Global Network of UNESCO Chairs on Gender

Collaboration, communication and innovation in gender research and practices

Gender Perspectives in Case Studies Across Continents: Volume II

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Foreword by Saniye Gülser Corat and
Afterword by Gloria Bonder

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Foreword

by Saniye Gülser Corat

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After the success of the first E-book on *Gender Perspectives in Case Studies across Continents* published a year ago through the collaborative effort of UNESCO Chairs on Gender, Co-Edited by Gloria Bonder and Brenda Gael McSweeney, I am thrilled to introduce the series' second edition coordinated by Brenda. Once again, the case studies presented in this volume come from all parts of the world, demonstrating the pervasive and transnational dimensions of gender inequality. We are reminded again that in all four corners of the world and in all walks of life, further efforts need to be made to achieve gender equality.

UNESCO's commitment to gender equality is global and purposive. We believe that gender equality is a fundamental human right and it is a necessary condition for the achievement of internationally agreed development objectives. We are aware of the positive ripple effect it has on fostering development and addressing poverty. We also believe that it is an objective in and of itself.

For all these reasons, gender equality has been renewed as one of UNESCO's two global priorities – along with Africa – for the new medium-term strategy period of 2014-2021. Our work, detailed in the second Gender Equality Action Plan, will focus on four key themes: developing training capacities and research through systematic collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data; preventing gender-based violence; promoting positive gender images; and developing capacity for women's leadership.

It is striking to see how strongly those four themes echo with the case studies compiled in this second volume. Indeed, the first part of the E-book, entitled "Women and Education", contains a case study about the male-dominated tertiary education system in Cyprus based on quantitative and qualitative approaches, stressing the need to deconstruct gender stereotypes. The same theme is also explored by the case study on the results girls obtain in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields in secondary education and university level in Burkina Faso, which appear to be severely limited by gender-biased attitudes and low quality teacher training.

In the second part of the volume, "Livelihoods and Political Voice", two case studies conducted in Ireland and Poland deal with the low political representation of women in national institutions. One of the case studies examines the factors that caused a wide gender disparity in Ireland and offers some suggestions to address the issue, while the second case study questions the continuous marginalization of women from decision-making processes in spite of the on-going transformation of Polish society. The case study about women beekeepers in Iran highlights another aspect of women's

marginalization, the lack of entrepreneurship skills that along with socio-cultural norms, led to the failure of an interesting microfinance project.

"Confronting Domination", the third part of the E-book, gathers two case studies that have one thing in common: women's struggle and pathways to empowerment. The case study in India shows the paradoxical situation of "nachni" women who suffer from social exclusion and exploitative authority while the traditional art and dances they perform are highly regarded. Using photography as a medium, another case study in Burkina Faso depicts how women's roles and rights have evolved during the past forty years.

The fourth and final part of the E-book, "Activism Across the Decades", presents inspiring and successful examples of women's rights militancy from the 1970s until today. The case study by Margaret Snyder, the founding Director of UNIFEM, tells the story of how the first UN regional center for women was founded in Africa thanks to solid organization and avant-garde approaches.

The case study about the women's rights movement in India in the 1970s also questions organizational choices. In particular, the author examines the *Emergency* period leading to a bifurcation of activists into politically and non-politically affiliated, and how this influenced their contrasting *modus operandi* towards women's empowerment. Finally, the last case study also takes a comparative approach, analyzing student mobilization in Boston University, USA and Concordia University, Canada, and how those two cases can help identifying successful strategies for student-led movements.

The case studies in this collection by the UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks carry important messages. They provide us with inspiring examples and useful resources; track progress achieved while identifying new challenges and opportunities. All of the case studies present facts and analyze situations that are necessary to better understand the different forms gender inequality takes in our societies, and identify some of the tools and methods we can use to overcome them. This knowledge is crucial to formulate relevant policies, as UNESCO is committed to do, in collaboration with UNESCO Chairs and all its partners.

My sincere congratulations to the contributors and editors of this important volume.

Introduction

by Brenda Gael McSweeney

This volume, second in a series of case studies published by the Global Network of UNESCO Chairs on Gender, addresses the overarching themes of gender gaps in education; women's economic livelihoods and political empowerment; combating gendered exploitation; and evolving activism. Contributing authors include UNESCO Chairs, as well as Founding Partners and affiliates of the UNESCO/UNITWIN Network on Gender, Culture & Development. The features capture realities at the cutting-edge of development thinking and action, aimed to enliven debate in university classrooms as well as in community gatherings at different corners of the globe.

Women and Education

On behalf of the UNESCO Chair on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Cyprus, Mary Koutselini, Frosoula Patsalidou and Katerina Tsimpimpaki present a panorama of gender inequalities in higher education. They set out their findings, based on a qualitative and quantitative research project, in "Gender Equality in the Cyprus Tertiary Education System: The Perceived Superiority of Men as Academics and Researchers". The results reveal an underrepresentation of women as professors, decision-makers, and externally funded researchers. Their approach includes examination of statistical data spanning twenty years, plus analysis of a unique set of interviews that they conducted. This rich tableau leads them to their bottom line: males dominate in numerous ways in the academic sphere, buttressed by perceptions of both men and women. An insightful discussion explores the hidden nature of the causes and how to address them. The authors join UNESCO in spotlighting stereotypes that continue to support unequal power relations between men and women.

Similar findings emerge in the research initiative led by Professor Fernand Sanou of the University of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, with his colleagues Afsata Paré, Soumaïla Keita, Aminata Elisabeth Ouédraogo, and Guidouma Oumar Sanou. This case study, based on their sample surveys among students, parents, teachers and heads of educational institutions, is entitled "Female Performance in the Sciences at Secondary and University Levels in Burkina Faso". Weak outcomes in the sciences, of female students in particular, emerge. The students – notably the young women – lacked self-confidence, participated infrequently and preferred homework that required little critical thinking. The teaching faculty also displayed sexist biases, and the quality of teaching did not improve over the years – exacerbated by lack of investment in tertiary education that Fernand Sanou elsewhere has vividly dubbed the pauperization ("*clochardisation*") of higher education. Looking ahead, the authors note the Government's positive commitment to boost the recruitment standards for teachers and to extend their training. This powerful contribution from Burkina Faso adds a West African perspective

on the paucity of women in science and engineering, an ongoing focus for the UNESCO/UNITWIN Networks; in Volume I of *Gender Perspectives in Case Studies across Continents*, Professor Deborah Belle and Sheryl Grace examined improving representation and advancement of women faculty in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields at Boston University.

Livelihoods and Political Voice

The first case in this next part of the volume is a fascinating exploration of microfinance initiatives in Iran, presented by Soheila Alirezanejad, based on her over eight years of involvement with an association of women beekeepers. Titled "Visible or Invisible Money: Different Opportunities for Rural Women in Iran", the author examines the women's initial financial success, accompanied by both new status and expectations within their families and community. Subsequent engagement with different donors and loan conditionalities revealed divergent cultural conceptions of money, plus a set of situational factors that ultimately led to the collapse of their beekeeping enterprises. The author leads us through the women's nuanced perceptions and the complexity of development cooperation in this context. She designed an interactive and participatory approach, inspired by Shahla Haeri's groundbreaking 'shared ethnography' methodology of joint discovery by the researcher and participants. At a time when discourse is heated as to the benefits and drawbacks of microcredit and microfinance in various corners of the globe, Soheila Alirezanejad's startling findings add fresh dimensions to the debate.

The contribution of Renata Siemieńska, "Role of Gender Quota Systems in Polish Parliamentary Elections After the Fall of Communism", reflects UNESCO's initiative to boost women's voice and input into decision-making, and to combat negative gender stereotypes. Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair "Women, Society and Development" at the University of Warsaw, the author looks at evolving cultural attitudes and legislative measures towards gender equality and the correlative effect on the political status of women in the country. Against a backdrop of inequality between women and men, the author probes a number of questions related to differing life expectations – especially with respect to political roles and access to power. Even with quota-based systems in place during elections in 2001 and 2011, women achieved limited success in gaining power in Poland. Tapping a unique data set that she herself commissioned, Renata Siemieńska sheds light on deep-seated cultural obstacles and potential ways forward. She highlights the positive role of the women's lobby and the European Union in influencing electoral behaviors towards greater gender equality in decision-making, and despite ongoing constraints, expresses guarded optimism for the future. It is interesting to contrast the impact of the establishment of gender quotas in Poland as portrayed by Renata Siemieńska with results in India (see the papers by Niraja Gopal Jayal, Kumkum Bhattacharya and Shiwali Patel in *Another Side of India: Gender, Culture & Development* published earlier by our UNESCO/UNITWIN Network). The experiences in both countries provide insights to inform the introduction of gender quotas in Ireland and elsewhere around the globe.

Lack of women's leadership – a focus area for UNESCO in its Gender Equality Action Plan through 2021 – also emerges strongly in the following case study. "Irish Women Today: Perspectives from Galway to Dublin on Gender (In)Equality" reveals that while Ireland is a highly 'developed' nation, gender disparities persist – particularly in the arenas of political voice and wages. Through interviews with Irish women and men, author Brenda Gael McSweeney, with Raffi Freedman-Gurspan, Rose O'Connell-Marion and Jade Sank, shares factors that contributed to these disparities, as well as some steps taken that have improved women's political empowerment and employment opportunities in recent years. The authors examine gender inequalities in Ireland in two snapshots, in 2011 and then in 2014. While this period saw improvements, significant gender wage and 'political voice' gaps remain. The adoption of political party quota systems and other strategies for boosting women's political leadership appear to be promising steps in securing greater equality overall.

Confronting Domination

Leading off this theme, the paper from India titled "*Indrer Pori - Nachni, a Tragedy*" examines the exploitation of nachnis, low-status women in several districts of West Bengal, who serve as traditional dancers under the unshackled authority of *rashiks*, or male masters. Author Jharna Panda, based on her field research, strives to give "faces" to these women as she explores the socioeconomic and cultural factors that lead them into a lifetime of abuse and deprivation. She analyzes the extreme social and economic exclusion that they experience resulting from their position, despite the admiration showered upon them during their ritual dance performances. Jharna Panda gives a particularly vivid account of the lives and stories of two nachnis, Malabati and Bimaladebi, drawn from her village interviews and observation in the district of Purulia in West Bengal. The author ends on a hopeful note, describing individuals and organizations working to shed light on the dire plight of the nachnis, and to advance solidarity approaches and legal steps to help improve their situation. Her case study echoes a number of the refrains of the Unite to End Violence against Women campaign that is a major thrust of UN Women, involving the entire UN system and its many partners, both governmental and non-governmental.

The story in photographs, focusing on women's arduous roles and emerging rights in Burkina Faso, was originally developed as an educational tool to accompany a community photo exhibition in Boston, Massachusetts. "The History of Women in Burkina Faso Over Four Decades" aims to showcase the achievements of a Government/UNESCO/UN Development Programme pilot project for women's education and empowerment. This tool, based on the decades of work and action-research of Brenda Gael McSweeney and Scholastique Kompaoré in Burkina Faso, including the preparation of sex-disaggregated village time diaries, was developed with Cassandra Fox. It portrays women's oppressively burdensome workloads followed by an uplifting story of the evolution of these roles and women's livelihoods in West Africa. The tool was initially used for outreach to Boston-based academics and community activists via a photo exhibition at the Faneuil Branch of the Boston Public Library, co-sponsored by the UNESCO/UNITWIN Network anchored at Boston University's

Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program and Unbound Visual Arts, a non-profit educational corporation. This exhibit guide, also informed by the authors' earlier research through Brandeis University's Women's Studies Research Center, carries forward the UNESCO/UNITWIN vision to share globally these positive realities that exist in developing countries, and reflects UNESCO's two overarching global priorities of gender equality and Africa.

Activism Across the Decades

The opening feature by Margaret (Peg) Snyder, who went on to become the Founding Director of UNIFEM (the UN Development Fund for Women), provides a behind the scenes look at the creation of the first regional UN center for women. She credits this achievement largely to the impetus and overwhelming support African women gave – to *their* idea – and to the exceptional team of African and international women who staffed the Centre with their knowledge and experience. Those of us working in Africa at the time benefitted greatly from the Centre's findings and publications which brought *visibility* to mammoth workloads of women in agriculture across the continent, thus helping to attract governmental and donor support for initiatives to lighten women's workloads and provide appropriate training and technology. The pioneering African Centre for Women, of which Peg Snyder was Cofounder, gave pride of place to spotlighting women as farmers, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers – reframing the very 'image' of African women – and thus setting a new direction and pace for development plans and work of Governments and international organizations alike in the decades that followed. In fact, this Centre of the UN Economic Commission for Africa served as a model for other regions.

Jean Chapman, Research Associate at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Concordia University, Montreal, shares a first-hand narrative of student engagement with the Left in India in the 1970s, when she was attending Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. This article was also the basis of a talk in March 2014 at the Conference, "A Revolutionary Moment: Women's Liberation in the Late 1960s and Early 1970s", sponsored by Boston University's Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program (WGS). Jean Chapman's engaging presentation of personal experience as a case study broadens the scope of ways in which lived realities can be integrated with academia, one of the UNESCO/UNITWIN programme goals. The author questions if there was a movement in India by women to 'liberate' women before, during and after the 1970s. This calls to mind a reflection on Jean's paper by Krishno Dey, a Founding Member of our UNITWIN Network: "There was much more activity and excitement over women's liberation, especially through education, in 19th century India than there is today: then the leadership and involvement of prominent members of reform bodies such as the Brahmo Samaj pushed the laws at least that made Sati, the dowry, and child marriage illegal, and female ignorance and illiteracy shameful for society, as well as produced educational and social institutions that are still active." Author Jean Chapman notes that even now the issue of dowry deaths, women's unequal legal status, and action against violence against women in which she is currently plunged, are far from resolved. She vividly portrays her ongoing role in the struggle.

In the final essay, Boston University student activist Alessandra (Sasha) Goodfriend writes of her compelling participation in addressing rape culture and in the breakthrough establishment of the Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Center on campus. BU's Center for Gender, Sexuality & Activism (CGSA), of which Alessandra was a student leader, spearheaded this arduous campaign. The author, drawing on first-hand experience both in Boston and in field interactions in Canada, compares the strategic approaches and organizing tactics of the Boston-based CGSA with those employed by the *Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante*/Association for Student Union Solidarity in Montreal for achieving their priority objectives. She provides a lively account of events that she 'lived', and applying her social scientist's eye, systematically outlines approaches to challenges confronted along the way and tactics to facilitate the task for future generations of student activists. The author acknowledges her professor at BU, Dr. Diane Balser of the Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program, who provided academic guidance, as well as her student colleague Gabrielle Newton, with whom she brainstormed their directed studies at the outset. The dual role of Alessandra Goodfriend's gender case study, to inform her own activism and to serve as a useful tool for her successors, mirrors the goal of UNESCO's UNITWIN programme: for grassroots realities to inform academic settings, notably in the global 'North'. Her contribution is especially timely, as UNESCO has identified the prevention of gender-based violence through research and action as a focus area through 2021.

The case studies in this concluding section along with those from Burkina Faso, Iran, Ireland and West Bengal have been contributed by Partners and affiliates of the UNESCO/UNITWIN Network on Gender, Culture & Development. As a group, along with the studies from the UNESCO Chairs in Cyprus and Poland, they capture UNESCO's themes for the planning period 2014-2021: sex disaggregated-data to guide policy, action to combat violence against women, and women's positive image and leadership roles. A goal of our UNITWIN Network is to share actual cases to inspire classroom and community debate as well as future activism. Each of the gender case studies presented here also resonates with the overarching goal of the Buenos Aires-anchored Global Network of UNESCO Chairs on Gender, to collaborate, communicate and innovate in gender research and practices. Following the essays in this volume's four thematic areas, Gloria Bonder who heads the Global Network offers her reflections in the Afterword, including on the next ambitions for our worldwide coalition of partners.

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Contributors

Soheila Alirezanejad is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Islamic Azad University, Garmsar Branch, Iran. Trained as a Sociologist with specific focus on gender and development, Alirezanejad has conducted research in her country on women's studies, development and environment. Her ongoing intellectual and academic interests converge on the evolving yet debatable relationship between gender, development and women's economic and emotional actions, in Iran in particular and in the Muslim world in general. She is the author of *An Introduction to Sociology of Industrial Societies (2012), Method and Development: Stakeholder Analysis Technique* (2011), and *View Assessment of Extension Directors on Rural Woman Affairs Activities, Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture Deputy of Extension and Farming System (2003).* Nowadays she is working at an indigenous microcredit model for women in Iran. She is also working on a project about love in Iranian women's lives. She was a Visiting Scholar at the Women's Studies Program, Boston University (2010). Dr. Alirezanejad has written 16 articles published by academic journals inside and outside of Iran.

Gloria Bonder is Director of the Gender, Society and Policies Area of FLACSO Argentina (Latin American School of Social Sciences), and Coordinator of the UNESCO Regional Chair on Women, Science and Technology in Latin America, the Master's Degree in Gender, Society and Policies, and the Global Network of UNESCO Chairs on Gender. She has been a consultant on Women, Science and Technology for several national, regional and international organizations such as: the Ministry of Science and Technology in Argentina, Division for the Advancement of Women/United Nations, Women and Development Unit/ECLAC and the Office of Science and Technology/OAS, IDRC/CRDI, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNDP and UNESCO. She has developed several research projects on gender issues and in technology and science, education, communication, and health and youth, and published books and articles both nationally and internationally. She has been distinguished by UNESCO as one of the 60 women worldwide who has helped accomplish the organization's goals throughout the 60 years of its existence, and is member of the regional advisory board of UN Women.

Jean Chapman is a Research Associate at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Concordia University, Montreal. She received graduate and undergraduate degrees in anthropology from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi and McGill University, respectively. She was awarded a doctorate in 2008 from the Department of Peace Studies, Bradford, West Yorkshire after a long career with First Nation in Quebec. Her research focuses on landmine management and the Khmer extractive industry in Cambodia. Since the December 2012 battery, rape and murder in New Delhi, Chapman has added violence against women in India to her research interests. Chapman has published articles for peer-reviewed journals

in the *Indian Journal of Gender Studies, Economic and Political Weekly,* the *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development,* and *Social Scientist.* She has presented papers at the Canadian Anthropology Association Annual Meetings and contributed "The emerging extractive industry in Cambodia" to a UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre E-Discussion. She is a life member of the South Asian Women's Community Centre; Vice President of Paul F. Wilkinson & Associates, a Montreal-based environmental and social science consulting company; a member of the Gender and Peacebuilding Working Group, Peacebuild, Ottawa; and a Corporate Secretary of the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach, Northern Quebec.

Saniye Gülser Corat is the Director of UNESCO's Division for Gender Equality in the Office of the Director-General. She has a diverse background in international development in areas ranging from socio-economic development, capacity development, agricultural policies, rural development, and water resources planning and management to gender analysis and gender mainstreaming. Before joining UNESCO in 2004, she worked for 20 years as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of an international consulting company in Canada. In that capacity, she acted as a senior advisor, senior project manager and consultant for various governments through bilateral development agencies, for multilateral lending institutions and for civil society organizations, especially in Asia and Africa. Throughout that period, she remained active in academia and taught as a professor of political economy at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa. She holds a B.A Honours degree from Boğazici University (Istanbul, Turkey), M.A. degrees from the College of Europe (Bruges, Belgium) and the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University (Ottawa, Canada). She pursued doctoral studies at the Political Science Department of Carleton University. (Photo: Mina Mauerstein-Bail)

Cassandra Fox is a graduate of the International Relations program at Boston University, where she worked as a Teaching Assistant for Dr. McSweeney. She has spent time studying and working in Niger and France, focusing on international development and women's rights with *ONG Le Pélican* (a school for disabled children) in Niamey, and *Ni Putes Ni Soumises* (an organization focused on women's rights and ending domestic violence) in Paris. She has also worked in low-income neighborhoods in Boston with Health Leads, a program connecting low-income patients at hospitals and clinics with resources such as subsidized housing, food stamps, and daycare. Combining her interests in social justice and healthcare with a passion for travel, Cassandra currently serves as the Executive Officer for Physicians for Haiti.

Raffi Freedman-Gurspan works as a Policy Advisor at the National Center for Transgender Equality in Washington, D.C., where she manages the organization's Racial & Economic Justice Initiative. She previously worked in the Massachusetts House of Representatives as Legislative Director for former State Representative Carl Sciortino of Medford and Somerville. In addition,

Raffi's professional experience includes having worked for the City of Somerville, Massachusetts as the city's LGBT Liaison; for the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition as the Legislative and Policy Staffer; and for Boston University's Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program as a Course and Research Assistant. A graduate of St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, Raffi was adopted from Intibuca, Honduras and grew up in Brookline, Massachusetts

Alessandra Goodfriend graduated Boston University with a degree in International Relations, focusing on Latin America and Cultural Anthropology and minoring in Women, Gender & Sexuality studies. As a student, she is most proud of her time with the Center for Gender, Sexuality and Activism where she served as Co-Director. Alessandra was the first recipient of the Feminist in Action Grant from which she co-founded the Innovation and Enterprise Leadership Institute. This is a program for middle school girls, who attend Boston Public Schools, to learn from local organizations how to be leaders in their community. She is currently Vice President of Action for the Massachusetts chapter of the National Organization of Women.

