, the policy that specifies the involvement of women on an equal basis with men in determining the allocation of funds should be enforced."[4]

What was also interesting was the new term proposed to replace 'sustainable development', which according to women from Planeta Femea, still supported the dominant mode of development.[5] This term they proposed was 'sustainable livelihood', which placed emphasis on the agency and participation of the smaller actors in shaping their own and their communities' lives in the process of development. This new model reversed the former 'top-down' capitalist developmental megaprojects, with a 'bottom-up', gender sensitive, green revolution. I see this form of resistance to the projects introduced by donor organizations that are constrained by liberal economic language and bureaucratic capitalism, as an example of 'situated knowledge' in all its complexity as described by Donna Haraway.[6] From this partial perspective Western technoscience with its alleged objectivity and militarism is being criticized, along with its attempt to create universal laws of unquestioned progress. Moreover, women whose voices are being articulated in Women's Action Agenda 21 are situated and embodied subjects, emphasizing both the material and the symbolic relationships between women and sustainable development – their bodies have become sites of violence. This alternative 'sustainability manifesto' calls for accountability and responsibility. However, Haraway warns against "a serious danger of romanticizing and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful, while claiming to see from their positions."[7] The shadow of the Foucauldian concept of 'subjugated knowledges'[8] is observable in Haraway's concern with how the standpoint of the "innocent" subjugated is privileged –

this became reality when the feminist critical voice was incorporated into environmental policy.

The result was that the feminist critique of development became integrated into the policies of major international actors. Soon it became obvious that women and the environment were a critical equation – something that was recognized internationally at the 1995 4th UN Conference on Women in Bejing. In The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development from 2002, one can also read that its signatories "are committed to ensure that women's empowerment and emancipation, and gender equality are integrated in all activities encompassed within Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation."[9] The problem laying here is that this transformation is just an apparent rhetorical move to include the category of gender but in fact it leaves major power structures that benefit from gender bias unchanged.

The alliance of feminist organizations and environmental activists started to gain political support. According to Manisha Deasai, "environmental activists attempt to develop sustainable alternatives to the industrial development model that reduces food available for local consumption, destroys local ecology, and produces toxic byproducts. The struggle against all these environmental ills has been strengthened by the emergence of transnational feminist solidarities."[10] Although the voice from Planeta Femea is one example of such solidarity that was a remarkable political success, it also generated some problems which are now being reiterated by the donor agencies that swallowed the bitter pill of feminist critique with its side effects. If one looks closely at the language being used in the Women's Action Agenda 21, it rests on the idea of a specific kind of femininity. I think that the authors of the Agenda easily fall into the shaky grounds of essentialism, equating women with nature and man with culture alongside the destructive forces of progress. Women who themselves celebrated differences have built an archetypal figure of 'a caring and nurturing mother', who is 'naturally' devoted to protect 'Mother Earth' from the catastrophic effects of uncontrolled economic, industrial and technological progress. Is the drive to progress inherently male? Are women the 'natural' victims of this 'malicious force'? In my opinion such a simplistic view not only reinforces old hierarchies and dualisms, but also to some extent paralyzes further transformative actions. Let us have a closer look at the way that women are now portrayed in developmental discourse.

VICTIMS OR SAVIORS? WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN SUSTAINBLE DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

One can observe obvious interconnections between gender-based inequalities and the global ecological crisis. It is worth noticing that in the mainstream feminist developmental framework women are usually portrayed in two ways: as special victims of the destruction of the environment (for example in the case of climate change), or as potential saviors of the natural world. In my opinion both of these approaches are highly problematic.

Does the sustainable development discourse position women in a different way? I think that this inner tension in a Janus-faced female subject of development reflects hierarchies and power structures that sustain the vision imposed on women as inherently connected to nature.

At some point women became a 'target group' for development interventions. The feminization of poverty is just one example of how structural adjustments and other programs are being implemented with visible gendered differentiation. This process was paralleled a tendency to romanticize the role of the local civil society by targeting identified powerless groups in a 'top-down' strategy. Unfortunately, as Mohan and Stokke point out in their article, "this means that local social inequalities and power relations are downplayed. Another problem is the tendency to view 'the local' in isolation from broader economic and political structures."[11] Local NGO's and grassroots movements have to deal with the burden of major social reforms that ultimately sustain the neoliberal idea of economic development and do not challenge the existing social order. Market-driven strategies disguised as social interventions fuel the discourse of capital (including the very popular term 'social capital') and efficiency, where economic growth is naturalized and "the market is seen as a universal principle without any 'geography' (…)."[12]

In my opinion one can also observe a process whereby female-headed households are fetishized in developmental discourse. For example in the UNDP Annual Report 2009, in the section devoted to reduction of poverty there is a scheme showing women-headed businesses as the core from which benefits radiate to the society and its economy as a whole.[13] Women are expected to invest more in food, health, and the education of their families, so that their commitment is seen as more sustainable. While keeping in mind that this pyramid of benefits to the society rests actually on women's unpaid labor in the household, this scheme also positions sustainability in the heart of capitalist system, in this way that maximizes efficiency and productivity.

In the section on environment and sustainable development, the only mention of women focuses on poor women from an African country; this is not by accident. The case mentioned is that of Benin, where a high dependence on wood leads to deforestation, such that Global Environment Facility decided to support several women's groups in order to promote the use of traditional ovens made of soil. The reader of this report might be led to think that sustainability only concerns developing countries and that the responsibility of the so called 'First World' is to teach the unfortunate 'Others' how to become sustainable.

Another example is the World Bank's report, *Engendering Development: Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice*. In this report women remain key actors, but as 'transmitters' of aid to their families and then to the society. The authors of the report write: "gender gaps are widespread in access to and control of resources, in economic opportunities, in power and political voice. Women and girls bear the largest and most direct costs of these inequalities – but the costs cut more broadly across society, ultimately harming

everyone."[14] So while gender inequalities are being recognized in the report, women are being instrumentally used as a group through which economic inequalities of the whole society could be redirected. In other strategy for action from 2002, Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work, the World Bank's development experts identified "the evidence linking gender to poverty reduction and economic growth—evidence that provides the business case for integrating gender considerations into the work of the World Bank."[15] In this sense, gender mainstreaming became mainstream as a business case that contributes to maintaining the global structures of dependency.

In this way another female hero has risen: a rational, economic, grassroots woman, who with the help of microcredits can lift the country's economy onto her shoulders, and thus contribute to the global economy according to neoliberal standards. Women are two-faced actors in this story. On one hand, they are recognized as victims of environmental degradation, urbanization and exploitation of resources. On the other hand, women, portrayed as being responsible for securing the basic needs of their families, are idealized as potential saviors of the planet. This double role might seem contradictory at first glance, but in fact it harmonizes the general, coherent pattern of small scale actions aimed at enhancing consumption and integrating national economies, with the global market. These approaches seem to 'go local' but in fact are not critical of the growth itself.

What happens with the subjects of these processes? In my opinion this strategy is another sign of the mechanism described by Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her famous essay Under Western Eyes. She writes: "Legal, economic, religious, and familial structures are treated as phenomena to be judged by Western standards. (…) When these structures are defined as 'underdeveloped' or 'developing' and women are placed within these structures, an implicit image of the 'average third world woman' is produced."[16] Production of the 'Third World Women' occurs not only under the sign of 'backwardness', but as I have shown above it can be just another effective strategy to promote the neoliberal economy. Under the guise of empowering women, revisionist neoliberalists are continuing to realize the same old Enlightenment-like model of growth, where the targeted local actors remain within the framework of hegemonic development. The subject being produced in this power game is the new sustainable heroine who is still a traditional, religious, family-oriented woman from any given country that is referred to be 'in the process of development', who is able to 'produce something from nothing'. In my opinion one can also trace the voice of Planeta Femea in the construction of the 'sustainable woman'. The 'catch-up development' strategies have began to become mainstream, but targeting women is in my opinion a result of a specific feminist influence and critique of the process of globalization and international donor agencies. As Apffel-Marglin and Simon argue in their essay, the construction of the subjectivity of Third World Women in the Women in Development (WID) discourse is parallel to the perception of colonized women by Victorian feminists.[17] According to this orientalizing logic, non-Western women are passive victims of the savagery and backwardness of their own cultures.[18] Just as Victorian womanhood was elevated to standard femininity against which 'uncivilized' women were measured, now, 'emancipated' First World Women are a standard to which Third World Women should aspire. This binary opposition between the civilized/emancipated Western woman and the oppressed/backward non-Western woman descends directly from colonial modernity.

ECOFEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON SUSTAINABILITY

Another alternative to the main developmental discourse is an ecofeminist point of view, in which women's oppression is inherently coupled with the oppression of the rest of nature – in this way it becomes much more then just a combination of feminism and environmentalism. This position forms a diverse landscape of theoretical approaches, among them an important critique of Western science, a promise of new epistemology, postcolonial and anti-capitalist critiques, social movements that gain significant political power, and the mystical deep ecology approach, focused on a celebration of vitality. However, ecofeminism still falls into the trap of romanticizing the woman/nature relation. Is privileging 'Mother Nature' over a 'Father Culture' a solution to the ecological crisis? How do ecofeminists inscribe themselves in the 'sustainability discourse'?

From the variety of ecofeminist positions, I have chosen Vandana Shiva's understanding of sustainability. This famous physicist, feminist philosopher and environmental activist connects the hegemony of Western development with patriarchal power and the 'reductionist mode of science', all of which form the basis for global capitalism, endangering nature, women and indigenous communities. She also campaigns against biopiracy (commercialization of traditional natural resources or knowledge), and monocultures dominating Western agricultural systems that are killing global biodiversity, and thus threaten life on Earth.

Shiva is searching for an alternative development model, one that would be more just and based on a life-creating 'feminine principle' and a sustainability paradigm. Her holistic vision of perfect harmony between human beings and the natural world is achieved only through women possessing unique, marginalized knowledge, as major actors of the process of this global change.[19] According to Shiva, women are destined to lead their livelihoods in a more sustainable way precisely because of their disadvantaged position in the labor market and their unique experiences as mothers. Resistance to the 'capitalist-patriarchal' destruction of biodiversity is possible from below – grassroots women's daily struggles for survival, to protect their bodies, environment and ways of life, are idealized by Shiva as a motor of global social change. In her most influential book Staying Alive (1989) she writes:

> "All ecological societies of forest-dwellers and peasants, whose life is organized on the principle of sustainability and the reproduction of life in all its richness, also embody a feminine principle. Historically, however, when such societies has been colonized and broken up the men have

usually started to participate in life-destroying activities or had to migrate; the women meanwhile, usually continue to be linked to life and nature, through their role as providers of sustenance, food and water. The privileged access of women to sustaining principle thus has a historical and cultural, and not merely biological basis."[20]

For Shiva, many of the problems that people from different contexts must face now are the result of the monopoly of the so called 'ownership society', that although on the surface might seem just and life-oriented, is inside driven by a logic of control over natural and human resources, such as water, fresh air, biodiversity, knowledge, public education, and health care.[21] Criticizing the global capitalist system, Shiva calls for abandoning this anti-life logic of growth that is actually limited to a few, rich societies benefiting from that model of development.

One might think that recent turn in the discourse of developmental aid agencies towards more gender-sensitive, bottom-up, 'green' development programs would be welcomed by ecofeminists like Shiva with open arms. Isn't this just what they wanted? The new rhetoric of such institutions as UNDP, the World Bank and the Bretton Woods system seems to be an answer to the ecofeminists' calls for a paradigm shift towards ecological responsibility and global justice. However, I think that ecofeminists would not be fully satisfied with this mainstream development image makeover. Sustainable development in many of its versions is the same old capital-intensive and ecologically devastating development, albeit in a new 'ideological disguise'. In this framework women are seen as valuable resources, thanks to their 'privileged' environmental knowledge, which is a result of their lower position in the sexual division of labor.[22] Unfortunately, having this privilege does not effect any serious change in women's lives, or alter their position in global power games. The ecofeminist standpoint is, rather, a form of resistance against both the state and the global market. As Susan Buckingham notes in her article concerning the influence of ecofeminism on policies governing gender inequalities and the environment, "whilst most policymakers would not challenge these aims, ecofeminists do question the validity of pursuing economic growth, as much of this is likely to produce negative impacts on the environment."[23] Ecofeminism could avoid essentialism and sidestep the dialectical oppositions intrinsic to the modernization project, by adopting feminist standpoint epistemology that does not romanticize or universalize women's roles in development.

CONCLUSIONS

I argue that the 'mythology of sustainability' was made possible through praising to the skies a pantheon of many 'exotic goddesses' from rural areas of the poorest countries of the world. In other words, the essentializing move that is an obvious strategy in ecofeminist critiques of mainstream development was perfectly adjusted to mainstream developmental discourse. This further instrumentalized women in order to introduce 'sustainability', such that the logic of the global free-market economy was simply reinscribed in a different form. Western developmentalism is soaked

with discourses of power and neocolonial approach, that are disguised as ecologically and gender friendly processes. Sustainable development is an excellent mask in this game. In fact as a version of the process of modernization, sustainable development is the old-fashioned industrial force – yet another chapter in the Enlightenment story of linear progress. There should be no doubt that the interest in women's situations and capacities (particularly of those from 'developing countries') shown by international aid agencies is a result of cold calculations of benefits. Women are seen as resources that can be used – particularly, the representations of them as victims and saviors at the same time perfectly inscribes them into the neoliberal framework where the market has to be flexible.

In my opinion feminist critiques at some points do challenge this mainstream discourse, but they also made the trick of mainstreaming gender possible. I am very critical even of strategic essentialism in the women/nature equation. This move has serious consequences – it leads to creation of two entities: an image of a caring woman, and nature. What is this nature? Should we protect this peculiar creature at any cost, should we preserve it, or should we coexist with it? Does 'nature' imply that 'culture' is always destructive? Why should only women contribute to sustainability? I perceive this dualistic approach as

a dangerous tool, one that is effective only to a certain point, but later precludes further action. Rejecting an essentialist position is crucial in abandoning the fixed subjectivity of the female development heroine.

It is worth noticing that feminist critiques are also extremely valuable, and that they usually follow the path of critical dependency theories of progress which are in opposition to modernization theories. For example, Vandana Shiva's proposal of 'earth democracies' is an alternative to corporate globalization. In my view, her practical application of theory is more coherent and follows the initial understanding of sustainable development. The feminist proposition to replace the term 'sustainable development' with 'sustainable livelihood' is an idea that could challenge developmentalism as a discourse of power and thus, save the concept of sustainability from ethical and practical bankruptcy. No more growth is needed – what we need is a sustainable way of living, introduced globally, that refers not only to the South.

Changing patterns of consumption in the North is one of the key challenges for sustainability in a broader perspective. The changes have to be taken not only locally but also globally, taking gender into account. For example, the term eco-efficiency has been used to endorse a reduction of waste and pollution, and a use of less resources in production of goods. Many feminists, however, criticize this model – arguing rather for eco-sufficiency which aims to reduce the demand for consumer goods.[24] Moreover, the recent trend in ecofeminist theory and practice is to rethink human relations to the non-human others. I find this posthumanist turn in theorizing about sustainability a very promising idea that can challenge the Enlightenment legacy and the global capitalist system.

What also needs to be revised in sustainable development discourse is its construction of the family and the household as heteronormative. Sustainable development in its current version contributes significantly to so called naturalization of institutionalized heterosexuality. In my opinion queering development would be another direction in which the feminist critique could shift the sustainable paradigm. The global ecological crisis gives us an opportunity to rethink macroeconomic policies, and to make sustainable livelihoods a real alternative and a significant ideological shift.

Notes

1 Our Common Future, http://www.worldinbalance.net/pdf/1987-brundtland.pdf, Retrieved 21. 10. 2010

2 I focused on women's actions connected to sustainable development only and in a limited time-frame. Before the Earth Summit in 1992, many other UN conferences on Women and Development were organized (Mexico City 1975) and years 1976-1985 were declared the Women's Decade. Moreover, women's movements from the South did not remain silent. Critical of the institutionalized Women in Development (WID) approach adopted by the donor organizations, they formed Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) - a network of feminist scholars, researchers and activists from the economic South working for economic and gender justice and sustainable and democratic development.

3 Women's Action Agenda 21, http://www.iisd.org/women/action21.htm, Retrieved, 21. 10. 2010

4 Ibid

5 See, Braidotti, R., Charkiewicz, E., Hausler, S., Wieringa, S., (1995), *Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development,* Santo Domingo: Zed Books, p. 90

6 See, Haraway, Donna (1991), "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective" in: Donna Haraway, *Simians Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature,* New York: Routledge

7 Ibid, p. 191

8 Foucault writes about the revival of more decentralized and localized kinds of knowledge, when the universalizing global perspective is being rejected. Through genealogy of knowledge, primarily marginalized subjugated knowledges can be resurrected. He notes that "the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects." Foucault Michele, "Two Lectures" in: Colin Gordon (ed.), (1980), *Power/ Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings,* 1972-1979, New York: Pantheon Books, p. 83

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10 Manisha Desai, (2002), "Transnational Solidarity: Women's Agency, Structural Adjustment, and Globalization" In: Nancy Naples and Manisha Desai, (eds.) *Women's Activism and Globalization. Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics*. New York: Routledge, p. 24

11 Mohan, Giles & Stokke, Kristian, "Participatory development and empowerment: the dangers of localism", *Third World Quarterly,* 21(2000): 249

12 Ibid, p. 251

13 UNDP Annual Report 2009, http://www.undp.org/publications/annualreport2009/pdf/EN_FINAL.pdf, p. 9

14 World Bank October 2000, Engendering Development: Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/02/02/00009 4946_01012505311522/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf, Retrieved, 21. 10. 2010, p. 1

15 World Bank, January 2002, *Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work,* http://www4.worldbank. org/afr/ssatp/Resources/HTML/Gender-RG/Source%20%20documents/donor%20strategy%20documents/ DON3%20World%20Bank%20Gender%20Strategy.pdf, Retrieved, 21. 10. 2010, p. 2

16 Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (1986), "Under Western Eyes. Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses", [in] Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (eds.), *Feminist Postcolonial Theory*, London/New York: Routledge 2003, p. 67

17 Apffel-Marglin, Frederique and Simon, Suzanne L., "Feminist Orientalism and Development", in: (ed.) Harcourt, Wendy (1994) *Feminist perspectives on sustainable development,* London: Zed Books, pp. 26-43

18 Ibid, p. 27

19 Shiva, Vandana, (1989), *Staying Alive. Women, Ecology, and Development*, Delhi and London: Zed Books, p. 223

20 Ibid, p. 42

21 Shiva, Vandana, (2005), *Earth democracy: justice, sustainability and peace*, London: Zed Books, p. 3

22 Braidotti, R., Charkiewicz, E., Hausler, S., Wieringa, S., op. cit., p. 97

23 Buckingham, Susan, "Ecofeminism in the twenty-first century", *The Geographical Journal*, 170(2004):149

24 See, Salleh, Ariel (ed.), (2009), *Eco-sufficiency and Global Justice: Women Write Political Ecology,* New York: Pluto Press

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Construction of gender equality in schools - Experiences with gender mainstreaming in Sweden

Malwine Seemann
Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung
Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg, Germany
Malwine.Seemann@uni-oldenburg.de

ABSTRACT

Schools tend to reproduce lasting inequalities between the genders. An assessment will be made as to what extent the gender equality strategy gender mainstreaming is used within the school system as a tool to achieve permanent results. The focus is on what facilitated and what hindered implementation, where difficulties were encountered and where positive changes could be observed. The data stems from interviews conducted in Sweden from 2003 to 2006 with experts in the national, regional, and local governments as well as in non-governmental or¬ganizations and schools from preschool to high school. Six factors were ex-tracted which appear to be central to the implementation of gender mainstreaming within the school system. I propose that the handling of the three central success factors as well as the three counter forces ("Implementation Hexagon") form the complex basis of each phase of the implementation of gender mainstreaming within school systems.

