



Gender, Work and Organization  
10th Biennial International Interdisciplinary Conference  
Sydney, 13-16 June 2018

## **Beyond the glass ceiling? Women professors between recognition and marginalization**

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Despite remarkable improvements over the last few years, women are still numerically underrepresented within academia, particularly when it comes to full professorship and academic leadership positions (European Commission 2016; Morley 2014). Perhaps more significantly, studies show that women have a weaker position even within the same level of qualification. Publications by women are cited less often than those written by men (Larivière et al. 2013), and women are more likely to hold short-term employment contracts (European Commission 2016; Wolfinger et al. 2009). According to a study in Germany, supervisors and other gatekeepers see female PhD students and post docs as less prepared for academic careers than their male counterparts (Kahlert 2013 & 2013a). Altogether, women in academia statistically have a lower status than their male colleagues. To date, a solid body of both quantitative and qualitative studies on the academic field is available. However, existing studies on academic careers and gender generally focus on the PhD and post doc levels, whereas the situation of women with (full) professorships has been largely neglected (with some significant exceptions).

On a descriptive level, statistics reveal not only a horizontal segregation between disciplines (with fewer women in the STEM disciplines and more women within social sciences and the humanities), but also a vertical segregation (with mainly men as representatives in the highest ranks of full professorship and leadership positions) (e.g. Jüttemann 2015; Morley 2013; Ruschenburg et.al 2011, Silander et al. 2013). In search of an explanation, researchers have studied structural as well as culturally-induced aspects, power relations as well as everyday practices (Beaufaÿs & Kraiss 2005; Engler 2000; Kraiss 2012). It has been argued that the idea of the scholar is inherently coded as male, which works as an excluding mechanism for women to become 'natural' participants

in the academic game, inevitably marking women either as outsiders or as only marginal actors. Similarly, researchers have analyzed narratives of legitimate academic life and have identified such narratives as elements in a highly selective social process, which is also formative in the making of the academic subject (Beaufaÿs 2015; Paulitz 2012a). Studies situated within the sociology and history of science with respect to gender trace the inherently gendered construction of science and of the scientist in its historic development (Daston 2003; Paulitz 2012) as well as its gendered reproduction in contemporary daily practices (e.g. Rolin & Vainio 2011). Furthermore, both the discursive co-constructions of the male-coded subject positions and their respective research areas (Paulitz 2012, Paulitz/Kink/Prietl 2015) as well as the culturally-formed and highly gendered construction of excellence have been revealed (van den Brink & Benschop 2011).

Another group of studies focuses on organizational and systemic aspects, e.g. the understanding of universities as social fields of power organized by both formal and informal rules and shaping a specific gender order (Hofbauer 2012); the cultural narratives in the organization ascribing care work to women in the field (Paulitz/Goisauf/Zapusek 2015); the structural and organizational aspects supporting or discouraging women to aim for an academic career and/or reconciling the latter with starting a family (e.g. Armenti 2004; Jacob & Winslow 2004; Wolfinger et.al 2013); or issues related to leadership positions and networks (Sağlamer 2013).

Furthermore, feminist theory and movements in the 1980s and 1990s claimed that the inclusion of women in the academy would stimulate a change of the whole system in regard to the topics, methods, and not least cultures of academic institutions. Indeed, both the number of women in the academic system did increase and gender studies (as an offspring of feminist movements) has currently reached a historically unique stage of establishment across different disciplines (e.g. Becker-Schmidt/Kriszio/Hoffmann 1994). Whether the presence of women has also changed academic cultures is not yet known.

While gender in the field of academia seems to be a fairly well-researched topic, little is known so far about how women professors experience the academic struggles for prestigious positions within the field. What is their position within academia when they become established and thus have managed to move beyond the glass ceiling?

Based on this leading question, we invite contributions that help to fill the gap with case studies and/or theoretical reflections from different national contexts, with respect to various disciplines, theoretical angles, and different kinds of academic institutions (all kinds of “universities”/institutions of higher education as well as research organizations in the respective nation states). In this spirit, we invite both theoretical and theoretically-informed empirical contributions that include but are not limited to the following questions:

- Which power mechanisms hinder women from climbing up the career ladder in universities and research organizations after they have reached positions that include the promise to be a serious player in the power games?

- How do women professors face organizational and/or more informal mechanisms of marginalization?
- What are their strategies to cope with marginalization and/or to mobilize resources in order to gain recognition, become a powerful player, and meaningfully participate in shaping the academia (and to effect organizational change)?
- Which gendered practices in the construction of scientific excellence can be identified that legitimate inequality in academic leadership?
- Through which mechanisms do different national academic systems support women in attaining tenure, becoming visible, and moving up to academic leadership positions?

We conceive of this conference stream as an opportunity to open the discussion to a broader international perspective and therefore invite contributions that already take on a comparative perspective as well as by bringing together single case studies. Finally, we hope that the stream provides a point of departure for further collaborations.

The stream will select suitable papers for a special issue proposal of the Gender, Work and Organization journal.

For submission details go to: [www.mq.edu.au/events/gwosydney](http://www.mq.edu.au/events/gwosydney)

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