Lucia Hsiao is a freelance editor and gender equality advocate who began her work with the Global Network of UNESCO Chairs on Gender as a Student-Scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University. She has worked previously as an intern at The New Press, a public-interest publisher, and as a research assistant and teaching assistant at Brandeis University, where she graduated with a B.A. in Sociology and Anthropology in 2013. She studied abroad at City University, London, and currently lives in New York, where she researches reproductive healthcare, gender-based violence, and family welfare.

Scholastique Kompaoré was National Coordinator of the Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) pilot Project for Equal Access of Women and Girls to Education, and a pioneer of advocacy and action for female education and advancement. Mrs. Kompaoré directed the United Nations Development Programme's initiative, "Strengthening Civil Society Capacities to Combat Poverty" in Central Africa. She was also the Harare-based Coordinator of the UN Volunteers' Domestic Development Service, an exchange of community development workers in Africa south of the Sahara. She then served as the Ouagadougou-based President of the Burkina arm of the World March of Women. More information at: equalityburkina.blogspot,com (Photo: Brenda Gael McSweeney)

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Instruction, Gender Studies, and Citizenship education. She participates in a great number of national and international academic and social councils and she has published extensively in the areas of her research interests. Her books and articles include "Participatory Teacher Development at Schools: Processes and Issues" (2010); and "Contextualizing the Gender Representation in Cyprus television" with S. Agathaggelou (2013). She is also Coordinator of international, European and national research programs.

Brenda Gael McSweeney is Visiting Faculty at Boston University's Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program specializing in Gender & International Development, and is Resident Scholar, Women's Studies Research Center (WSRC), Brandeis University. She served with the UN for 30 years in executive positions including in West Africa and the Caribbean; in Europe heading the UN Volunteers programme; then in India as the United Nations Resident Coordinator/UN Development Programme Resident Representative. Brenda holds her Ph.D. from the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy. She was the recipient of a Fulbright and awards from the Governments of Germany, Jamaica and Burkina Faso, plus two honorary doctorates. Her research focuses on female education and empowerment in Burkina Faso, and a gender perspective on livelihoods in West Bengal (see related papers at The Global Network of UNESCO Chairs on Gender and at brendamcsweeney.com). She initiated and co-coordinates the UNESCO/UNITWIN Network on Gender, Culture & Development, and is a Founding Advisory Board Member of the Global Network of UNESCO Chairs on Gender. (Photo: Kassia Karr)

Rose O'Connell-Marion graduated summa cum laude from Boston University with a B.A. in International Relations. Her studies focused on Latin America, international development, and the Spanish language. During her time at Boston University Rose also worked as a Teaching Assistant in the Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program, a Research Assistant for The Global Network of UNESCO Chairs on Gender, and a Peer Spanish Tutor. Rose was a Summer 2014 New Sector Alliance Fellow and is currently working with Year Up, an organization that provides urban young adults with the skills, experience, and support that will empower them to reach their potential through professional careers and higher education.

Jharna Panda is a social scientist with specialization in field research and is a keen observer of the evolving dynamics and organizational patterns and policies of education and health in West Bengal. A series of research projects have taken her to virtually every corner of West Bengal's districts and given her a wealth of information and insight that she shares with civil society through regular contributions to leading dailies and research magazines. Her career began in the remote islands of the Sunderbans. Hailing from a small town of Purulia in West Bengal, she spent 26 long years in the stifling milieu of a conservative family. Her father, Shri Trishanku Panda, inspired

and guided her emancipation – into a passionate social researcher. The unique trajectory of her personal journey engendered her own sensitive way of looking at women of marginalized families. The resultant observations are widely acclaimed among social observers. Her three years of extensive research evaluating the qualitative impact of primary education in six districts of West Bengal has made some fundamental observations, some noted by the government of West Bengal. She is a member of the State Advisory Council of the Department of School Education, Government of West Bengal, and is affiliated with the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta.

Frosoula Patsalidou is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Cyprus Department of Education. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Education and a Masters Degree in Curriculum Development and Instruction. Her research interests center around equality in education, student literacy and ways to improve literacy, and quality in teachers' in-service training and development. She currently works at the University of Cyprus as a research assistant.

Jade Sank graduated in 2012 magna cum laude from Brandeis University with a BA in Anthropology and International and Global Studies. In 2010, she spent a semester abroad in Nepal and Northern India studying Tibetan history and culture. Upon returning, an anthropology professor connected Jade with the Women's Studies Research Center and Brenda McSweeney through the Student-Scholar Partnership Program. In 2013-2014 Jade lived in Jerusalem, Israel for her first year as a rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR). Currently, she is living in Brooklyn, New York and is a second year student at HUC-JIR's New York campus.

Fernand Sanou, Professor at the University of Ouagadougou**,** led a team researching "Female Performance in the Sciences at the Secondary and University Levels in Burkina Faso". The team was comprised of **Afsata Paré**, educational psychologist, **Fernand Sanou**, education sociologist and coordinator, along with Secondary School Inspectors **Soumaïla Keita** (mathematics), **Aminata Elisabeth Ouédraogo** (natural sciences), and **Guidouma Oumar Sanou** (physics-chemistry). The in-depth quantitative research study entitled, "Improvement of Female Performance in the Sciences in Secondary and University Education in Burkina," was prepared at the request of the association, "Female Scientists of Faso."

Renata Siemieńska is a full professor at the Institute of Sociology, head of the Center of Interdisciplinary Gender Studies at the Institute for Social Studies, and Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair "Women, Society and Development", University of Warsaw (Poland). She is also professor and head of the Chair of Sociology of Social Change in the M. Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education in Warsaw. She has been Director of the Institute for Social Studies of the University of

Warsaw (2002-2012). She has lectured as Visiting Professor in several American and Canadian universities. Siemieńska served as President of the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic), expert of the UN, UNESCO (Division of Human Rights and Peace) and the Council of Europe, and member of the Advisory Board of the Plenipotentiary of Equal Status of Men and Women in Poland (1992-2005). She is also a member of several editorial boards of international journals, and an author and editor of books and essays on comparative cross-national value systems, ethnic relations, women's public participation, socialization, systems of education, family, gender inequality in the public sphere (politics, labor market) and the welfare system. She has been participating in cross-national studies as principal investigator in Poland for the World Values Survey since 1990, as well as for several other international projects.

Margaret (Peg) Snyder is founding director of UNIFEM (1978-89), cofounder of the African Centre for Women and head of the Voluntary Agencies Bureau of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (1971-78), as well as a co-founder of Women's World Banking. She was an international election observer in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Tanzania and a Fulbright Scholar at Makerere University, Uganda (1990s); her PhD is from the University Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. She is co-founder and Vice President Emeritus of the Board of the Sirleaf Market Women's Fund and Treasurer of the Green Belt Movement International. Her books include *Transforming Development: Women, Poverty and Politics* (a history of UNIFEM), *African Women and Development: A History* (co-authored with Mary Tadesse), *Women in African Economies: from Burning Sun to Boardroom* and *Above the Odds: a Decade of Change for Ugandan Women Entrepreneurs* (with Sarah Kitakule); she has written chapters in other books.

Katerina Tsimpimpaki is a PhD candidate in Curriculum and Instruction at the department of Education, University of Cyprus. She has worked as a teacher in the public and private sector and as a research assistant, University of Cyprus, and is currently working as Scientific Personnel in its Education department. Her research interests concern issues of learning, teaching and gender equality. She has a great deal of experience in writing and carrying out research proposals and projects.

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Women and Education

Gender equality in the Cyprus tertiary education system:

The perceived superiority of men as academics and researchers

by Mary Koutselini, Frosoula Patsalidou and Katerina Tsimpimpaki

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Abstract

Existing literature provides strong evidence of the under-representation of women in the academy (Harley, 2003; Husu, 2000; Marschke et al., 2007; Morley, 2000). In this context, gender inequality refers to the under-representation of women in academic posts, their limited numbers in the rank of professorship, their absence in decision making bodies and positions, and the restricted participation of women in externally funded research programs (She figures, 2013). A number of factors and variables have been proposed for the interpretation of gender inequalities in the academy, including the nature of institutions and regulations as well as women's limited skills and abilities. The present paper presents a research project funded by the National Machinery for Women's Rights of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order of the Republic of Cyprus. The study aimed 1) to investigate and record the quantitative gendered map of the tertiary education system in Cyprus from 1992 to 2011; and 2) to qualitatively investigate, critically discuss, and provide contextualized interpretations of both the quantitative and qualitative results of the study. Quantitative results included statistical data about the distribution of male and female members of the academic staff across different academic posts from 1992 to 2011. Qualitative data were collected through interviews from thirty-seven academicians and fifty-eight students. Content and discourse analysis were used to analyze the data. The results have shown that men were dominant in the academic sphere in multiple ways. This trend seemed to persist and was reflected in the perceptions of both male and female academic scholars when they attempted to explain the source of gender inequality. The results are discussed along the lines of historical and contextualized discourse.

Introduction

Higher education is a field where important changes and societal transitions that aim to transform the social environment can be implemented and managed. The implementation of gender equality in higher education can reinforce gender equality in society in a powerful and dynamic way. Seen in this light, higher education is considered a very important field, a field where gender mainstreaming policy can be implemented to effect great changes in society as a whole (UNESCO, 1993).

Gender equality in higher education and in society as a whole can promote pluralistic and democratic decision making processes, fruitful dialogue, social progress, as well as progress in all domains of human activity. The participation of both male and female scholars, in all higher education posts, and in administrative, research and teaching positions can support the development of new, different and innovative approaches in their respective domains. It may also facilitate modernization, development and improvement of academic institutions. It is expected to advance research in different domains and further promote the universities' mission.

In general, the literature on higher education in the developing world tends to be characterized by a gender-neutral approach (Morley, 2005). Gender appears as a category of analysis in relation to access and quantitative representation. Thus, the qualitative experiences of women once they are enrolled at university level remain largely unexamined by research.

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Moreover, there is strong evidence of the under-representation of women in the academy (Harley, 2003; Husu, 2000; Marschke et al., 2007; Morley, 2000), a fact that needs further interpretation. The research project presented in this paper, funded by the National Machinery for Women's Rights of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order of the Republic of Cyprus, was motivated by the absence of any research in Cyprus concerning the gender profile of the academy. The project had two aims: to investigate and record the quantitative gendered map of the tertiary education system in Cyprus from 1992 (the year of establishment of the first university in Cyprus) to 2011; then to qualitatively investigate, critically discuss, and provide contextualized interpretations of the quantitative and qualitative results of the study.

Theoretical Background

Morley (2005) asserts that although there have been some equity gains in higher education, particularly in relation to women's access as students, universal patriarchal power appears hard to neutralize in elite professions. The evidence about the decrease in gender inequalities, both in participation and degree awards, does not mean that gender equal study opportunities have been ensured. A more careful examination of this data illustrates that the choice of studies has remained highly gender-based (Bebbington, 2002; UNESCO, 1993). This is an especially important point because gender wage differences are partly attributable to the subjects that men and women choose to study. Women, for example, are far more likely than men to study subjects relating to education, teaching, health and the social sector (and are subsequently over-represented in these professions). Men, for their part, are more likely to choose science or engineering which, in addition, lead to higher salaries in the labour market.

Women are also under-represented in higher education management. Although women have increased their numbers in higher educational institutions (Howie & Tauchert, 2002; Luke, 2001; Morley, 2005), the largest increases have been in junior, untenured, and part-time positions, where they often outnumber men (Luke, 2001). Women deans and professors are a minority group, while women vice-chancellors and presidents still occupy a small percentage of the respective posts. Fraser (1997) contends that women's under-representation in senior and decision-making roles is not just symbolic. It results from both cultural stereotyping and material and intellectual oppression. The extent to which the imbalance in the global experiences of men and women in higher education contributes to discrimination among university-level staff should be of great concern to institutions of higher learning. Current practices of recruitment and promotion require urgent investigation in order for us to understand the barriers to women's progress and to identify strategies to bring about a fairer gender balance based on professional equality.

Lund (1998) concluded that there were no significant differences between high-income countries and low and middle-income countries in the Commonwealth of Nations regarding the percentages of women employed as full time academic staff. While women were entering the academy as students, female staff were still concentrated in the care and service areas and were a minority in the areas of higher education where power was exercised and decisions were made (see Singh, 2002). Examples

from across the Commonwealth demonstrated that women comprised less than a quarter of professional and executive heads. It is therefore evident that mechanisms through which gender inequality persists in higher education exist in more than one country, and persist irrespective of each country's economic status.

The inequality discussed in the literature is not exhausted by some quantitative data about women's under-representation in managerial and high teaching positions and the gender based distribution of male and female candidates in separate fields of study. The following aspects of gender inequality have also been identified by the relevant literature:

a) The limited opportunities women have for receiving research funding and for publishing their work (Brouns, 2000; Howie & Tauchert, 2002; Salo, 2003): it is remarkable that women are not very successful in obtaining grants even in those disciplines that are rather popular among women students and researchers: the humanities and biology (Brouns, 2000). Lack of published literature does not imply lack of activity or lack of cultural capital. Rather, it can reflect the power relations and gendered and radicalized gate-keeping practices embedded in publication and research awards (Brouns, 2000; Salo, 2003). Research in the respective domain also implies that committee work and emotional labour form a strong barrier against women applying and using their energies to obtain larger research grants (Morley, 1994).

b) The persistence of a competitive neoliberal culture in higher education/academic institutes facilitates the dominance of careless managers/leaders (Currie, Harris, & Thiele, 2000; Grummell, Devine, & Lynch, 2009; Lynch, 2007): academicians are required to be highly committed to their work. Both men and women are working beyond their call of duty; they sacrifice their families, their friends and even their own health (Currie, Harris, & Thiele, 2000). The 'successful academic', according to these expectations, devotes all of his/her time and energy to the university; networks both in and out of work hours; is guided into and through their career by a mentor; builds a reputation through research; is 'career-oriented', 'productive', 'hardworking' and 'enthusiastic', and publishes in the right publications. While it is not explicit that the 'successful academician' should be a man, or indeed a child-free woman, a number of factors would seem to stand in the way of mothers being able to succeed in this field and to fit into these values, namely: i) the material realities of women's primary responsibility for caring and domestic work in the family in the majority of cultures and countries; ii) the fact that academic mothers have to take time out of their career to have children; and iii) that they often dominate the lower-level and part-time jobs in universities (Raddon, 2002). These working environments are not necessarily conducive to creativity and do not necessarily inspire people to join. There is therefore a need for healthier working environments that allow both men and women the chance to have lives outside their work (Currie, Harris, & Thiele, 2000).

c) The hidden culture of the academic institutions facilitating male dominance and male persistence in higher academic posts (Charalambidou-Solomi, 2009; Husu, 2000; Morley, 2000; Muller, 2000): this hidden culture in some circumstances contradicts the official policy of academic institutions. Women scholars are competing in an "institutionalized context governed according to the male life cycle", in which rules pertaining to appointments are male driven, and applicants are evaluated

according to male standards (Acker, 1984, p. 242). Women have particular difficulty in securing access to this "colleague system" that allocates resources, research support, opportunities to publish, and promotion (Halsey, 1992; Kaufman, 1978). Universities value the reputation status of academic staff above all. This status is heavily dependent upon integration into networks in the academic community from which men benefit more than women (Bagilhole, 1993; Heward, 1996); "Generally, the university is a 'man's world' and the old boy network is influential" (Sutherland, 1985, p. 25).

As indicated above, gender inequality has both a quantitative and qualitative nature. The quantitative and qualitative aspects of this phenomenon are to a very large extent interconnected. Together they can aid and inform our attempt to better understand these phenomena and act against gender inequality and every kind of social inequality. According to Plano-Clark and Creswell (2010), a mixed method analysis is useful when attempting to answer two related questions and provides a more in-depth understanding of the research. Quantitative measurements of organizational or higher education administration environments are limited in that they offer only numerical data about the complexities of gender diversity, whereas qualitative methods provide a conceptual description of the topic. Additionally, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods presents a more comprehensive portrayal of gender barriers to administration compared to utilizing only one method of assessment. As emphasized by Plano-Clark and Creswell, qualitative research is a useful tool when describing trends such as a lack of women in upper level administrative positions. Qualitative research study is needed to bring insight into and understanding of the experiences of women in higher education. It is also necessary to fully understand the underlying processes at work that help explain gender inequality (Quinn, & Litzler, 2009).

Methodology

This study had a two-fold aim: firstly to investigate and record the quantitative gendered map of tertiary education system in Cyprus from 1992 to 2011 and, secondly, to qualitatively investigate, critically discuss, and provide contextualized interpretations of both the quantitative and qualitative results of the study. The quantitative record of gender presence concerned men's and women's comparative numerical presence, position and rank in the higher education of Cyprus and particularly in the public and private universities. The qualitative investigation included the analysis and interpretation of the opinions/beliefs held by the project participants towards this gender disparity and the discourse they use to explain the distribution of male and female academicians in different academic posts.

Table 1. *Research Participants*

Universities	Academic Staff			Permanent			Nonpermanent		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Public 1	8	11	19	5	6	11	3	5	8
Public 2	1	2	3	0	2	2	1	0	1
Public 3	2	1	3	1	1	2	1	0	1
Private 1	2	2	4	2	1	3	0	1	1
Private 2	4	1	5	3	0	3	1	1	2
Private 3	1	2	3	1	0	1	0	2	2
Grand Total	**18**	**19**	**37**	**12**	**10**	**22**	**6**	**9**	**15**

Participants and Sampling

The research was conducted from March 2009 to March 2011. According to the table above (Table 1), thirty-seven academicians from six public and private universities in Cyprus participated in this research. The methodological design of the research included criterion sampling by the following variables: gender, rank, administrative position and department/faculty.

Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected from the Cyprus Statistical Service, the selected Universities' official databases, the selected Universities' official websites, the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation website (RPF) and the official website of the Eurydice Education Information Network in the European Community. Qualitative data were collected through interviews with academicians. Interviews were structured and based on a questionnaire (Appendix 1), which consisted of ten open-ended questions. Participants were asked to express their opinion on the issue of gender equality in Cyprus and interpret the percentages related to the presence of both sexes in public and private universities in Cyprus.

Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative analysis was used to analyze the data. Quantitative data included statistics about the distribution of male and female academicians in the following positions: academic posts, administrative posts (deans, department chairpersons, members of the Council, members of the Senate), administrative staff posts and research posts as coordinators of research programs. All the collected quantitative data were recorded into Excel accounting-formulated sheets and went through classification and analysis. The qualitative part included interviews with academicians. The qualitative part was analyzed by content and discourse analysis.

To conduct content analysis, the frequencies of keywords were recorded according to the total responses for each question. Subsequently, keywords were categorized depending on whether they belonged to the same factor. According to Gee (1999), discourse analysis depends on the oral or

written expressions that can reveal social identities within the social activities. The word itself in the context of the sentence, the paragraph and the interview acquires special meaning.

Firstly, the transcripts were read. Moreover, words and phrases were analyzed. This showed the identity constructed for women today through their tone, color and frequency. Words and phrases were analyzed in the context of the sentence, the question and, finally, the interview.

Research Results

Quantitative Analysis

This section refers to quantitative data regarding the numerical presence of male and female academicians in different ranks and administrative positions. Additionally, it includes information about the presence of male and female members of the special teaching staff, researchers and research coordinators. Finally, the distribution of men and women in different administrative positions is presented.

Table 2. *The mean number of male and female academic staff during the academic years 2005/06 to 2008/09 by rank in public and private universities in Cyprus*

Rank	Public Universities		Private Universities	
	Men	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**
Professor	55,25	4	26	9,5
Associate Professor	60,75	18	69,5	31
Assistant Professor	54	24,5	70	43
Lecturer, Associate and Assistant Lecturer	46	26	68	56,5
Special Teaching Personnel	35,25	34	64	45

According to the table above, men academics outnumbered women academics in all ranks in public and private universities in Cyprus during the academic years 2005/06 until 2008/09. However, the biggest discrepancy was in the rank of professor and associate professor, while at the rank of assistant professor and lecturer the gap was narrow. Regarding special teaching personnel, the mean number of male and female scholars was almost the same in public universities in contrast to private universities where the mean of men is bigger.