KEYWORDS: gender, gender mainstreaming, implementation, schools

INTRODUCTION

With the implementation of gender mainstreaming as a general principle throughout the European Union (Treaty of Amsterdam, ratified in 1999) a gender perspective must be adopted by regular staff. The objective is the equal status of women and men. Gender mainstreaming is a process of getting there. It is a strategy which obliges everybody involved in processes of political decision-making to apply gender-related and gender-differentiated perspectives to all decisions, at all levels, as a matter of course. It contains a potential for political change. This is how the Council of Europe defines gender mainstreaming in its key paper (Council of Europe, 1998, p.15). With its implementation in all areas of policy, the chances are better that the objective of a gender-equal society will be achieved. At its core this policy is directed at transforming the political process itself. Yet gender mainstreaming as a political crosssectional task does not replace existing policies for gender equality targeted at women, but enhances them. It is a double strategy. While policies aimed at equality for women reveal conditions that dis¬advantage women and try to find remedies for them, the new approach always targets both genders.

Gender is a social constructed definition of women and men. Gender relations are characterized by unequal power relations. They are constructed permanently as interactive and prereflexive. As several studies indicated doing gender is deeply incorporated in the bodies of individuals and organisations (West/Zimmermann, 1991; Bourdieu, 1998; Acker, 1991; Goffmann, 2001). Studies in many West-European countries like for example Germany resulted in the insight that schools tend to reproduce lasting inequalities between the sexes (Brehmer, 1982; Enders-Dragässer/ Fuchs, 1989; Flaake, 1989, Council of Europe, 2007). In as far as this is so schools are social institutions which support the hierarchical relationship between the sexes with the male dominance and the subordination of women. This process takes place at various levels, for instance in interaction between the students, between members of the teaching staff, or between students and teachers. It

is to be found in how individual subjects are structured and taught, and not least in curriculum guidelines, as well as the organisation and general development of the school. At the same time the institution of school holds a great potential for change in existing gender-based organisation.

And yet little change actually takes place in schools. Everywhere in western Europe, for instance, boys as before receive more attention in the classroom than girls. Girls feel they are subjected to as much harassment as ever. This is true also of Sweden. The Delegation for gender equality in schools has tried to analyse why patterns have changed so little. It comes to the conclusion that gender equality is essentially an issue of having enough knowledge in the subject area. (SOU 2009:64, p. 15, 24, 178).Unfortunately the delegation accords the con-cept of gender mainstreaming only marginal importance. In this field, at least up to 2006, a number of very promising endeavours have been made to secure the position of gender main-streaming in the school system. At that time I was interested in the way this was done. I was fortunate enough to be able to investigate some of the paths pursued. I would here like to present the results of my study.

SWEDISH CONTEXT

The research has been carried out in Sweden because this country has practical experience of implementation of gender mainstreaming in many areas, including that of education. Nevertheless, there has been relatively little analysis of the process in schools and in the educational system as a whole. The fact that in Sweden gender equality in schools has been an aim since the 1960s has been due to the strong women´s movement which saw to it that gender equality was high on the public agenda. Sweden has been committed to the gender mainstreaming approach since 1994 (Regeringens proposition, 1993/94:147, Shared power – shared responsibility).

It is crucial that the government be involved in implementing gender mainstreaming. Already 1990 in the report of a survey of social power relations Yvonne Hirdman described the dominant "genussystem" (gender system) with its separation of the genders and the construction of a hierarchy between the genders with the male as norm (Mak-tutredningens huvudrapport, SOU 1990:44, Stockholm). Since 1994 gender mainstreaming ("jämställdhetsintegrering") is a public objective to achieve gender equality in Sweden. Shortly thereafter, 1995, Gertrud Åström developed the 3R-Method (Swedish Association of Local Councils, 1999), the three Rs being: representation of women and men, ressources and realia or the reasons behind. Against the background of the cultural structure and the educa-tion policies of the country this paper examines a number of projects in the Swedish school system.

The study (Seemann, 2009) was carried out in Sweden 2003-2006 during a particularly auspicious period of time. Starting in1998 the gender equality board JämO expressed the need for prompt action at all school levels, mainly because of problems with verbal and physical sexualized violence amongst pupils in and out of school.

Gender equality institutions at na-tional, regional and local level then increased their efforts to produce indepth theoretical and practical gender-material for teachers and to put in place pilot-projects aimed at implementing gender mainstreaming processes in schools. Valuable experience had already been gained from previous gender mainstreaming projects.

The aim of these early gender mainstreaming school projects was to achieve permanent changes in the gender order in the everyday life of the school. Supportive measures were pro-vided from the outset. The projects being the result of political decision making, considerable resources were provided. There was a choice of a wide range of proven gender mainstreaming methods. The projects were further strengthened in that they were frequently integrated with wider gender mainstreaming structures such as national, regional and local gender equality institutions, trade unions or NGOs concerned with women's rights and violence against women.

The most far-reaching project in terms of gender mainstreaming was "Break the pattern!", courses for pupils and staff from pre-school to high school, piloted at national level 1998-1999 and staged at regional level 2001-2003. It was based on the concept that the process of changing the gender-order was the responsibility of all actors in any particular school. Gender patterns were analysed by students and staff together, for instance mapping exactly in what circumstances a person felt discriminated against, and exactly how the situation was reacted to. Plans for action were then worked out, which included concrete objectives, a time-frame and identification of those responsible. The success of the project was due to the active par-ticipation of all persons involved and the inclusion of all non-teaching staff such as caretakers, canteen employees, librarians etc in helping to make gender inequalities visible. The projects were primarily a success with the pupils. Teachers and head teachers, however, generally felt the need for further training, hence the "Break the pattern!" project also focused on offering courses in gender education for teachers. The JämO-handbook (2000) became popular in schools.

A similar follow-up project for pre-schools was "Equal in…" (naming one of the larger Swe-dish cities, 2003-2004), based on the awareness that ou have to start very early if you want to change traditional gender patterns. The success of this project was due to its being broadly based in one geographical area. All the pre-schools in one urban district together with at least one pre-school in each of the other urban districts were included, all the heads of these schools being involved. One difference with reference to the Break the Pattern projects was the omission of the objective of empowerment since the children were considered too young (aged 1-6).

Different from the earlier projects which had been started top-down by national, regional and local gender mainstreaming agents, the long-term project "Equal school – on equal terms" (local long-term courses for teachers and all the staff, continuous since 1994) had been initi-ated and developed by individuals in a small town. It had been going for ten years and was thus well

established. This scheme had supplied many a teacher and head teacher with further gender training with the support of the local school authorities and funds from the EU.

Head teachers were identified as key persons for the work on gender issues in all projects and as such needed special support. The same experience being gained from "Break the pattern", a new project was launched: "Girl or boy – does it matter?- together for a gender-equal school", regional gender courses for head teachers together with local politicians and employees from the educational authorities (2005-2006). The special success of this regional project depended on systematically including school leaders together with politicians and members of the school administration in the work on gender issues, encouraging them to acknowledge their responsibility in the process of gender mainstreaming.

RESEARCH PROCESS

An assessment will be made as to what extent the strategy is used as a tool to achieve permanent results. The main objective of my research being to identify what hinders and what facil-itates the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the school system, I conducted an anal-ysis of qualitative guideline based interviews with experts, carried out between 2003-2006, at various school levels, as well as at different levels within gender equality institutions, the administrative framework and universities (Figure 1). The exploratory questions are concerned with different phases of implementation, such as introduction, sensitisation, method, planning and the process of introducing change. The focus is on what facilitated and what hindered implementation, where difficulties were encountered and where positive changes could be observed. It will also be examined in what ways practical changes come about within the educational system.

The method concentrates on two areas, the analysis of the available material, and of inter-views with experts within the framework of gender mainstreaming school projects. I met the persons interviewed as a "co-expert" with long experience from teaching and from the teachers union. My choice of persons to interview proceeded step by step. My starting point in collecting data was my desire to know how implementing gender mainstreaming was done in Sweden.

Some of the first eight persons interviewed showed me the way to relevant current school projects. Later I looked for interview partners in the area of two and later on of four particular projects. Finally, when I noticed the lack of interviews at certain levels within the educational system, as well as at the governmental level, I supplemented the list of interviewees, approaching as many as possible involved in a school project, those who were actually involved in a process of change together with others and those who had themselves initiated processes, were leading or observing them, including some who were commenting on the process from the sidelines. Hence not only decision makers at higher levels of an institution or organisation were interviewed or those who had launched projects together, but also teachers in the schools who had participated in inservice training and were trying to implement their newly won insights. Less interest was shown the pupils, partly because problems of gender mainstreaming implementation were to be found almost exclusively with the adults and also because many pupils who had experience of concrete projects had already left school or were too young to be interviewed. In the period 2003-2006 I came across incidentally experience of gender mainstreaming school projects in Sweden.

The following questions provided guide lines for research: How can it be achieved that through awareness of the difference between the sexes both are treated equally. How can everybody in a school bring perceptive gender awareness to bear on decisions at all levels? To what extent does implementation of gender mainstreaming lead to changes in the spirit of gender equality?
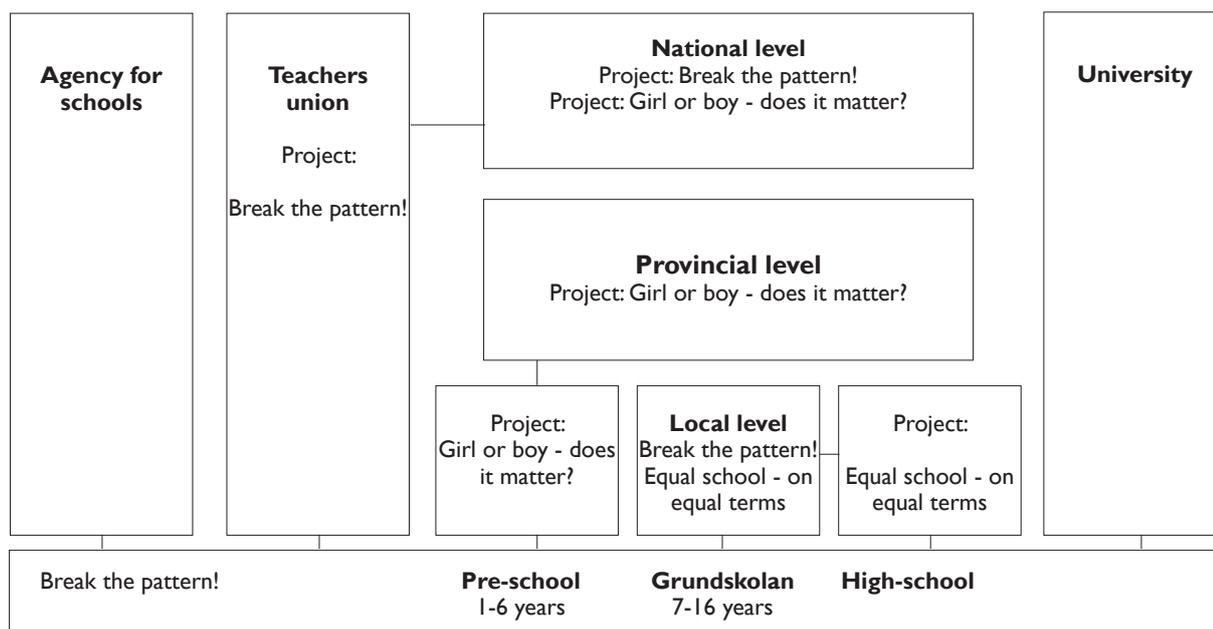

Figure 1.

RESULTS

The following results relate to two research areas:

- The analysis of the relevant material relating to gender mainstreaming in the Swedish school system gives an overview of various effective methods leading to the unanimous opinion that changes in the school system in the sense of gender mainstreaming start with the installation of action plans (JämO, 2000; Lärarförbundet, 1998; 2000; 2002). The process of gender mainstreaming aims at a fundamental understanding of gender relations, as well as a gender-analysis of one's own workplace in school, undertaken by those working there. It includes the drawing up of a plan for gender equality, defining concrete goals, a time frame and a list of those responsible. The next annual plan will be based on a thor-ough evaluation of the achieved goals by those involved in the process. However, this empirical study was done at a time when there was only little experience of completed gender equality plans in schools.

- The analysis of expert interviews, out of school and within, both provided similar findings. The experts from relevant out-of-school institutions agreed that schools must contribute towards changing the hierarchical gender order. Most of them considered it important to include basic gender knowledge into compulsory basic teacher training. They agreed that besides learning more about gender, a collective learning process with value based interactive exercises is essential and that therefore active support from above and an adequate offer of the resources time and funding are preconditions for success.

The main objective of my research being to identify what hinders and what facilitates the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the school system, I was able to define six factors which are central to the process. Three of them are facilitating the process: (1) gender awareness as an "eye-opener", (2) gender learning in theory and practice, and (3) a gender equality process that involves everyone. An additional three emerge as central counter forces as a consequence. If an implementation is to be successful regard to gender equality, these have to be taken into consideration as well: (4) personal resistance against gender main-streaming, (5) the low presence of men in the work on gender issues, (6) gender problems with the involvement of gender with ethnical attributions. For the process of gender main-streaming, the consideration of all six factors seems to be of vital importance.

In the following I give several examples from my interviews followed by a brief comment. We talked English,

Success Factors

(1) The first of the success factors to be identified, gender awareness as an "eye opener", is essential in as far as that only with the "aha!" experience, stimulated by taking on a gender perspective, can the insight be won that existing gender relations must be changed if greater gender equality is to be achieved. Many of the people I talked to had experienced the understanding of a gender perspective as something new. They described it as a step forward suddenly to recognise gender order patterns as an asset and, surprisingly, a key to further under-standing. A project leader in charge of a long term gender project, who herself consulted head teachers on gender issues, said that she until quite recently held the view that she treated all pupils alike, though she had since recognised this was not the case.

> "For me personally to start with me, for me it was, that I wasn´t aware before, because I thought, I was, I saw genusordning, equality, I have treated the kids equally". (Gunilla, teacher, project leader)

Several of the project leaders wished to stress that it was necessary first to highlight the hierarchical gender order if one wishes to change it along gender mainstreaming lines.

> "First it has to be anchored in inside one-self, otherwise there would be only empty rhet-oric without consequences in reality. It takes time before it is anchored in oneself" (Ulrika, head teacher, grundskolan).

One head teacher described the process of suddenly becoming aware of gender inequalities, that previously passed unnoticed, as irreversible. Once one has learnt to look at one´s sur-roundings through gender glasses, there is no turning back.

> "I´ m sure of it, that this is something that you must have opened your eyes for, and if you are not aware of what is going on, you don´t see it. When you have opened your eyes, you can never close them again. And I opened mine many, many years ago. So, if you have not seen it, you are not aware of what it is that make you a woman or a man." (Linnea, rector of a pre-school)

Often surprise was expressed in the interviews that well known circumstances could be seen in a new light.

> „[…] suddenly you see patterns, that you didn´t see before. You notice it, OK, all the boys are herwith the bicycles, and it was knowledge that you perhaps had, but you didn´t reflect, you didn´t think of it. And if you did that indoor, it was even more surprising, that you saw that, OK, this room was never hardly ever visited by girls, only boys all the time." (Linnea, head master, pre-school)

Before attention had been turned towards them, quite obvious gender inequalities had gone unnoticed. It was up to each of the participants to discover in what way they themselves felt discriminated against. And It became abundantly clear how the mechanisms worked of ridicule, ignoring or exclusion etc.

> "I think we all changed and got new eyes. We saw more clearly these things […] be-tween boys and girls, but also both in the girls' group and the boys' group." Janina, teacher, grundskolan)

The gender awareness gained was experienced as something positive. Over and again people talked about "understanding", "seeing things afresh", "new glasses".

"When you see it with gender glasses, you will at least see it from another point of view, which I think is good for everyone."
(Bengt, rector, high-school)

And they were emphasizing that one's own efforts of active watching and learning is necessary. Changes should in any case only be initiated following sensitization to gender patterns. For the persons interviewed the "aha" experience when taking on a gender perspective was special in that it was always spoken of as something positive.

In the school system "gender awareness as an "eye opener" seems to evoke a similar aha-effect as did Carol Gilligans's study "In a different voice" in the German Universities in the 1980s. It questioned the claim of dominance and the power of definition through men. "It became clear that theoretical conceptualisations, even in when claiming universality and neu-trality, always bear the stamp of gender" (Flaake 2005:173). The convincing view of science that sees itself as gender neutral, yet in reality is androcentric, was once an "eye opener" for a generation of women at German universities and was of great importance for a feminist cri-tique of science. In the Swedish gender projects examined a function crystallized from the adoption of a gender perspective that is of corresponding importance to a feminist critique of education. In all events, gender awareness means a qualitative step forward in the perception of reality and provides the basis for efforts to improve gender equality

(2) The second factor, learning about gender, theory and practice, is relevant in that gender relationships and one's own involvement in the predominantly hierarchical gender system cannot be fully grasped at a purely theoretical level. A deeper understanding needs to be de-veloped and experienced physically in interaction with others.

Whilst gender consciousness as an eye-opener can serve as an initiating experience, theoretical and practical gender learning is a more extended process. It includes both a theoretical gender perspective and a gender equality mind-set, leading to increased awareness of gender inequalities and to corresponding conscious practice. The insight that a fundamental understanding of gender relations cannot be conveyed exclusively through theorising was in tune with the concept of the gender projects under study, also reflecting the experiences of the project leaders.

"Many teachers they ask for a recipe and there is no recipe, you have to find out for yourself what to do. I think. There is a difficulty and I think there are a lot of good ex-amples, you can find good presentations, but in the end you have to do it in your own way."
(Ylva, teacher´s union, national level)

It should be noticed that learning about gender essentially needs theory and practice. In her study with Swedish teacher trainees, Maria Hedlin (2004) found an unconscious equality discourse ("omedveten likhetsdiskurs") which cannot exclusively be met with theory. Therefore, a deeper understanding needs to be developed and experienced physically in interaction with others.

(3) The third success factor "gender equality as a process involving everyone", refers to the fact that a single person cannot achieve sustainable change on his or her own. Both a top-down process and a bottom-up process are needed as a complement to each other.

"And it was a problem. There were the same persons that went to each course and they got to carry all this responsibility. They also had a hard time to integrate the issues in the schools as they were alone, you know. They were the alibi, the aliens for to no one else had to work with it since there was no one else to share the work". (Simona, project-leader, provincial level).

A number of people appreciated the top-down strategy adopted by the authorities responsible for gender equality, since it induced those not directly involved also to join in, highlighted the gender equality process and granted it legitimacy.

"You have to have the leaders in all positions from the top down. You can work very hard, but if you don´t have the leaders with you, it´s just a sort of project which comes to an end. You have to find strategies so that the process can go on for years" (Nora, municipal gender mainstreaming officer).

"Gender equality as a process involving everyone", plays an increasingly important role. In the context of school development, equality between the sexes as a meta-learning of organisations/institutions is a task which is everybody's responsibility (Klemm/Günther, 1985; Ratzki,1998; Koch-Priewe, 1996, 1998). The Swedish approaches to implementation show gender mainstreaming to be the right strategy for meta-learning of equality in the school sys-tem.

Counter Forces

With the implementation of gender mainstreaming three success factors are accompanied by three central problem areas. These too were crystallized from the gathered data at all levels in and out of school. Here are again a few examples quoted from the interviews, followed by a brief comment.

(4) Of the three problem areas which are to be expected during implementation, the first refers to personal resistance against gender mainstreaming. This is possibly the most critical problem, since it concerns individual anxieties and fears with regard to change. In reference to the three problem areas there is evidence that personal resistance against gender mainstreaming is the main barrier in implementing gender mainstreaming. Maria Hedlin (2004) found common arguments from teacher trainees against gender equality work: gender equality matters are not relevant questions, they do not concern them, gender equality is not a problem , if there is a problem - then only for the elder generation, the younger generation feels more free, gender theory is so complicated that one cannot comprehend it, you should not force women to perform male tasks and the reverse.

