

ESA RN19 Sociology of Professions Conference

Leadership Programmes as Gendered Professional Projects: Empowering Women in Swedish and UK Higher Education

Presenters: Sarah Barnard (Loughborough University, UK) and Helen Peterson (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)





WHEM

Women in Higher Education
Management Network

Key message

The comparative analysis of **women's leadership programmes** in Sweden and the UK show **evidence of success** in supporting and encouraging women to pursue senior academic and professional services management positions through professionalization strategies that **made leadership careers accessible and attractive to women** via values-led approaches to leadership. These leadership programmes **could thus be understood as 'inclusionary usurpation' strategies**, used in order to challenge the previous male monopoly of academic management positions.



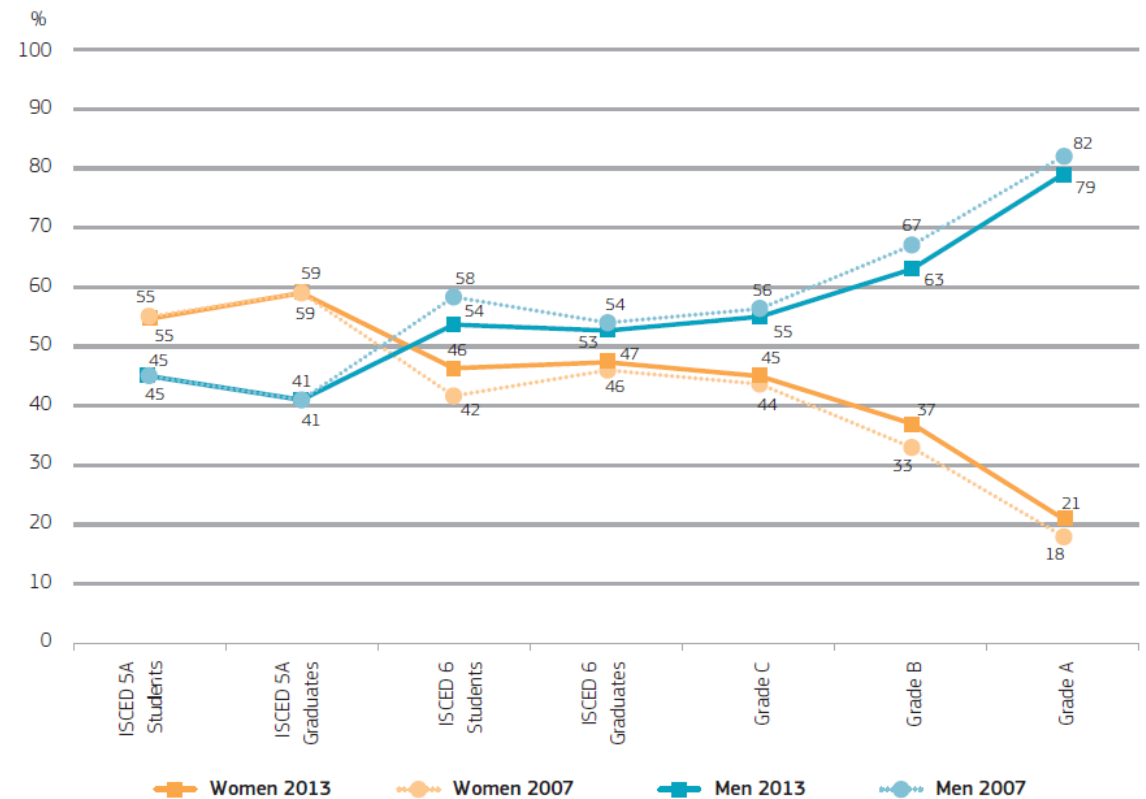
WHEM

Women in Higher Education
Management Network

Introduction

- The problem of too few women leaders in HE
- Leadership concepts and leadership in HE

Figure 6.1. Proportion of women and men in a typical academic career, students and academic staff, EU-28, 2007–2013



Notes: Reference years Eurostat data: 2007–2012; Reference years for Women in Science (WIS) data: 2007–2013; Exceptions to the reference years (WIS): AT: 2007–2011; BE (FR), LV, RO: 2010–2013; CY, PT: 2007–2012; DK, LU (Grade A and B, C not available): 2009–2013; ES, IE: 2008–2012; BE (FL), NL, FI: 2011–2013; PL, SK: 2012–2013; FR: 2012; HR: 2014; MT: 2015; EE: 2004 (She Figures 2012); LT: 2007 (She Figures 2012); UK: 2006 (She Figures 2012); Data unavailable for: (Eurostat) ISCED 5A Students: LU (2007); ISCED 5A Graduates: FR (2012), LU (2007); ISCED 6 Students: DE (2007), LU (2007); ISCED 6 Graduates: FR (2012), LU (2007).

Source: Women in Science database, DG Research and Innovation and Eurostat – Education Statistics (online data code: educ_grad5)



WHEM

Women in Higher Education
Management Network

Methodology

- Curriculum analysis of leadership programmes
- Programme evaluations
- Empirical data collected with participants/non-participants
- Comparative analysis of definitions, assumptions, strategies and goals





WHEM

Women in Higher Education
Management Network

Inclusionary Usurpation Strategies?