Table 3. *Male and Female Scholars: Distribution in different ranks during the academic year 2010/2011 in Universities in Cyprus*

Rank	Academic Institutes													
	Public 1		Public 2		Public 3		Private 1		Private 2		Private 3		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Professor	64	6	12	1	2	0	19	4	12	7	12	4	**121**	**22**
Associate Professor	61	21	8	2	3	2	32	11	14	7	20	5	**138**	**48**
Assistant Professor	56	30	14	1	2	1	26	25	28	13	27	17	**153**	**87**
Lecturer	28	18	18	11	6	2	22	37	15	16	62	28	**151**	**112**
Total	**209**	**75**	**52**	**15**	**13**	**5**	**99**	**77**	**69**	**43**	**121**	**54**	**563**	**269**

As shown in the above Table, the number of male academics during the academic year 2010/2011 was greater than the respective number of female scholars, especially among the ranks of professor and associate professor. In Public University 1, the difference between male and female academicians decreased significantly among the ranks of assistant professor and lecturer. In Public University 2, the greatest difference was observed in the assistant professor rank. In Private University 1, the numbers of male and female assistant professors are almost identical. It is also noteworthy that the number of women lecturers exceeded the number of men. In Private University 2, the number of men and women academics was almost the same only in the lecturer rank. Finally, an overwhelming majority of men at the rank of lecturer was observed only in Private University 3.

Table 4. *Special Teaching Personnel in the Academic Institutes of Cyprus by gender in 2010*

Special Teaching Personnel		
University	2010	
	Men	Women
Public 1	21	39
Public 2	13	10
Public 3	43	72
Private 1	N/A	N/A
Private 2	14	17
Private 3	44	33
Total	**135**	**171**

In all the participating Universities, women outnumbered men in the position of special teaching personnel, excluding Public University 2 and Private University 3.

Table 5. *Male and female academicians in administrative positions in 2010/11*

University	Number of Faculties*	Deans		Number of Departments	Chairpersons	
		Men	Women		Men	Women
Public 1	6	6	0	21	19	2
Public 2	5	N/A	N/A	10	9	1
Private 1	4	4	0	17	12	5
Private 2	4	3	1	9	7	2
Private 3	6	6	0	14	11	3
Total	**20**	**19**	**1**	**71**	**58**	**13**

*Faculties = Groups of departments

As illustrated by the table above, female academicians were completely absent from the position of dean during the academic year of 2010/2011, except from Private University 2. On the other hand, women were present in chairperson positions, but there was still an overwhelming dominance of men in these positions in all participating Universities.

Table 6. *Researchers by field of science between 2001-2005*

Year	Gender	Total	Exact* Sciences	Engineering Sciences	Medical Sciences	Agricultural Sciences	Social Sciences	Human Sciences
2001	Men	622	218	135	43	55	125	46
	Women	258	107	21	18	12	68	32
2002	Men	716	247	160	44	66	143	56
	Women	298	125	23	15	12	79	44
2003	Men	752	249	160	52	63	162	66
	Women	337	142	22	19	13	89	52
2004	Men	833	285	172	58	51	191	76
	Women	393	162	31	13	6	110	71
2005	Men	960	329	234	61	54	212	70
	Women	464	187	43	11	14	134	75

Source: Department of Social Statistics of Statistical Service (2008). *The Statistical Portrait of Women in Cyprus.* Republic of Cyprus: Statistical Service. (Table 3.10., page 39)

*e.g. physics, chemistry, astronomy

According to Table 6, men researchers numerically surpassed women researchers in all fields of science during the years 2001 to 2005. However, there has been a steady increase of women researchers in every field. Most of the women researchers were active in the fields of Exact, Social and Human Sciences in contrast to the Engineering, Medical, and Agricultural Sciences.

Table 7. *Coordinators of research programmes in the public and private universities of Cyprus by gender from 2004 to 2011*

	Academic Institutes									
	Public 1 2005-2010		Public 2 2007-2010		Public 3 2010-2011		Private 1 2007-2010		Private 2 2004-2010	
Research Programmes	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Internal Research Programmes	73	19	9	1	20	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
European Research Programmes	42	7	10	4	N/A	N/A	5	4	14	19
International Research Programmes	5	0			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Research Programmes RPF*	233	46	34	12	N/A	N/A	15	6	17	5
Research Programmes funded by Government	12	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	0	N/A	N/A
Total	**365**	**74**	**53**	**17**	**20**	**1**	**25**	**10**	31	24

*RPF = Research Promotion Foundation

Table 7 is indicative of the greater participation of men as coordinators in research programmes. Their number is overwhelmingly greater than that of women in all universities of Cyprus (percentage of women: 25.7%). This is further confirmed by data from the website of the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation (RPF), which reports that the coordinator is a man in 80 out of 103 research programmes.

Table 8. *Means of members of administrative personnel by gender and field of employment in the public and private universities of Cyprus from 2005/06 to 2008/09*

Field of Employment	Public Universities		Private Universities	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Research and teaching assistant	68,25	37	3	0
Academic support for students	5	31	2,5	16
Social and health support personnel	1	0	1	1,5
Administrative staff	87,25	226,25	59	148,5
Operation and Maintenance	52	18,5	10,5	24,5

Regarding Table 8, the number of male research and teaching assistants was greater than the number of females in both the public and private universities. By contrast, the mean number of women was higher at the positions of academic support for students and administrative staff. Regarding maintenance and operations staff, in public universities the positions were occupied to a

greater extent by men, while in private universities the majority of positions were occupied by women.

Table 9. *Administrative Personnel by position and gender at the Universities of Cyprus in 2010*

	Public 1		Public 2		Public 3		Private 1		Private 2		Private 3		Total	
Administrative Positions	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**
Director	2	0	2	0	0	1	5	2	6	3	2	0	**17**	**6**
Head	5	1	5	0	1	1	0	3	N/A	N/A	3	2	**14**	**7**
Scientific Personnel	61	65	32	41	17	42	20	55	18	44	16	29	**164**	**276**
Non-scientific personnel	37	124	41	100			6	26	3	37	3	18	**90**	**305**
Total	**105**	**190**	**80**	**141**	**18**	**44**	**31**	**86**	**27**	**84**	**24**	**49**	**285**	**594**

According to Table 9, in all participating universities the majority of administrative positions are occupied by women. The presence of women is strong within scientific personnel but the greatest number of females occupy positions amongst non-scientific personnel. The image is reversed in the positions of director and head, where women have limited presence.

Qualitative Analysis

The following table presents the answers given by the thirty-seven academic scholars in response to three out of the ten interview questions (questions #1, 2, and 9). Question 1 invited the respondents to answer whether gender equality exists in Cyprus. Question 2 called them to state clearly their perceptions about the existence of gender equality in education, and question 9 invited them to speak about possible discriminatory policies they had identified in their own academic institution. The following was extracted from the questionnaire replies:

Table 10. *Male and female scholars' perceptions about the existence of gender equality in Cyprus*

Questions/Answers	Exist(s)		Do(es) not exist		**Total**	
	M	F	M	F	**M**	**F**
Q1: *Does gender equality exist in Cyprus?*	3	2	15	17	**18**	**19**
Q2: *Do you believe that gender equality exists in education?*	14	6	4	11	**18**	**17**
Q9: *Have you identified discrimination policies (institutional and practical) in your work?*	0	2	18	15	**18**	**17**

M = Male, F = Female

As illustrated in the above table, male respondents in this survey supported the opinion that gender equality exists in education, despite gender inequality in the social environment. All of them failed to recognize discrimination policies, formal or informal in their academic institutes. In contrast with their male counterparts, a higher percentage of women scholars tended to recognize the existence of gender inequality in education. However, a majority (88%) of female respondents failed to identify the existence of discrimination policies, formal or informal, at their academic institutions. All respondents referred to their personal experiences and their knowledge about the ratio of males to females in higher education. Some of them also grounded their assertions that gender equality exists in higher education in the following facts/observations: the existence of an appointment system, the council's function and the male/female student ratio. The scholars also justified their perceptions about the existence of gender equality in higher education by mentioning that all persons have the right to participate in all the decision-making bodies, and that there is no declared discrimination against male or female students and staff members concerning remunerations, benefits and opportunities for participation. Some of the responses asserting that gender inequality does exist in higher education were justified in terms of the unequal opportunities for male and female scholars to be promoted, the absence of women from administrative or senior positions, sexist comments, women's employment to satisfy occasional needs, male dominance and mutual male support on different boards.

The qualitative analysis of the participant responses illustrated that the majority of the respondents defined gender equality as equal opportunities, equal rights and equal treatment of male and female individuals. The limitations created because of gender difference, the equal representation of men and women, equal remuneration, and equal participation were only stressed by a small number of the participants. There were also some very limited, severely negative, descriptions of gender inequality in Cyprus, such as "sexist country", "patriarchal model" and "vertical distinction". Some parallel, seriously negative descriptions of the situation were made when scholars were asked about the existence of discrimination mechanisms/policies in tertiary education. A very limited number of scholars made reference to a "male dominated culture", a "sexist environment", an "oppressive authority relationship" and "bullying and sarcasm".

Male and female scholars were also invited to explain women's under-representation in several domains. More exactly, the third question invited them to comment on the limited presence of women in the Cypriot academic society. In question #5, scholars were invited to comment on the persistence of male dominance despite women's overrepresentation in graduate and postgraduate programs. In questions #6 and #8, research participants were asked to give their own interpretations about the numerical superiority of male scholars over their female colleagues in presidential positions and in research participation. They were also asked to mention any educational and social structures making equality difficult to obtain in higher education. The content analysis of the participants' responses about the sources of gender inequality in the above domains led to the deduction of the following subject themes:

Table 11. *Male and female scholars' perceptions about the sources of gender inequality in higher academic institutes*

Themes / Number of times	Male	Female
Family (*family encouragement and support to men, family investment in male education, family discouragement towards women, pressure for marriage and creation of family, child-bearing and maternity, women's orientation towards family*)	43 (24%)	34 (15%)
Social Environment (*male dominated society, male dominated fields, discouragement of women to follow an academic career, mass media messages, prejudice, social roles, social provisions, culture/tradition/historical reasons, lack of female role models, traditionally female occupations*)	53 (30%)	76 (32%)
The Numerical Superiority of Men + University Institution's Demanding Nature (*male dominated composition of admission and promotion commissions, men judges, women hostile criteria, male dominated fields, male scholars' numerical superiority, few women in permanent positions, work load, the nature of the university institute, not enough time, many obligations, few research and university institutes, uncertainty about women's employment potentials, women finishing studies younger*)	40 (22%)	52 (22%)
Hidden Curriculum and Academic Institutes' Hidden Culture (*Hostile/not supportive climate, male dominated culture, sexist environment, sexist climate, practical support to men, preference given to men, networking and mutual support between males, males perceived to be more competent in administrative and research positions, lack of support for women, fewer opportunities for women, larger possibility to censure women, oppressive authority relationship, irony and fear, hidden curriculum*)	10 (6%)	45 (19%)
Women's Blame (*fewer women candidates, educational background, women become self excluded, women are less persistent, women choose to concentrate on family issues, women's lack of interest, psychological/sentimental reasons, women's fear and lack of self-confidence, women's hate for administrative issues*)	32 (18%)	27 (12%)
Other (*lack of a developed industrial domain*)	1 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	179 (100%)	234 (100%)

As illustrated by the table above, both male and female scholars trying to explain the sources of gender inequality in higher education attributed gender inequality phenomena in the academy to the social environment more than to any other factor. 22% of the interpretations given in both male and female scholars' interviews named the numerical superiority of men in tertiary education and the demanding nature of the academic institutes as the sources of gender inequality. However, while the hidden agenda of the male-dominated culture in academic institutes and institutions was the third most often stated source of gender inequality (occurring in nearly 20% of the respective answers given by women scholars), this was only the case for 6% of the answers given by men. Male scholars preferred to highlight the role of the family and the role women themselves play in undermining their own presence in higher education. Women scholars, on the other hand, did not blame women and family environment as frequently as men did.

Question #4 and question #10 invited the male and female scholars to suggest measures for the enhancement of gender equality in higher education institutions. Their positions are summarized in the following table:

Table 12. *Suggestions from male and female scholars for measures to reinforce gender equality in higher education academic institutes*

Themes / Number of times	Male	Female
Work Family Reconciliation Measures (nursery station at the university, flexible timetables, equal responsibilities inside the family, extension of maternity leave, paternity leave)	9 (20%)	10 (24%)
Positive Distinctions (social provisions, release from teaching duties, choice/option for partial employment, extra points for parenthood, extension of the promotion criteria list with non-scientific criteria, state scholarships to female students)	20 (44%)	24 (57%)
Activities Aiming to Eliminate Gender Stereotypes (awareness raising and sensitization activities, extra motivation for female students, introduction of gender studies in the educational curricula, equal representation of both genders in electoral and other commissions)	12 (27%)	7 (17%)
Institutionalization of Gender Mainstreaming Policies (the creation of a commission for the evaluation of the universities' policy, reinforcement of a culture supporting equal opportunities, evaluation of the European policy for gender mainstreaming)	4 (9%)	1 (1%)
Total	45 (100%)	42 (100%)

The suggestions from male and female scholars for the reinforcement of gender equality in higher education academic institutes fell under the following four categories: a) Work-Family Reconciliation Measures, b) Positive Distinctions, c) Activities Aiming to Eliminate Gender Stereotypes, and, d) Institutionalization of Gender Mainstreaming Policies. As illustrated in the table above, the "positive distinctions" measures were the most frequently suggested measures by both male and female scholars. Female scholars suggested work family reconciliation to a larger extent than they suggested activities aiming to eliminate gender stereotypes. Male academicians, on the other hand, were more likely to suggest measures relating to the elimination of gender stereotypes rather than family reconciliation measures. The institutionalization of gender mainstreaming policies was the measure they emphasized more. Based on the above, it can be observed that women scholars acknowledge the work/family barrier to a greater extent than men, and suggest more measures aiming to eliminate the implications and effects of this barrier and the consequent negative influence it has on their professional life. Additionally, male academicians acknowledged the importance of equality and support measures to reinforce gender equality, prioritizing institutional changes and the elimination of gender stereotypes over work/family reconciliation measures.

The discourse analysis of the scholars' interviews revealed that there were some differences in the way male and female scholars spoke about the existence of gender equality/inequality, the certainty with which they spoke about the source(s) of gender equality/inequality and their suggestions for resolving this situation, while some parallel trends were also apparent. The first tendency identified in male academicians' interviews was characterized by a dominant uncertainty about the exact sources of the under-representation of women in higher education, ambivalence about the existence of gender equality in the educational domain and a general positive attitude towards the European Union gender mainstreaming policy. This discourse did not have any special suggestions to offer for the implementation of gender mainstreaming in higher education. A second tendency identified in some male scholars' interviews was grounded in a very strong perception that "things go well", meaning that there are no problems currently and that equality is the outcome of an ongoing societal process that is already under way. No systematic efforts were considered to be necessary in this discourse, as things will inevitably change. A third discourse was grounded in a more systematic gender sensitive approach to gender equality issues. Using this discourse, male academicians tried to explain women's under-representation in higher education by suggesting a variety of sources, mainly societal and cultural, which they justified through examples and argumentation that advocated change. They were also gender sensitive in their suggestions for measures to enhance gender equality. This kind of discourse is reflected in the following two positions, coming from two different male scholars:

"Until we arrive at real gender equality, I am in favour of positive discrimination, if one takes into account all of the inequality that exists against women in all sectors. So you have to somehow try and increase the number of women in jobs, universities, etc." (male assistant professor).

"*It is very important, to develop some policies, be clear about these policies and not apply single and simplistic measures or rules, for example the appointment of some women ministers and women parliamentarians and women on the boards with a quota of 10 or 1 in 20*" (male lecturer).

Similar tendencies were also identified in the female academicians' discourse. The first tendency was to hold that society, family and women themselves are responsible for gender inequality phenomena. Most of the female academicians using this discourse tended to be uncertain in their answers concerning the existence of gender (in)equality in education in Cyprus. They displayed certainty only about specific factors in the social and family environment that seem to facilitate gender inequality. The references they made to the nature of academic institutes were very reserved. Also, they did not suggest any comprehensive measures to combat gender inequality in education. A second tendency stressed the need for women scholars to become more actively engaged. Female academicians using this discourse held a firm belief in the existence of equality and considered that difficulties could easily be overcome. A third tendency in women's interviews supported a more gender sensitive approach towards explaining women's under-representation in academic institutes. Women using this discourse rejected the opinion that gender equality exists in education with great certainty. They suggested a variety of causes for gender inequality, arising both from the social and the academic institute environment, and offered specific suggestions on how to cope with the complexity of gender equality issues.

Discourse analysis of student answers to the interview questions

The discourse analysis of the interviews produced the following results: a large proportion of the students interviewed during this study responded by expressing stereotypes about women, women's role and women's potential to be effective in political life. More precisely, twenty-seven out of the fifty-eight students interviewed expressed positions based on gender stereotypes. During these interviews parallel questions to the ones submitted earlier to the scholars were used. The various stereotypical positions expressed during the interviews by the students, male and female, are summarized in the table below.

Table 13. *The students' positions containing gender stereotypes*

Subject No.	Student Group Leaders	Subject No.	Student political party representatives and electors* (electors = all enrolled students)
2 (W)	There is rivalry among women which prevents them from giving their vote to one another.	10 (M)	Women are by nature more jealous than men, they underestimate their own abilities and believe that men can be better leaders (than women).
5 (W)	Men, by their nature, know more people. They naturally have greater leading skills and are more persistent. Women easily succumb to pressure.	32* (M)	I think that men are more qualified. They can easily dominate. Women are more emotional and this deters progress.
15 (W)	Men are more willing to assume leadership positions. Women are more	34*	Leaders in this country are men by tradition. A reason for this is the

	compliant. In positions of power, women are more organizational and anxious, while men are more relaxed. Some sectors that relate to the emotions, like literature, art and pre-primary education, attract more women.	**(M)**	way we men grow up. This way prepares us to become leaders.
17 (M)	Women can take leadership roles in social groups and charities such as Doctors of the World.	**35* (M)**	Men can more easily make an impression. Men do not hesitate to come into conflict with other people when needed. Women are very competitive with each other. Women are more emotional.
18 (W)	Men are more daring and dynamic. They are also better able to organize and coordinate (repeated twice). The nature of charity and charity organizations and groups attracts a lot of women.	**36 (W)**	Women compete with each other and prefer to see a man in a leading position rather than a woman.
19 (W)	Women are more focused on their studies and follow the rules strictly. They prefer to undertake fewer responsibilities.	**42 (W), 49 (M), 52 (W)**	It is not a matter of inefficiency but men are more willing to undertake leading positions and possess better skills to persuade other people when they speak.
20 (M)	Men can achieve more than women in leadership positions, independent of their own qualifications.	**43 (M)**	Women have specific weaknesses and they cannot respond with the same effectiveness to the increased time demands of a leadership position, the demands to work late in the night and the need to fight and dispute against other student party leaders. These demand very strong nerves.
21 (M)	They trust men because they believe that they can lead better.	**44 (M)**	A man needs a dynamic woman behind him to be able to dedicate his time to the leadership position demands. Women themselves prefer the role of the mother, the sister and the wife.

25 (W)	Women have always occupied themselves with cultural and social issues. Men undertake all other activities.	46 (W)	The reason is that women are not ready to make the same sacrifices as men for their political party.
26 (M)	Women in senior and managerial positions are far more vengeful than men.	48 (M), 56 (M)	Men have greater influence. Their word counts more and they have more will power. I vote for men because they are more active than women.
28 (W)	We feel that men are more capable and we trust them more than women.	54 (W), 58 (M)	Men have more qualifications, while women are weak.
29 (M)	We have to give more opportunities to women. We are students. It is different than societal positions, where we are afraid of doing something wrong, because it will have a greater impact. At university, it is ok to do something wrong.	55 (W)	I vote for men, because I think that they are more capable and can deal with difficult situations effectively.

Note: Subject No. = number assigned to the specific respondent

However, an equally large number of students expressed a strongly gender sensitive approach in their answers about males and females in administrative positions. They supported these beliefs/opinions with great strength and certainty, as illustrated by the use of the following expressions: "women are", "you have to", "I consider" and similar expressions. The following table summarizes the students' positions indicating a gender sensitive approach about women in leading/administrative positions.

Table 14. *The students' positions expressing a gender sensitive approach*

Subject No.	Student Group Leaders	Subject No.	Student political party representatives and electors*
2 (W)	Women are more decisive in their roles in certain groups.	4 (M)	You have to select the person that can represent your own rights and positions, independent of their gender. I consider women today to have enough self-confidence and they will constantly make their presence more evident.