In the interviews the resistance of individual women and men was frequently mentioned as a problem to be faced when working with gender issues. It took the form of an inner resistance to having to question one's perception hitherto of society and to abandon the view one took for

granted as an adult. that one lived co-equally. To lose the security of an established point of view could be distressful. Many instructors found it difficult to handle the defense mechanisms of participants who did not wish to change their values and their attitudes.

> "I think that many of the teachers are afraid of the changing. You almost can hear them say: I don't want to change my behaviour, my attitudes and my values, as if they are struggling."
> (Ola, project leader)

Resistance is something you have to be prepared for, according to an representative of the regional board, so that the project is not abandoned when it proves difficult.

> "I think in the beginning you don´t know about the resistance. It´s when you start to work that you see it. Sometimes, if you are not prepared, you stop your project. You give up, it´s too hard"
> (Evalotta, project leader, provincial level).

Many experts interviewed in my study emphasised that resistance is a difficulty one has to expect, a necessary evil of change (see also Eva Amundsdotter, 2006).

(5) Reasons for the low presence of men in the work on gender issues are closely connected to gender power relations in which men are the norm and women are subordinated. In schools there are fewer male teachers than female. About a quarter of experts interviewed by me were men: two headmasters, two teachers, a project leader, an extern gender-worker as well as a schoolassistant and a caretaker and local politician. Several of them bemounded that men in Swedish schools and preschools are considerably underrepresented. They viewed the reason for gender inequality in school in the gender-power-order (könsmaktordning). Because of lower payment teacher profession had a marginal status and therefore mostly women are to meet there. Mainly men regret the deficit of masculine role models in school. This is of particular importance because children often are missing masculine role models in the case they have single mothers or like in families with migration background their fathers have multiple families.

I also interviewed others than those directly involved in gender issues. According to one headmaster, his experience was that men with few exceptions considered themselves too busy in school with other work to involve themselves in gender projects.

> "So you have all kinds of teachers and if there are more women, I don't know. It could be the male teachers we have, some of them, are definitely not interested. I would put this way: they are overworked in the areas where they are. They are up to here, they can't be part of yet another thing."
> (Bertil, head-master, grundskolan)

This headmaster did not question the gender related project his school was involved in, yet he withdrew from active participation. One of the teachers was critical of this, meaning that the project would have progressed if the head teacher had been involved.

> "In the exercises and discussions he answered in a way that made him stand out. He was more conservative and more macho, I think, than he thought of him¬elf, and some

of my colleagues, who have worked with him to¬gether for 10 or 15 years, they were disappoint-ed. So he jumped out from taking part in the active part."
> (Erik, teacher, grundskolan)

The interviewees´ experience was that men often avoided issues concerned with gender equality, because they viewed them personally in relation to themselves.

> "You have to talk about equality in general because they take it so per¬sonally. We want to talk about men and equality. They think: I am not a person who oppresses women."
> (Maja, teachers union)

Also the teacher who reported that the project he participated was too feministic for him and he felt cramped, combined with this no devaluation with the work on gender issues at all.

> "It felt like none equality from the beginning."
> (Mats)

> "Ah, the women's point of view.“
> (Annika).

> "Too much, maybe, because I am a man, I say only what I feel."
> (Mats, teacher, grund-skolan)

So it is not amazing the project leader of a greatly interesting schoolproject, which interlocked responsible persons from the head of the schools, from the urban administration and the city council, regrettes that she won less men than women to participate in the project.

> "Then we selected thirteen communities which all had a politician and administrative chief for the   school issues from each community and heads of schools like rectors. If we didn´t have all the three parts, they couldn´t have participate. And half of the communities we gave a place in the project, which is quite a lot, quite a big interest. So then 41 rectors participated and of them I think eight were men. So at least there were some of them, but it´s hard to reach out the men still." (Simona, project leader, regional level)

And the woman who was responsible for the process of gender mainstreaming in one of the larger cities in Sweden, came to the conclusion that the next issue to tackle was to investigate what "masculinity" entails, this being one of the key issues of the gender mainstreaming process.

> "So you have to work on a lot of different arenas to make this as a gender issue getting forward, let us say: make a building from the very ground. (…) I think the next thing to do is just to focus even in men's questions, questions what being a man about."
> (Nora, municipal gender mainstreaming officer).

The low presence of men in the work on gender issues I have found corresponds to a study by Ingrid Pincus (1987, 2004) of the role of men in Gender Equality Reforms in Local Authorities in Sweden, who found male resistance and ambivalence during her research. Between 1980 and 2001 Pincus looked at the role of those responsible for implementation. She found that most men were guardians of the status quo who used their power to obstruct the implementation and only

few men were looking for change, working actively to alter gender rela-tions. Jeff Hearn and Linn E. Holmgren (2006) in their study of Swedish men called attention men´s particular problems in positioning themselves in relation to gender equality and femi-nism. In their German study Höyng/Puchert (1999) argue that the lack of interest in gender equality work on the part of many men is a selective perception, the "advantage-based blind-ness" ("interessegeleitete Nichtwahrnehmung") of unequal gender relations. Maybe there is a temptation to refuse confronting one's own gender problems in transferring them to others.

Swedish government apprehends male dominance as a problem. Big efforts have been taken to get men into the work with gender isssues. Official demands directed men to engage themselves for changes in gender relations. Gender issues different from other countries are priortized in such an extend that they are combined with concrete measures. Already in 1983-1992 a governmental working group was engaged in the role of men and publicitated a serie of reports. Withal common acceptance there followed few concrete. A positive change of attitudes of men in favour of gender equality in Sweden in the 1980th was a remarkable step in the right direction. The inclusion of men in the work on gender issues seems to be achieved not for a long time yet. In 2003 male dominance in society again became a theme of the Swedish government because gender equality cannot be achieved if it is ownly aims women.

It is hardly surprising that Ingrid Pincus revealed passive and indirect resistance to gender issues from men in Sweden rather than active opposition, in view of the common consensus round gender issues in society. I myself noticed no active resistance such as described by Cynthia Cockburn (1993) in England, during my research in Sweden. It was pointed out once or twice in conversation that active opposition to gender work would have negative consequences for the person expressing such views. This goes to prove on the one hand the positive effects of governmental objectives for gender equality, yet on the other the danger of resistance going underground and becoming more subtle. It seems to be necessary to develop new methods for the work on gender issues in order to successfully include men.

(6) The third problem area - problems with the connection of gender with ethnical attributions - reflects general issues concerned with the way in which society handles social heterogeneity. The interdependence of the categories gender and ethnicity possibly enables some individuals to draw from this a stabilisation of their own identity through emphasising cultural differences.

In some cases it seemed as if gender problems of one´s own were projected onto people with migrant backgrounds. Boys with migrant background were macho, according to one teacher, and their mothers would do anything for them around the house.

> "I know there are a lot of mothers they do everything for the boys. The boys don't have to do things like this at home. And the girls often take care for their little brothers and sisters and the boys can go out and play. I think that's quite normal here."
> (Susann, teacher, preschool)

Girls with migrant backgrounds were considered difficult to influence because it is not possible to change their traditional religious patterns in one generation.

> "For the girls I would say, when it comes to immigrants, it´s more difficult, because some of the girls are by religion in a certain pattern and they stay in that pattern, but they can learn to see other options. I think that´s a good idea."
> (Bengt, head teacher, gymnasium)

Difficulties with the work on gender issues was illustrated in one case with reference to discussions with a pupil with a migrant background, who was horrified that Swedish boys did not protect their sisters better.

> "There is one boy now in the third year, he always wants to discuss with me, because he says: we are taking care of our girls. I don´t want my sister to be like the girls I see in town. We are worried, we can´t be like Swedes, just letting the girls out being raped and every thing. You have to lock the girls up, you see. The only way to do it." Then we have so many nice discussions. I haven´t made him change, but have made him think about it and I think that´s a good step." (Barbro, teacher, gymnasium).

Maybe there is a temptation to refuse confonting one´s own gender problems in transferring them to others. This is also to be seen in the involvement of gender problems with the inter-sectionality of gender and ethnicity. In ethnicity- and gender-based attributions such as "Moslem boys are macho", "Swedish girls are whores" legitimate and illegitimate forms of „femininity" and "masculinity" are generated. (see Weber, 2003). We need to examine critically that a definition of the „stranger" and the „other" can serve, through essentialising, to stabilise one's own identity (Diehm/Radke, 1999). To resist the temptation of connecting gender with other social categories of inequality – here ethnicity – awareness and a sensitive approach is required. The problem of the relation between gender and ethnicity attributes touches on the wider question of how to handle social heterogeneity in as far as individuals tend to stabilize their own identity by essentializing differences. This must be taken into account when implementing gender mainstreaming.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of my research being to identify what hinders and what facilitates the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the school system, I was able to define six factors which are central to the process. Three of them are facilitating the process, an additional three emerge as significant problem areas. Important success factors are gender awareness as an "eye opener", gender learning in theory and practice and a gender equality process that involves everyone. In addition it is necessary to address the following problem areas: personal resistance against gender mainstreaming, low presence of men in the work on gender issues and projection of gender problems in one's own culture onto people with migrant back-grounds. For the process of gender mainstreaming, the consideration of all six factors seems to be of vital importance.

I propose that the handling of the three central success factors as well as the three counter forces -Implementation Hexagon (Figure 2) - form the complex basis of each phase of the implementation of gender mainstreaming within school systems.

Swedish gender main-streaming method development (Jämstöd, 2006) described a process with eight steps,

Implementation-Hexagon
gender awareness as an "eye-opener"

theoretical /practical
process of gender learning

equality as processes
involving everyone

**Central
success factors**

**Gender
mainstreaming**

Counter forces

handling the personal
resistance against
gender mainstreaming

handling problems with
the connection of gender
with ethnical attributions

handling the low presence of men
in the work of gender issues

Figure 2.

"Trappan" (fundamental understanding, examine the conditions, plan and organize, examine the activities, survey and analyse, formulate objectives and measures, implement the measures, evaluate the outcome). I argue that at least five of these are necessary phases, namely an in-depth understanding of gender relations as power relations, a gender analysis of one´s own workplace, a gender equality plan setting out common objectives, a time frame and the allocation of responsibility, the implementation itself to be followed by an evaluation that in turn leads to the launching of a new plan based on what has been achieved. (Figure 3).
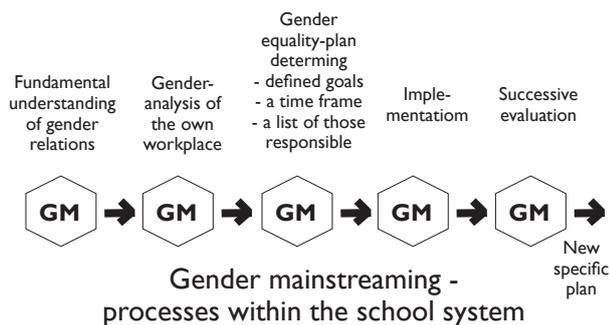
My research in Sweden has focused on what conditions need to be fullfilled for successful implementation of gender mainstreaming in schools and what the main difficulties are. I have summarised my findings in the form of a hexagon defining three essential factors for success, counterbalanced by three negative forces to be contended with. These factors must be considered at each stage of the implementation process if it is to prove successful in achieving gender equality.

The research in Sweden shows that a successful implementation of gender mainstreaming in schools is possible if there is a political will to put it into practice, if adequate resources such as time and money are provided, if the necessary gender-knowledge on both a theoretical and practical level can be conveyed and if there is a forum for collective reflexion and communi-cation. Success further depends on recognising and seriously addressing problem areas such as doubts, reservations, resistance and the projection of personal gender problems onto others. The process must in addition be clearly defined by means of a gender analysis of the workplace in question, based on a thorough understanding of relations between the sexes in terms of power structures, and by means of common concrete objectives drawn up within the framework of a set time table and clearly defined areas of responsibility. Finally there must be a thorough evaluation of the whole process. Future research should focus on the imple-mentation process and analyse further how the six implementation factors of gender mainstreaming – the Implementation Hexagon – are vital to the whole process as this research project sets out to demonstrate.

Gender
equality-plan
determing
- defined goals
- a time frame
- a list of those
responsible

Fundamental
understanding
of gender
relations

Gender-
analysis of
the own
workplace

Imple-
mentatiom

Successive
evaluation

GM → GM → GM → GM → GM →

New
specific
plan

Gender mainstreaming -
processes within the school system

Figure 3.

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Papersession G

Sustainable gender equality:
How do we get there
and what tools do we need?

Networking and mentoring – Efficient tools in gender mainstreaming

Professor Dr. Shykrane Gërmizaj,
University of Prishtina, Republic of Kosova

ABSTRACT

Gender inequality is not only reality, but also a great concern of universities in Europe and wider. Moreover, the increase of numbers of women in research and science, as well as at senior levels of academic hierarchy, has become the guiding principle and target of university managements, in order to meet the requirements sanctioned by EU legislation and national laws on equal opportunities.

The paper discusses the up-to-date gender mainstreaming initiatives at the University of Prishtina, in general, and international cooperation and networking in particular. It focuses on presenting the process, experiences, and outcomes of the project 'Gender Mainstreaming in Academia' jointly implemented by the University of Prishtina, the University of Vienna and the State University of Tetovo and funded by ASO Ljubljana and ASO Sofia on behalf of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Research and Science.

KEYWORDS: academia, cooperation, gender, mainstreaming, mentoring, networking

GENDER MAINSTREAMING INITIATIVES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA

The University of Prishtina is a public institution of higher education and the largest university in Kosovo. It is a young but vital university which celebrated its 40th anniversary on 15 February 2010. It comprises 17 academic units. Around 40,000 students, half of which are women, study at the University of Prishtina. According to the statistics for the academic year 2008/2009, University of Prishtina employed over 1,000 full-time engaged academic staff (28% female staff) and over 2,000 academic staff engaged on part-time basis. In addition, administrative staff comprised 329 members, with 45% female staff.

Gender equality office of the UP
The establishment of the Gender Equality Office in June 2007 was the result of the commitment of the UP to fulfil international standards and to implement the national legislation on equal opportunities. The GEO was directly overseen by the Vice Rector for International Cooperation. The Gender Equality Office is now being transformed into the Gender Equality Centre in accordance with the Regulation on internal organisation of the central administration of the University of Prishtina adopted by the University of Prishtina Board in 2008. The staff of the Centre will comprise two paid positions: the Director and the office administrator with the prospect of further expansion.

The activity of the GEO is based on elaborate equal treatment legislation that comprises: international standards, Law against discrimination passed in 2004, Law on gender equality, passed in 2004, the Statute of the University of Prishtina, adopted in 2004.

The mission of the Gender Equality Office is clearly stated:

- Mainstream gender equality and prevent gender discrimination

- Undertake research projects to generate gender knowledge

- Contribute to increasing awareness within academic and non-academic circles

- Contribute to the dissemination of information through cooperation and networking at national, regional and international level

During the two year period of its existence, the Gender Equality Office has conducted a number of projects and has served as a driving force in promoting equal opportunities at the University of Prishtina.

The first project conducted by the GEO was the research project of assessing and evaluating the status of women at the University of Prishtina, which has become annual practice. The table below shows the percentage of women and men in different positions at the UP based on the self-evaluation report:

	WOMEN	MEN	TOTAL
Undergarduate	47%	53%	100%
Master	24%	76%	100%
Academic staff	26%	74%	100%
Administrative staff	44%	46%	100%

Table 1. Women at the University of Prishtina (2006/2007 statistics)

The aftermath of the self-evaluation exercise lead to the appointment of contact persons for equality in all seventeen academic units which represented the creation of the nucleus of the future network. Further on, the GEO worked closely with contact persons in creation of networks in separate academic units. In the meantime, the equality committee headed by the Vice-rector for international cooperation was established. These efforts culminated in the establishment of the Network of Academic Women of the University of Prishtina.

In accordance with its mission and orientation, the GEO has undertaken several projects at national level: Assessment and evaluation of the situation of gender equality at the UP became annual practice aiming at creating a gender sensitive data-base. Separate small scale projects included continuous assessment and evaluation of the status and role of women in decision making, in research and science, and publishing activity. In addition, heavier focus was placed on increasing awareness regarding the drastic decrease in the percentage of female students in master programmes compared to undergraduate studies, the information that was shared with all relevant stake-holders and was disseminated further to the wider public.

	WOMEN	MEN	TOTAL
2006/2007	11%	89%	100%
2007/2008	12%	88%	100%
2008/2009	15%	85%	100%

Table 2. Gender ratio of PhD degree holders

On the other hand, efforts in networking and cooperation stretched beyond academic community and resulted in several joint projects implemented in partnership with governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations. Example of the cooperation of the GEO of the UP and the Agency for Gender Equality of the Prime Minister's Office was the project: Advancement of women through formal academic qualification which enabled ten women from governmental institutions and civil society to enrol and attend master studies in their chosen field. On the other hand, the project: Kosovar women – PhD degree holders was the result of the cooperation of the GEO and the Centre for Training and Gender Studies. The project aimed at collecting CVs of women who have earned their doctoral degree in various fields of science. The ultimate aim of the project was to highlight true achievements of women and prevent their representation solely as percentages in gender disaggregated statistics.

Intensification of the GEO activity

The activities of the GEO regarding cooperation and networking at international level are also worth mentioning. They include participation in the 5th European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education (Berlin, 2007). Participation of the UP delegation in this conference was of vital interest for the newly established office. It provided an opportunity for obtaining first hand information, making first contacts with gender equality offices and centres of universities in Europe and wider. It also enabled us to consider the status of women at the UP from a different perspective, as well as to plan our future activities. Furthermore, the Network on Gender Equality in Higher Education (EQ – UNI) proved to be an invaluable resource in our efforts to mainstream gender and develop international cooperation.

Gender mainstreaming activities of the GEO of the UP also include awareness-raising activities. The office utilised every opportunity to provide training, sensitise, as well as to disseminate the newly generated knowledge through research. These events took the shape of conferences, round tables and forums for discussion. Several such events deserve to be mentioned: the conference 'Towards quality through equality' (2007) was organised to mark the month against all forms of discrimination. However, it also provided the opportunity for presenting the mission and vision of the GEO, the guiding principles of its activity, dissemination of the research projects findings and, above all, for gaining the support of gender sensitive women and men at the UP and wider. The conference 'Gender Equality on Women's Day' (2008) apart from commemorating efforts of all known and unknown women in centuries long struggle for gender equality, also served for launching the newly established Network of Academic Women of the UP.

The Prishtina International Summer University forum 'Equality and Diversity' (2008) supported by the Centre for Equality of the University of Vienna served for presenting Austrian equal opportunities policies and best gender mainstreaming practices, as well as for discussing similarities and differences regarding the status of women in the two universities. Having he Head of the Equality Group of Vienna University for guest speaker was our first attempt in the knowledge transfer and exchange of experience at international level. Other opportunities followed: paper presentation at the 12th Research Conference 'Dilemmas in Human Services 2008' (London) and the 6th European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education (Stockholm, 2009). The feedback obtained in these two conferences

regarding the methodology of mainstreaming gender at our university, strengthened our determination to not only continue, but also to intensify our activities.

Several other activities were organised that aimed sensitising academic and non-academic circles and disseminating information, as well as reacting to the developments at the University in order to prevent discrimination. Among them were round tables in academic units and at central level: 'Faculty of Education and the challenges in the achievement of gender equality', 'Gender equality at the Medical Faculty'; 'Underrepresentation of women in students' organisations'; 'Women in higher education' (training for municipal gender equality officials in partnership with the Centre for Training and Gender Studies -2008).

