

Making a career in the gendered university

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Making a career in the gendered university

- Universities are gendered – how to tackle it as a female teacher/researcher?
 - Individual solutions
 - Boost self-confidence, learn to take place, make yourself noticed
 - Network
 - Find a mentor and/or a sponsor
 - Collective solutions
 - Make each other aware of gendered cultures and structures
 - Support each other
 - Find allies for change
 - Be strategic, look for opportunities



Individual or environment – the case of women's self-confidence

Self-promotion is important for making a career in the academy.
Sometimes it seems that women lack the self-confidence that is needed to put oneself forward

But how could you show assertive behaviour

- If you don't know that you're supposed to put yourself forward
- If you don't get positive feedback and encouragement
- If people don't tell you what arguments are useful and acceptable



I can't go around telling people what a fantastic researcher I am. Though my PI tells me that it is what I should do. He says that he never comes to think of me when a new project is coming around. He thinks that I should make sure I'm noticed. The guys get much more qualified tasks than I do. I guess it's because they are more pushing.



Self-confidence, esteem, efficacy

impostor syndrome ⇔ feeling of entitlement

women's belief in work well done ⇔ careerist masculinity

"I haven't read this proposal but I still have to say that..."

Men speak from a status position

"I don't think that I've quite understood this proposal, but..."

Women mitigate their knowledge



Men seem to have more ambition

Men seem to be more excellent

=> Men are favoured when meriting tasks are distributed

Networks

- Networks are essential for career: information, opportunities, visibility, promotion
 - The more visible you are, the more successful you are perceived to be.
 - "Top women" refer to networks as an explanation to their success
- Networking is natural for men, an intricate "job" for women
 - Homosociality - Keeping to your own sex – comfortable and safe
 - Heterosociality - Socialising with both sexes – often more problematic but necessary for women
- The male dominated locations in which networking takes place are often difficult for women to access.
- Women take care of the family while men network



Networks, mentors and sponsors

- Sponsors: Make you visible, open doors
 - E.g. senior researchers, administrators, collaborators at other universities
- Mentors: Give you advice, teach you about the academic paths
 - E.g. your advisors, other senior researchers
- Networks: Other people who help you to reach your goals in your professional life
 - Give you support (emotional, practical)
 - E.g. your peers, people in the same research area, people who you met in conferences
 - Private networks

To use the benefits of networks, mentors and sponsors

- Tend the contacts you have who are valuable to you
- Actively make new contacts
 - At your university – maybe outside your department, people in the administration etc
 - Nationally – actively look for people to collaborate with, to write funding applications, publications etc
 - Internationally – in conferences, PhD courses, but also by approaching by e-mail etc
- Look out for mentoring programmes



Becoming aware: The 3 R method



Representation

Which persons perform which tasks, have which positions, in which rooms with which tools

Resources

Who gets money (salaries, grants), time, information, competence development

Realia (representation + resources=>gendered effects)

Are there gender patterns, gender norms, gender advantages, gendered influence when it comes to representation and resources?

Mapping the present situation

- Who does what?
- Who is where?
- Who uses which tools?
- What associations are connected to the different tasks, locations and tools?
- To which extent can men and women change their tasks, locations and tools?
- Who gets which competence development?
- How are salaries set and how does the practice affect different groups of employees?



Use the data for awareness raising

Raise awareness about the situation among different stakeholders

Students and staff

Leadership

(media)

other strategic groups



Find allies who see the problem that data shows

Solid data on inequalities is the best start for demanding changes

Meetings - an important arena for equality

**Important decisions, influencing both women and men, are made in meetings =>
Both women's and men's voices need to be heard**

- Inequal meeting patterns reproduce inequality in the organization
- Observing meetings reveals gender patterns in interaction between different groups in the organization
- Working with more inclusive meeting cultures has repercussions on
gender relations outside meetings
A fact that makes it not always so easy
- More inclusive meetings might also be more effective...



Family matters

- Practical matters: Finding the time and energy
- Psychological matters: Double bind
 - At work, women researchers are judged as scientists, in the society they are judged as mothers



Individual solutions:

Marry wisely, get help, listen to your passions

Collective solutions: together we can

show that having children does not decrease your intelligence

discuss issues such as that men have children, too

suggest and demand support for combining work and family

Making a career in a gendered university as a woman

- ... is a challenge
- but others have done it before, (almost) all over the world
- is becoming easier
- is important for the future of science, our societies and our world