6 (M)	A woman can be successful in a leading position. There is gender equality.	**8 (M)**	I vote based on the person's capacity for the specific position. The external appearance does not influence my selection. A man is not necessarily more appropriate in a position than a woman.
7 (W)	I vote based on the person's capacity for the specific position and not the person's appearance. Some women fail in organizational positions because they are not truly interested in these positions and do not have the capacity to undertake these positions.	**9 (W)**	Gender does not influence my final selection. What needs to be considered is what the specific person can do for the society. A woman has the same possibility as a man to fail or succeed.
13 (W)	Women are interested and participate in public affairs. The extent of the influence of prejudice on women's (non)-participation depends on the woman's character. Women who are more social and dynamic are not influenced so much. Women balance sensitivity and rational ability.	**12* (M)**	I vote for the most capable person. I voted for a woman in the parliamentary elections. Our society reproduces some superstitions and prejudices. There is a lot of progress that is due to women's activity.
14 (W)	I first consider what the person has done or has to offer, independently of their gender. A man is not necessarily more fitted to a leadership position than a woman.	**30* (W)**	I have seen women who have terrific leading abilities, abilities more developed than those of men. Existing prejudices, that men should have leadership positions, make women vote for men. There are dynamic women who have self-confidence and try to get leadership positions.
23 (M)	Women trust themselves. They want to be able to bring new ideas into a group. Their objective is to participate. Women are very dynamic. We can see them undertake initiatives, responsible positions and succeed in these positions.		
24 (M)	I vote for the person with the most qualifications, independently of their gender. The previous woman president was tops. Society undoubtedly reproduces specific role models that date from years ago and still survive.	**33* (W)**	Men and women are equal. Men have the advantage of being heard more. There is a lot of progress in Cyprus. Women who have increased self-confidence and dynamic personalities are not influenced by social prejudice.

25 (W)	I have voted for both men and women, independently of their gender and appearance. I believe that women today are more dynamic, they demand things and want to say their opinion. Women's sensitivity is not a weakness. The group's nature does not attract more male or female students.	38 (W)	Unfortunately men are preferred in leadership positions. There is some caution when it comes to women, particularly when political issues are discussed. Women themselves are also suspicious of other women. Women can lead. They have the power and the capacity to do so.
27 (M)	Society reproduces this phenomenon and considers women to be weak. It is very difficult to change those and similar opinions which are held beliefs for many people. I personally believe that a sensitization movement could help change this situation gradually. I believe that women are very capable, because of my participation in different councils. They undertake personal responsibilities and this also happens in their life in general.	39 (W)	I vote for the person with the most qualifications. There were some moments that I acted more sentimentally rather than rationally. I do not consider this negative, because presidents need to understand that they shall earn other people's estimation, sympathy and love.
		41 (M)	I vote for the person who seems to be more capable, independently of their gender. Women vote for women and support each other.

Note: Subject No. = number assigned to the specific respondent

Discussion

This research aimed to critically investigate, document and present the quantitative and qualitative attributes of the Gendered Map of the Tertiary Education System in Cyprus.

With regards to the first research question, men and women were not equally represented in any of the academic sectors examined during the academic years 2005/06 to 2010/11. Male scholars outnumbered female scholars in all ranks. However, the difference was lower in non-permanent teaching positions, i.e. assistant professors and lecturers. On the other hand, women occupied the greatest percentage of special teaching staff positions in most of the examined academic institutes. As far as academic leading positions were concerned (meaning deans and chairpersons), women's participation was very limited. The same pattern appeared with regard to men and women in administrative-organizational positions. While women occupied scientific and non-scientific

personnel positions, men occupied the majority of the highest administrative posts as directors and heads. As to researchers, men were more than double than the number of women in engineering, medical and agricultural sciences and were nearly double in exact and social sciences. In the human sciences, male and female researchers were almost numerically equal. Finally, women's participation as research coordinators was very limited. Exceptions were observed in cases of European funding to private universities, in which male and female researchers seemed to have equal opportunities.

This observation is in line with previous research findings, suggesting that although women have increased their numbers in higher educational institutions (Howie & Tauchert, 2002; Luke, 2001; Morley, 2005), the largest increases have been in junior, untenured, and part-time positions, where they often outnumber men (Luke, 2001). The glass ceiling effect (i.e., Morrison et al., 1992) seems to exist in the Cyprus tertiary education system, preventing women from overcoming the barrier to higher and administrative positions. Further barriers make women's participation in research even harder. The influence of the research barrier seemed to be less powerful in some specific private academic institutes, where male and female scholars/researchers were employed in specific research laboratories or centers with research as their main task.

Moving on to the next research question, the analysis of the opinions/beliefs held by the project participants towards gender equality issues and the discourse they used to explain the distribution of male and female academicians in different academic posts revealed the following: male and female scholars in this survey held similar but slightly different opinions about the existence of gender equality in higher education, the causes of gender (in)equality and suggestions for a gender sensitive approach in tertiary education. Women scholars tended to recognize the existence of gender inequality in education at a higher percentage than their male counterparts. However, the majority of both male and female research participants did not worry about gender equality in higher education. This was further illustrated during the discourse analysis of male and female scholars' speech. The dominant discourse supported by both male and female scholars affirmed that the sources of women's under-representation in higher education are principally related to family factors, societal factors, and women's environment and personality factors. It is important to mention that only men underestimated women's personal abilities and their competence to be promoted and hold decision-making positions in the academy. The academic institutes themselves are not even mentioned in the above discourse as a possible source for women's gender inequality.

This result can be interpreted by taking into account the complex and hidden nature of the possible causes of gender inequality analyzed in the relevant research bibliography. The marginalization of women in higher education occurs implicitly and through unstated, subtle, hardly conscious, and hidden processes (Husu, 2000; Margolis, 2001; Morley, 2007; Morley, 2006; Morley, 2005; Siemieńska, 2000). This hidden agenda of the male-dominated culture takes many forms in higher education (Margolis, 2001). Studies have reported how discrimination against women can involve not taking women seriously and doubting their ability and motivation (Seymour & Hewitt, 1997). Even when women are physically present as staff and as students in higher education, they are often excluded from decision-making, discussion and debate (Lewis, 1994). These processes have to do with male networks, the mutual male support systems, the academic sociality of men, and the

relative "invisibility" of women with regard to their male colleagues (see, for example, Benokraitis, 1998; Caplan, 1994). The implicit and hidden nature of gender related barriers in higher education makes marginalization persistent. A question is how to challenge the hidden gendered ethos of higher education (Morley, 2005).

According to the present study this challenge becomes very difficult because of the culturally male-dominant patterns of belief that consider "men more capable of leading and persuading," beliefs that even female students affirmed in their interviews. However, this study also contains some evidence about the existence of very positive factors or elements, upon which a gender sensitive approach in Cyprus higher education can be built. Some of the scholars (both male and female research participants) seemed to be conscious of the complexity of the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in the various sectors of higher education. The use of a very strong gender sensitive discourse from a small number of both male and female scholars, whether they dealt with gender equality issues in their work as scholars or not, was very encouraging for the promotion of gender equality in higher education.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that gender equality in the academy cannot be further reinforced unless the institutional barriers are recognized and, furthermore, until cultural patterns change. For example, if regulations allow only professors in the first rank of the positions to become members of the evaluation and promotion committees, or head persons of the Departments, it is obvious that the seats on decision-making committees will continue to be held by men, simply because men hold the majority of the professorships. Moreover, it must be recognized by the members of these academies that in the cases of equally qualified candidates there is a trend, even among women committee members, to favor the male candidate. As research-based data show, "Both men and women were more likely to vote to hire a male job applicant than a female job applicant with an identical record" (Steinpreis et al., 1999, p. 509). The implicit masculine criteria continue to play their role in non-gender sensitive societies and, according to this study, girls of the new generation continue to think and act on the basis of implicit and well-internalized masculine criteria.

Further research is still needed to promote awareness in the community on gender issues and to unveil the real barriers to women's equal representation in the academy. This may come in various stages of academic/scientific work and research.

Conclusion

Gender inequality in the Cyprus academy refers to the under-representation of women in academic posts, their limited numbers in the rank of professorship, their absence in decision-making bodies and positions, and the restricted participation of women in externally funded research programs. Culture is always highly resistant to change; prejudices and negative stereotypes against women seem to be well established even among the new generation, as the interviews with students have indicated. We need to face the negative effects caused by a male scientific ethos in the academy which is constituted by stereotypes, institutional criteria, social and family factors, and a lack of sensitivity towards gender issues. The barriers can be removed only if we become aware of the

inequality and its causes, a premise that sounds simple but is actually very complex because of the rhetorical acceptance of equality and inertia when it comes to action. In the final analysis, gender inequality guarantees the control and power of the majority over the minority, which translates to men professors having power over women lecturers and male student representatives' control of female student voters, a pattern that is dominant in more sectors than just the academy and research.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire used during the interviews with the academic scholars

1. Does gender equality exist in Cyprus?

2. Do you believe that gender equality exists in education?

3. Data collection and analysis have revealed that there is a large majority of males in both public and private universities in Cyprus. More specifically, during the year 1995-1996 74.63% of the total 397 academics in public universities in Cyprus were males and only twenty-five were women (37%). In 2001-2002 men constituted 72.30 % of scholars, and women 27.79%. In 2007-2008 the rate for men stood at 70.30 %, while the respective percentage for women was only 29.70%. From 1995 to 2008 there has been a slight and steady increase of approximately 2% in women's representation rates in Universities with the percentage for men, however, remaining very high. How do you explain this data?

4. The data collection and analysis revealed that there was a great majority of men in tertiary education in Cyprus in both public and private academic institutes. Why do you think this is, and what practices/policies can change this situation?

5. How do you explain the research findings revealing that despite the greater admission rates of female students in both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, more males than females are promoted in senior academic positions?

6. In the current academic year, the councils in nearly all academic institutes in Cyprus have a male president. How do you explain this?

7. What structures, educational or social, do you think make equality difficult?

8. The results of the European research project «She figures» show that women's average involvement in research is less than 30% compared to the respective average participation of men (70%). Why do you think there is such a big gap/difference?

9. Have you identified discrimination policies (institutional and practical) in your work?

10. How effective do you find the European Union's policy of gender mainstreaming and what changes would you suggest?

Questionnaire used during the interviews with the students

1. How do you interpret the election of male students in the students' unions' leading positions, despite the greater participation of women in the specific bodies?

2. Do you vote for male or female students and what criteria do you follow in your voting selection?

3. Did you have any experience of a female student in a leading position, who disappointed you and failed in their mission?

4. Is your decision on a male president a conscious decision or is it based on guidelines provided by your political party? (only for political party representatives)

5. Does connaissance have a role in the election of specific candidates?

6. Do you think that males have more qualifications compared with female students? What qualifications?

7. A study observation of this project was that in the few circumstances, when a female was elected as a president there was always a male sub-president. Do you think that this has to do with the union's worry that females might fail in their duties?

8. Despite the majority of women in the University, senior positions are held by men. Women, therefore, do not vote for women. Why do you believe that this happens?

9. (For Men) As a man, do you have trouble being led by a woman in your political party or students' union?

10. Do you think that women act more by recourse to their logic or sentiment?

11. Do you think that this is a disadvantage for their promotion in a higher position?

12. Do you believe that women have the self-confidence required to seek a leading position in a political party or do they underestimate their competences because of the existing prejudice?

13. Do you believe that our society and culture reproduce the prejudice that women cannot lead?

14. Do you think that there is some progress towards gender equality in Cyprus?

Performances des Filles en Sciences

dans les Établissements Secondaires et Universitaires

du Burkina Faso

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Pour : Femmes Scientifiques du Faso pour la Promotion de l'Éducation
        Scientifique et Technologique des Femmes (FESCIFA-PRESCITEF)

La présente communication est une brève synthèse d'une étude menée en 2000 par une équipe d'universitaires (Afsata Paré, psychopédagogue, Fernand Sanou, sociologue de l'éducation, coordonnateur) et d'inspecteurs de l'enseignement secondaire : Soumaïla Keita (Mathématiques), Aminata Elisabeth Ouédraogo (Sciences Naturelles) et Guidouma Oumar Sanou (Physique-Chimie), sous le titre «Amélioration des performances des filles dans les disciplines scientifiques dans les établissements secondaires et universitaires du Burkina Faso », à la demande de l'association « Femmes Scientifiques du Faso ».

Résumé

Partant d'un échantillon assez représentatif des élèves inscrits en 1999, et d'échantillons de parents d'élèves, d'enseignants et de chefs d'établissement, la présente étude a mis en relief un certain nombre de facteurs explicatifs et, surtout, de la faible performance des élèves en général et des filles en particulier dans les matières scientifiques. Il s'agit, notamment, du manque de confiance en soi, en ses capacités de réussite, de la faible participation aux cours, de la préférence pour les parties des programmes et des devoirs demandant peu d'effort de raisonnement et de recherche et résolution de problèmes.

Il s'agit également de la tendance des enseignants à interroger plus les garçons que les filles et à créditer les garçons de plus de capacités intellectuelles que les filles, bref, de biais sexistes.
La décennie qui a suivi l'étude a été marquée par une amélioration quantitative substantielle de la scolarisation primaire mais pas de la qualité aussi bien au primaire qu'au secondaire, le supérieur ayant par ailleurs payé le coût de l'amélioration quantitative du primaire.

Tirant les leçons de cette mauvaise expérience, le Gouvernement entend relever la qualité de l'enseignement de base incluant le préscolaire, le primaire et le post-primaire par le relèvement du niveau de recrutement et de la durée de formation des enseignants de cet ordre qui seraient désormais recrutés au niveau du Baccalauréat plutôt que du Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle (BEPC) et formés en deux ans plutôt qu'un.

I. PROBLEMATIQUE

Jusqu'au milieu des années 80, les recherches sur les inégalités des sexes dans le domaine de l'éducation avaient surtout porté sur les inégalités d'accès en défaveur des filles, en particulier celles des pays en développement. Depuis lors, si l'attention a continué à être portée sur ces inégalités persistantes d'accès dans ces derniers pays, par contre, dans les pays développés où les inégalités d'accès ont disparu ou ont été inversées au profit des filles, l'accent est davantage mis sur les différences de performances dans et d'orientation vers les différentes disciplines et, partant, les carrières ouvertes par ces disciplines dans des pays où prédominent la science et la technique.

Des recherches isolées épinglaient ces différences, mais elles n'ont bénéficié d'une véritable attention nationale et internationale qu'avec les grandes enquêtes menées, par exemple, en France par la Direction de l'Evaluation et de la Prospective (DEP) en 1989 (Education et Formation, revue de la DEP, n°9, avril-juin 1989), de l'INSEE en 1990 (Données sociales 1990) et par Baudelot et Establet (*Allez les filles*!, Seuil 1992) ; aux États-Unis, par une vaste enquête menée par l'American Association of University Women (AAUW) et dont les résultats ont été publiés en 1991 sous le titre « *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America* » et repris en 1994 sous forme de portraits par une

journaliste, Peggy Orenstein (School Girls: Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap)[1], puis traduit en plusieurs langues et diffusé en 1995 sous le titre « *How Schools Shortchange Girls* ».

Les conclusions de ces enquêtes étaient qu'il ne suffisait pas d'avoir une égalité quantitative entre garçons et filles à tous les niveaux de l'échelle scolaire, mais qu'il fallait aussi et peut-être surtout avoir une égalité qualitative en termes de filières de formation valorisées et valorisantes, ce qui est loin d'être le cas. En particulier, il a été constaté que, comme le dit Marie Daru, « Les filles parcourent le système scolaire de manière apparemment plus aisée, au moins pendant les premières années. Elles sont moins nombreuses à atteindre les niveaux de formation les plus élevés et les plus prestigieux, mais elles acquièrent une formation générale en moyenne plus longue. En ce sens, les filles apparaissent comme privilégiées. Il est plus juste, cependant, de parler de « apparent privilège » : cette orientation vers les études générales est l'envers d'un accès relativement limité aux formations professionnelles, notamment aux plus rentables. Qui plus est, à tous les niveaux, les filles sont concentrées dans un nombre de filières beaucoup plus restreint que les garçons » (1990: 26-27).

Qu'il s'agisse de la France, des États-Unis ou de tout autre pays développé, on constate que les filles s'inscrivent moins dans les filières scientifiques et que, d'une façon générale, elles réussissent moins dans ces disciplines, du moins, à partir d'un certain niveau - le niveau secondaire, particulièrement le second cycle. Selon Baudelot et Establet, « Encore franchement majoritaires en seconde du fait de leur meilleure résistance aux mécanismes de sélection de la fin de troisième, les filles disparaissent ensuite rapidement des filières scolaires et universitaires, qui affichent de plus en plus leur vocation scientifique » (Allez les filles!, 1992, 118-119)

La cause de la lutte pour l'égalité d'accès aux études scientifiques et techniques dans les pays développés semble donc entendue – quoique souvent de façon trop restrictive en termes d'emploi alors qu'il faudrait parler en termes d'intégration sociale plus large, selon l'AAUW (1995, 2). Par contre, dans les pays en développement, la préoccupation majeure de ceux qui luttent pour la scolarisation des filles concerne l'aspect quantitatif de l'accès même à l'école. Cela s'explique bien par les écarts très marqués dans les taux de scolarisation des garçons et des filles, écarts allant croissants avec l'élévation des niveaux de scolarisation. Dans le cas du Burkina Faso, par exemple, on note qu'en 1999 la proportion des filles par rapport aux effectifs scolaires est de 39% au primaire, 32% au secondaire et 24% au supérieur.

Mais, les contextes international et national ont beaucoup changé avec la mondialisation caractérisée par la forte tendance à l'effacement des frontières nationales (politiques, économiques et culturelles) au profit d'un système global intégrant les sous-systèmes socio-économiques et politiques nationaux et dominé par la compétition pour les marchés. La science et la technologie, l'imagination, la créativité et la capacité d'adaptation, la flexibilité deviennent plus que jamais les instruments privilégiés de cette compétition internationale.

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[1] Une synthèse des études (1.300) sur la scolarisation et scolarité des filles américaines a été publiée en 1995 par l'AAUW sous le titre « La scolarisation féminine mise au rabais. Etude sur les principaux résultats des recherches consacrées à la scolarisation féminine ».

Les nouvelles firmes n'ont plus de nationalités, sont dispersées sur tous les continents et recrutent la main-d'œuvre ou les cerveaux les plus avantageux. Avec ces «firmes œcuméniques » (Reich, 1993, 157), personne, quelle que soit sa nationalité, n'est garanti de conserver indéfiniment son emploi s'il n'améliore constamment ses compétences. Selon Reich, *«dans l'économie mondiale qui est en train de naître, même la position la plus impressionnante dans l'organisation la plus prestigieuse est vulnérable à la concurrence internationale si elle implique des fonctions de routine faciles à copier. Le seul véritable avantage compétitif réside dans les compétences en matière de résolution et d'identification de nouveaux problèmes, et de courtage stratégique »* (169).

L'Afrique, en général, et le Burkina Faso, en particulier, ont donc tout intérêt à revoir leur politique de scolarisation dans leur ensemble et celle des filles en particulier pour éviter à celles-ci le double handicap du (faible) nombre et de la (faible) qualité.

C'est la motivation profonde qui a conduit l'association « Femmes Scientifiques du Faso » à faire mener une étude pour identifier les obstacles qui expliquaient la faible représentation des filles dans les filières scientifiques (21% dans les séries D, 7% dans les séries C des établissements secondaires; 7% dans la filière Mathématiques-Physique-Chimie et 13% dans la filière Sciences Naturelles, selon les statistiques des années scolaires et universitaires 1997-1998 et 1998 ainsi que leur relative sous-performance dans ces filières.

Il faut distinguer ces deux aspects de la représentation démographique et de la sous-performance. A priori, on peut penser que les deux sont liés, surtout dans notre pays où l'orientation dans les différentes filières scolaires et académiques se fait par les conseils de professeurs en fonction des aptitudes démontrées. Mais, l'expérience des pays développés indique la possibilité d'« auto-orientation » des filles elles-mêmes, comme aussi des garçons, vers des filières non-scientifiques, plus en fonction de certaines pesanteurs socioculturelles qu'en fonction des compétences et des aptitudes scolaires. Ainsi, par exemple, en France, Baudelot et Establet ont constaté que « Les garçons se montrent plus persuadés que les filles de l'utilité des mathématiques pour trouver un emploi (50 % contre 34%), un travail intéressant (62% contre 49%) et lucratif (48% contre 36%). L'aversion dont témoignent les filles à s'engager dans la filière scientifique met en jeu la plupart des traits culturels qui définissent le modèle traditionnel proposé aux femmes : moindre intérêt pour la connaissance rationnelle de la nature, moindre intériorisation des valeurs de compétition, plus forte incertitude sur l'investissement strictement professionnel. Chacun de ces facteurs, et surtout les deux derniers, a sa part dans l'explication finale » (1992, 137-138).

Il n'est du reste pas exclu que ces déterminants socioculturels « externes » influencent d'une manière ou d'une autre les déterminants psychologiques « internes ».

II. BREVE REVUE DE LA LITTERATURE

Les études et recherches sur les obstacles à l'orientation et aux performances égales des filles et des garçons faite dans les pays développés comme, notamment la France et les États-Unis mettent en exergue trois séries de facteurs ou déterminants, avec des recoupements et des interactions possibles.

Il s'agit des facteurs :

- socioculturels, extérieurs à l'école et liés à l'organisation, au fonctionnement de la société et à ses croyances ou facteurs socioculturels concernant la perception des hommes et des femmes, leurs différentes qualités réelles ou supposées, leurs places respectives dans la société ;

- psychologiques ou cognitifs subjectifs, liés à des caractères collectifs attribués aux garçons et aux filles ou manifestés par les éléments individuels, par exemple, à travers les préférences de disciplines ;

- psychopédagogiques internes à l'école et liés (a) aux objectifs pédagogiques assignés à l'institution scolaire, d'une façon générale, et à certains programmes, d'une façon particulière, (b) au comportement du maître en classe vis-à-vis des élèves des deux sexes et (c) aux différents comportements des élèves des deux sexes en classe.