The conference 'Gender equality cannot be achieved without women and their efforts' (2009), although organised to mark Women's Day, due to the engagement of the Network of Academic Women of the University of Prishtina, took shape of the exhibition of the publishing activity of women academics. In lack of funds, the NAW issued a call for (female and male) authors to donate books which would be given as present to their women colleagues on Women's Day. In less than a week, more than 500 copies of books published in various fields of science and arts were donated and the best part was that participants of the conference were allowed to choose their own present. It was impressive to see the diversity of issues covered by women researchers. This was the first time that women academics of the University of Prishtina could present jointly, if not the entire, at least a portion of their contribution in research and science.

Apart from good media coverage of the events organised by the GEO, to ensure wider dissemination of information, University provided the GEO link within the UP website (www.uni-pr.edu). The brochure Promoting women at the University of Prishtina was also published aiming at promoting gender equality as principle and value, and informing the public regarding the existence, as well as the activity of the GEO.

International cooperation and networking resulted in provision of two gender courses selected for the 9th edition of Prishtina International Summer University: Gender issues in educational leadership and Women work and employment, co-lectured by international and UP Professors which were attended by the total of fifty students.

Improvements were observed in gender disaggregated statistics year after year, which provides grounds for hope. However, the road is too long and arduous; therefore we are aware there is definitely no room for complacency.

Two other projects were initiated at that time by the GEO: Establishment of a child-care centre at the UP campus and Establishment of Master in Gender studies program. Although the two projects were backed up by the UP management, they could not be realised due to objective reasons.

THE PROJECT 'GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN ACADEMIA'

The project 'Gender Mainstreaming in Academia' was funded by ASO Ljubljana and ASO Sofia on behalf of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Research and Science. It was initiated by the Gender Equality Office of the University of Prishtina. Since international cooperation and networking is set as a high priority in the mission and vision of the GEO of the UP, the project was of vital interest for the recently established office. Although the project was initiated much earlier, the actual work on planning began in November 2008. The first step that was made was to contact international partners, in our case University of Vienna and the State University of Tetovo, in order to express our interest for cooperation in a joint project.

Cooperation with the University of Vienna was considered of vital interest. Although the GEO at the UP, being a unique case in the region, had made its
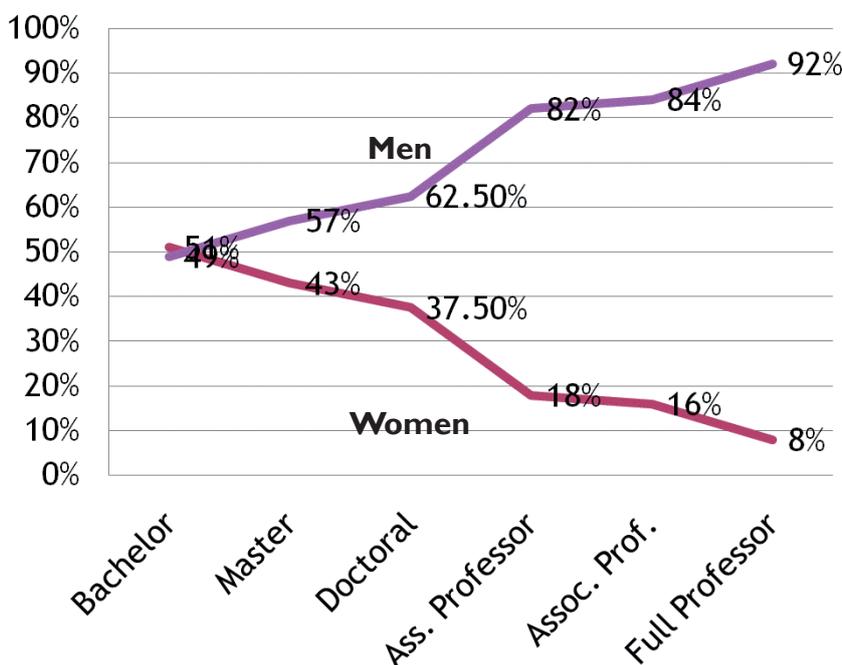

Figure 3.
Women at the
University of Prishtina
(2008/2009 statistics)

first steps, we considered that cooperation with the University of Vienna, that has a longer tradition in equal rights policies, in a joint project would provide the opportunity to obtain first hand information regarding equal opportunities policies and gender mainstreaming initiatives in Austrian universities. This would give an impetus to planning and implementing much more effective policies and measures aiming at accelerating the advancement of women in our universities.

Consortium
The consortium consisted of three main partners: Gender Equality Office - University of Prishtina, Centre for Gender Equality – University of Vienna, Faculty of Philosophy – State University of Tetovo. Apart from the main partners of the consortium, two other universities in Vienna were also involved in the project as University of Vienna local cooperation partners: Centre for Promoting Women and Gender Studies – Vienna University of Technology, and Department for Gender Mainstreaming – Medical University of Vienna.

Project aims and objectives and indicators of enhancement
Project aims and objectives had been clearly defined: eestablishment of a transnational network, transfer of knowledge and experience, and adoption of Austrian equal opportunities policies and best practice models in gender mainstreaming leading to the ultimate aim of advancement of women in the selected SEE partner universities.

Advancement of women, being the umbrella term, comprised our determination to explore all possibilities of focusing on the accomplishment of the projected aims:

* The increase of the participation ratio of women in senior levels of professorship;

* The increase of the distribution ratio of women in research and science;

* The increase of the participation ratio of women in graduate studies;

* The empowerment of women through their increased participation in decision-making.

Our intention was to use these as indicators of enhancement of the status of women in partner SEE universities.

Project team structure
Within the project teams the partner universities included a reasonable number of members who were directly involved in the project:

* University of Prishtina – 4 members

* University of Vienna – 3 members

* Vienna University of Technology – 1 member

* Medical University Vienna – 1 member

* State University of Tetovo – 2 members

Work packages and activities
Work packages and activities included in them, alongside with the milestones were clearly defined. Initial planning comprised the following work packages:

* Research projects – needs assessment and analysis of the current status and role of women in the SEE partner universities

* Study visit to Austrian partner universities

* Reflection, comparison and conclusions

* Project document: Joint strategy for the advancement of women in SEE universities

* Dissemination conference in Prishtina

Implementation process, obstacles and modifications
Due to visa problems on the part of the SEE universities, the project was slightly modified. The conference in Prishtina was held before the visit to the Austrian partner universities. Therefore the Prishtina conference did not address the dissemination of results as intended initially. Rather it served as a forum to discuss preliminary findings and to have a closer look at gender equality policies and best practices at Austrian universities. The investigation on the latter was pursued during the study visit to the Viennese universities involved.

The whole process of preparation as well as implementation of the project was characterized by a very supportive attitude of all partners. Cooperation was very close, prompt and all project partners displayed high commitment to support the partner universities in order to overcome obstacles and work out best solutions for the problems that occurred.

Conference in Prishtina
The conference in Prishtina was held on 12 October 2009. After almost a year of electronic communication and cooperation, the teams of the partner universities met for the first time in person.

University of Prishtina was responsible for the logistics of organising the conference. However, the content of the conference was planned in collaboration with all project partners.

The conference was attended by 32 participants in total. Among the audience were UP professors, assistants, administrative staff, students and representatives of governmental and non-governmental institutions.

The intention was to enable as many people as possible to obtain information regarding gender equality policies in Austrian universities, as well as the status of women in all partner universities in the project.

By bringing together academic and non-academic participants, it was intended to ensure greater engagement and involvement of all the relevant actors into gender mainstreaming activities in academia. As many gender sensitive persons as possible should further disseminate the information obtained in the conference.

Presentations delivered by Austrian partners regarding gender equality measures aroused immense interest. Although differences between the partner universities were observed, and these were mainly linked to the length of institutional promotion of women in science, similarities were also discussed. The leaky pipeline present in all partner universities strengthened the opinion that the culture of the universities can be identified as the main hindrance in the advancement of women in academia.

Discussions evoked by the presentations delivered by Austrian partners, as well as partners from the SEE universities revolved around the necessity of exploring all possibilities of focusing attention on diverse aspects of advancement of women in academia. Heavier emphasis is agreed to be placed on:

- greater inclusion of women in top hierarchy in academia;

- greater inclusion of women in research and science;

- greater inclusion of women in decision making processes;

- facilitating the reconciliation of family and career.

The participants in the conference generally agreed that women in academia need greater support in their career at all stages: in choosing their career path, in reconciling career and family life, as well as in finding a niche in career progression. In order to accomplish this, greater commitment and involvement of all stakeholders into gender mainstreaming activities is required.

This demands increased effort on the part of women as well, in order to articulate their needs and seek support and cooperation at national, regional and international level. However, equality issues, it was stated, cannot be solved by women's efforts only. From a gender equality perspective they do concern men to the same extent; therefore men and women should engage in guaranteeing equal opportunities as guiding principle and value.

Summing up the conclusions of the conference, the awareness related to the many steps to be taken was particularly stressed, as well as the necessity of changing the culture that hinders the advancement of women not only in academia, but in society in general as well.

Study visit to Austrian universities

The transfer of knowledge and exchange of experience that commenced in the conference in Prishtina was continued in Austria on 27 and 28 October 2009.

In the workshop at the University of Vienna emphasis was placed on discussing the possibility of adopting Austrian gender equality policies and best practice

models on the road of the achievement of the ultimate goal. Moreover, the partners from the SEE universities could further explore possibilities of international cooperation.

University of Vienna was responsible for the logistics of organising the study visit. However, the content of the visit and the schedule of the workshop were planned in accordance with the needs of the partner universities.

The presentation of the mentoring program (muv) for women academics at the University of Vienna and its sustainability aroused particular interest. Apart from this, international networking came out as a vital possibility for SEE partners. Cooperation possibilities and fund-raising issues elaborated during the workshop were evaluated as valuable information considering the lack of funds allocated for research in partner universities. The content of the master program in Gender Studies, as well as its organizational structure were also of special interest.

The participants' discussions lead to the common agreement that Austrian equality policies and best practice models of the University of Vienna could be adapted to the local context of the SEE partner universities. This should accelerate initial balancing of the statistics that would eventually bring empowerment of women and their equal representation at all levels. Among them, the mentoring program (muv), soft skills seminars for female PhD students, as well as the career planning course for female academic staff were judged as the most suitable initiatives for the partner universities.

The visits to the local cooperation partners at the other universities were an extended opportunity for further networking and exchange of experience. Obtaining information related to the projects conducted by the Centre for Promoting Women and Gender Studies at the Vienna University of Technology, meeting with the Vice Rector for International Relations, members of the Equal Opportunities Group, obtaining information related to the function and role of the group, as well as exchanging opinions with other colleagues from the centre, was an inspiring experience.

The visit to the Department of Gender Mainstreaming at the Medical University of Vienna also lead to further networking and additional opportunity for exploring future cooperation possibilities in research and science. Meeting with the Vice Rector for Personnel Development and Advancement of Women opened up new horizons in future cooperation of mutual interest for the benefit of the SEE partner universities. Meeting with the Head of the Equal Opportunities group, as well as the visit to the Vienna General Hospital University Clinics rounded up the study visit to Austrian universities.

Reflection, conclusions and outcomes

After almost a year of collaboration on the joint project and the conduct of four work packages, the blurred focus on the part of the SEE partner universities gradually sharpened. The comparison of the gender equality situation in the partner universities in the project and analyzing gender equality measures implemented in

particular Austrian universities provided a different outlook, and consequently a different approach to mainstreaming gender in academia.

The project aims and objectives were accomplished as envisioned:

• Transnational network established

• New knowledge obtained

• New experience gained

• New ideas generated

• Clearer vision created

• Joint strategy for mainstreaming gender in the SEE partner universities drafted

• Project documents 'Gender mainstreaming in Academia' (flyer, brochure and White paper) printed

STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN THE SEE PARTNER UNIVERSITIES

After having thoroughly analyzed gender ratios at the partner universities in the project, relevant conclusions have been drawn related to policies, strategies and measures, as well as their impact on the advancement of women in academia.

The overall conclusion is that despite the differences that are observed between Austrian universities and SEE partner universities with regard to institutional promotion of women, that is, the elaborate equal opportunities legislation, as well as measures implemented, the common goal of all partner universities in the project remains the balanced number of women in academia.

On the other hand, differences exist between the SEE partner universities, as well. While the existence of the Gender Equality Office makes the University of Prishtina a unique case in the region, at the State University of Tetovo there has not yet been such an initiative. Hence the joint strategy for the advancement of women in these two universities comprises complementary strategies suitable for the context of the particular university.

Since the Gender Equality Office at the University of Prishtina has made considerable progress in the institutional promotion of women, adoption of Austrian gender equality policies and best practice models seem much more conceivable. However, considering the fact that in the establishment of the Gender Equality Office at the University of Prishtina, similar to the Austrian experience, a top-down approach was used, for the State University of Tetovo a bottom-up approach is estimated to yield best effect. Consequently, a combination of University of Prishtina's and Austrian universities' experiences is considered to be appropriate for the promotion of women at the State University of Tetovo.

However, in order to ensure the implementation of strategies for the advancement of women in the selected SEE partner universities, it was agreed that greater involvement of not only the universities, but also greater commitment and stronger support of the governmental institutions, as well as international support is required.

CONCLUSION

In mainstreaming gender at our University, we had set realistic goals. Being aware of the length of the road to achievement of the ultimate goal, we placed heavy focus on student population considering that the increase of the numbers of female students in graduate studies would have direct impact on balancing the statistics in the academic hierarchy.

We focused on cooperation and networking at all levels and found support and benefited from international experience and best practice models. Through networking we promoted the spirit of mentoring female academics. However, individual efforts do not bring major social changes.

We made all attempts at attracting gender sensitive women and men into our activities. Regardless of this, the true challenge remains dispelling the negative reaction towards feminism, even if academic, and opposition to targets and quotas, by both parties: women and men academics, a fact that leads to the conclusion that it is the university culture that hinders women progression.

Considering all that has been discussed in this paper, we remain convinced that networking and institutionalised mentoring programmes would prove effective and sustainable tools in mainstreaming gender in academia.

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Sustainable gender equality as enabler for innovation

Example from the public sector and women employed in institutional kitchen

Anna Haraldson Jensen,
Sustainia AB
anna.haraldson@gmail.com

Christina Scholten,
Malmo University
christina.scholten@mah.se

ABSTRACT

This paper is a conceptual discussion on gender equality as enabler for innovation. Using a system analysis model combined with time-geographic notions on pocket of local order we try to test the system analysis capacity on acknowledge qualitative input such as gender equality. The idea is tested on the Skåne Food Innovation Network innovation research project "The nutritious meal" where institutional kitchen labour force are focus for the intervention. The system analysis identifies a range of important relations illustrated in creative loop diagrams where gender, time and place specific arrangements for innovations might be brought forward.

KEYWORDS: system analysis, creative loop diagrams, gender equality, innovation, empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Gender mainstreaming is often discussed as a Human Resource issue, often in terms of quantitative numbers of employees, salaries and work conditions. In this paper we are, however, concerned with gender equality as enhancer for industrial core activities, asking ourselves what if gender equality was considered as a quality of work performance in the assembly line, what would it contribute to according to added value of the products for sale or the services offered?[1] How then, is gender mainstreaming or gender equality to be understood and translated in order to enhance innovation and further development?

This paper is derived from the ongoing research project on applied gender research in strong innovation environments; Gender perspective on Skåne Food Innovation Network. Skåne Food Innovation Network is an organisation which facilitates innovations and developments in food business and related industries.[2] It is a triple helix constellation made up by public bodies, the universities in Skåne and private companies in food business and describes itself as a hub in the innovation system on food business in Skåne. The purpose of the project is to provide the innovation environment with instruments on how to integrate gender equality in the innovation system. Certain issues such as gender equality, needs real enthusiasts, this is however a vulnerable method according to continuity. Eva Amundsdotter and Minna Gillberg have developed a system management model (Amundsdotter,och Gillberg 2003) on how to implement gender mainstreaming in organizations. Our attempt is to try to make gender equality an enhancer for innovation integrated in the production process.

Aim and research questions

The aim with this paper is to present and discuss a conceptual frame of a system analysis model combined with a time-geography approach for evaluate whether gender equality might become value added in industrial and organizational development processes. We are also interested in how these pocket of space and time in which gender equality might contribute are characterized and gendered. In order to be able to do so, the process needs to be mapped from a holistic perspective and one way of mapping these processes is by system analysis. By identify in what specific situations innovation and developments occur, a spatiotemporal understanding of the processes investigated is necessary. We hereby use gender equality as an input for testing the system analysis ability to address qualitative inputs.

Questions that follow from this ambition are:

- What relations are identified as important structures in the case described according to innovation and development?

- In what respect is the system analysis capable of acknowledges qualitative input such as gender equality?

- In what spatiotemporal and gendered setting are the relations identified as important by the system analysis embedded into?

Methods and assumptions

The methods used to collect data for the system modelling are focus interviews with project managers, semi-structured interviews with management consultants, senior managers and lecturers in entrepreneurship. These data have been used as input to the creation of the Creative Loop Diagrams, more explicitly discussed below, which produces an illustration of the process examined. The case presented below is an example from the public sector. Important to note is that the paper is discussing the frame for a system analysis and empirical data in the everyday working conditions will be added by fieldwork in spring 2011.

GENDER EQUALITY, CHANGE PROCESSES AND INNOVATION

In this paper we understand gender as a political category for action (Young, 2000; Eduards, 2007) categorized by bodily marks and signs (Søndergaard, 2000) . By this distinction, we identify this political category's sub ordinate position in the gender system (Hirdman, 1988; Connell, 2003) where places, actions, work and artefacts labelled "female" still are political, economic and cultural de-valued in relation to those labelled "masculine" (Gemzöe, 2002) and space for bargaining for better conditions are hard to achieve in terms of in-equality. Empirical evidence for this situation are the sex segregated labour market, the gendered imbalance in high positions in business and universities, women's general domestic responsibilities, domestic violence toward women and women's fear of sexual violence and harassment in public places (National Statistics on Gender 2010). The dominant A category still have control of the space and movement of non A (Hirdman, 2003).

Gender equality change processes

Gender mainstreaming as a model for gender equality is debated and contested by gender researchers (Walby, 2005) The problematic issue is what gender mainstreaming really is all about (Eveline, 2005) women's adjustment to traditional normative and cultural principles; Complementary ideas of two sexes and thereby discrimination and silencing of other sexual preferences or identities; Essentialist understanding of the categories "female" and "male"? If gender mainstreaming is to become an integrated tool for development and innovation, businesses have to develop

the perspective on the production process and of the customers. This indicate that the qualitative aspect on gender equality has to be operationalized which demands new perspectives on the market and the business relation to the market and how demands for goods and services are developed and formulated (Hanson and Blake, 2009)

Mark (2007) differs between system preserving and system changing gender mainstreaming. System preserving gender mainstreaming is about "facts and figures" where the group of underrepresented sex have to adapt to the current organisation and its norms and values. The core activities are carried out as usual. System changing gender mainstreaming is about investigating what norms and values the organization is founded upon and challenge these ideas. A critical perspective is needed based on gender research. Working with this kind of system changing gender mainstreaming is usually contested and questioned. Combining the two aspects is important in order to handle the disorder within the organization that system changing gender mainstreaming creates (Mark 2007:23). In this work, it is necessary to involve the both kinds of gender mainstreaming approaches Mark (2007) has identified by elaborating the recruitment of personnel, by investing in human resource by training programmes but also by starting asking questions on the main idea of the service produced, on what norms and values this work is labelled by and why, what can be done to change it and if there are any needs for changes – if not, why and what experiences and skills does becomes valued, in what terms and by whom? This is a difficult process to start and handle which requires professional support and guidelines (Amundsdotter 2010). It is necessary though, if gender mainstreaming is to be used as an improver for innovation and development.