“A gendered strategy of inclusionary usurpation describes the ways whereby women, who are hit by gendered strategies of exclusion, do not simply acquiesce in the face of patriarchal closure practices, but **challenge a male monopoly over competence**. They seek to be included in a structure of positions from which they are excluded on account of their gender. It is usurpationary because it is a countervailing strategy, in tension with an exclusionary strategy. It is an inclusionary strategy of usurpation because it seeks to replace gendered collectivist criteria of exclusion with non-gendered individualist criteria of inclusion.”

Anne Witz (1992) Professions and Patriarchy



WHEM
Women in Higher Education
Management Network

Leadership programme in Sweden - overview

- Name: IDAS - Identification Development Advancement Support
- Continuation and scope: National leadership development project between 1999-2010
- Concept: “imported” from the USA by one of the first women VCs
- Vision: to make sure women qualify for senior academic positions such as VC
- Curriculum: seminars, invited lecturers, networking
- Participants: over 70 women academics
- Results: majority of women VCs today have participated in IDAS



Leadership programme in Sweden – programme descriptions

- “Inclusionary usurpation strategies” used:
 - Identifying competent women and building a bank of women candidates
 - Developing a leadership programme that will educate women about what a VC does and provide them with the knowledge needed
 - Building models for individual support to encourage women to put themselves forth as candidates for VCs positions
 - Focus shifted from individual support for women to the structures for academic leadership and providing the academia with competent leaders



WHEM

Women in Higher Education
Management Network

Leadership programme in Sweden – voices of the participants

- **Praise:**

- *“The support provided in IDAS was so important for women. Many don’t dare to speak about their career ambitions in the way men do”. (VC 1)*
- *“I believe that the IDAS project and networks like that are excellent efficient instruments to increase the number of women”. (VC 2)*
- *“I was a part of IDAS – because I’m a feminist!” (VC 3)*
- *“The IDAS programme meant that women were seen as potential academic leaders”. (VC 5)*
- *“The reason Sweden has so many women VCs is IDAS. It meant that people became aware of all the qualified and competence women out there. They could no longer ignore them”. (VC 6)*

- **Criticism:**

- *“I’m critical to women-only groups. I don’t think women should be isolated like that. Women-only networks tend to focus too much on whining about men.” (VC 7)*



WHEM
Women in Higher Education
Management Network

Leadership programme in the UK – overview

- Name: Aurora
- Continuation and scope: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education 2013/14 – 2018/19
- Concept: Developed by LF
- Vision: To help women influence institutions and develop skills
- Curriculum: day workshops with networking, action learning sets, mentors, role models
- Participants: over two thousand so far
- Results: Being evaluated by LF and funded research



WHEM
Women in Higher Education
Management Network

Leadership programme in the UK - descriptions

- “Inclusionary usurpation strategies” used:
 - Identifying potential leaders at early career stage through self-identification/ internal competitions
 - Developing a leadership programme that provides a forum for women to consider different models of leadership
 - Using action learning as a model for women to address challenges
 - Building networks of women at early and mid career stage with intentions of leadership



Leadership programme in the UK – voices of women

- Praise:

- *'Aurora was not what I expected it to be. It was better. It was a transformative experience that encouraged me to reflect on myself, my career and my aims in a way I would not have without the programme. I feel more confident and clearer with regards to what I want from my career and for myself. I will certainly be recommending the programme to colleagues'*
- *'I never thought when it started that I would apply for senior posts and feel so empowered. I've had two senior post interviews since March and am applying for two more currently.'*

- Criticism:

- In our survey there was some feeling that Aurora focussed too much on problems, individual responsibility and gave insufficient recognition to structural barriers, powerful groups, and the HE and the institutional landscape.



WHEM

Women in Higher Education
Management Network

Comparative Analysis – tentative thoughts

- Similarities and differences between the programmes
- In what ways can these programmes be understood as ‘inclusionary usurpation’ strategies?
- Just how ‘usurpury’ are they?





WHEM

Women in Higher Education
Management Network

Discussion

- Tensions of 'women's leadership programmes' in terms of participation and in terms of the content and approach
- Any similar comparative research?





WHEM

Women in Higher Education
Management Network

Concluding remarks

- Curriculum content shows a range of approaches to encourage women to consider and have success in going for leadership roles
- Evaluations and participants themselves indicate successes in promoting women's careers in HE
- Comparison shows evidence of similarities in approach, despite differences
 - Question of how inclusionary women-only programmes can be?
 - How such programmes 'do or undo' gender?



WHEM

Women in Higher Education
Management Network

Key message

The comparative analysis of **women's leadership programmes** in Sweden and the UK show **evidence of success** in supporting and encouraging women to pursue senior academic and professional services management positions through professionalization strategies that **made leadership careers accessible and attractive to women** via values-led approaches to leadership. These leadership programmes **could thus be understood as 'inclusionary usurpation' strategies**, used in order to challenge the previous male monopoly of academic management positions.



WHEM

Women in Higher Education
Management Network



- Forthcoming report publication: Barnard et al. (2016) 'Onwards and upwards? Tracking women's careers in higher education: Year 1 report', see <http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/en/programmes-events/programmes/women-only/aurora/the-longitudinal-study/index.cfm>, or email S.H.Barnard@lboro.ac.uk for more information

ESA RN19 Sociology of Professions Conference

Leadership Programmes as Gendered Professional Projects: Empowering Women in Swedish and UK Higher Education

Presenters: Sarah Barnard (Loughborough University, UK) and Helen Peterson (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)