2.1. Facteurs socioculturels : indicateurs et limites

Les indicateurs

L'exemple français des choix de filières scolaires et de carrières par les filles en fonction des rôles sociaux assignés aux et acceptés par les femmes – ceux notamment d'être le plus proches possible du foyer - indique que les facteurs socioculturels jouent un rôle variable selon les sociétés mais réel. Faisant un tour du monde sur la question, et parlant de l'université américaine, Baudelot et Establet notent que :

> « On retrouve donc dans l'université la plus riche et la plus moderne du monde l'éternel et monotone clivage, commun aux pays du tiers-monde et à la vieille Europe, entre un supérieur masculin tourné vers la pratique, la maîtrise des choses et des hommes, et un supérieur féminin orienté vers la relation, l'éducation et la santé. Rien encore n'a été fondamentalement bouleversé (1992, 65).

Les limites de l'explication socioculturelle

L'exemple américain montre que, si les facteurs socioculturels ont un impact sur les orientations des filles vers les différentes filières, il n'en demeure pas moins que cet impact n'est pas uniforme au sein de la société et que ces facteurs eux-mêmes ne sont pas figés, qu'ils évoluent, notamment sous l'effet des actions et des réactions des groupes sociaux qui se considèrent victimes des discriminations.

En fait, certains sociologues estiment qu'il est très difficile de saisir l'impact de la macro-culture sur la scolarisation, surtout au niveau le plus élevé. Baudelot et Establet, par exemple, pensent qu'en ce qui concerne les rapports hommes-femmes, le caractère quasi-universel de leur perception à travers le monde fait qu'il vaut mieux les désigner sous le terme de « stéréotype » (ou « répertoire virtuel d'attentes sociales »). Selon eux, en effet,

> « Le chatoiement des cultures, les fantaisies religieuses ne sont guère perceptibles dans le tableau mondial des universités. On attendait des pays islamistes ségrégatifs ; ils instruisent les femmes à proportion exacte de leurs moyens et, s'ils orientent les étudiantes vers les

lettres et les étudiants vers les métiers de l'ingénieur, ils obéissent, non point à la *charia*, mais à un modèle universel (1992, 68).

2.2. Facteurs psychologiques, cognitifs, subjectifs

Parmi les facteurs psychologiques, cognitifs et subjectifs, il est souvent mentionné (a) la confiance en soi des garçons et le doute des filles, (b) le goût de la compétition comme aiguillon et (c) l'impact de l'origine sociale et du sexe.

a) La confiance en soi des garçons et le doute des filles

Pour accomplir leur rôle social de protection et de chef de famille, les garçons seraient élevés et socialisés dans la confiance en soi et les filles dans une sorte de réserve, de doute. Or, selon certaines recherches, l'assurance, la confiance en soi et la détermination sont des facteurs explicatifs de l'orientation vers et du succès en mathématiques (Reyes et Stanic, 1988, 26-43). Plus que toute autre variable d'ordre affectif, la confiance en soi déterminerait le niveau de performance en mathématiques (Fennema et Sherman, 1977, 51-71; Reyes, 1984, 558-81).

b) Le goût de la compétition comme aiguillon

Les garçons afficheraient une plus grande confiance en eux-mêmes et en leurs capacités à réussir dans les disciplines scientifiques telles que les mathématiques réputées difficiles…donc « masculines » (Hyde et al., 1990). D'autres études ont abouti à la conclusion que les filles qui rejettent les stéréotypes sexistes, le confinement aux rôles attribués à leur sexe ont de meilleures performances en mathématiques que les autres qui intériorisent ces stéréotypes. Les filles qui ont de bonnes performances en maths ne considèrent pas cette discipline comme « masculine » (Armstrong, 1985, 56-94). Alors que, au fur et à mesure que le niveau de performance baisse, les filles ont tendance à assimiler les maths à un univers « masculin » (Tartre et Fennema, 1991).

c) L'impact de l'origine sociale et du sexe, complexe et discutable

Les enquêtes et données statistiques exploitées par Baudelot et Establet en France aboutissent aux mêmes conclusions que celles des chercheurs américains sur la primauté de l'origine sociale dans les performances scolaires des élèves à tous les niveaux de scolarisation. Le sexe serait la seconde variable explicative des différences de performances, avec un impact variable selon les pays et selon l'origine sociale. La situation pourrait se résumer de la façon suivante:

- « Dans les pays où l'égalité des accès est plus développée, les inégalités sociales entre les filles sont moins accusées que chez les garçons.

- Les écarts entre filles et garçons décroissent à mesure que s'élève l'origine sociale au sein d'une société donnée. Ils décroissent aussi d'une société à l'autre, à mesure que s'élève la richesse dont elles disposent.

- A la différence de l'origine sociale, dont les effets sur la réussite scolaire sont identiques dans tous les pays, l'action de cette variable s'est modifiée avec l'extension des scolarités: dans les pays pauvres, les scolarités enregistrent de façon directe la domination des garçons sur les filles; dans les pays riches, à scolarisation développée, la retraduction scolaire s'effectue

selon une relation croisée, chaque sexe tirant avantages et inconvénients de la situation sociale de domination » (1992, 156-157).

L'étude sur la sous-scolarisation des filles menée en 1995 par Fernand Sanou indique que les écarts entre les taux de redoublements des garçons et des filles décroissaient avec l'accroissement des taux de scolarité des différentes provinces enquêtées, taux liés à la relative richesse des provinces.

2.3. Facteurs psychopédagogiques

Selon certaines études, notamment celle d'Ellen Rydell Altermatt, Jasna Jovanovic et Mochelle Perry (1998, 516-527), les éléments suivants contribuent à expliquer les différences de performances entre garçons et filles : (a) la classe, avec les stéréotypes sexistes qui s'y manifestent à travers l'enseignant, (b) les élèves eux-mêmes, (c) les méthodes d'enseignement, plus précisément la conduite ou animation d'une classe, la construction des épreuves et la manière de les noter ou docimologie. Ces auteurs font remarquer que si dans trois classes de science sur six étudiées, les maîtres interrogeaient les garçons plus souvent qu'on pourrait s'y attendre sur la base des effectifs des garçons dans les classes, par contre, dans aucune des six classes, les maîtres n'interrogeaient les garçons plus souvent qu'ils ne se portaient volontaires pour répondre aux questions. D'où leur proposition d'examiner de plus près la part respective des maîtres et des élèves dans la création et le maintien des différences sexistes dans les relations enseignants-élèves.

Les questions de recherche ont été ciblées sur ces trois facteurs majeurs considérés comme déterminants dans les différences de performances des garçons et des filles dans le domaine scientifique.

III. METHODOLOGIE

Pour vérifier dans quelle mesure ces trois facteurs influençaient les performances des filles et des garçons des établissements secondaires et supérieurs du Burkina Faso, on a recouru à deux techniques :

1. La collecte de données secondaires constituées essentiellement (a) de statistiques scolaires sur la répartition des effectifs selon le sexe dans les différentes séries ainsi que les performances dans les différentes matières scientifiques selon le sexe au BEPC et au BAC des sessions 1995 et, surtout, 1998 plus récente et (b) de documents relatifs à l'organisation des enseignements et des programmes des différentes disciplines scientifiques.

2. L'administration de questionnaires et de guides d'entretien à des échantillons (a) d'élèves, (b) de parents d'élèves, (c) d'enseignants de maths, de sciences physiques et de sciences naturelles de l'enseignement secondaire, (d) de chefs d'établissements secondaires, (e) d'étudiants de l'Université de Ouagadougou (Faculté des Sciences et Techniques, FAST) et de Bobo-Dioulasso (Institut du Développement Rural, IDR), (f) d'enseignants de maths, physique-chimie, sciences naturelles, médecine et pharmacie de l'Université de Ouagadougou.

Les questionnaires et guides d'entretien avaient pour but de recueillir les opinions des différents acteurs du système éducatif secondaire et supérieur sur les différentes questions de recherche

portant sur les grands facteurs identifiés comme facteurs explicatifs de la sous-performance des filles dans les disciplines scientifiques. Ils avaient aussi pour but de recueillir des informations relatives aux variables classiques sociodémographiques (sexe, âge) et socioculturelles et professionnelles (niveau d'instruction et profession des parents, ethnie ou zone culturelle) afin de les croiser avec les opinions des acteurs et voir dans quelle mesure ces variables influencent ces opinions.

Un effectif de 3 221 élèves a été soumis au questionnaire-élèves, avec une représentation « normale » (par rapport à la population scolaire totale) en termes de genre mais un biais volontaire pour ceux des classes du second cycle et des disciplines scientifiques (séries C et D).

Un échantillon de 350 étudiants de la Faculté des Sciences et Techniques (FAST) et de la Faculté des Sciences de la Santé (FSS) a également été soumis à un questionnaire.

a) Les parents d'élèves

Un échantillon de 876 parents d'élèves a été interrogé. Il indiquait que d'une façon générale, les élèves avaient des origines sociales relativement élevées par rapport à l'ensemble de la population burkinabè. Leurs parents avaient un niveau d'instruction plus élevé que la moyenne national. Et cela était encore plus vrai pour les filles. En effet, pour une population à 82,2% sans niveau d'instruction, les parents des élèves représentaient 43,8% pour l'ensemble, 50,4% pour les garçons et 35,3% pour les filles.

b) Les professeurs

L'étude a impliqué un échantillon de 250 enseignants des disciplines scientifiques, notamment les trois fondamentales que sont les Maths, Physique-Chimie et Sciences Naturelles enseignées individuellement que par les professeurs de lycée et en combinaison Maths-PC, Maths-SN, PC-SN pour les professeurs de CEG (Collège d'enseignement général).

La proportion des femmes était très faible aussi bien au niveau de l'échantillon qu'au niveau de l'ensemble des enseignants de sciences. Elles constituaient 16,9% de l'échantillon comme de l'ensemble des enseignants toutes disciplines confondues en poste en 1999. Mais cette proportion était bien supérieure à celle de l'ensemble des professeurs de sciences qui était, en 1999, de 9,9%. La plus forte représentation des femmes se situe au niveau de la combinaison Maths-SN où elles constituaient près d'un tiers (31,3%) des effectifs de l'échantillon et 11,8% de l'ensemble des enseignants de cette spécialité. La seconde meilleure représentation féminine se situait au niveau des Sciences Naturelles avec 28,3% de femmes au niveau de l'échantillon. Au niveau national, c'était la discipline de la plus forte représentation féminine avec 14,8%. La Physique-chimie est la discipline où les femmes sont le moins représentées, avec seulement 4,0% au niveau de l'échantillon, inférieur cependant à la moyenne nationale de 6,8% avant-dernière devant la combinaison Maths-PC (3,6%).

c) Les chefs d'établissement

Une cinquantaine (52) de chefs d'établissement comprenant aussi bien les établissements retenus dans l'échantillon-élèves que d'autres situés dans la localité d'enquête avaient répondu au questionnaire et avaient ainsi permis d'avoir quelques indications sur le profil socioprofessionnel de ces responsables.

Des 48 chefs d'établissement qui avaient indiqué leur sexe, 39, soit 81,3%, étaient des hommes et 9, soit 18,7%, étaient des femmes. La représentation des femmes à ce niveau de responsabilité semble « normale » et correspondre à leur représentation dans le corps enseignant, c'est-à-dire, très faible.

Sur les 50 chefs d'établissement qui avaient indiqué leur discipline, 34 (68%) enseignaient des disciplines littéraires et 16 (32%) des disciplines scientifiques. Cette représentation semblait conforme à celle des deux catégories disciplinaires : 63,1% de littéraires et 36,9% de scientifiques, ce qui voulait dire qu'il n'y avait pas de discrimination disciplinaire au niveau des responsabilités de chefs d'établissement. Il restait toutefois qu'on pouvait s'interroger sur l'impact de cette répartition « équitable » mais très faible des scientifiques sur la culture, l'enthousiasme des élèves pour les disciplines scientifiques. On pouvait, par exemple, se demander si le chef d'établissement littéraire aurait le même empressement que son homologue scientifique pour satisfaire les besoins en produits d'expérimentation.

IV. RÉSULTATS ET ANALYSE

Les réponses des différents échantillons de l'étude avaient permis de faire les constats et les conclusions ci-après concernant les différents facteurs perçus comme déterminants.

4.1. Facteurs socioculturels

La relative sous-performance des filles dans les disciplines scientifiques s'inscrit dans un contexte plus large de sous-représentation globale des filles dans le système éducatif dans son ensemble et à ses niveaux secondaire et supérieur en particulier.

Cette sous-représentation remonte au début même de l'introduction de l'institution scolaire par la colonisation. L'administration coloniale avait des objectifs sociaux et politiques précis : scolariser d'abord les fils de chefs et de notables pour en faire des auxiliaires efficaces. Le problème de l'égalité d'accès des filles et des garçons n'était pas une préoccupation pour cette administration. Pas plus d'ailleurs pour l'Etat Voltaïque indépendant plus préoccupé à sélectionner et former une élite technique pour assurer le développement économique et social du pays que les experts développementalistes disaient alors fortement lié au niveau d'éducation de ces élites.

Les populations, pour leur part, ont développé des stratégies correspondant à celle de l'État qui était (est) d'optimiser les rares ressources en choisissant judicieusement les bénéficiaires de celles-ci. Pour les populations, choisir d'abord de scolariser les garçons représente un choix rationnel dans la mesure où les garçons sont censés perpétuer la descendance familiale et aider les parents ce pendant que les filles sont appelées à quitter leur famille d'origine pour celle d'accueil. Par contre, préparer les filles pour les transactions matrimoniales, au besoin en les empêchant d'aller à l'école et/ou en les retirant prématurément était et est toujours une manière d'optimiser cette sorte de capital humain féminin dans un contexte encore (toujours) dominé par la tradition surtout en milieu rural.

Les inégalités de scolarisation se maintiennent de décennies en décennies en s'accentuant à travers les cycles: 38% de filles en 1970, 39% en 1995 au cycle primaire ; 32% de filles en 1970 et en 1995 au cycle secondaire ; 24% de filles en 1970 et en 1995 au cycle supérieur.

4.1.1. L'orientation vers les différentes disciplines

L'origine sociale (mesurée par la profession du père) ne semblait jouer aucun rôle significatif dans l'orientation des élèves dans les différentes séries (P=0,369). Cette orientation était faite majoritairement (46%) par les élèves eux-mêmes, puis par les conseils des professeurs (28,8%) et, dans une bien moindre mesure, par les chefs d'établissement (11,2%).

La très grande majorité (86,6%) des élèves se disaient satisfaits de leur orientation sans différence significative entre garçons (87,5%) et filles (84,5%).

4.1.2. Discipline de la meilleure note selon l'origine socioculturelle (ethnie)

Les données de l'enquête laissaient percevoir que l'une ou l'autre ethnie était relativement plus représentée au niveau de l'une ou l'autre discipline de la meilleure note. Les différences semblaient statistiquement significatives, mais il était difficile d'en conclure une quelconque prédisposition socioculturelle pour cette discipline. Elles auraient pu être plutôt liées au caractère conjoncturel de l'échantillon.

4.1.3. Discipline de la meilleure note selon l'origine sociale (profession du père)

L'origine sociale symbolisée par la profession du père semblait avoir une certaine influence sur la discipline de la meilleure note, certains groupes étant relativement plus nombreux que d'autres, que la moyenne, au niveau de certaines disciplines sans que pour autant on observât une polarisation-cristallisation.

Ainsi, par exemple, les élèves dont les parents étaient commerçants ou artisans se retrouvaient proportionnellement plus nombreux que la moyenne au niveau de l'Anglais (15,7% pour une moyenne de 14,4%) et des Maths (18,3% pour une moyenne de 15,2%) ; ceux dont les parents étaient ouvriers se retrouvaient proportionnellement plus nombreux au niveau de l'Histoire-Géographie (19,6% pour une moyenne de 15%) et des Sciences Naturelles (24,3% pour une moyenne de 19,5%) ; ceux dont les parents exerçaient une profession libérale étaient relativement plus nombreux à obtenir leurs meilleures notes en Maths (18,9% pour une moyenne de 15,2%), en PC (15,2% pour une moyenne de 11,3%) ou plusieurs matières (15,4% pour une moyenne d'ensemble de 11,3%). Ces différences apparaissaient statistiquement significatives. Toutefois, comme pour l'ethnie, on ne pouvait rien conclure sur l'impact de l'origine sociale sur les performances dans les différentes disciplines en raison du caractère limité et conjoncturel de notre échantillon d'enquête (voir tableau 4.1).

TABLEAU 4.1 : DISCIPLINES DE LA MEILLEURE NOTE SELON LES ORIGINES SOCIALES (PROFESSION DU PERE)

Profession du père	DISCIPLINE DE LA MEILLEURE NOTE (en %)							
	Sc. Nat	Français	Hist/Géo	Philo	Anglais	Maths	P-C	Plusieurs
Cultivateur	19,6	11,5	15,9	0,2	14,3	14,6	11,5	11,5
Commerçant/artisan	18,3	17,0	14,0		15,7	18,3	7,0	7,0
Fonction/Militaire	20,6	16,9	14,4	0,3	14,4	15,1	11,7	11,7
Ouvrier	24,3	12,1	19,6		10,3	9,3	9,3	9,3
Profession libérale	13,9	16,9	13,9		12,9	18,9	15,4	15,4
Autre	15,3	16,1	9,7	1,6	19,4	16,9	8,9	8,9
Total	19,5	16,1	15,0	0,3	14,4	15,2	11,3	11,3
X² = 55,11*			DL = 35**			P = 0,017***		

*X^2 = somme des différences constatées

** DL (Degré de liberté) = le nombre de croisements possibles. S'obtient par le nombre total des rangées ou lignes de données – 1 multiplié celui des colonnes – 1 (r-1) x (c-1)

*** P (Probabilité) = la probabilité que l'on obtienne, avec ces croisements, la somme des différences trouvée par simple hasard ou par erreur d'échantillonnage. Il est convenu que cette probabilité doit être tout au plus égale à 5 pour 100 ou 0,05.

En Mathématiques, en dehors de la géométrie sur laquelle filles et garçons s'accordaient dans pratiquement les mêmes proportions (respectivement 41,1% et 41,9%) à reconnaître qu'elle était la partie du programme la plus abordable. Pour les autres activités mathématiques, il y avait des différences d'appréciation significatives. Ces différences portaient notamment sur le fait que les filles trouvaient les activités numériques plus abordables que les garçons (21,7% contre 17,0% ; de même que l'algèbre (32,1% contre 28,8% des garçons) et qu'en revanche, les garçons étaient plus nombreux (7,7%) que les filles (2,2%) à trouver abordable l'analyse, quoique l'ensemble des élèves trouvât cette activité peu abordable, au contraire de la géométrie (41,5%) et de l'algèbre (30,2%).

Le tableau 4.2 indiquait la répartition des élèves des deux sexes selon leurs appréciations des différentes activités mathématiques en fonction de leur facilité de compréhension.

TABLEAU 4.2 : ACTIVITE LA PLUS ABORDABLE EN MATHS SELON LE SEXE DES ELEVES

SEXE	Partie du programme la plus abordable en Maths (en %)					Total
	Activités numériques	Géométrie	Algèbre	Analyse	plusieurs	
Garçon	17,0	41,9	28,8	7,7	4,7	100,0
Fille	21,2	41,1	32,1	2,2	3,4	100,0
Total	18,8	41,5	30,2	5,3	4,1	100,0
X² = 58,105		DL = 4		P = 0,000		

Qu'en était-il des étudiants ?

Le questionnaire soumis aux étudiants ne comportait pas, comme pour les élèves, la question de la discipline de la meilleure note. Il leur avait été demandé plutôt d'indiquer l'estimation de leurs chances de succès dans leurs disciplines.

Sur ce point, on avait constaté que les étudiantes filles affichaient moins de confiance en leurs capacités intellectuelles, leurs chances de terminer sans échec leurs études. En effet, 63,6% des filles contre 52,2% des garçons estimaient leurs chances moyennes ; 8,5% des filles contre 5,0% des garçons estimaient leurs chances faibles. Les garçons étaient, conséquemment, plus nombreux que les filles à estimer leurs chances de réussite bonnes (33,3% contre 23,3% des filles) voire excellentes (9,5% contre 4,7% des filles) (Voir tableau 4.3).