By mapping and evaluating the organisation, its processes, inflow and output in form of goods and services from a gender perspective, we think it is possible to identify what impact gender equality might contribute to according to business and organisation. By this qualitatively development, the workplace/organisation might perform a more efficient and strategic business and also become a more attractive place to work at, producing goods and services more adjusted to needs and desires of a multiplicity of people. In order to implement gender as a quality aspect of the core business the issue has to be brought back to production officers and managers. Another aspect on why gender equality seems hard to implement as a quality indicator is the qualitative dimensions and lack of description of how to handle qualitative measurements; aspects of power; reluctance and resistance to explore the potential of gender on innovation. To work with gender mainstreaming and its qualitative dimensions implies to question the stereotyping of the categories "women" and "men", what these categories represent and bring with them according to business performance, how to make use of both women and men's experiences and knowledge and to question norms and values and power relations imbedded within the dominating norms and values in the organization (Acker, 1990, Gemzöe, 2002, Gherardi, 1995, Mark, 2007).

Innovation and gender

There are dominant gendered ideas on who is an innovator and in what areas innovations are produced. In these descriptions women as inventors have been left out (Nyberg 2009), research has focused traditional male areas (Cockburn, 1993; Wajcman, 2000; Wajcman, 2010) and policy has been directed towards traditional male industry (Pettersson 2007, Lindberg 2010) where ambitions to gender mainstreaming has become side ordered (Pettersson 2007). There are different ways of implementing a gender perspective on innovations. Hanson and Blake (2005) emphasis the gendered structures of innovation systems and identified needs in the market to incorporate other perspectives on innovation. The gendered structures in which innovations and development takes place as Hanson and Blake are referring to are important to acknowledge. These structures are made up by people interacting in specific spaces which are imbued by power relations as individuals are positioned in relation to each other (Forsberg och Lindgren 2010).

By creating a setting in which production might be discussed from alternative perspectives (Mark 2007), it is possible to develop business and create value. From our project perspective, we are convinced that improvements and innovations also are possible in the food business segment, if gender is acknowledged. Firs we turn to system analysis and what we believe this approach might contribute to according to innovation and development processes.

SYSTEM ANALYSIS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is three-dimensional: economic, social and environmental. The social dimension, including gender, class, ethnicity and so forth, is mentioned in programmes and policies, but often by acknowledging the hardship in bringing it forward into explicit actions and tends to become "clouds in the horizon"(Forsberg, 2005). We need to describe the full potential of conscious gender awareness and leverage points where gender may contribute to qualitative change.

System analysis and system behavior

Systems analysis has been proven constructive in complex problem solving. Sustainable development is multi-dimensional and systems analysis has helped communicating the complexity of problems as the reality is multi-dimensional. In many ways systems analysis can aid communicating complexity through models where mental modeling engaging stakeholders in the process is a central aspect for success. Jay Forrester founded this field in 1956 at the M.I.T. In the 1970s Forrester was invited by the Club of Rome where he modeled the world's socioeconomic system a model and the refined model (World 2) mapped central interrelations between world population, industrial production, pollution, resources, and food. The World 3 version became a book, "The limits to growth" which discussed the collapse of the world socio economic system, if nothing would be done to balance the system and the earth's carrying capacity. Systems analysis, -thinking and -dynamics

became an important tool for analyzing issues relating to sustainability research.

System thinking is effective solving complex problems as it focus on the interconnection between parameters and stakeholders and recognizes the consequences on the system as a whole from actions of the individual parameters. Areas where system thinking has been useful are, for example (Aronson 1996):

- Complex problems involving many stakeholders and a need of seeing "the big picture" rather than the stakeholders own parts of it.

- Problems where an action affects the surrounding environment and system

- Recurring issues

A systems analysis can provide new input as gender and innovation in itself is not considered as connected. Adopting a system perspective on gender equality as enhancer for innovation and development is motivated by the complexity in working with qualitative dimensions in processes. By defining and mapping the system, we believe it is possible to identify specific time-spatial situations of importance for qualitative change. If a new product is to be developed heterogeneous panels and customers satisfaction and behavior out of a gender perspective might bring un-foreseen aspects forward. The idea must, however be launched by someone with impact potential.

Turning to system analysis is not far when innovation systems are put in focus. System thinking has developed over the past century and is "a science that deals with the organization of logic and integration of disciplines for understanding patterns and complex problems" (Haraldsson 2004:4). Deriving from a need of a more holistic approach and demonstrating feedbacks can mental modeling of complex problems might provide new perspectives and observed patterns. The working process is central as it reflects the outcome and mental model itself. Causal loop diagram is one way of working with mental modeling and communicating the various mental models that different actors have of the same problem. The feedback mechanisms are important in all problem-solving as they constitute the mechanism driving the problem. Finding the leverage points in the systems, the places where a small shift can produce change is seeing the potential switch and most effective way of achieving a switch. (Meadows 1999)

Causal loop diagrams

Mental modeling, drawing the mental pictures of the problem, is part of the process of systems analysis as drawing a model and describing the relations and feed-backs is a constructive method for developing and understanding the full system. Involving as many stakeholders as possible in the process, through workshops and interviews are central for the analysis. The mental model is a first sketch of the problem and the relations of the variables of the system. Causal loop Diagram (CLD) is one way of mental modeling. The mental modeling process is a communicative mean to

involve and integrate the stakeholders and their input. The relations and feedbacks are represented as arrows in the model and is set to be questioned: What is the relation? Are there more variables within the relation? More relations? feedbacks? What is triggering the system? More variables? Other actors that we have not seen and recognized? The discussion on the mental models and involvement in the process as a whole is useful for the stakeholders as it questions "known" relations.

Gender equality, innovation and management systems – do they match?

To shift to a more holistic approach the levels within the organisation must coincide: values, vision and an enabling management system embedding the strategy as well as supporting a wanted organisational culture (McKinsey 2003). Gender equality must be stated in the business strategy and promoted as an enabler by the operating management system and core of the leadership. The difficulty on following-up a qualitative variable as gender equality in a quantifying management system can be complex, but central as a modern management system have to handle qualitative data and variables to fulfil its purpose. The management system is a means to fulfil the business strategies.

The crucial aspect is to address innovation and business development direct. Focus must be set on innovation, development, and business strategies and how gender awareness can contribute to new levels for the organisations and businesses. A well-operating gender sensitive management system must support this relation and systemize the potential of a bond. To focus on implementing gender in managements systems solely is stating the own worth of the system, which is none. The foundation of the system is to systemize good business, and by analysing the system the potential of gender can be stated.

An aware system sees the potential everywhere in the organisation and is "gender-sensitive". If the gender aspect is not fully integrated is it likely that the organisation "does more of the same" and ignores the potential for innovation and business development. This awareness has affected the project "Makten över Maten" and related actors.

EMPOWERING INSTITUTIONAL KITCHEN WORKFORCE – INNOVATION IN PUBLIC SECTOR

The Skåne Food Innovation Network hosts several applied innovation research project of which the case described below is one. In the dominate discourse on innovation, knowledge and knowledge based economy (Maskell and Malmberg, 1999) innovation project on functional food in terms of bio-technologies is a good representation of the main research innovation system produces. The main purpose with the case presented here is healthier seniors where food and eating is considered as a major contribution to a healthier ageing. In this innovation project, the persons working with food preparation and eating is considered by the project manager at Skåne Food Innovation Network as key

actors in enhancing health. However, the workforce is characterized as a low status group marked by part-time employment, low average salaries and hard working conditions.[3] The working conditions and the working environment for institutional kitchen workforce are in this relation far from these knowledge intensive settings in which innovations usually are said to take place.

Innovation has for long time been connected to high-tech research environment in universities and industry. However, the public sector is becoming more and more interesting as an arena for innovation and entrepreneurship (SKR 2009/10, Sundin, 2008).[4]

Skånes livsmedelsakademi has initiated the focus area "Den goda måltiden"[5] where several projects are focusing food and innovation. The project "Mat för äldre – innovativ upphandling" (Food for Elderly – Innovative Procurement") is included in this initiative and is focusing on food service within the public sector and especially for elderly people. Hans Knutsson is focus area manager and researcher at Lund university school of economics.[6] He is and has been involved in several projects within the food industry since 2005 concerning efficiency and innovation. The project has focused on the public sector since 2009, a sector with little innovative outcome[7]. The aim of "Mat för äldre" is to contribute to better health through nutritious and pleasant meals amongst old aged persons. In 2000, the Swedish Board of Health and Welfare, Socialstyrelsen, in a scientific review stated the necessity of improvements among the workforce handling food and meals in elderly care (Socialstyrelsen 2000). "Mat för äldre" is built on the idea of "a good intake of food can decrease health care costs". According to the project manager, the project is a pilot with an ambition to facilitate public procurement, increase the efficiency and decrease food waist and boost innovation. The project is also interesting from a gender perspective as this particular sector in the labour market consists of a majority of women.

In order to create a more efficient public procurement, smarter logistics and production processes, empowerment and good leadership are fundamental, according to Knutsson. The recognition of the personnel, to 94 percent[8] women, working within the public sector and cooking, the so called "food aunties", and their competence and role is thereby central for success. Knutsson continues: To empower the personnel that are working directly with handling the food, increased competence and level of status is central as an increased degree of awareness triggers the potential in the chain of production as a whole. The profession is low status and the budget for skills development is limited, a combined difficulty that needs to be resolved in order to use its full potential. Knutsson concludes several key issues that need focus: 1) Enhanced competence considering nutrition and health aspects in relation to food and acknowledging the existing experience. 2) Good leadership within the sector. Shift in mindset, both amongst the workforce and the institution as a whole. More aware health- and nutrition policies that are result oriented. 3) An increased level of status for the professions working with food in the public sector.

" If we can boost the nutrition and catering staff in the public sector with competence and augmented status, it

will raise the consciousness in the public sector and put higher demands on the food industry. The power comes from within and not from the outside. To take initiative. There is a Gordian knot to be resolved… There are questions that can release problems and in the solving process can release force."
(Hans Knutsson, 2010-06-15, trans. Anna Haraldson Jensen)

Other projects within the overall initiative are Matglädje (Enjoyment of food) and Mellanmål (Snack). Catharina Byström and Peter J Skogström manage Matglädje and have identified potential areas for development in relation to an improved food experience for elderly people. The ambition is to take forth a material based on three cases, educating personnel working with food and elder people to create a better food experience. The nutrition- and food personnel in each of the three cases have been involved and developed the material together with the project manager. Christina Stefanovic Andersson is nutritionist and responsible for Mellanmål with the ambition of looking at what elderly people eat and ensure a nutritious snack as an important part of the daily intake, when needed. Businesses from the private sector have been involved in developing products for elder people, products that are both nutritious, easy to chew and swallow as well as a positive food experience, as a quality of life. Many businesses consider the public sector as important to involve in product development, but finds it difficult to navigate in, to find a way in e.g to promote new products. Projects like Mellanmål is hence creating a forum for these interests to meet and develop new products, where the public sector can contribute and affect the development process by taking part in it, according to Knutsson.

The personnel as the key
Two of the above projects are focusing on the workforce as a central resource to increase health amongst elders. The personnel are identified as keys actors in achieving the targets on healthier food for elder people and a more positive experience of food and eating. These projects are not designed out of a gender mainstreaming intention, but focus a part of the public sector dominated by a low-status group of women. Empowering this category of workforce is indeed a feminist approach.

The position of the nutrition- and catering staff is a key aspect in the system. where a small shift can make a great impact on the system as a whole. The variables "will to change", the individual level where the personnel's own ambitions are recognised and developed and "capacity for taking action", the institutional level where the structures provides more or less capacity for action taken by the personnel are leverage points. The variables are inter-connected (se below CLD) and to achieve a shift, triggers must complement each other and acknowledge this relation; inputs are more efficient when synchronised. Triggers driving the system are structural: existing policies, organisational culture, affecting both will to change and capacity for taking action.

These are areas that are affecting the system at present in relation to innovation as the sector in general and this area in particular experienced little input concerning innovative potential. An ambitious individual level and

a personnel engagement concerning innovation are dominating, as there are no policies or implementing strategies recognising the innovative potential. The Skåne food innovation network has focused on innovative aspects of the public sector since 2009, but there is no gender aware or sensitive strategies related to the initiative and therefore no commitment concerning internal learning from a gender perspective from these projects in relation to new. This is central as the actors in the innovation system that has an outspoken ambition to work with gender awareness, as the Skåne food innovation network has, needs to learn from these results in order to fulfil their purpose and develop a gender sensitive approach initiating projects.

From a systems analysis perspective the links, relations and feedbacks become evident as it looks into "known" relations as level of status and competence. But what type of competence is raising the level of status? Besides existing competence other skills are needed as the focus shifts from "food preparation" to "health and nutrition". The structural transformation must be synchronised and support the individual, in order to fulfil targets and meet needs.

Various actors operating within the system can provide different possibilities, which are needed to increase the innovative capacity as a whole. The CLD and its process demands more accurate relations than general acknowledged relations. How can a result oriented health policy affect the level of competence and status? Many smaller links in between become evident when the relation policy/status is questioned. Below is a model describing the basic project according to Knutsson. The logic of the project is modelled as follows:

Conclusions from "Mat för äldre":
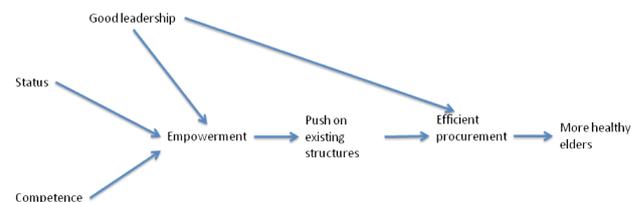

Figure 1. "Mat för äldre" system model. Based on the description of the project manager. Model elaborated by A. Haraldson Jensen.

CLD of "Mat för äldre", basic system:
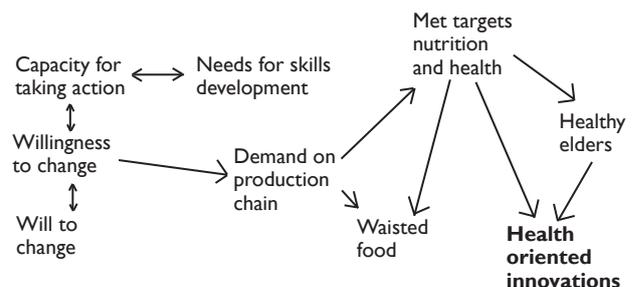
Figure 2. "Mat för äldre" as a CLD, where gender is a key aspect in determining important leverage points for innovation. Based on a gender sensitive description. Model elaborated by A. Haraldson Jensen.
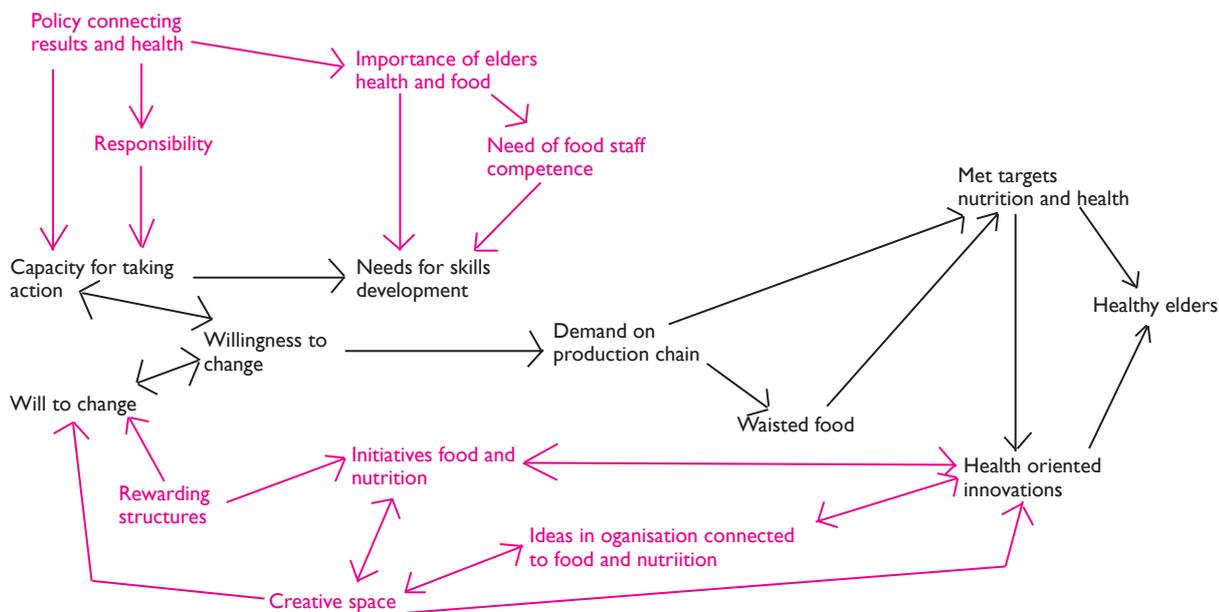
Figure 3. Mat för äldre as a CLD where gender is a key aspect in determining important leverage points for innovation. Black variables and links represent basic system. Pink variables are triggers driving the system. All pink variables and links derive from the policy level.A. Haraldson Jensen.

The CLD recognizes the structural drivers as policy (political and organisational strategies, ambitions, goals) and the type of inputs needed to establish a shift in the system. The CLD shows the various levels that the structural drivers must recognize in order to change the system: policy lifting the system from within and will to change ("rewarding structures" and "creative space" and from without triggering the "Capacity for taking action" ("responsibility", and direct set targets and policies through "policy connecting results and health". Creative space[9] and rewarding structures[10] are presented as important factors for innovation and triggering the "will to change" in the system presented above.

GENDERED TEMPOSPATIAL DETERMINATIONS FOR CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

To focus institutional kitchens in the public sector gives an opportunity of exploring the context and its structures in order to develop an understanding of possible shifts for more innovations as outcomes. Businesses in the creative knowledge economy describe the importance of open systems, high level of individual responsibility in work performance with structures enabling for idea generating and implementation (Martin and Terblanche 2003).

Creative space is a key factor for developing ideas further and as all people are capable of developing ideas is the creative space needed everywhere in order to bring more ideas into actions and become innovations (Nyberg, 2009). As innovations and creativeness are bound to time, place, people and resources, the way these prerequisites are organized and coupled to each other gives a more or less successful output. However, compared to high-tech environments, the daily activities in large scale kitchens are highly structured with limited or no offered possibilities which encourage creativity and innovation.

The importance of being around and integrating in everyday activities with people working in the organization is stressed by Lena Nyström, chairwoman of Gothenburg's innovation association and founder of the innovation and entrepreneurship programme at Gothenburg University. She stresses the necessity of meeting the organisation and the people in it for an innovative output, it is time-space-related. The creative space can be both a physical setting around a coffee table as well as a virtual community, or network, where trust-worthy relations are established (Hanson and Blake 2009).

> "It is important to be close to the organisation where the people are and work as they are the ones who should accomplish something. That is where you have to be and communicate. Offer knowledge and inspire. That is where and when many people get going and starts develop their ideas further… We provide a course for our students where they are part of a group and come up with an idea of their own. They brainstorm and come up with lots of ideas after half-an-hour, despite that many have problems getting started. Then they structure, what ideas can we develop further? A selection is made of simple ideas "finding one's glasses", "drive a stroller in snow" etc. What is central is to be permissive, every idea must be noted with a following process of voting. Nothing is bad, no ideas are judged by grading or discussing. To keep a positive and permissive process is central. This exercise can be done everywhere"
> (Lena Nyström, 2010-10-14, trans. Anna Haraldson Jensen)

Activities, in order to be successful, need to be organized in specific time-space structures, and the outcome is based on the skill required and obtained, resources available and allocated, and what control of the time-space environment actors within the setting needs and are able to demark. In our system analysis we try to elaborate with this time-geography model in order to understand where, in time and space, situations might occur where skill, experience, knowledge and creativity are moulded which could provide the large scale kitchen

workforce to promote and test ideas contributing to development of the business? Or what kind of tempo-spatial environment has to be established to promote and enable qualitative change?

