

Women in Higher Education and Research in Finland

Two steps forward, one step back

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The big picture

- Official statistics
 - Look good for Finnish women
 - Women's position 2nd best in the world (after Iceland), all Nordic countries in top positions (World Economic Forum)
 - The gap between the two genders smallest in terms of education and health less so in economic terms
 - In the academia
 - The female professor's Euro is worth 96 cents (the average for women is 86.4 cents)

However,

- A Nordic study shows that
 - Gender segregation in academia very prominent
 - The Nordic research community clearly male-dominated at the higher levels
 - Overall, nearly 80% of professors are male in the Nordic countries
 - In Finland, currently the share of female professors is about 25%.
Examples
 - At the Technical University of Tampere 94% of professors are male and only 6% women
 - At the University of Tampere – “my university”, the share of women professors is 38%

Segregation between fields – what do the student populations look like?

- Why such a big difference between two universities in the same city?
 - Engineering fields – overwhelmingly male-dominated
 - Information sciences – more men than women
 - Medicine and life sciences – a good gender balance
 - Humanities, social sciences, education – female-dominated

Entrance to Higher Education

- OECD Survey

All European OECD countries covered by the analysis, coming from a higher educated family (*i.e. a father with a tertiary degree*) increases the probability of achieving tertiary education relative to having a medium parental educational background

Mobility in earnings, wages and education across generations is relatively low in France, southern European countries, the United Kingdom and the United States. By contrast, **such mobility tends to be higher in Australia, Canada and the Nordic countries.**

Is gender balance a norm now?

- One female president does not guarantee that there will be a second one
- One hole in the glass ceiling
 - can make us complacent
 - may lead us to think that the problem is solved
- We still need to appoint both male and female candidates for different positions and monitor the results

“Men think that women are equal” - Gender balance in Finland

- One female president of the country does not have a long-term effect
- One female rector or professor in natural sciences does not change the situation
 - Hard competition in academia favours men
 - Women carry the responsibility for childcare
- Men appoint men (unawareness of hidden motives)
- Gender balance is not yet reality
 - Equality improves and weakens in waves
 - The current mood in Finland does not contribute to equality
 - Leading politicians are male and women politicians play a minor role, eg in ministerial roles - “quota women”

What is competence?

In our collective mindsets we tend to think that

- after affirmative action has highlighted inequality and women have been appointed to high positions, we can now go back to the old competence criteria
- we can now appoint men freely, because in previous cases women got the jobs because of affirmative action not because they were more competent
- We can soon get back to business as usual

Should equality still be a criterion and is competence a clearly definable criterion?

- Yes
 - Equality does not disappear as a criterion when more women are appointed to top positions
- Can competence be defined in absolute terms?
- No
 - There is more than one road to competence
 - Women's career structures are different from those of men

Do the same criteria make men and women equal as job applicants?

- Partly true
 - but biological factors and societal pressures make career moves and their timing different
 - Competence criteria need to be relativized to a degree
- Competence criteria are already often age- or experience- related but they also need to be gender-related

Systemic issues in the academia

- Marginalization starts early
 - In top research jobs
 - Women 's careers start later and this is often reflected in their position and salaries throughout their working lives
- There is still too little support for women to encourage them to seek leadership positions
- There are too few women's networks to promote women in the academia

Systemic issues in the academia

- It is claimed that women have equal opportunities but they are not capable of utilizing them
- Recruitment processes often recognize the need to promote equal opportunity but make it impossible in practice

All male panel discussing “female dominance in Danish literature” on the TV show. From <http://allmalepanels.tumblr.com>