TABLEAU 4.3 : ESTIMATION DE LEURS CHANCES DE SUCCES PAR LES ETUDIANTS DE L'UNIVERSITE DE OUAGADOUGOU SELON LE SEXE

SEXE	Chances de terminer sa formation sans échec ?				TOTAL	
	Excellentes	Bonnes	Moyennes	Faibles	%	N
Masculin	9,50	33,30	52,20	5,00	100,00	201
Féminin	4,70	23,30	63,60	8,50	100,00	129
Total	7,60	29,40	56,70	6,40	100,00	330
X² = 8,443		DL = 3		P = 0,038		

Toutefois, le degré de confiance de l'ensemble des étudiants et particulièrement des filles augmentait avec le niveau d'études, cela de façon tout à fait compréhensible dans la mesure où les étudiants de 3ème et, surtout, de 5ème année avaient déjà franchi les étapes les plus difficiles de leur cursus académique et étaient pratiquement assurés de le terminer, les autres ayant été exclus en cours de route (Voir tableau 4.4).

TABLEAU 4.4 : ESTIMATION DE LEURS CHANCES DE SUCCES PAR LES ETUDIANTS SELON LE SEXE ET LE NIVEAU D'ETUDES (%)

Année d'étude	Sexe	Quelles sont, selon vous, vos chances de terminer cette formation sans échec ?				Total	
		Excellentes	Bonnes	Moyennes	Faibles	%	N
1ère année	Masculin	3,20	25,40	65,10	6,30	100,00	126
	Féminin	1,10	12,00	76,10	10,90	100,00	92
	Total	2,30	19,70	69,70	8,30	100,00	218
3ème année	Masculin	16,70	37,50	43,80	2,10	100,00	48
	Féminin	5,00	35,00	55,00	5,00	100,00	20
	Total	13,20	36,80	47,10	2,90	100,00	68
5ème année	Masculin	23,80	66,70	4,80	4,80	100,00	21
	Féminin	18,80	75,00	6,30		100,00	16
	Total	21,60	70,30	5,40	2,70	100,00	37
Signification	DL = 3	1ère an ;X²=8,12 P= 0,04		3ème an;X²=2,26 P= 0,52		5ème an; X²=0,99 P= 0,80	

De façon surprenante, c'était en Sciences Naturelles que les filles affichaient moins de confiance en elles-mêmes. Au regard des préférences des filles pour cette discipline au secondaire et à leur plus grande orientation vers celle-ci on s'attendait à les voir plus confiantes en leurs capacités de poursuivre leurs études sans trop de trébuchements. Mais, selon notre échantillon d'enquête, aucune fille n'estimait excellentes ses chances de faire un parcours académique sans faute, contre 8,7% des garçons et seulement 9,9% des filles contre 25,0% des garçons estimaient leurs chances de le faire « bonnes ». La très grande majorité des filles estimaient leurs chances « moyennes » (85,2%) voire « faibles » (5,6%) alors que les garçons étaient respectivement 62,0% et 4,3% à estimer leurs chances « moyennes » ou « faibles ».

On se serait plutôt attendu à ce que ce fût en Mathématiques et en Physique-Chimie que les filles affichassent une plus grande frilosité académique. Mais, celles de notre échantillon d'enquête se montraient au contraire plus confiantes en leurs capacités, étant relativement plus nombreuses que les garçons à estimer leurs chances de succès « excellentes » : 27,6% contre 7,9% des garçons, même si, par ailleurs, elles étaient également plus nombreuses (14,3%) que les garçons (4,8%) à estimer ces chances « faibles », des différences toutefois non statistiquement significatives (P = 0,223). A vrai dire ces statistiques n'avaient pas du tout de signification du fait du très faible effectif des filles (7) par rapport aux garçons (63) (Voir tableau 4.5).

TABLEAU 4.5 : ESTIMATION DE LEURS CHANCES DE SUCCES PAR LES ETUDIANTS SELON LE SEXE ET LA DISCIPLINE (%)

DISCIPLINE	SEXE	Quelles sont, selon vous, vos chances de terminer cette formation sans échec ?				TOTAL	
		Excellentes	Bonnes	Moyennes	Faibles	%	N
Maths/Phys-Chimie	Masculin	7,9	39,7	47,6	4,8	100,0	63
	Féminin	28,6	28,6	28,6	14,3	100,0	7
	Total	10,0	38,6	45,7	5,7	100,0	70
Sciences Naturelles	Masculin	8,7	25,0	62,0	4,3	100,0	92
	Féminin	0,0	9,3	85,2	5,6	100,0	54
	Total	5,5	19,2	70,5	4,8	100,0	146
Médecine/Pharmacie	Masculin	11,9	40,5	40,5	7,1	100,0	42
	Féminin	5,9	33,8	50,0	10,3	100,0	68
	Total	8,2	36,4	46,4	9,1	100,0	110
Signification DL = 3	Maths/P-C	X^2 = 4,384		P = 0,223			
	Sciences Naturelles	X^2 = 11,798		P = 0,008			
	Médecine/Pharmacie	X^2 = 2,259		P = 0,521			

4.1.4. Les performances aux examens nationaux

Les moins bonnes performances des filles par rapport aux garçons dans les disciplines scientifiques demeuraient constantes et significatives au premier cycle secondaire. Au second cycle, elles existaient mais avec une tendance à se réduire, en tout cas, à marquer des fluctuations d'une année à l'autre, notamment au niveau de la série C dont la dominante scientifique (Maths et PC) est affirmée. La tendance à la réduction des inégales performances se poursuivait à l'université et au fil des années sans qu'on pût dire que cela était dû à une plus grande maîtrise des disciplines scientifiques ou à la plus faible représentation des filles rescapées des hécatombes des sélections universitaires.

Les résultats des examens nationaux du BEPC et du BAC de 1998, par exemple, indiquaient :

- Des performances plus faibles des filles de troisième dans toutes les disciplines scientifiques, les différences de performances étant toutes statistiquement significatives (P=0,000).

- Des performances plus équilibrées voire légèrement en faveur des filles de terminale D en sciences naturelles   (P=0,51) mais significativement plus faibles que celles des garçons en maths et physique-chimie (P= respectivement 0,000 et 0,050).

- Des performances relativement homogènes des filles et des garçons en série C mais sans grande signification au regard des effectifs des deux sexes (P= 0,76).

Les moyennes de performances dans les trois disciplines en série C pour la session de 1998 ne marquaient pas de différence significative. Les garçons dépassaient les filles en Mathématiques de 3,9 points sur un total de 140 points; mais ils se faisaient légèrement distancer par elles en sciences physiques et chimiques avec un écart de 0,71 point sur 140 et en sciences naturelles avec un écart de 1,71 sur un total de 60 points. Dans les autres disciplines (littéraires), le niveau de performance était très similaire. Au total, dans aucune épreuve on ne notait de différence significative entre les élèves des deux sexes.

Toutefois, ces résultats ne permettaient pas de tirer des conclusions générales concernant l'égalité des performances entre garçons et filles optant pour la série C. La principale raison tenait au fait que la représentation des filles dans cette série était extrêmement faible tant du point de vue absolu que du point de vue relatif. Par exemple, en 1995, il n'y avait que 15 filles inscrites et présentes pour 146 garçons inscrits dont 139 présents. En 1998, il n'y avait que 22 filles inscrites et présentes pour 157 garçons inscrits dont 151 présents. Soit une moyenne de 10 % de représentation féminine, deux fois moins qu'en série D et deux fois et demi moins que dans l'ensemble des candidats au Baccalauréat (BAC).

Les relativement meilleures performances des filles de la série C par rapport à leurs consœurs de la série D et aux garçons pourraient s'expliquer donc aussi par le fait que celles qui optaient pour cette série étaient les meilleures dans les disciplines scientifiques.

Au supérieur, la spécialisation disciplinaire se renforçait à l'entrée et s'accentuait au fil du cursus académique, particulièrement après le premier cycle. Cette spécialisation conduisait à un filtrage de plus en plus marqué dont l'effet était d'homogénéiser les performances entre les étudiants des deux sexes – une homogénéisation dont l'importance et la signification étaient atténuées ou voilées par le déséquilibre dans la représentation des deux sexes au niveau de certaines filières (maths et sciences physiques notamment).

Pour les années universitaires 1996-1997 et 1997-1998, on ne notait aucune différence significative de performances (succès aux examens terminaux de médecine) entre les étudiants des deux sexes, dans l'ensemble et quelle que fût l'année. Ainsi, en première année, 34,3% des garçons et 37,5% des filles avaient réussi à leurs examens de fin d'année. En troisième année, 63,4% des garçons et 76,2% des filles avaient réussi à leurs examens. En cinquième année, 78,2% des garçons et 87,5% des filles avaient réussi à leurs examens. Les différences notées ne s'avéraient cependant pas statistiquement

significatives en raison des faibles effectifs des filles notamment en 3ème année (42 sur un total de 173 étudiants) et en 5ème année (40 sur 187 étudiants), ceux de la première année étant plus importants en termes absolus et relatifs (200 sur 684 étudiants).

Le tableau 4.6 indiquait les taux de succès des étudiants de la Faculté des Sciences de la Santé (FSS) selon le niveau des études et selon les filières pour les années académiques 1996-1997 et 1997-1998.

TABLEAU 4.6 - RESULTATS AUX EXAMENS DE FIN D'ANNEE DES SESSIONS 1996-1997 ET 1997-1998 DES ETUDIANTS DE LA FSS, SELON LE SEXE ET LE NIVEAU D'ETUDES

Niveau d'études	Sexe	Résultats		Total		Signification DL = 1
		admis	Ajourné	%	N	
1ère année	Masculin	34,3	65,7	100,0	484	
	Féminin	37,5	62,5	100,0	200	$X^2 = 0,636$; P = 0,425
	Total	35,2	64,8	100,0	684	
3ème année	Masculin	63,4	36,6	100,0	131	
	Féminin	76,2	23,8	100,0	42	$X^2 = 1,350$; P = 0,125
	Total	66,5	33,5	100,0	173	
5ème année	Masculin	78,2	21,8	100,0	147	
	Féminin	87,5	12,5	100,0	40	$X^2 = 1,702$; P = 0,192
	Total	80,2	19,8	100,0	187	
Ensemble médecine	Total	53,8	46,2	100,0	671	$X^2 = 0,173$; P = 0,677
Ensemble pharmacie	Total	38,9	61,1	100,0	373	$X^2 = 1,711$; P = 0,191

Si dans l'ensemble les étudiants boursiers réussissent beaucoup mieux (58,5%) que les non-boursiers (37,5%), on note que l'absence de la bourse affecte plus les garçons que les filles. En effet, alors que les différences entre garçons boursiers (57,9%) et filles boursières (60,7%) ne sont pas statistiquement significatives (P = 0,67), celles entre garçons non-boursiers (34,2 %) et filles non-boursières (43,5 %) sont significatives (P = 0,046) (voir tableau 4.7).

TABLEAU 4.7 - RESULTATS AUX EXAMENS DE FIN D'ANNEE DES SESSIONS 1996-1997 ET 1997-1998 DES ETUDIANTS DE LA FSS, SELON LE SEXE ET LE STATUT FINANCIER

Statut de bourse	Sexe	Résultats (en %)		Total		Signification DL = 1
		Admis	Ajourné	%	N	
Boursier	Masculin	57,9	42,1	100,0	437	
	Féminin	60,7	39,3	100,0	112	$X^2 = 0,292$ P = 0,589
	Total	58,5	41,5	100,0	549	
Non-Boursier	Masculin	34,4	65,6	100,0	323	
	Féminin	43,5	56,5	100,0	170	$X^2 = 3,609$ P = 0,046
	Total	37,5	62,5	100,0	493	
Salarié	Masculin	0,0	100,0	100,0	2	Non valide (2 observations
	Total	0,0	100,0	100,0	2	seulement dans une seule cellule)

Cette situation s'expliquait sans doute par le fait que les filles provenaient d'origines sociales plus favorisées que les garçons, ce qui les rendait moins éligibles que ces derniers pour la bourse

d'études. En effet, si dans l'ensemble de l'échantillon de l'enquête, les étudiants dont les parents étaient des cultivateurs représentaient 41,9% et ceux dont les parents étaient fonctionnaires 37,2%, à la Faculté des Sciences de la Santé, ces proportions étaient respectivement de 15,5% et 60,9%. Les garçons de parents cultivateurs, eux, représentent 21,4% des effectifs de la Faculté des Sciences de la Santé et les filles de parents cultivateurs 11,8%; les garçons de parents fonctionnaires-militaires et de professions libérales représentaient 54,8% des effectifs et les filles de même origine 64,7% des effectifs.

On notait également que si le redoublement améliorait le taux de succès des étudiants dans leur ensemble, il semblait plus bénéfique aux filles qu'aux garçons. Dans l'ensemble, 58,4% des redoublants contre 42,9% de non-redoublants ont réussi à leurs examens. Pour les filles, le taux de succès des redoublantes avait été de 63,5% pour 56,6% de garçons redoublants, une différence appréciable et statistiquement significative (P = 0,000).

Le même phénomène s'observait au niveau de la FAST où le redoublement semblait avoir un effet « bénéfique » sur les performances des étudiants en général et des filles en particulier.

Le tableau fait ressortir que le redoublement égalisait pratiquement les chances de succès des filles et des garçons = 19,4% et 20,9%, alors que sans redoublement les filles avaient deux fois moins de chances que les garçons de réussir = 3,9% contre 8,6%.

On notait toutefois qu'ici, les conditions de vie (évaluées par la bourse) affectent les filles autant que les garçons, les non-boursiers réussissant deux fois moins que les boursiers sans distinction de sexe = 10,2% contre 26,2%, encore qu'il fallait nuancer l'impact des conditions de vie en faisant remarquer que les boursiers étaient aussi parmi les meilleurs élèves. On pouvait aussi émettre l'hypothèse qu'au contraire de la FSS, les filles non-boursières n'avaient peut-être pas le même appui financier parental que leurs consœurs futures médecins ou pharmaciennes.

Si les facteurs socioculturels n'expliquaient pas de façon convaincante les sous-performances des filles par rapport aux garçons, fallait-il se replier sur les facteurs subjectifs, psychologiques pour chercher les causes de ces sous-performances?

4.2. Facteurs subjectifs et psychologiques

Préférences pour les lettres chez les filles

En plus de leur sous-représentation globale dans l'enseignement secondaire et supérieur mentionnée plus haut (I), les filles étaient moins nombreuses que les garçons à choisir les filières scientifiques à ces deux niveaux. Elles étaient proportionnellement moins nombreuses à s'orienter vers les séries D et, surtout, C du second cycle secondaire. Au niveau de l'entrée à l'université, même avec un BAC scientifique, une plus grande proportion de filles (54%) que de garçons (45%) s'orientait vers les disciplines littéraires (voir tableau 4.8).

En 1997-98, les filles qui constituaient alors 22,5% des effectifs totaux de l'Université représentaient 25,8% des effectifs des facultés littéraires et seulement 15% des effectifs des facultés scientifiques.

Par contre, les garçons qui constituaient 77,5% des effectifs totaux de l'université représentaient 85% des effectifs des facultés scientifiques et 74,2% des effectifs des facultés littéraires.

TABLEAU 4.8 : REPARTITION DES ETUDIANTS DANS LES DIFFERENTS FACULTES ET INSTITUTS DE L'UNIVERSITE DE OUAGADOUGOU EN 1997-1998

FACULTES	EFFECTIFS			POURCENTAGES		
	G	F	Total	H	F	Total
Scientifiques	2323	411	2734	85,0	15,0	100,0
Littéraires	4651	1617	6268	74,2	25,8	100,0
Total	6974	2028	9002	77,5	22,5	100,0

Source : Université de Ouagadougou/Direction des Affaires Académiques et de la Scolarité (DAAS), août 1998

Moindre confiance en elles des filles inscrites en sciences

Ce choix ou, plus exactement, ce non-choix des disciplines scientifiques s'expliquait en partie par une moindre confiance des filles en leurs capacités, particulièrement au niveau des Mathématiques et de la Physique-Chimie.

Non seulement les filles étaient moins nombreuses que les garçons à obtenir leurs meilleures notes dans ces deux disciplines, elles étaient aussi moins nombreuses à les préférer. Cette sorte d'aversion était nette au premier cycle et confirme la bipolarisation notée aux examens du Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle (BEPC). Elle se maintenait au second cycle parmi les filles qui avaient pourtant choisi de s'inscrire dans les séries scientifiques (C axée sur les Maths et la Physique-Chimie et D axée sur les Sciences Naturelles), comme si cette orientation avait été faite à contrecœur, malgré les assurances données par la majorité des élèves, filles comme garçons que leur choix avait été volontaire et personnel.

Le tableau 4.9 indiquait le classement au premier rang des différentes disciplines selon le sexe et le cycle. Il indiquait le maintien de la polarisation globale des garçons vers les sciences et des filles vers les lettres du premier au second cycle. On aurait pu s'attendre à ce que les filles qui s'étaient orientées au second cycle vers les séries scientifiques (C et D) affichassent au moins la même prédilection que les garçons pour les disciplines scientifiques. Mais tel ne semblait pas le cas pour notre échantillon constitué, il faut le rappeler, d'élèves de séries scientifiques (C et D) pour le second cycle.

Ainsi, on constatait que les filles étaient toujours proportionnellement moins nombreuses que les garçons à préférer les disciplines scientifiques, en particulier les Mathématiques et la Physique-Chimie au niveau desquelles les filles étaient presque deux fois moins nombreuses que les garçons à les classer au premier rang : 16,1% contre 28,3% de garçons en Mathématiques; 11,5% contre 21,6% en Physique-Chimie. C'était en Sciences Naturelles et au premier cycle que l'on obtenait une certaine égalité entre les filles (18,4%) et les garçons (18,1%), les filles reprenant le dessus au second cycle avec 26,8% contre 21,3% pour les garçons. Au niveau des disciplines littéraires, l'égalité s'observait au premier cycle au niveau de l'Histoire-Géographie : 14,9% contre 15,2% de garçons. Au premier cycle comme au second cycle, les filles étaient presque deux fois plus nombreuses que les garçons à

classer au premier rang le Français : 24,0% contre 16,5% au premier cycle, et 25,3% contre 11,1% au second cycle. Elles étaient également une fois et demie plus nombreuses que les garçons à classer l'Anglais au premier rang des disciplines préférées: 23,4% contre 14,8% au premier cycle, 11,0% contre 8,6% au second cycle.

TABLEAU 4.9 : CLASSEMENT DES DIFFERENTES DISCIPLINES AU PREMIER RANG, SELON LE SEXE ET LE CYCLE

Cycle	Sexe	Anglais	Français	H-Géo	Maths	Sc. Nat	P-C	Philo	Total
Premier	Garçons	14,8	16,5	15,2	27,6	18,1	18,0	4,8	100,0
	Filles	23,4	24,0	14,9	15,2	18,4	10,8	3,2	100,0
	Total	18,8	20,0	15,1	21,7	18,2	14,5	4,3	100,0
	P =	0,000	0,000	0,804	0,000	0,216	0,007	0,445	
Second	Garçons	8,6	11,1	5,2	28,8	21,3	23,6	4,0	100,0
	Filles	11,0	25,3	6,4	17,7	26,8	12,1	4,3	100,0
	Total	9,5	16,6	5,7	24,5	23,4	19,1	4,1	100,0
	P =	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,005	0,000	0,152	
ENSEMBLE	Garçons	12,0	14,0	10,7	28,3	19,5	21,6	4,1	100,0
	Filles	18,8	24,5	11,9	16,1	21,5	11,5	4,1	100,0
	Total	15,0	18,6	11,2	23,0	20,4	17,3	4,1	100,0
	P =	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,003	0,000	0,165	

Au niveau de l'université, les filles étaient plus nombreuses que les garçons à choisir la médecine, l'enseignement et la magistrature comme futurs métiers: 35,9% de filles pour 24,5% de garçons souhaitaient devenir médecins; 12,4% de filles pour 9,2% de garçons souhaitaient être enseignantes; 10,0% de filles pour 4,6% de garçons envisageaient le métier d'avocat comme future profession. Les filles étaient également relativement plus nombreuses que les garçons à vouloir être pharmaciennes: 4,4% pour 1,6%.

Les garçons, pour leur part, étaient proportionnellement plus nombreux que les filles à vouloir devenir pilotes (19,3% pour 4,9% de filles) ou ingénieurs (10,2% pour 3,5% de filles), ingénieurs agronomes (2,4% pour 1,2% de filles).

Le tableau 4.10 indique les professions envisagées par les élèves selon le sexe Il indique que les différences de choix sont statistiquement significatives et non dues au hasard.

TABLEAU 4.10 : PROFESSIONS ENVISAGEES PAR LES ELEVES SELON LE SEXE (EN %)

SEXE	Profession envisagée pour plus tard												Total	
	Enseignant	avocat	magistrat	banque	pilote	informatique	médecin	pharmacie	agronome	ingénieur	autre	plusieurs		N
Garçon	9,2	4,6	2,9	7,6	19,3	8,2	24,5	1,6	2,4	10,2	4,6	5,0	100,0	1770
Fille	12,4	10,0	3,7	6,7	4,9	10,3	35,9	4,4	1,2	3,5	4,9	2,1	100,0	1396
Total	10,6	7,0	3,2	7,2	13,0	9,1	29,5	2,8	1,9	7,2	4,7	3,8	100,0	3166
X² = 300,095			DL = 11					P = 0,000						

Le manque de confiance plus marqué chez les filles se manifestait par le fait que, d'une façon générale, celles-ci attribuaient moins leur succès à leur intelligence (13,9%) au contraire des garçons (17,6%) (Voir tableau 4,11). Un manque de confiance qui, heureusement, se réduisait et s'estompait au fil des années, plus exactement, des cycles: 16,1% pour les filles contre 24,0% pour les garçons au premier cycle; 10,8% pour les filles contre 11,5% pour les garçons au second cycle.