The idea is to try to exemplify when a situation occurs where resources and workforce have opportunities to establish a tempo-spatial environment used for creativity. This will be elaborated further in the next part of this project where the workforce in the institutional kitchen will be filling time-geographic diaries in which time, place, actions, working group members and innovation in everyday working situations will be noted, collected and analyzed from a spatiotemporal perspective and a gender equality standpoint.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper we have presented a system analysis perspective on innovation and gender equality and an attempt to combine gender equality and innovation with time and space. The case above has not been formulated out of a gender perspective, but focusing on this particular working environment in the public sector gender equality becomes an unintended consequence to the project manager. Cases like "Mat för äldre" shows the potential of gender equality as an enabler for innovation and organisational development by acknowledging other work force categories as carriers of knowledge besides what traditionally have been put in focus; highly educated academics.

Gender related issues are clearly affecting the projects, but not communicated and targeted as enablers for accomplish results. The systems analysis states these relations and breaks them down into actions focusing on how the variables interact. Essential for an efficient chain of procurement is to make use of all present competence and personnel and utilize all potential available. The nutrition- and food staff has a key-role and their potential has not been supported by the structures in which they operate. The leverage points are: "Will to change" and "capacity for taking action", where the structures must support the individual level, the personnel in wanting a shift, as well as a new direction reinforced by the same structures. The structures must provide space for change and innovation.

The projects described in this paper are initiated as empowerment of a low-status labour force in the Swedish labour market. With a feminist perspective empowerment is fundamental. This approach highlights power relations within the labour market. Power relations in relation to this group is characterised e.g. by the lack of authority in relation to suppliers to large-scale food preparation facilities; members of this category are also absent from the decision making processes. They have little influence on their work environment and they are not acknowledged as important contributors to innovation.

By mapping the system out of a gender perspective the total workforces, competences etc, strengths and weaknesses becomes evident. Gender equality as an enabler for innovation must be part of a gender aware process to create a sustainable paradigm shift and use the full potential in organisations and businesses.

The example "Mat för äldre" holds many aspects that can be transferred into other projects.

1. To focus on efficiency and innovation rather than gender, but also aware of gender related aspects.

2. Ideas as empowerment and "growth from within" as leading.

3. Not taking organizations face value, but striving for institutional change.

Gender aware businesses and organisations see the innovative potential everywhere, which opens up for new business and markets. The cases presented in this paper shows that there are projects that are working with gender related aspects though not aware of it. This needs to be elevated and presented from a gender perspective as examples of where gender awareness enables innovation and business development. Creative space, essential for innovation, is situated in time and space and must be institutionalised in a setting suitable for the organisation, the people and expected output.

Notes

1 In the Care-centre in the Skåne municipality Skurup, the staff is working with the hand of gender. By analyzing how women and men traditionally is met by the care givers 5 areas have been developed in order to break gender traditional behaviors among the care givers who have the introduction talk with the patient. This has resulted in a more adjusted and professional care giving. Jämt sjukskriven – ett genusperspektiv på sjukskrivningsprocessen. Slutrapport Swedish Associations of Local Authorities and Regions, 2010.

2 See www.livsmedelsakademin.se for further details on the hub.

3 In the employment office descriptions of the working conditions the hard working conditions are mentioned. The trade unions Kommunal and Hotell och restaurang also pinpoints poor work life conditions.

4 The Helix Excellence Centre at Linköping university is hosting several research projects towards the health care sector. http://www.liu.se/helix/?l=en

5 In English "The pleasant meal".

6 Hans Knutsson has been involved in several projects within the food industry since 2005 concerning efficiency and innovation.

7 Compared to the private sector and private actors in the food industry.

8 Statistics from "Makten över maten" http://www.livsmedelsakademin.se/sites/default/files/Sysselsattning_inom_hotell_och_restaurang.pdf

9 Nyberg 2001

10 Skjöldebrand, 2010-06-03

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Competencies for sustainability and gender: How to gain advantage

The problem, the theoretical background and questions

Christine Katz, Dr., Anja Thiem, Dr.
Environmental Planning, Faculty III
Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Germany
waldfrauen@uni.leuphana.de, anja.thiem@uni.leuphana.de

ABSTRACT

In Germany there are a large number of female junior scientists in sustainability areas. In contrast, only few women take top positions in for instance governmental or environmental organisations. The reasons for this phenomenon have not yet been clarified.

Academic programs on environmental issues have been developing over the last 15 years to become more inter- and transdisciplinary to better meet the requirements of complexity and sustainability. Up to now, we do not know the effects of these measures and developments in research and academic education in terms of the impact on women achieving top positions in organisations in the professional fields of sustainability. A further question is whether people with sustainability competencies require specific organisational/work structures. This article outlines the contexts and challenges for this much-needed research.

KEYWORDS: competencies for sustainability, competence and gender and organisation, competence development and gender

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS: AN INTRODUCTION

In Germany a large number of female students and junior scientists can be found in sustainability study courses or in the areas of science dealing with issues of sustainable development, which require strong skills in interdisciplinary academics. In contrast, only few women take top positions in for instance governmental or environmental organisations in these fields. The reasons for this phenomenon have not been clarified yet. Is it due to a lack of (leadership) competencies (and then, which ones?) or is it the result of different career values? Is it because sustainability competencies in general are not required for top positions in institutions, for instance if the existing organisational structures are not adequate for working out cross-issues and sustainability competencies effectively? Is it because on the one hand the competencies required for sustainability studies are not the same as those needed for top positions? The competencies required for sustainability studies and required for top positions might be quite different. In addition the current structures of governmental and environmental organisations may require changing to accommodate the working competencies of those most talented in these fields.

In Germany a large number of female students and junior scientists can be found in sustainability programs or in research fields dealing with issues of sustainable development. Looking at the number of students at the Leuphana University in Lüneburg, the large number of female students in environmental sciences (bachelor, master and diploma) is obvious (figure 1).

Students at the Leuphana University Lüneburg in summer 2010	Students (male and female)	Female students
Leuphana Bachelor of Sciences, Major Environmental Sciences	212	127
Master of Sciences, Sustainability Sciences	43	23
Environmental Sciences, Diplom	107	49

Figure 1: Students at the Leuphana University Lüneburg in summer 2010

Research for the sustainability funding programmes of the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF), like the initiative "social-ecological research" or by the German Research Foundation (DFG), particularly attracts female junior scientists. Our first overview in this funding programs shows that female junior scientists in these fields are more in assistant positions and less in leading positions (figure 2).

Funding programs	Women in assistent positions	Women in leading positions
Social-ecological research (BMBF)	45 %	19 %
Sustainability Management (BMBF)	45 %	20 %
Human dimensions of global environmental change (DFG)	47 %	11 %

Figure 2: Funding Programs

In academic education, environmental programs have developed over the last 15 years to become more inter- and transdisciplinary, to better meet the requirements of complexity and sustainability. Up to now, the effects of these measures and developments in research and academic education in terms of the impact on women to achieve top positions in organisations in the professional fields of sustainability are not known. We demonstrated that women educated and working in sustainability sciences have to find a balance between various difficulties (Katz et al. 2003, Katz/ Mölders 2004, Thiem 2006):

- restrictions due to disciplinary structures,

- the necessity to distinguish themselves as specialist experts in interdisciplinary -topics,

- research activities normatively framed by the ambitious overall concept "sustainable development" pointing to tasks and habits beyond pure professional ones.

The first results suggest that professionals in the field of sustainability are confronted on the one hand with the enormous complexity of their subject matter, and also with the still "highly sectorised" institutions involved in sustainability practices. But if this is the case, male professionals with similar sustainability competence should find this situation similarly challenging. Up to now the competencies and skills of men compared to women in leadership positions in professional fields of sustainability as well as the factors responsible for gaining these positions are unknown: is it due to occupational factors like education, work-related biography and work conditions or is it due to social life related contexts or the set of values and gender socialisation of the persons concerned?

The question then raises which specific inter- and transdisciplinary competencies (including sensitivity to and reflection of gender and sustainability aspects) do female and male professionals working in scientific fields on sustainability have? Do "sustainability competencies" need specific structural requirements?

Which gender codes do competencies for sustainability show and how are male and female professionals affected by this?

The starting point for our research interests is the assumption that men and women busy in inter- or transdisciplinary fields of sustainability sciences (education and work) form specific competence profiles –"competencies for sustainability". They are characterized first by the ability to anticipate interrelations and secondly by having a particular set of values or value orientation. The competence profiles are gendered and differ between men and women. The individual's competency profile seems to have an impact on the decision whether leadership vacancies are filled with women or men.

This article explores the contexts and challenges of research requirements focussing on this problem. The following section outlines the scientific and theoretical background of the research problem. Based on the approach of "doing gender", questions and methodical aspects outlining our research design are presented. Our goal is not simply an advancement of women in the professional realm of sustainability, but inquiry into inter- and transdisciplinary as well as leadership-capabilities and structural innovations to meet the broad and complex demands in the field of sustainability studies, policies and practices.

THEORETICAL AND SCIENTIFIC CONTEXT

Research on Competencies

Which human abilities are needed in order to overcome complex global problems, has been discussed elaborately since 1990, referring thereby to argumentations resulting from educational and action theories (de Haan 2001, Becker 2001). At least since the UN-Conference at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, total agreement exists in the assessment of global environmental changes requiring more than the common existing solutions and competencies. According to this, transfer of knowledge is supposed to be insufficient; but social life related, context oriented, problem focussed and issue-crossing approaches are required in order to reach effective learning – teaching constellations. This is reflected in the concept of key-competencies, introduced by the OECD (2005) and used as a frame of reference in most of the competence models and testing tools nationally and internationally[1] discussed.

The engagement with the role of competencies in realms of education and qualification is connected to a shift of focus in quality assessment of educational processes, from input (content, curricula) to output orientation (coping of specific tasks) (Strauch et al. 2009, Gnahs 2007) , and from qualifying to measuring and assessing competencies (Bretschneider 2006). Practical and scientific experts from different disciplines (pedagogy, psychology, occupational research, personnel consulting) are involved in various research and innovation projects to develop adequate and effective instruments or models for identifying and testing competencies (www.bmbf.de,

www.die.de, www.dipf.de, 20.8.2010; Klieme/ Leutner 2006). Reaching a more or less standardized (and thus comparable) competence model for identifying, forming and testing competencies is the idea behind (EQR 2008). Because up to now, the competence models and terms underlying measures and projects in research or occupational application fields or national and international programmes are referring to, are said to be inconsistent (de Haan/ Harenberg 2008, Erpenbeck/ Rosenstiel 2007). Its theoretical framing is supposed to be insufficient (Kurtz/ Pfadenhauer 2009, Haase 2006, Lang-von Wins 2007), The methods used for identifying and testing competencies are showing huge heterogeneity. For example in the German Handbook for Measuring Competencies of Erpenbeck/ Rosenstiel (2007) already 54 testing methods are presented.

ESD is related to the scientific discourse on competence outlined above and initiated by the OECD (2005) and its key-competence concept (de Haan 2003 und 2008). Structural competence (developed in Germany as "Gestaltungskompetenz") – a set of 10 sub-skills deducted from sustainability sciences (e.g. interdisciplinarity), futurology (e.g. dealing with uncertainty), the social practice (e.g. solving problems cooperatively) and founded normatively (e.g. justice) -, is not only pointing to cognitive skills, but includes extensive personal, value oriented and social capabilities e. g. like being able to be self-reflective and to form and represent an own set of value and ideas (de Haan/ Seitz 2001 a und b, de Haan 2008, BLK 1999). The relation between and relevance of cognitive and affective or social life related skills for sustainability is still debated (Ernst 2008, Rieß/ Mischo 2008, Funke 2003). Cognitive aspects yet are dominating most of the competence models used.

As well as still being debated what competencies for sustainability have to include specifically (Barth 2007) and how this could be measured or evaluated in an adequate manner, the contribution and effect of qualifications, educations, trainings and occupational working experiences in inter-/transdisciplinary fields of sustainability on reaching competencies for sustainability have not yet been investigated. The impact of motives, biographic and social life related factors on choosing studies or occupational orientations towards cross-sectional sustainability sciences is not analysed yet – and not at all in terms of its relation to gender. Main areas in education of these academic fields are communicating the contextual knowledge of interrelations and training of the ability to think in cohesions. The relevance of such sub-skills for the development of others to reach sustainability competencies is not clarified yet. Neither clear is the effect of value orientation due to the normative model of sustainable development on the forming of sustainability competencies nor are the gender codes analysed.

Gender and Competencies

In the German discussion about generating adequate competencies for sustainability - like structural competencies outlined in the concept of ESD - general gender issues do not play a decisive role, despite the fact that gender aspects have been taken into consideration seriously in educational research and practical contexts since the 1970s (Mayer/ Katz 2008). Furthermore reaching gender equality is mentioned to be a crucial factor for reaching sustainability in almost all international documents, agreements and conventions on ESD (UNECE 2005, Rohrbach 2005). The capability of recognizing gender relevant discrimination and of acting gender sensitively or gender reflectively are said to be essential sub-skills of competencies for sustainability.

Results of feministic epistemology as well as feministic science and technique research particularly to issues of the cross-sectional field "Gender and sustainability", indicate a female connotation of some of those principles said to be part of competencies for sustainability as foresight orientation, social related life contextualisation, ability of empathy, orientation on social interrelatedness. Women often seem to prefer broader foci and more coherent solutions of socio-ecological problems than men. That was shown for consumer and mobility behaviour, in relation to nutrition aspects and risk awareness as well as towards the sense of responsibility for environment and nature (Keppler 2005, Schultz 2001, Southwell 2000, Wächter 2000, Janshen/ Rudolph 1987). Women obviously form sub-skills which particularly meet the defined requirements of competencies for sustainability during their socialisation. Gender related differences in developing and shaping competencies are hardly focussed so far – neither in competence research nor in research on "gender and sustainability".

Gender research on competencies mostly focusses on questions relating to career affairs. It often is about differences and common grounds in terms of leadership behaviour of men and women, or male and female competence characteristics during their career are analysed as well as mechanisms thereby effective (Pascherer 2008, Mohr/ Wolfrum 2006, Sczesny 2003a, Willemsen 2002). Another main topic concerns the forming of competencies referring to occupational advancement and leadership supporting women to reach top positions (Sczesny 2003b). Lots of the explorations are concentrated on "structural adjustment efforts" of women, i.e. requiring that the competencies of women be as successful as men under existing structural conditions.

Competencies, Gender and Organisation

Gender aspects of organisational affairs – often focussed on bureaucratic organisations - are scientific areas which have been analysed for many years (e.g. Funder et al. 2005, Kurz-Scherf 2003, Riegraf 2003, Franke/ Simöl 2000, Wimbauer 1999, Savage/ Witz 1992, Mark-Lawson/ Witz 1986, Walby 1986, Enloe 1983). One main feministic criticism of conventional theoretical approaches of organisational functions and perceptions refers to its rationality concept and underlying gender neutrality, and points to the resulting "absence of real persons" (Wilz 2002, p. 43 ff.). Gender research showed in contrast that organisational processes generate gender as socially relevant phenomenon again and again which is hidden by referring to alleged neutral principles like relevancy, efficiency and output, formality and impersonality.

Gender research focussing on the linkage between competence, value -/ social life orientation and structural aspects is deficient. For example there is little knowledge about how interdisciplinary orientations, a specific set of values, concepts of career and relevance of occupation as well as life concepts would function as impacting factors on competence profiles and its shaping in a way that influences its structural suitability and thus e.g. the filling of positions (Wigfield et al. 2002). And thus it is not clarified yet how organisational cultures and structures are involved (facilitating and hampering) in specific competencies being effective and how this is influencing the selection of gender specific careers.

In Germany Karin Gottschall (1998) and Angelika Wetterer (2002) have shown in various scientific projects that organisation and gender are process oriented categories, mutually constructed in the frame of organisational practices and regulative interactions, in day- to-day-work, in organisational guiding models, in discussions of images, symbols and performances – "doing gender while doing work" (international explorations: Halford et al. 1997, Wilz 2002). If organisation and gender are understood as process oriented categories, structure cannot be seen any more as determinative to action. According to Giddens´ Structuration Theory, the interrelation between structural and acting aspects and recursive procedures come to the fore (Giddens 1995, Ortmann et al. 2000). To complete this approach in terms of considering gender (Kahlert 2006, Braun 1995, Wilz 2002, Holtgrewe 1997, Riegraf 2003) and combining it with research on competencies is an interesting and challenging task which has not yet been tackled.

WHAT HAS TO BE DONE? OUTLINING A DESIGN

By means of our research we want to identify more explanatory factors for the existing gender inequality in achieving top positions at sustainably oriented organisation. In detail, the research will seek to

- generate gender reflecting knowledge about the linkages between development of competence profiles, a specific specialisation and value orientation in scientific fields of sustainability;

- elicit those structural, procedural and individual preconditions facilitating sustainability competencies (during qualification and occupation) to become effective in organisations working in sustainability affairs;

- develop measures which foster gender sensitive competencies for sustainability and which assist in achieving gender equality by getting persons with this competence profile into top positions.

In accordance with social-constructivist gender research (Gildemeister/ Wetterer 1992), we do not perceive gender as a person's irrevocable characteristic, showing itself in gender-differentiated practices and providing evidence for typical male or female patterns of action. Gender differences are in contrast understood as a competence has to be achieved again and again in social interactions with the structural framework and all partners of interaction ("doing gender", West/ Zimmermann 1987).

Following the concept of "doing gender", we need to concentrate on processes of constructing differences in specific contexts instead of focusing on differences as products of construction processes. The research procedure and applied methods have to meet this demand. For this and in order to explore the gender codes of sustainability competencies and its impact on the staffing of top positions in relation to structural conditions

- our group of interest is composed of men and women,

- we are looking at different career steps and contexts of conditions and significances, i.e. study phase, status of junior researcher and of being in top positions in scientific fields of sustainability,

- a holistic competence model - KODE® und KODE®X for diagnosis and WERDE© for identifying the value orientation (Heyse/ Erpenbeck 2007) – is applied, which combines cognitive, affective, social life related, biographic, motivational and ethical aspects,

- gender is integrated as a cross-sectional parameter – including analyses of organisational structures and cultures.

According to the perspective of qualitative reconstructive gender research, the analytical procedure is problem and process oriented, flexible and reflexive. It enables us to detect complex behavior patterns and their evaluation from the viewpoint of the persons involved (Witzel 1982).

The project will probably start at the beginning of next year at Leuphana University, Institute for Sustainability Governance.

Notes

1 The concept "education for sustainable development" (ESD) and the therein developed competence of organization (Gestaltungskompetenz) is referring to this approach too (de Haan/ Harenberg 1999).

2 KODE® und KODE®X were selected because they base on empirical studies about competence development. Both are refined continuously and tested during applying procedures since many years (Erpenbeck 2004).

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Papersession H

Work - family balancing strategies

Work-family unbalance in the Portuguese tourism sector: Strategies for a better life and improved upward mobility

Inês Carvalho, Carlos Costa, Zélia Breda
Department of Economics, Management and Industrial Engineering,
Research Unit 'Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policies'
University of Aveiro, Portugal
inesclaudiare@ua.pt

ABSTRACT

Although women's participation in paid employment is growing, household and care-related duties are still regarded as a female duty. This has a negative impact on women's careers. In this study, the case of Portuguese tourism workers is analysed. It is concluded that women have more difficulties than men in balancing work and family lives. In the tourism sector, these difficulties are supposed to be exacerbated, due to the characteristics of tourism jobs, such as long and irregular working hours.