Le même phénomène s'observait au niveau de l'université, les filles renforçant leur confiance en elles-mêmes au fil des années académiques et... des succès. Cette réduction d'écart tout en étant positif et intéressant s'avérait cependant de peu d'utilité pratique.

En effet, comme l'avaient souligné Fennema et Sherman (1977, 51-71), Reyes (1984, 558-581), Reyes et Stanic (1998, 26-43), la confiance en soi étant un élément déterminant dans le succès particulièrement en mathématiques, il était à craindre que son absence au départ n'handicapât sérieusement les filles et que la confiance tardive acquise et manifestée au terme de leur cursus académique ne fût alors d'aucune utilité pratique. Tout le problème que cela posait était de savoir comment faire pour que les filles eussent, dès le départ, plus confiance en elles-mêmes de manière à améliorer leurs performances et à rattraper leur retard par rapport aux garçons, tous les élèves ayant par ailleurs besoin d'améliorer leurs performances dans le domaine scientifique.

TABLEAU 4.11 : RAISONS DU **SUCCES** DES ELEVES DES DIFFERENTS SEXES DANS LES DIFFERENTES DISCIPLINES SCIENTIFIQUES (EN %)

Raisons du succès des élèves	Mathématiques			Physique-Chimie			Sciences Naturelles			TOTAL		
	G	F	T	G	F	T	G	F	T	G	F	T
Travail personnel	30,7	32,2	31,4	33,1	34,3	33,6	29,5	29,9	29,7	30,9	32,0	31,4
L'intelligence	18,0	14,3	16,4	16,7	13,3	15,2	17,9	13,9	16,2	17,6	13,9	16,0
La facilité du devoir	5,3	7,1	6,1	4,2	8,5	6,0	5,5	5,7	5,6	5,1	6,9	5,9
Largesse du prof/note	0,8	1,1	0,9	1,2	0,7	1,0	1,4	1,6	1,5	1,1	1,2	1,2
Bon enseignement	24,1	24,4	24,2	22,2	23,0	22,5	25,6	28,8	27,0	24,2	25,6	24,8
Autres	0,9	0,7	0,8	1,2	0,9	1,0	0,8	0,6	0,7	0,9	0,7	0,8
Facilité et largesse	20,1	20,1	20,1	21,5	19,3	20,6	19,2	19,5	19,3	20,2	19,7	19,9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Signification DL=7	X^2=11,9 P=0,063			X^2=21,5 P=0,001			X^2=11,2 P=0,131			X^2=33,8 P=0,000		

4.3. Facteurs psychopédagogiques

Le corps enseignant était dominé par les hommes, particulièrement en Mathématiques et en Physique-Chimie. La très grande majorité (70%) des élèves, filles comme garçons, avait eu surtout affaire aux enseignants de sexe masculin. C'est aussi la très grande majorité des élèves qui préférait ce genre d'enseignants, particulièrement en Mathématiques et en Physique-Chimie, les Sciences Naturelles étant plus équilibrées en termes de préférences pour le genre d'enseignants.

La préférence pour les professeurs hommes se justifiait pour tous les élèves, filles comme garçons, par le fait qu'ils expliquaient bien, ce pendant que le choix de professeurs femmes se justifiait essentiellement par le fait qu'elles étaient patientes, qu'elles conseillaient les élèves et qu'elles se

montraient compréhensives, en somme, qu'elles possédaient les qualités stéréotypées comme spécifiquement féminines et maternelles.

A leur faible représentation numérique au sein du corps enseignant scientifique, les femmes ajoutaient une moins bonne image pédagogique par rapport à leurs collègues hommes. Les qualités dont elles étaient créditées semblaient pourtant importantes, particulièrement pour les élèves qui éprouvaient quelques difficultés à suivre les explications. Même si les professeurs hommes expliquaient bien, dès lors qu'ils n'avaient pas la patience et l'esprit de compréhension, il était à craindre que les bonnes explications ne profitassent qu'aux meilleurs élèves, ceux qui étaient plus rapides à comprendre, mais probablement aussi les moins nombreux. Une combinaison des qualités de bonne explication et de qualités de patience, de conseil et de compréhension serait hautement bénéfique aux élèves, en particulier ceux qui éprouvaient plus de difficultés que les autres et il y avait de fortes chances que les filles fussent plus nombreuses dans cette catégorie (voir tableau 4.12).

TABLEAU 4.12 : RAISONS DE LA PREFERENCE DES PROFESSEURS HOMME OU FEMME SELON LE SEXE DES ELEVES

RAISONS	HOMME			FEMME		
	G	F	T	G	F	T
Explique bien	37,4	36,9	37,2	20,0	18,0	19,1
Est patient(e)	3,7	4,3	4,0	9,4	5,7	7,8
Est charmant(e)	0,3	0,2	0,3	4,6	0,8	3
Est sympathique	2,0	1,5	1,7	2,9	1,4	2,2
Encourage élèves	7,6	9,0	8,2	10,1	9,2	9,7
Conseille élèves	6,4	4,2	5,5	9,5	12,8	10,9
Compréhensif (ve)	8,1	5,9	7,2	7,3	9,8	8,4
Autre	4,4	2,4	3,5	4,5	2,2	3,5
Plusieurs	30,1	35,6	32,5	31,7	40,1	35,3
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Signification Dl = 8	X^2=28,94 P = 0,000			X^2=47,83 P = 0,000		

Il était donc nécessaire que les professeurs femmes prennent bonne note de l'image qu'elles projetaient sur leurs élèves et qu'elles travaillent à en corriger les aspects négatifs pour créer cette synergie de qualités pédagogiques susceptibles d'aider les élèves moyens en général et les filles en particulier.

De même qu'ils avaient des préférences pour un genre précis de professeurs, de même les élèves, cette fois-ci selon le sexe, avaient des préférences pour des parties du programme, des activités scientifiques et les questions de devoirs, particulièrement en mathématiques.

Les filles préféraient les activités numériques et les exercices d'application aux activités de résolution de problèmes et de raisonnement dans les trois disciplines scientifiques. Pour les devoirs, dans les trois disciplines scientifiques, les filles étaient plus nombreuses que les garçons à préférer les questions de cours et les exercices d'application plutôt que la résolution de problèmes et le raisonnement (voir tableau 4.13).

TABLEAU 4.13: ACTIVITE LA PLUS INTERESSANTE EN MATHS SELON LE SEXE DES ELEVES

SEXE	Activité la plus intéressante en Maths (en %)						Total
	calculs	représentation de figures géométriques	résolution de problèmes	raisonnement	géométrie dans l'espace	plusieurs	
Garçon	33,6	27,8	21,6	9,9	3,1	4,1	100,0
Fille	46,4	27,6	16,4	6,3	1,6	1,8	100,0
Total	39,3	27,7	19,3	8,3	2,5	3,0	100,0
signification	X^2 = 76,20		DL = 4		P = 0,000		

En Mathématiques, en dehors de la géométrie sur laquelle filles et garçons s'accordaient dans pratiquement les mêmes proportions (respectivement 41,1% et 41,9%) à reconnaître qu'elle était la partie du programme la plus abordable, pour les autres activités mathématiques, il y a des différences d'appréciation significatives. Ces différences portaient notamment sur le fait que les filles trouvaient les activités numériques plus abordables que les garçons (21,7% contre 17,0% ; de même que l'algèbre (32,1% contre 28,8% des garçons) et qu'en revanche, les garçons étaient plus nombreux (7,7%) que les filles (2,2%) à trouver abordable l'analyse, quoique l'ensemble des élèves trouvât cette activité peu abordable.

Ces différentes attitudes des filles laissaient penser que celles-ci n'étaient pas la volonté nécessaire de s'investir dans les activités fondamentales qui font de véritables scientifiques : la résolution des problèmes et le raisonnement, encore que l'ensemble des élèves n'affichât pas un engouement pour ces activités. La passivité qui caractérisait les élèves, particulièrement les filles, dans les classes de sciences était un sujet de préoccupation qui semblait être sinon créée du moins favorisée par les conditions pédagogiques existantes dans les établissements d'enseignement secondaires et supérieurs.

Filles et garçons s'accordaient assez bien sur la fréquence modérée (« de temps à temps ») avec laquelle les professeurs réalisaient des manipulations devant eux, cela au niveau des deux disciplines.

Quant aux fréquences avec lesquelles les enseignants faisaient manipuler les élèves, elles se situaient au même niveau que celles avec lesquelles les enseignants eux-mêmes réalisaient des manipulations devant les élèves « de temps en temps » pour environ 37,3% des élèves, avec un léger plus en Physique-Chimie (39%) et, au niveau des deux disciplines, chez les filles (40,5% contre 37,9% en Physique-Chimie, 37,7% contre 34,9% en Sciences Naturelles).

Par contre, il y avait deux fois et demie moins d'élèves dans l'ensemble (11,4%) qui disaient que les enseignants les faisaient manipuler toujours. La proportion était encore plus réduite en Physique-Chimie, avec une quasi-égalité entre garçons (8,0%) et filles (8,4%). Elle était plus élevée en Sciences Naturelles, avec un léger plus pour les garçons (14,1%) par rapport aux filles (13,0%). En Physique-Chimie, la proportion des garçons disant n'avoir jamais manipulé était beaucoup plus grande (23,7%) que celle des filles (18,9%). En Sciences Naturelles, l'écart était insignifiant et à l'avantage des garçons : 21,7% contre 22,2% de filles disant qu'ils manipulaient « rarement » (voir tableau 4.14).

TABLEAU 4.14: FREQUENCE AVEC LAQUELLE LE PROFESSEUR FAIT MANIPULER LES ELEVES

Fréquence (%)	Physique-Chimie			Sciences Naturelles			Total		
	G	F	T	G	F	T	G	F	T
Toujours	8,0	8,4	8,2	14,1	13,0	13,7	11,6	11,2	11,4
De temps en temps	37,9	40,5	39,0	34,9	37,7	36,1	36,1	38,8	37,3
Rarement	23,7	18,9	21,7	21,7	22,9	22,2	22,6	21,3	22,0
Jamais	30,3	32,2	31,1	29,3	26,3	28,0	29,7	28,7	29,3
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Signification DL=3	$X^2 = 15,07$ P = 0,002			$X^2 = 2,56$ P = 0,464			$X^2 = 4,25$ P = 0,236		

Il restait toutefois qu'une proportion non négligeable d'élèves avait soit rarement ou jamais vu le professeur manipuler (30,4%), soit rarement ou jamais vu le professeur faire manipuler les élèves (51,3%). Probablement parce que l'établissement ne disposait pas de laboratoires ni/ou de matériel de manipulation. La moitié seulement des professeurs enquêtés (86/171 = 50,3%) avaient dit que leur établissement disposait d'un laboratoire ; 28,9% avaient dit que leur établissement n'en disposait pas; 20,8% n'avaient pas répondu à la question, sans doute ne se sentant pas concernés, ce qu'on pourrait assimiler à une réponse négative. A peine plus d'un tiers (18/51 = 35,3%) des chefs d'établissement enquêtés ont dit avoir un labo. Un établissement en possédait même trois et deux en possèdent deux. Ce qui voulait dire que notre échantillon d'enseignants se retrouvait essentiellement sous l'administration de l'heureuse minorité de chefs d'établissements disposant d'un laboratoire.

A l'université, les enseignants se plaignaient du manque de matériel de laboratoire. Au niveau des établissements d'enseignement secondaires, la majorité des enseignants disposait de laboratoire et de matériel en assez bon état; les petits matériels d'expérimentation commandés arrivaient généralement vite (moins de deux jours d'attente). Mais un tiers des enseignants n'utilisait pas les laboratoires. Par ailleurs, on avait noté une discordance entre les enseignants et les élèves quant au rythme auquel les premiers faisaient manipuler les seconds. Ces derniers affirmaient que cela arrivait de temps en temps alors que les enseignants prétendaient que c'était souvent qu'ils le faisaient. Une attitude de camouflage des réalités et d'utilisation d'une langue de bois pédagogique qui ne permettent pas d'identifier les vrais problèmes et d'y remédier.

Temps consacré aux travaux domestiques

Les filles consacraient moins de temps que les garçons à l'étude des disciplines où elles réussissaient, en particulier en mathématiques et en physique chimie. La raison en serait-elle qu'elles consacraient par ailleurs plus de temps que les garçons aux travaux domestiques ?

Si tous les élèves, quels que fussent leur sexe, leurs origines sociales, lieu de résidence (chez leurs parents biologiques, chez des tuteurs ou à l'internat) faisaient des travaux domestiques, les filles étaient relativement plus nombreuses que les garçons à le faire et à y consacrer plus de temps journalier : 96% de filles contre 88% de garçons ; 42% de filles contre 52% de garçons à y consacrer 1 à 2 heures seulement, mais 16,5% de filles contre 10,5% de garçons à y consacrer 5 à 6 heures et 9,2% de filles contre 5,6% de garçons à y consacrer 7 heures ou plus (voir tableau 4.15).

TABLEAU 4.15 : TRAVAUX DOMESTIQUES (EN %)

Sexe	Assure travaux domestiques	Nombre d'heures journalières pour les travaux domestiques				Total
		1-2 heures	3-4 heures	5-6 heures	7 h et plus	
Garçons	87,7	52,4	31,5	10,5	5,6	100,0
Filles	96,0	42,1	32,2	16,5	9,2	100,0
Total	91,4	47,7	31,8	13,2	7,3	100,0
Signification	P= 0,000	X² = 46,323		DL = 3	P = 0,000	

Mais l'impact de ces activités domestiques sur les performances scolaires restait à déterminer, le peu d'études existantes se contentant d'affirmer cet impact sans en faire la démonstration concrète et sans tenir compte des autres facteurs identifiés par ailleurs comme des obstacles potentiels à ces performances.

Un de ces facteurs était le comportement des élèves en classe. A ce niveau, les garçons étaient plus prompts que les filles à se porter volontaires pour répondre aux questions du professeur et aussi pour lui en poser d'éclaircissement, d'approfondissement, de compréhension et de simple curiosité. Par exemple, en Maths et PC, 19 à 20% de garçons contre 13% de filles étaient toujours volontaires pour répondre aux questions (voir tableau 4.16).

TABLEAU 4.16 : PARTICIPATION DES ELEVES EN CLASSE (VOLONTAIRES POUR REPONDRE AUX QUESTIONS) SELON LE SEXE ET LA DISCIPLINE (EN %)

Volontaire ?	Mathématiques			Physique-Chimie			Sciences Naturelles		
	G	F	T	G	F	T	G	F	T
Toujours	19,0	12,8	16,3	19,9	13,0	16,9	22,9	19,0	21,2
De temps en temps	77,1	81,4	79,0	55,7	55,7	55,7	58,0	57,7	57,9
Rarement	0,4	1,9	1,0	20,8	25,0	22,6	16,8	19,3	17,9
Jamais	3,5	4,0	3,7	3,6	6,3	4,7	2,3	4,0	3,0
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Signification DL = 3	X² = 36,86 P = 0,000			X² = 26,67 P = 0,000			X² = 15,43 P = 0,001		

Les filles elles-mêmes disaient que le professeur ne faisait pas de discrimination à leur encontre et en faveur des garçons, au contraire de ces derniers qui pensaient bénéficier un peu plus de la confiance de leurs enseignants (voir tableau 4.31). Un préjugé que semblait confirmer par ailleurs le fait qu'interrogé sur le genre de leurs meilleurs élèves, les enseignants désignaient invariablement, pour les trois disciplines scientifiques, les garçons (voir tableau 4.33). Sans doute, à leur insu, l'effet « Pygmalion' » jouait-t-il en faveur des garçons proclamés et/ou s'autoproclamant bons élèves, en tout cas, meilleurs élèves que les filles. Comme le disait Jacquard « l'attente des enseignants est un élément essentiel de l'attitude de l'élève. S'il sent une confiance, il l'intériorise, retrouve espoir en ses possibilités et fait les efforts lui permettant de progresser. Plus il est âgé, plus il constate que l'opinion des enseignants sur lui est figée et se sent enfermé dans le carcan des échecs antérieurs inscrits dans son carnet scolaire », bien que l'effet Pygmalion soit plus sensible au niveau des plus

jeunes. Par exemple « Pour le cours préparatoire, l'augmentation d'une année était de 27,4 points pour les enfants présentés comme capables de progrès, de 12,0 points seulement pour les autres, pour le cours moyen, ces nombres étaient 16,5 et 7,0 ; pour la dernière année du primaire il n'y avait pas de différence significative » (145).

Les enseignants, dont la majorité se disait par ailleurs attentive aux différences entre filles et garçons, estimaient que les filles participaient moins que les garçons en classe. Près des deux tiers (64%) des enseignants des trois disciplines scientifiques disaient que les filles participaient en classe moins que les garçons. Ce phénomène était un peu plus accentué pour les Mathématiques (64,7%) et, surtout, pour la Physique-Chimie (66,7%) que pour les Sciences Naturelles (61,9%) (voir tableau 4.17).

TABLEAU 4.17 : PARTICIPATION DES FILLES EN CLASSE PAR RAPPORT AUX GARÇONS, SELON LES ENSEIGNANTS (%)

Par rapport aux garçons les filles participent-elles en classe ?	Mathématiques	Physique-Chimie	Sciences Naturelles	Total
Plus	8,8	4,2	4,8	6,0
Autant	26,5	29,2	33,3	30,0
Moins	64,7	66,7	61,9	64,0
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Les professeurs qui se disaient presque tous (80,4%) attentifs aux différences entre filles et garçons devraient se préoccuper davantage de créer les conditions d'une plus grande participation des filles aux cours et aux travaux pratiques de laboratoires.

Mais il n'était pas exclu qu'ils fussent, inconsciemment, prisonniers de certains préjugés en faveur des garçons et au détriment des filles. Plus des 2/3 (69,9%) des enseignants de disciplines scientifiques disaient en effet que leurs meilleurs élèves étaient plutôt des garçons, contre seulement 5,8% qui disaient que c'étaient des filles et 24,4% qui disaient qu'ils ne notaient pas de différence entre garçons et filles. (Voir tableau 4.18).

TABLEAU 4.18 : LES MEILLEURS ELEVES DES ENSEIGNANTS, SELON LA DISCIPLINE ENSEIGNEE

Discipline	Vos meilleurs élèves sont plutôt (en %)			Total
	Des garçons	Des filles	Pas de différence	
Mathématiques	71,4	11,4	17,1	(N = 35) 100,0
Sciences Naturelles	64,3	4,8	31,0	(N = 42) 100,0
Physique-Chimie	80,0	0,0	20,0	(N = 25) 100,0
Autre	76,9	0,0	23,1	(N = 13) 100,0
Maths-PC	64,0	4,0	32,0	(N = 25) 100,0
Maths-SN/PC-SN	68,7	12,5	18,8	(N = 16) 100,0
Total	69,9	5,8	24,4	(N = 156) 100,0

V. CONCLUSIONS

La présente étude a mis en relief le peu d'engouement des élèves en général et des filles en particulier pour les disciplines scientifiques, notamment les Mathématiques et la Physique-Chimie. Elle a aussi mis en relief la faiblesse de l'enseignement expérimental (Physique-Chimie et Sciences Naturelles), surtout avec manipulations et expériences par les élèves eux-mêmes qui, pour l'instant, et encore plus pour les filles, préfèrent regarder le professeur manipuler devant eux. Or, l'importance de la manipulation et de l'expérimentation pour la maîtrise de ces disciplines n'est plus à démontrer.

L'étude a mis en relief un certain nombre de facteurs explicatifs du peu d'intérêt des élèves en général et des filles en particulier pour les sciences. Il s'agit, notamment, du manque de confiance en soi, en ses capacités de réussite, de la faible participation aux cours, de la préférence pour les parties des programmes et des devoirs demandant peu d'effort de raisonnement et de recherche et résolution de problèmes, d'un manque d'encouragement à la curiosité, à la participation et à la confiance en soi de la part des enseignants.

Il est apparu que l'amélioration des performances des filles ne serait effective et significative que si elle se situait dans un contexte général d'amélioration des performances de l'ensemble des élèves. Il ne servirait pas à grand-chose en effet d'amener les filles uniquement à égaler les garçons dans leurs faibles performances. Par ailleurs, comme l'ont souligné Baudelot et Establet (1992, 156-157), il y a une corrélation entre les performances des filles et les performances de l'ensemble des élèves et le niveau de scolarisation d'un pays. Aussi, des mesures devraient être prises au niveau familial et scolaire, au niveau pédagogique et au niveau institutionnel (ministériel) pour cette amélioration.