The need for gender equality promotion in the workplace is thus advocated. The role of companies in the promotion of work-life balance is underlined. However, since companies may experience difficulties in implementing these measures on their own, a network for the promotion of gender equality and work-life balance is proposed and the role of each stakeholder is presented.

KEYWORDS: gender, work-life balance, tourism, employment, Portugal

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, despite the increasing participation of women in the labour market, household duties and care are still strongly associated with women. This poses obstacles to women's work-life conciliation, since women tend to accumulate working hours in paid and unpaid work (Torres and Silva., 1998). Very often this situation leads to a clash of schedules and conflict situations (Torres and Silva, 1998). However, according to Rosemary Crompton and Clare Lyonette (2005, cited by Torres et al., 2008), it is likely that this conflict increases in countries where there are no state policies that explicitly encourage men to participate more in domestic work, as is the case of Portugal, Britain and France. In contrast, in countries like Finland and Norway, such measures have a positive impact in reducing work-family conflicts.

Regarding the tourism sector, it is markedly feminised, underpaid, precarious and requires working in 'unsocial hours', such as nights and weekends (Parrett, n.d.).

These characteristics of tourism jobs, combined with the lack of state encouragement to work-life balance in Portugal, are likely to make the conciliation between work and family lives of Portuguese tourism workers particularly difficult. It is thus important that strategies aiming at a better conciliation between work and family lives are adopted at the micro and the macro level. These measures should target both women and men, since both have the right to participate in paid employment, as well as in care and domestic duties.

The main aim of this study is to analyse how gender equality can be promoted in the workplace, in particular what strategies can be followed in order to support work-life balance. Particular emphasis is given to the Portuguese tourism sector. Characteristics of tourism jobs and tourism companies are analysed, so that the strategies proposed fit the reality of this sector.

First of all, difficulties in balancing work and family lives are analysed from the literature. The presence of

men and women in the public and private spheres is studied. The consequences of the unequal participation of each gender in these domains are examined, in particular the way they affect female employment and female lifestyles. Other constraints to work-life balance are mentioned and information about work-life balance in Portugal is introduced.

In the following section, the Portuguese situation is studied in greater detail. Three surveys carried out by Statistics Portugal (Instituto Nacional de Estatística) are analysed: the Time Use Survey (1999), the ad-hoc module on work-life conciliation from the 2005 Employment Survey and the Employment Survey (2009). These databases provide important information on the characteristics of work-life balance in Portugal, gender differences in time committed to family and professional lives, as well as characteristics of tourism jobs.

In order to tackle the inequalities found and to improve the work-life balance of both women and men, the need to promote gender equality in the workplace is advocated. Companies are identified as essential actors in this field, since they deal with employees directly. However, in order to involve companies in gender mainstreaming, it is necessary to raise their awareness on gender issues. Moreover, companies should be made aware of how promoting gender equality can stimulate their competitiveness. For this reason, economic advantages of gender equality promotion for companies are presented.

After that, several dimensions that should guide companies in the gender mainstreaming process (CITE, 2008) are presented. Since the focus of this study is the support of work-life balance, particular attention is given to measures in this field.

However, since most companies, particularly in the tourism sector, are small-scale businesses, they may lack financial resources and know-how. Therefore a network involving the following stakeholders is proposed: companies, the State and other governmental entities, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, tourism industry associations, research centres, as well as tourists and the local community. This network could ease the flow of information between the partners involved, as well as the creation of childcare and elder care facilities that respond to the needs of those working in the sector, since the costs related to running in-company facilities can be shared and protocols with local caring institutions can be more easily established.

BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY LIVES: THE NEED FOR A MORE BALANCED LIFESTYLE

Women's presence in the labour market is increasing (European Commission, 2004). Whereas economic survival is one of the reasons that lead women to enter the labour market, there are many other motives that drive women to search for a job. According to Torres (2009), for women, a job is a means of attaining a social identity, being socially recognised for their competences, increasing their autonomy and bargaining power within

a relationship, as well as of pursuing a new lifestyle. Furthermore, women's rising levels of education raise their expectations, which means that most women are not anymore looking forward to be housewives. On the contrary, increasingly more women want a job that suits their qualifications (Scott, 1997).

However, despite the growing presence of women in the labour market, the private sphere is still seen as feminine (Ferreira, 2007), since women are still expected to perform most household and care-related duties (Hemmati, 2000; INE, 2002) and they even consider that this situation is fair (Rêgo, 2008). According to Dantas (2004), women's increasing participation in the public sphere has not been matched by a more equitable split of household chores between men and women. This has resulted in women's accumulation of working hours in paid and unpaid work, leading to a very heavy workload and high stress levels (Torres and Silva, 1998). Moreover, the way society and labour are organised does not favour work-life balance either (Dantas, 2004). Therefore women face double work each working day and have to deal with feelings of guilt if they are unable to cope with this situation (Torres, 2009). This unequal split of responsibilities at home leads to gender inequality in employment, since women are left with less time for professional development and tend to be regarded, by their employers, as less available for work-related commitments (Gustafson, 2006).

In Portugal, the lack of childcare services and family support, along with low salaries, lead to overwork, so that family can cope with family expenses (Torres and Silva, 1998). The fact that Portugal has the highest rate of full-time working mothers within the European Union (Torres et al., 2005), combined with a lack of infrastructures to support family life and a low average salary (Torres and Silva, 1998), mean that Portuguese families, particularly women, suffer from high stress levels. The lack of supporting structures, namely childcare and elderly care services, create obstacles to work-life balance which affect particularly women, since they are the ones who still perform the majority of care-related tasks. These barriers imply very often negative consequences for women's careers, making it more difficult for them to break the 'glass ceiling'. The lack of time for professional life deters women, more frequently than men, from developing their full potential. For society, this implies very often an under-utilisation or even loss of highly qualified human capital (Freire, 2007).

Another main cause of gender inequality in employment, mentioned by several authors (European Commission, 2004; Hemmati, 2000; Parrett, s.d.; Rêgo, 2008), is gender stereotypes, which keep men and women from challenging the traditional gender roles. Likewise, practices embedded within corporate culture also create hurdles to women's career development (Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006; Jordan, 1997; Parrett, n.d.; Purcell, 1997).

Consequently, it is necessary to find ways to tackle gender inequalities, particularly by lessening the collision between work and family lives and thus encouraging more balanced lifestyles, both for women and men.

METHODOLOGY

This article is based on the analysis of relevant literature on work-life conciliation and gender issues in the workplace, as well as on the analysis of microdata from the "Time Use Survey" (1999) and the "Employment survey" (1998-2009), which are carried out by Statistics Portugal (Instituto Nacional de Estatística).

The Time Use Survey measures the amount of time people spend doing several activities, including paid work, household chores, childcare, socialising, among other activities. The software PASW statistics was used in order to analyse the data from this survey. Crosstabulation and chi-square tests were computed in order to search for relevant gender differences in time use. The main limitation of this database is the fact that it is not recent, since it only covers the year 1999. Moreover, it does not provide information for the tourism sector specifically.

Concerning the Employment Survey, it is a quarterly sample survey that covers all the national territory and aims at collecting data that allow the characterisation of the labour market. The 2005 "Employment survey" includes an ad-hoc module on work-life balance, which was of particular importance for this analysis. However, the more general database for 2009 was also used to derive important information to characterise employment in the tourism sector. The data were analysed using the software PASW statistics. The aim of this analysis was to identify differences in the situation of women and men, particularly in the tourism sector, as well as to characterise employment in tourism, by comparing it to employment in the economy as a whole. The data were crosstabulated in order to find gender differences. The t-test was used to analyse the gender pay gap and the number of working hours.

Even though OECD et al. (2001) mention a broader range of tourism characteristic products[1], it was not possible to analyse some of these economic activities due to limitations of the database, namely the fact that the data were not sufficiently disaggregated or the fact that the number of respondents for some economic activities was too low. Therefore, in this study, the tourism sector includes the following activities: accommodation, food and beverage, and travel agencies and tour operators.

Regarding the ad-hoc module on work-life balance, the main aim of its analysis was to obtain information concerning difficulties of women and men in conciliating professional and family lives. Since differences between workers, in general, and tourism workers, in particular, were not significantly different, data specifically for tourism workers is not provided for most of the analysed variables.

Finally, since the creation of synergies between several actors is important to promote gender equality, the creation of a network involving several stakeholders is proposed, as well as a set of actions that can be carried out by these actors.

WORK-FAMILY BALANCE IN PORTUGAL

In this section three databases (Time Use Survey, 2009; Employment Survey, 2009; Employment Survey – 2005 Ad-hoc Module on Conciliation between Professional and Family Lives) are analysed in order to characterise work-life balance in Portugal, particularly gender differences in time use and in commitment to family and professional lives. The characteristics of tourism employment are also analysed, especially those that might interfere negatively with work-life balance.

The Time Use Survey was used to obtain information about differences in the way women and men spend their time, particularly if there are differences in the amount of time committed to the family and household. The Employment Survey's ad-hoc module on work-family conciliation was used to identify conflicts between work and family lives, the degree of flexibility in workplaces, as well as childcare solutions more frequently adopted by male and female workers. In order to obtain information for the characteristics of tourism employment, the Employment Survey 2009 was analysed.

How tasks are split between men and women

According to the Time Use Survey, in 1999, men worked more hours (40-45 hours) in paid work than women (30-35 hours on average). However, women devoted more time than men to unpaid work (i.e. household chores, childcare …). Not only did they perform most of these tasks much more frequently than men, but they also spent more time performing them. For instance, women spent more time than men with the following tasks (only percentages for the most frequent answer, in each gender, are presented):

- preparing meals (47.3% of women: always; 32.9% of men: sometimes)

- cleaning the house (31.8% of women: always; 53.4% of men: never)

- doing the laundry (35.6% of women: always; 67.6% of men: never)

- doing the regular shopping (53.4% of women: always; 25.8% of men: always)

- taking care of children (65.3% of women: always; 28.3% of men: sometimes)

- participating in children's school life (67.9% of women: always; 29.4% of men: frequently)

- playing with the children, taking them to the theatre, cinema, concerts… (41.7% of women: always; 26.5% of men: always)

- taking the children to the doctor (63.1% of women: always; 25% of men: sometimes; and another 25% of men: never)

Gardening is the household duty that was most equally shared between men and women. The single task that was mainly performed by men was taking care of administrative duties (25.8% of women: always; 42.9% of men: always).

There were more women than men who felt rushed. Women tended to state that, comparing to the previous years, this feeling was increasing. However, the chi-square test showed that there was no statistically significant difference for this variable. Women also felt that they lacked time to do what they wanted to in their free time. It was also less frequent for them not to know what to do in their free time (45.2% of women: never; 35% of men: never).

Women also complained more about the clash of schedules than men, albeit the gender difference in this variable is not statistically significant (significance values of the chi-square test are above 0.05). However, men mentioned conflicts with the opening hours of kindergartens more frequently than women.

It can be concluded that tasks in unpaid work have not been equally shared between genders and that this has lead women to higher stress levels than men.

The clash between work and family lives, especially for women

The Ad-hoc module on work-life balance of the 2005 Employment Survey demonstrates that family responsibilities are more frequently taken by women than by men.

Concerning the main childcare service chosen for one's own children or spouse's children, in 2005, men resorted to the spouse seven times more than women (22.9% of men vs. 3.7% of women). Women resorted more than men to other alternatives, such as kindergarten or other childcare services, relatives, neighbours or friends. There were also about three times more women than men taking care of children (14 years old or less) or other dependent people (sick, elderly or handicapped).

Moreover, men and women were asked if they wished to change their work life or their family responsibilities in the care field. The majority of men and women stated that they did not wish to change any of the situations. However, the number of women that were not satisfied with their current situation more than doubled the number of men: some wanted to spend more time working in paid employment, others wanted to spend more time caring. This reflects the work overload that women are subject to, both in paid and unpaid work, as well as the difficulties in balancing work and family lives. However it is noticeable that both men and women, but particularly women, expressed a desire to work less and increase the amount of time dedicated to care. This perhaps reflects once again what Torres (2009) wrote, namely, that parents, especially mothers, have feelings of guilt for not spending as much time as they wished with their family.

In addition, more women (23.8%) than men (13.8%) stated that they did not work more hours or did not work at all in paid employment because of some reason related with childcare services. Similarly, more women were absent from work due to family emergencies (23.3% of women; 13.4% of men) and about 30% of women missed work during children's holidays, against 13% of men. Many women were absent from work during this period because of the lack of childcare services. However, there was also a higher percentage of women stating that they had missed work for another reason not related to the lack of adequate childcare services (6.1% of women; 2.3% of men).

Most respondents did not have the possibility to change their daily work schedule due to family-related reasons. However, it seems that women's working hours were more flexible than men's: 46.8% of women had this possibility, against 42.5% of men. As regards being absent from work for whole days due to family reasons, most of the respondents did not have this possibility. The difference between genders is not statistically significant.

About of a third of the respondents did not have the right to parental leave in the last 12 months. Most of the respondents either mentioned that they preferred working, particularly men, or that remuneration was scarce or inexistent. Negative impacts on the career, or a negative impression from the employer, were also mentioned. There were also more women than men abandoning work due to family reasons. On the contrary, more men abandoned work due to study or training reasons.

Concerning the accommodation and food and beverage sectors, they are slightly more flexible than most other sectors, since more workers have the chance to change their daily work schedule due to family reasons in at least one daily hour (47.3% vs. 45.3% in the economy as a whole).

To sum up, women's professional lives tend to be more affected by family responsibilities. Lack of flexibility in the workplace and shortcomings in childcare services increase difficulties in conciliating work and family lives.

Characteristics of tourism employment, and how they might interfere in the conciliation between professional and family lives

The Employment Survey (2009) allows the characterisation of employment in the tourism field. It can be concluded that this sector is horizontally and vertically segregated, since women account for 60.1 per cent of its workers, but only for 41.1 per cent of its managers and executives. However, 81.8 per cent of the unskilled workers in this area are women.

Moreover, it is a sector with a high incidence of non-permanent contracts and hence with more precarious jobs. In addition, tourism workers work, on average, more hours (46 weekly hours) than workers elsewhere in the economy (40 hours on average). They also work more in 'unsocial' hours (weekends, nights, shiftwork) than workers in most other sectors. Moreover, salaries are below the national average and there is a marked gender pay gap, since women earn on average 26.3 per cent less than men.

This overload in working hours in paid work, combined with working outside 'normal' hours, higher precariousness of the contractual relationship and low salaries, is likely to complicate work-family conciliation for tourism workers, especially for female workers.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN THE WORKPLACE

The need to gender mainstream
Women have rising levels of education and constitute valuable human capital that might be under-utilised or lost. However, their professional development is compromised by the unequal split of household chores between men and women, since it leaves them with lack of time for their careers. Moreover, gender stereotypes and practices within corporate culture are also likely to create further obstacles to female careers.

There are other problems in the tourism sector. The higher amount of working hours, precariousness of contracts, higher incidence of work at weekends, nights and in shifts, along with lower-than-average salaries make work-life balance even more complicated, not only for women, but also for men. Furthermore, women hold the majority of higher education degrees in tourism studies in Portugal (GPEARI-MCTES, 2009), but men are the ones who occupy most top level positions in the tourism sector (INE, 2009).

In order to stimulate women's upward mobility and keep highly qualified women in the tourism field, action has to be taken (Biehl and Kaske, 2006). Given that tourism is a labour intensive industry, quality tourism can only be achieved if its human resources are given the opportunity to develop their full potential.

Therefore, it is necessary that companies and organisations promote gender equality in the workplace. This process should imply moving beyond formal equality to question the status quo, the mainstream (European Commission, 2007). In order to promote gender equality a strategy was designed in the Fourth World Conference on Women. This strategy is based on gender mainstreaming and positive action measures (Rato, 2005). Gender mainstreaming concerns the assessment of implications and consequences, both for men and women, of all planned activities, such as legislation, programmes, measures, in all the domains and at all levels. This implies reorganisation, improvement, development and evaluation of all planning phases in all domains, so that gender inequalities are put an end to/ are not perpetuated.

It is also necessary that all the economic, political and social actors assume that men and women are equally important both for production and for reproduction, as well as to assure that they have the same rights both in the public and in the private sphere (Rêgo, 2008).

In order to promote gender equality coherently and effectively and to transform the status quo, the macro and the micro level should be intertwined. It is thus important to involve several actors in the gender mainstreaming process, so that actions can be more directed towards the transformation of institutions and society itself.

Since companies are the main employers of workers, their contribution and their action is essential, so that gender equality is promoted effectively. However, companies, especially small-sized ones, may lack the know-how and resources to promote gender equality by themselves. They may even not recognise the need to promote gender equality (Jordan, 1997). First of all, it is important to make company-owners aware of the benefits of gender equality in the workplace. Company-owners should also be informed about the measures for gender equality promotion that they can adopt. Then, it is necessary to involve several relevant stakeholders in a network aimed at promoting gender equality. The stakeholders of this network, as well as some of the actions that can be carried out by them, are presented in this section.

Economic reasons for gender equality promotion
It is important that companies be at the core of gender equality promotion. However, they may find that 'Gender equality', as well as 'Diversity' are part of a government agenda to get them to employ people they do not want or need (European Communities, 2009) and may thus not see any advantage in being involved in gender equality promotion. Other companies may be unaware that they are perpetuating gender inequalities in an indirect way (Jordan, 1997). Since the participation of companies is crucial if equality de facto is to be achieved, it is necessary to provide them with training, in order to make them aware of the existing inequalities and of direct and indirect ways of discriminating (Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006; Jordan, 1997). Moreover, it is necessary to convince employers that gender equality promotion is beneficial for their companies. For instance, improved gender equality in the workplace enlarges the 'pool of talent', allowing employers to recruit the best professionals in each field, regardless of their gender. Moreover gender equality may reduce labour turnover, and thus the costs of recruiting and training new professionals (Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006; Jordan, 1997).

In addition, if workers feel that their work-life balance needs are respected and that they are not discriminated against on the grounds of gender, they are more motivated and their creativity is encouraged. Work-related conflicts are also reduced and productivity increases, for instance, with the adjustment of working hours to the needs of workers, which avoids unjustified absences (Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006).

One of the aims of gender equality promotion should be the improvement of communication between workers and supervisors, as well as the enhancement of the company's image in the community. This should contribute to the promotion of the company products, an increase in their turnover, as well as the attraction of the best professionals (Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006; Guerreiro et al., 2006; Jordan, 1997; European Communities, 2009).

To sum up, gender equality policies are a set of good practices in the field of human resources management, an efficient marketing strategy, a competitive advantage, as well as a means of attracting and motivating employees (Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006).

How can companies support gender equality and improve their employees' work-life balance?

The Portuguese Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE, 2008) suggests that gender equality in companies can be promoted across the following dimensions:

1. Mission statement and company values

2. Staff recruitment and selection

3. Investment in human capital through education and training

4. Pay and career management

5. Social dialogue and participation of workers and organisations representing them

6. Dignity of women and men at work

7. Information, communication and image

8. Work/ family/ life balance

9. Maternity, paternity and family assistance protection

Within each of these dimensions, several important measures can be proposed. However, since the core of this study is work-life balance, preferential focus is given to measures in this field.

First of all, it is important to raise the gender awareness of company-owners, human resources managers and other workers. Then, it is important that companies support employees' work-life balance by improving their performance in the following areas: flexibilisation of the workplace and working hours; provision of infrastructures and services to support work-life balance; leaves for family care; recreational activities for children of workers; and healthcare (CITE, 2008).

Concerning flexibilisation of the workplace and working hours, several measures can be taken (Direcção-Geral do Emprego et. al, 2008; Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006):

• Job-sharing

• Flexible working hours

• Telework

• Accumulation of working hours over lifetime

• Informal flexibility

• Compression of the working week

• Part-time work

According to Donlevy and Silvera (2007), productivity increases in 30 per cent with telework. However, if it is not well managed, it can lead to isolation and lack of motivation from the employee. Moreover, flexibility should be equally granted to men and women, regardless of them being parents or not, otherwise discrimination is reinforced (Donlevy and Silvera, 2007; Parrett, n.d.). Moreover work should be oriented towards the accomplishment of goals, instead of the compliance with strict working hours (Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006).

Infrastructures and services to support work-life balance are also useful, such as childcare services within the company, protocols with childcare providing institutions, a company canteen accessible to the children of workers or a room where children can stay outside school hours to play or study (Donlevy and Silvera, 2007; Guerreiro and al., 2006; Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006; Parrett, n.d.). Training should occur within working hours, so that all workers can attend it without worries about their children (Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006). If that is not possible, babysitting can be provided in order to allow parents to attend training programmes outside normal working hours (Donlevy and Silvera, 2007).

Extended maternity and paternity leaves and the creation of other leaves for family care are other best practices identified by Guerreiro and Pereira (2006). Other best practices mentioned in the literature are the provision of recreational activities for children of workers, as well as healthcare within the organisation, ideally extendable to the workers' family members (CITE, 2008; Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006).

If employees are allowed to advance in their careers even when on maternity or paternity leave they will feel encouraged and thus increasingly motivated. The same will happen, if they do not lose any fixed or variable remuneration, such as bonuses, due to absences for family reasons (Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006).

Several authors emphasise the importance of formalising this kind of procedures, since informality allows for the perpetuation of discriminatory practices within companies (Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006; Jordan, 1997). Therefore companies could prepare written equal opportunities policies, organise and distribute a handbook for equality in the tourism sector among their workers, as well as a gender equality plan (Donlevy and Silvera, 2007; European Commission, 2007; Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006).

Jordan (1997) studied several tourism companies and found out that most managers believed gender equality to be embodied in their companies and thus that written equal opportunities policies were useless. However, Jordan (1997) found out that it was precisely in these companies that men dominated in management positions and, even where there were female managers, they were concentrated in typically female areas, such as marketing and sales. Even though formalisation is in itself not enough to promote gender equality, it fosters a feeling of trust and stimulates a change in attitudes (Jordan, 1997).

As analysed before, these actions have several economic and ethical advantages. Nevertheless the tourism sector is dominated by small-sized and family-owned

companies, which can have difficulties in accessing the necessary funds and know-how to carry out the described actions (Costa, 2005). These restrictions can be overcome with the formation of networks that allow for the sharing of resources and know-how, as will be analysed in the following section.

The role of networks in gender equality promotion

It was analysed previously that companies play an important role in gender equality promotion. However, most companies also face limitations that hinder them from promoting gender equality and work-life balance properly.

Therefore it is necessary to support companies, so that they can overcome their limitations. Networking can be an important step towards this aim, since it enables the sharing of information between the stakeholders, the optimal use of resources, along with the implementation of more effective and coordinated actions towards gender equality promotion. Besides, best practices carried out by one of the stakeholders can be disseminated more quickly throughout the network towards all the other partners. Partnerships should also increase the commitment of stakeholders in promoting gender equality.

According to Scott et. al. (2008), networking and information exchange may render the stakeholders involved more dynamic, innovative and competitive, particularly if the cooperation established between these stakeholders is extended to other fields also important for the companies.

Concerning the question of which stakeholders should be included in such a network aiming at gender equality promotion, Hemmati (2000) suggests the inclusion of companies, national and local governmental entities, tourism offices, tourism associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In the present study, the integration of the following actors is suggested: companies, the State and other governmental entities, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, tourism industry associations, research centres, as well as tourists and the local community. In the next sections a set of actions to be carried out by each of these stakeholders is put forward. These measures concern not just work-life balance, but gender equality promotion in general.

The role of the State and governmental entities

The public sector is frequently characterized as excessively rigid, bureaucratic and not particularly innovative (Costa, 1996; Hall and Williams, 2008). However, the state might play a very important role in the promotion of gender equality in the workplace, especially in what concerns protecting interests during the decision-making process. It can also play a very important role in the implementation of the following measures (Donlevy and Silvera, 2007; Hemmati, 2000; Parrett, s.d.):

- Creating infrastructures for family support (childcare and elderly care services);

- Promoting awareness-raising actions on gender issues and the necessity of degendering the public and the private sphere;

- Promoting tourism without resorting to stereotyped images of men and women;

- Issuing laws that stimulate companies to actively promote gender equality in the workplace, e.g. by enforcing companies with more than ten employees to develop an action plan for gender mainstreaming, as it is the case of Sweden;

- Encouraging female entrepreneurship;

- Offering consulting services on gender equality promotion for companies and other organisations;

- Supporting NGOs;

- Encouraging organisations to adopt and develop best practices in the field of gender equality;

- Funding research centres and innovation processes aiming at creating methodologies and management models that favour gender equality;

- Disseminating statistical information;

- Training women and men in occupations not typical for their gender.

The role of trade unions

Trade unions should play an important role in gender equality promotion since they establish a bridge between companies, the government and the workforce. However, trade unions, whose aim is to improve the working conditions of employees, are often not aware enough for this matter and lack appropriate training to intervene in this field.

Since most top-level positions within trade unions are filled by men, union representatives should be trained in order to foster gender equality within their trade unions and their own companies, as well as to include it adequately in collective bargaining (Donlevy and Silvera, 2007).

They can also play an important role in creating and disseminating guides for gender equality at work, assessing the needs of the workers and the constraints of companies and organisations, as well as informing the other stakeholders about these limitations (Donlevy and Silvera, 2007).

The role of non-governmental organisations

NGOs are also fundamental for women's empowerment, particularly in developing countries (Dunn, 2007). Rao (2005) defined empowerment as the gaining of equal access and control over resources, and the access to decision by the individual, which is only possible if economic independence is guaranteed.

Costa (1996) and Hemmati (2000) mention the peripheral role of NGOs and non-profit organisations in decision-making processes, particularly in tourism networks (Costa, 1996) and highlight the importance of giving them a more central role. However, these organisations can have a major contribution for these partnerships by:

- Disseminating existing support structures to peripheral and disadvantaged groups, such as immigrant or handicapped women, thus contributing for their integration (Donlevy and Silvera, 2007);

- Designing and coordinating gender awareness and training programmes (Hemmati, 2000);

- Collecting and sharing best practices for gender equality with the other stakeholders;

- Promoting sessions on how to balance work and family lives and stimulating participants to share their experiences;

- Offering consulting services on gender equality promotion and legal assistance for companies and other organisations;

- Informing and helping women with the procedures for the creation of their own employment or with the procedures to follow in the case of discrimination in the workplace.

The role of tourism industry associations
Tourism industry associations are important due to their connection to tourism companies. They have direct knowledge of the reality of the sector, as well as direct contacts with companies operating in it. They can thus contribute to adapt to the tourism sector models and measures that are used to promote gender equality in other sectors.

Moreover, they can disseminate best practices adopted specifically by tourism companies (Hemmati, 2000), as well as promote the adoption of a code of ethics and a handbook for tourism employment that support the adoption of measures for promoting gender equality, as well as provide guidelines on how to implement them. Parrett (n.d.) also mentions the creation of a centralised service containing information about training opportunities, trainers and funding for tourism companies, since due to the multidisciplinarity of the sector these opportunities are frequently scattered.

The role of research centres
Research centres can give an important contribution for these networks too; however, their role is not frequently referred to in the literature. In Portugal, several multi-stakeholder projects on gender equality have involved research centres (CESIS, 2008; CITE, 2008; Guerreiro and Pereira, 2006). This confirms the importance of the know-how retained by these entities.

These institutions can develop diagnostic studies, establish and monitor the implementation of

management models, as well as develop tools that allow companies to promote gender equality more effectively. They can also offer advice to companies on gender issues. Therefore, the required resources have to be allocated to fund these institutions.

Finally, networking is important, so that the results obtained by these research centres can be disseminated and other stakeholders can benefit from the results achieved, as well as apply them. Thus research developed by these organisations can have a positive impact on society. Therefore, networking is also a good way of intertwining theory and practice for the benefit of society.

The role of tourists and of the community
According to Hemmati (2000), the participation of local communities as stakeholders does not seem to be actively supported by tourism boards and government departments. However, local community should have a say in the decision-making process, as well as play an active role in gender equality promotion.

Both the local community and the tourists should favour companies that adopt socially responsible measures, as well as measures that stimulate gender equality in the workplace. In addition, they should avoid companies that use stereotypical images of women, namely the ones that portray local women in an unrealistic manner (Hemmati, 2000).

CONCLUSION
This study aimed at putting forward strategies for supporting work-life balance and gender equality at work in general. Special focus was given to the situation of Portuguese tourism workers and companies.

In the first section, obstacles to the conciliation between work and family lives were examined. Despite women's growing presence in the labour market and in the public sphere, the tasks within the household are not yet equally split between men and women. Since women spend much more time than men performing chores such as cleaning, cooking or taking care of children or dependent relatives, they have less time for themselves and for their career. Moreover, they are also regarded by their employers as less available, which has negative consequences for their upward mobility. The lack of adequate childcare services further complicates this situation.

From the analysis of the databases it was possible to conclude that the share of household tasks performed by women by far surpasses that of men. Moreover, family responsibilities tend to interfere more with women's than men's professional lives, leading women to be absent from work more frequently than men. Tourism workers are supposed to deal with further obstacles, since they have more working hours than most other workers, have lower salaries and more precarious contracts. They also tend to work outside 'regular' hours, leading to further difficulties in conciliating their working hours with the opening hours of childcare services.

These difficulties in balancing work and family lives, which are specially felt by women, point at the importance of gender mainstreaming and strategies that, in supporting the conciliation between work and family, influence positively women's vertical mobility. Companies should play a key role in gender mainstreaming, since they deal directly with employees. It is necessary to make them aware of gender issues, as well as of the ethical and economic advantages of promoting gender equality.

Several dimensions across which companies can promote gender equality were proposed (CITE, 2008). However, focus was given to measures enhancing work-life balance. These measures concern the following areas: flexibilisation of the workplace and working hours; provision of infrastructures and services to support work-life balance; leaves for family care; recreational activities for children of workers; and healthcare. The importance of formalisation in preventing gender discrimination was highlighted.

Nonetheless, companies should be supported so that they can have the necessary means to carry out the measures proposed. Therefore, the formation of a network involving several stakeholders was put forward. This network could help the companies with the provision of know-how and the sharing of resources. Moreover, they could increase the innovativeness and competitiveness of the companies involved, in particular if synergies between the partners are extended to other areas besides gender mainstreaming.

Notes

1 Accommodation services; food- and beverage- serving services; passenger transportation services; travel agency, tour operator and tourist guide services; cultural services; recreation and other entertainment services; and miscellaneous tourism services (OECD et al., 2001).

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Conference programme 24-26 November 2010

Wednesday November 24 th
18.00   Welcome reception, Östergötland County Museum

Thursday November 25th
09.00 - 10.30   Registration and Coffee

10.30 – 11.00   Conference opening and welcome speech by Rector Mille Millnert,
                 Linköping University

11.00 – 11.30   Key Note I, Viviane Reding

11.30 – 12.30   Key Note II, Mieke Verloo: Stretching and bending gender and equality
                 in a changing Europe

12.30 – 13.30   LUNCH and coffee

13.30 – 14.30   Key Note III, Tryggvi Hallgrimsson: Groupthink and Growth: A culture of failure

14.30 – 17.30   Parallel papersessions and workshops with coffee break

 19.30   Conference dinner & entertainment at Linköping Konsert & Kongress

Friday November 26th
9 .00 – 10.00   Parallel papersessions and workshops

10.00 – 10.15   Coffee

10.15 - 11.30   Parallel papersessions and workshops

11.30 – 12.30   Key Note IV, Jeff Hearn: Equality, Growth, Sustainability: Adding Some More
                 Missing Ingredients to the Mixture

12.30 – 13.30   LUNCH

13.30 – 14.45   Concluding panel discussion: Malin Rönnblom, moderator, Kolbeinn Stefánsson,
                 Mieke Verloo and Mustafa Özbilgin

 14.45 – 15.00   Conference summary and Coffee to go

Organising committee

Forum for Gender Studies and Equality, Linköping University:
Stina Backman, Academic Coordinator
Anna Fogelberg Eriksson, Head of Centre
Elisabeth Samuelsson, Coordinator

Scientific committee

Jeff Hearn, Professor, Tema Genus, Linköping University
Anita Göransson, Professor, Tema Genus, Linköping University
Nina Lykke, Professor, Tema Genus, Linköping University
Elisabeth Sundin, Professor, IEI/Helix Vinn Excellence Centre, Linköping University
Ulf Mellström, Professor, Department of Human Work Sciences, Luleå University of Technology

Papersessions and Workshops

THURSDAY

PAPERSESSIONS

- Gender perspectives on innovation system in policy and practice.
  Session organizer: Ewa Gunnarsson, Luleå University of Technology and
  Jennie Granat Thorslund, Vinnova

- Sustainable gender equality: How do we get there and what tools do we need?
  Session organizer: Marie Christine Taylor, KRUS and
  Anneli Häyrén Weinestål, Uppsala University.

- Entrepreneurship and gender mainstreaming.
  Session organizer: Elisabeth Sundin, Linköping University

- Gender, Sustainability & Climate Change.
  Session organizer: Måns S. Andersson, Linköping University

- Creating sustainability an interplay of top-down steering and bottom-up activities. Session
  organizer: Helena Olofsdotter Stensöta, Linneaus University, Växjö and
  Elin Wihlborg, Linköping University

- Work-family balancing strategies - challenges to growth and sustainability.Session organizer:
  Anne Grönlund , Umeå University and Ida Öun, Umeå University

WORKSHOPS

- How can we combine gender mainstreaming and work against multiple discrimination?
  Organizer: Lina Nilsson, SKL

- Genderperspective on a sustainable development, a political challenge.
  Organizer: Esabelle Dingizian and Linnéa Engström Green party

- Gender mainstreaming in the making.
  Organizer: Anna Tengquist, Lennart Svensson och Ann-Charlotte Callerstig

- Forum Theatre on ”doing diversity”.
  Organizer: Katarina Olsson, Bettina Rother and Hanna Glans

FRIDAY

PAPERSESSIONS

- The impact of social institutions on gender equality in developing countries.
  Session organizer: Karen Barnes, OECD

- Gender issues in digital society.
  Session organizer: Irina Neaga, Loughborough University

- Is Gender Equality always Gender Equal?
  Session organizer: Marie Nordberg, Karlstad University

- How to facilitate /gender aware/ organizational innovations?
  Session organizer: Susanne Andersson, Stockholm University,
  Eva Amundsdotter, Luleå University of Technology, Marita Svensson, Fiber Optic Valley

WORKSHOP

- Sustainable growth – when everyone is included.
  Organizer: Jennie Granat Thorslund, Vinnova and Anna Tengquist, Thematic group on equality

- Gender and Growth.
  Organizer: Lars-Gunnar Larsson, Vinnväxt, Vinnova

- Diversity and Growth in Regional Development: an experimental workshop.
  Organizer: Mattias Hansson

- Forum Theatre on "doing diversity".
  Organizer: Katarina Olsson, Bettina Rother and Hanna Glans

- Women's Resource Centres Promoting Innovation in Gender Equality Across Europe
  Organizer:Malin Lindberg och Britt-Marie S Torstensson

- The Future of Gender Mainstreaming.
  Organizer: Annika Olsson JÄMI

- Gender and Rescue Service: A project on the Complexities and Paradoxes of Gender Equality
  Understanding and Implementation.
  Organizer: Ulf Mellström, Kristina Lindholm, Anne-Charlott Callerstig, Mathias Ericson,
  Jennie Olofsson, Katherine Harrison, Magnus Blondin

Keynote speakers

Tryggvi Hallgrimsson

Centre for Gender Equality, Iceland. He holds a postgraduate degree from the University of Tromsø, within the field of organization studies, with an emphasis on change management. Before joining the Centre for Gender Equality, he has taught research methods and sociology at the University of Akureyri, Iceland. As a researcher at the University of Akureyri Research Centre, his research and consultation has focused on both private and public organizations' work environments. He has been involved in putting forth suggestions about the perceived implications of the financial crisis' differing effects on men and women in Iceland. Working with gender mainstreaming, his attention has foremost centred on the relationship between public policy and response-challenges following the financial crisis.

Jeff Hearn

Professor in Gender Studies, Critical Studies on Men, Linköping University, Sweden; Professor in Management and Organisation, Hanken School of Economics, Finland; and Professor of Sociology, University of Huddersfield, UK. His recent books Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities (2005), European Perspectives on Men and Masculinities (2006); Sex, Violence and the Body (2008), and Managers Talk About Gender (2009). He is managing co-editor of Routledge Advances in Feminist Studies and Intersectionality. An elected UK Academician in the Social Sciences, he has worked extensively on studies of men, gender, sexuality, violence, organisations and management in Nordic, European and international projects, alongside long involvement in policy and practical interventions in equality issues.

Viviane Reding

Vice-President of the European Commission, Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship.

Mieke Verloo

She combines working as Professor of Comparative Politics and Inequality Issues at Radboud University Nijmegen with being the Scientific Director of QUING, a 6th Framework Project, at the IWM in Vienna, see www.quing.eu. She studied sociology and urban planning, and finished her dissertation in policy studies at the Radboud University Nijmegen. Among her recent publications are The Discursive Politics of Gender Equality. Stretching, Bending and Policy-Making. Routledge 2009 (co-edited with E. Lombardo and P.Meier); Displacement and Empowerment: Reflections on the Council of Europe approach to gender mainstreaming and gender equality, in Social Politics (2005) 12, 3: 344-366; and Multiple inequalities, intersectionality and the European Union. European Journal of Women's Studies, 13, 3:211-229.

Panellists – concluding panel discussion

Malin Rönnblom

Senior researcher at Umeå Center for Gender Studies, Umeå University. She has her PhD in Political Science from Umeå University and her main research interest is critical policy analysis, especially regarding gender equality policy, regional policy and growth policy. She has also recently started a research project on gender and the academy. Among her recent publications in English are 'Critical Studies of Gender Equalities: Nordic Dislocations, Dilemmas and Contradictions' (2008) with Eva Magnusson and Harriet Silius, and 'Bending towards growth: discursive constructions of gender equality in an era of governance and neoliberalism' (2009) in The discursive politics of gender equality: Stretching, bending and policymaking, ed by Lombardo et al. She is also the chair of the Swedish Association for Gender Studies and chief editor of NORA, Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research.

Kolbeinn Stefánsson

Sociologist at the University of Iceland, with expertise in equality research in Iceland. He is the Head of Research at EDDA, an interdisciplinary Center of Excellence in critical contemporary research, with special emphasis on equality and diversity; transnational politics and security; the social state; sustainability and development. His research interests include the welfare state, family policy, sociology of work and labour markets, the philosophy of social sciences and social change.

Mieke Verloo

Combines working as Professor of Comparative Politics and Inequality Issues at Radboud University Nijmegen with being the Scientific Director of QUING, a 6th Framework Project, at the IWM in Vienna.

Mustafa Özbilgin

Professor of Organisational Behaviour at Brunel Business School, Brunel University, London. He was previously a Professor of Human Resource Management at the Norwich Business School, University of East Anglia, England and editor-in-chief of the scientific journals, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Equal Opportunities International and British Journal of Management. Director, DECERe (Diversity and Equality in Careers and Employment Research). He researches in the field of equality, diversity and inclusion at work from interdisciplinary, international, and comparative perspectives. He has authored papers in journals such as the Academy of Management Review, Academy of Management Learning and Education, Human Resource Management, Journal of Vocational Behavior and Gender Work and Organization and research monographs, including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Work (Edward Elgar 2009) and Global Diversity Management (Palgrave 2008).

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