Une décennie après l'étude, si le rapport fille/garçons au primaire s'est très nettement amélioré, passant de 0,6 en 1999 à 0,9 en 2010, cela grâce à la mise en œuvre du Plan Décennal de Développement de l'Education de Base (PDDEB) 2000-2009, par contre la qualité ne s'est pas améliorée si elle ne s'est pas plutôt dégradée aussi bien au niveau du primaire qu'au niveau du secondaire. Le tableau de bord des enseignements post-primaire et secondaire pour l'année 2008-2009 campait la mauvaise situation en ces termes « Les rendements internes du système éducatif burkinabé du post-primaire et du secondaire sont médiocres… Le taux de rétention qui mesure la capacité du système à maintenir les élèves et à les amener au niveau supérieur est en baisse très rapide au fur et mesure que l'on monte de niveau. Sur 100 élèves qui entrent en sixième, 76 atteignent la classe de Sème, 54 la classe de 3e et seulement 19 parviennent en classe de seconde et 14 en classe de terminale. Le système éducatif national injecte 4,7 fois plus de ressources pour produire un diplômé du post primaire que le coût idéal. Quant au diplômé du secondaire, ce rapport est de 3,1. » (Ministère des Enseignements Secondaire, Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique : Tableau de bord des enseignements post-primaire et secondaire, année 2008-2009, Septembre 2010, 62).

Par ailleurs, non seulement l'amélioration quantitative de l'enseignement primaire n'a pas été suivie d'une amélioration qualitative, mais elle s'est faite au détriment des autres ordres d'enseignement, surtout l'enseignement supérieur sevré de financement, surtout externe.[2]

Le gouvernement burkinabé semble avoir tiré les leçons de cette mauvaise expérience et entend relever la qualité de l'enseignement de base incluant le préscolaire, le primaire et le post-primaire par une démarche holistique et par le relèvement du niveau de formation des enseignants de cet ordre. Ces enseignants seraient désormais recrutés au niveau du Baccalauréat plutôt que du Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle (BEPC) et formés en deux ans plutôt qu'un.

La détermination affichée dans la loi d'orientation de l'éducation de juillet 2007 permet d'espérer une amélioration substantielle du système éducatif tant sur le plan de son accès à tous que sur le plan de sa qualité et de son équité. L'article 2 de ladite loi proclame, en effet, que son objectif est de « faire acquérir à l'individu dans un contexte historique, social et linguistique déterminé, un ensemble de connaissances, d'aptitudes et d'attitudes indispensables lui permettant de comprendre son environnement, d'interagir avec lui, de poursuivre son éducation et sa formation au sein de la société et de participer plus efficacement au développement économique, social et culturel de celle-ci ».

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[2] Voir l'étude de F. Sanou et M. Charmillot (2010: 119-145).

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Female Performance in the Sciences at Secondary and University Levels in Burkina Faso

by Professor Fernand Sanou, Ph.D
Inspector Soumaïla Keita
Inspector Aminata Elisabeth Ouédraogo
Inspector Guidouma Oumar Sanou
Afsata Paré, Ph.D

For the Association of Female Scientists of Burkina Faso
for the Promotion of Scientific and Technological Education for Women

English Summary by Cassandra Fox

Introduction

Fernand Sanou, Professor at the University of Ouagadougou, is leading a team paper on the performance of girls in science at the secondary and university levels in Burkina Faso. Drawing on earlier studies in the US and France, the team works to identify the complex sociocultural factors that influence female performance in the West African context. By carefully measuring and analyzing factors ranging from the profession of students' parents to hours per day spent on domestic work, the authors explore the gendered breakdown of academic performance. Their goal is to identify the reasons that female students consistently underperform as compared to their male counterparts in certain subjects, with the long-term vision of addressing these inequalities in order to create a system that is truly egalitarian.

Summary of the Case Study

Fernand Sanou, along with Soumaila Keita, Aminata Elisabeth Ouédraogo, Guidouma Oumar Sanou, and Afsata Paré begin their discussion with a careful review of the international literature, pointing out that while a relative parity between boys and girls has been achieved internationally in terms of school attendance, there are still significant gaps in the quality and level of the education delivered. They point to this subtle problem as a serious handicap for females in a world that is increasingly globalized and competitive. They then go on to identify three areas where gender inequalities are perpetuated: sociocultural context, psychology of students (including confidence and competitiveness) and psycho-pedagogic context (that manifests itself as subtle sexist behaviors in the classroom).

The team's analysis is based on a study they undertook in 2000 in Burkina Faso, drawing from a large data set. The team combines statistics drawn from school records and scholarship programs with qualitative data taken from surveys of students, teachers, parents and administrators to paint a more complete picture of the country's education system and its impact on each gender. As expected, they find an overarching theme of female underperformance and underrepresentation. As the team explains, this inequality is rooted back to the country's colonial heritage, where men were trained by colonizers to become working partners. The tradition continued out of a necessity to conserve resources in a society where men typically earned income for a family, while women were often married off to a different family, and thus were not considered an economically viable investment.

In this analysis, the authors explore indicators outside of gender in order to create a fuller understanding of the factors that lead to academic success. Among these, the team looks at the profession of the student's fathers and their ethnic backgrounds, comparing these factors to specific areas of strength and weakness demonstrated by students across several different academic levels. While some of these factors appear to contribute in a statistically significant way, gender still surfaces as the most influential factor of a student's success.

The team also examines academic success by gender and academic subject, revealing some distinctive differences across different areas. In their data, male students generally performed better in mathematics, while females were relatively stronger in the sciences (and especially natural sciences). However, these results may not accurately portray the situation, given that female students were dramatically under-represented in these studies. Interestingly, when surveying students on their confidence that they would succeed in certain subjects, the team found that students seemed to perceive the opposite. Female students had relatively more confidence that they would succeed in mathematics and medical courses, and relatively less confidence in the natural sciences. However, it is again important to note that these results are drawn from small data sets with a limited number of female participants, and thus may not be representative of the larger picture.

In exploring the three identified factors for female underperformance, Fernand Sanou and his colleagues first look at socioeconomic factors by evaluating gendered data from students receiving scholarships versus those not receiving any financial aid. Interestingly, they find that although students receiving assistance tend to be admitted at higher rates and perform better than those not receiving aid, students not receiving aid are more likely to complete their studies. These data points taken together do not make a convincing argument that female students from lower socioeconomic status have a lower chance of succeeding in schools, so the team looks into other identified factors to try and explain the disparity.

Next, they explore the contributing subjective and psychological factors in academic inequality. The authors point out that females are outnumbered in the fields of mathematics and science, both as students and teachers. Although students are given control over the subjects that they study, females reliably avoid these fields, and self-report enjoying them less. In contrast, females are both more numerous and higher-performing in subjects such as history, French, and English. Women are more likely to study medicine, law, and education at the university level. In studies at this level, Sanou and the team find that confidence is closely tied to performance. This indicates that selection of an area of study is likely tied to perceived strength in a discipline, which may be influenced by the proportion of men to women in that field.

"Psycho-pedagogical" factors, or psychological factors tied to the classroom environment, are another closely related variable. The team points out that there are a majority of male teachers across all levels of instruction, and particularly in the subjects of math, physics, and chemistry. Furthermore, students of both genders seem to prefer these male teachers, stating that they are better at explaining material clearly. In contrast, female teachers are perceived as being more caring and patient with their students, but less adept at explaining concepts. Furthermore, male and female students seem to express generally different preferred learning styles. While males seem to prefer scientific activities and straightforward questions, females express more interest in applied questions and reasoning activities. This is significant, as further studies demonstrated a lack of hands-on

activities in many situations due to a lack of available laboratories and materials — leading to an inability to teach in a way that resonates with female students.

There are several other potential factors that may be at work. Time at home devoted to domestic workloads could be significant, given that female students are more likely to devote more hours per week to these chores than males. Class participation is another factor closely tied to performance, and which is likely rooted in the issue of confidence discussed earlier. Thus, a large part of the underperformance of females seems to be cyclical — females are underrepresented in certain fields, and thus feel less confident in them. As a result, they are less likely to participate in these classes, and perceived as weaker students by their teachers, enforcing the status quo.

Conclusions

This study brings to light a general lack of interest in math and science, particularly on the part of females, as well as a static and non-experimental way of teaching these subjects. These weaknesses, combined with the factors of confidence, representation, and learning style, seem to be at the root of female academic underperformance. It is important for women, and for the progression of Burkina Faso on the whole, that these factors are addressed and female performance is improved on all levels. In a 2010 follow-up study, Fernand Sanou and Maryvonne Charmillot found marked improvements in the representation of females in school, although little progress in their relative academic standing. Furthermore, there have been some significant barriers to progress, including a decrease in funding for education projects. The next steps for the country will be to improve the quality of teaching, requiring teachers to receive a higher level of education. With these recommended changes, Burkina Faso hopes to continue to see progress in the quality and equality of the education system.

Livelihoods and Political Voice

Visible or Invisible Money: Different Opportunities for Rural Women in Iran

by Soheila Alirezanejad

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Abstract

As part of a microfinance project, an Association of women beekeepers in central Iran started to keep bees in 2000. They succeeded to make good money initially, which transformed some of their family and their sociocultural expectations. By 2004, however, most of the members had lost their bees and with them their source of revenue. In the meantime, they managed to attract financial support from some national and international donors. Despite these resources, however, they were not able to raise adequate capital to re-start their businesses again. For reasons that will be discussed in the text, these women did not save some money in order to improve or maintain their business. These women's inability to distinguish between different kinds of money (income, grants, loans, and development money), and their expectations to continue receiving money/grants from the donors frustrated their efforts to reignite their earlier success. The question this article addresses is: "what factors militated against the women saving money while they were making it?" Based on my more than eight years of close interaction with these women, I propose some answers.

Introduction

In the year 2000 a developmental intervention was initiated in central Iran named "The Land and Water Project."[1] The donors and facilitators adopted microfinance as a strategy for poverty alleviation. Subsequently, a group of rural women in Rameh[2] (a village in central Iran) got involved in the project and formed the "Association of Women Beekeepers of Rameh." The Association, which was comprised of 53 women, received a $2000 grant from the Land and Water Project, and managed to save $500 collectively among themselves. Consequently they were able to purchase four beehives each to start their business. Their business initially thrived and they started making their own hard earned money.

Based on the women's initial success in generating income, the project facilitators were able to draw the attention of two more donors: the Agricultural Bank of Iran and the Small Grants Programme (GEF/SGP).[3] In 2002 the Bank gave an interest-free loan to 33 younger individual members of the Association, which came to about $1000 each. The loan was also collateral-free and they had to repay it in four years, approximately $21 per month. With this new money the recipients purchased ten more beehives each. In 2003, the Programme gave the Association a grant of $17,500, which required the women to implement an environmental project.

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[1] The Land and Water project started in about 2000 in Semnan province in central Iran. It aimed to preserve the watershed of Hiblerood, which is the most important river in Semnan province. Some UN agencies and national as well as local governments were the donors of this project.

[2] Rameh is a village about 55 kilometers north east of Garmsar, a small town about 100 kilometers east of Tehran in Semnan province. Based on the 2006 census Rameh included 70 households, about 350 people, who transmigrated to Garmsar, mainly in the fall and winter (Shahhoseiny 2007 (1385 solar), 167-169).

[3] The Small Grants Programme is the part of Global Environmental Facility (GEF) that tries to protect the natural environment by working with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs).

As most of the members of the Association lost, sold, or mismanaged their bees, for personal or social reasons, in a period of 2-3 years they lost their ability to generate any personal income. In the meantime they stopped adding to their savings fund (they saved about $500 collectively). The majority of younger women (under the age of 40) in the Association who had received the Bank loans postponed, or in most cases, neglected to repay the required installments, apparently under the assumption that they no longer had an obligation to the Bank.[4] Their justification was their belief that since they were not making any more money, they did not have to pay installments. Some approached the Bank to get a temporary deferment but the Bank refused their request to change the terms of the loan. Under these evolving circumstances, the Association was not able to attract other donors. By 2004 most of the members had lost their resources and were not able to continue with their bee keeping business or begin a new venture.

Based on the theoretical principles of microcredit, borrowers are expected to save some money to repay their loan or to extend their venture. But this did not quite work in the case of the women beekeepers. Instead, with their resources drying up, the women kept seeking new sources of revenue. Why, one wonders, did they not save any portion of their money while they were making it?

Money as a Key Social Concept

Money is a key concept in rational modern societies. It gives people the power to exchange it with any object of desire and need and for any given value. In a modern society, earning or possessing money is a very important source of self-confidence and authority, and in that sense it can be argued that it may be gender blind, i.e. whoever has money has power and can influence certain outcomes. Perhaps that is why policy makers consider 'the ability to earn money' a key factor for empowering the lower layers of societies and communities, especially rural women. Microfinance is basically in line with such policies, with the objective to empower the poor through enabling them to make money (Matin et al. 2002; Elyachar 2002, 505; Snow and Buss 2001). In Elyachar's view, "if credit and money are human rights, as is proclaimed in micro-lending circles, then debt is the way to empower the people" (ibid., 510). An important part of microcredit is related to assisting people to make good business decisions and to repay loans on time (Woolsey Biggart 2001, 130). Women who receive microloans are expected to be able to initiate and run a good business and to repay their loans dutifully.

When women are the target group of a development program, the planners have to pay particular attention to the intra-household financial resources, arrangements, and activities. Rural women, as a marginalized section of the society who usually make "invisible money", often constitute the major segment of those who work in the informal sector of the economy. The concept of "invisible money"

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[4] The borrowers were asked to guarantee each other's loan but as they were a group of local women it was not easy for the Bank to force them to pay back the loan they had guaranteed. So the Bank negotiated with their facilitators and husbands to get back the loan.

is introduced by Diane Elson (1995), who argues that the modern economy is supported by an unpaid economy situated in the domestic sector (Budlender et al. 2002; Elson 1995, 211-253). She believes that women, as the people who work in the unpaid economy, usually make invisible money (Himmelweit 2002, 51-52). Even in a modern society, people who work in the domestic sector seldom make "explicit money". Elyachar relates microcredit with a sort of informal sector in the society. She believes this "micro informality" is potentially a site in which "alternative economic practices can be fostered" (ibid., 511-512).

Looking at the case of women beekeepers, some members of the Association worked in the domestic sectors and one could easily argue that the money they made falls in the "invisible" category. Still, one would be hard pressed to consider the women as breadwinners or money-makers. On the other hand, the women who got involved with the microcredit project were now making visible money. The questions here are: how are we to understand "visible money" in the case of this particular Association of women? Was microfinance their first chance to make visible money?

Viviana Zelizer believes that money is a sociocultural concept that is influenced by variables like social class or gender, and that there are different kinds of money available even in a modern society (1989). Visible money might mean different things depending on gender. Zelizer also believes that money could be perceived differently based on "who makes it," and on "how it is spent". She introduces two categories of "special purpose money" and "all purpose money." Accordingly, women usually make "special purpose money", which is usually spent just in specific ways.

Based on Zelizer's argument, we need to determine what kind of money members of the Association made, and whether its nature changed from "special purpose" to "all purpose". We also want to know if the act of making money has a collective or individual nature (Woolsey Biggart, ibid., 140). Zelizer writes that cultural and social infrastructures direct monetary affairs. "Culture and social structure set inevitable limits to the monetization process by introducing profound controls and restrictions on the flow and liquidity of money. Extra economic factors systematically constrain and shape (a) the uses of money, with certain monies for specified uses; (b) the users of money, designating different people to handle specified monies; (c) the allocation system of each particular money; (d) the control of different monies; and (e) the sources of money, linking different sources to specified uses" (Zelizer 1989, 351).

Therefore, based on different social and cultural contexts money could be described and understood in different ways. People in different social and gender categories may understand money differently. The Association of women beekeepers in Rameh, I would argue, understood money differently from that of the facilitators and the donors. Given the difference in monetary perception, members of the Association thus managed their financial issues differently. To understand the probable differentiations, we need to know how they earned and how they spent money before the Association was formed.

Microcredit and Rural Women

International observations show that microcredit is a useful and practical approach towards poverty alleviation (Rahman 1999; Rosintan et al. 1999; Woolsey Biggart 2001, 130; Matin et al. 2002). Different cross-cultural experiences also show that the micro loan is a common way to implement microfinance for poor rural women, who are often an excluded section of their communities (Mafy 2008 (1387 solar); Rahman 1999; Rosintan et al. 1999). Micro loans enable rural women to establish a desired business. People involved in development programs, like planners, policy makers, facilitators, and researchers generally believe that if women have money, the entire family will benefit and that the family's quality of life will improve (Yunus 2007, 72; Anderson and Baland 2002, 6). The idea is that by increasing women's income the livelihood of the whole family is enhanced. Hence rural women in different developing countries, including Iran, have become the main targets of micro loan projects.

Microcredit is one of the more popular money resources for women in Asian communities, but there are other informal organizations rooted in the local social structures and relations of these communities, such as ROSCAs (Rotating Savings and Credit Associations), which offer collateral-free loans. In either case, saving is significant (Woolsey Biggart 2001, 131-132, 152). There are several similarities and also differences between these two kinds of microfinance programs. In the case of Rameh women the microcredit approach was the one applied by the Project.

When poor rural women earn money, men in their family (especially the husbands) may demand either some or a large portion of it. Given this possibility, project facilitators usually request that the women do not hand over their income to their husbands, but rather to save some of it for the future, particularly since they are expected to repay the loan (Hashemi 1996, 651; Anderson and Baland 2002, 5; Vonderlack-Navarro 2010).

In the case of the Association in Rameh, the facilitators' expectation was that the women would save or invest some of the loan money. But as it turned out, most of the women of the Association spent it for their immediate needs or relinquished it to their husbands. In subsequent sections we will discuss the factors that encouraged women not to save money and instead spend it or hand it over to their husbands despite specific recommendations by their facilitators.

Methodology

Iranians are generally reluctant to discuss their financial matters. Thus it is relatively difficult to gather accurate and reliable information. In rural areas, women and their financial activities are often a highly private matter. Even today, it is not unlikely to meet men who prefer not to name their wives or daughters in public, let alone to acknowledge whether or not they are making any money or contributing to the family income. Therefore to get insight into and an accurate picture of the activities of rural women's financial situation requires not just cautious probing but also more

sensitivity in matters of observation and interaction. For that matter, I adopted a qualitative and participatory method, similar to that of Shahla Haeri's methodological approach "shared ethnography," which she successfully applied to her research on the lives of professional Pakistani women (2002). Based on this method an equal relationship is established between the researcher and the subjects. The subjects then play an active role not only during the interview but also the whole process of research. I designed an interactive and participatory approach to enable members of the Association to participate in various steps of my research. To my delight, the women of Rameh actively engaged with me and were eager to ask me questions or share their concerns.

I interviewed 28 members of the Association. Some also participated in focus group discussions. Further, I employed a short structured interview with the members of the Association (Creswell 1994, 175-178). At the same time, I interviewed the representatives of different stakeholders, as well as some rural women – and men – who were not members of the Association. The interviews were conducted in a place convenient for the interviewee, and were open-ended (Reinharz 1992, 18-32). Each interview was like a journey through the woman's life story. The members of the Association were genuinely eager for me to become familiar with their social issues and problems, which in turn helped me greatly to gain insight into their financial concerns, individually and within their family. As it will become clear, these women were far from passive actors.

I met the Association of women of Rameh for the first time while I was a member of a consultancy group that reviewed an international program in Iran. I had this chance to see their documents, interview the members and facilitators and observe them for about five months. It seemed they did a good job. It was a great surprise, not just to me but to the other consultants, facilitators and donors. I initially held several workshops and site visits, which let me interact with various members of the Association extensively and discuss their project and activities with them. They were doing great and successful work, and I improved my interactions with them as a researcher for more than eight years. Having long term relationships and frequent interactions with the women of the Association allowed me to observe the way they made financial decisions and treated monetary issues. I took part in some of their parties, gatherings, meetings, and out of town trips. I visited them in their homes and invited them to come to mine. I also had a chance over time to see their family photo albums, discuss their life expectations, memories, dreams, desires, and the like. I paid them a visit when a new baby was born or a young couple got married. Through non-verbal communications, jests, or direct comments, they usually helped me to understand their expectations of a gift from me. This gave me another angle from which to learn about their financial matters. Occasionally, in some of their face-to-face interactions with me or some of their friends and acquaintances they would act as if they were rich while at other times they would claim to be poor, particularly when meeting project facilitators and donors. Several times, they even tried to make me realize that they really needed to have more money in order to find new sources of money. On the other hand, I usually avoided asking them direct questions or talking about money. Instead I used indirect methods, like talking about their memories and dreams about family matters and what they thought about the way their

husbands made and spent money. I also used focus group discussions to cross check the information I had gathered.

Interestingly, they frequently asked me to tell them how my husband and I dealt with our financial issues. Sometimes they even criticized me for not spending more on dresses – apparently befitting of a professor – or on dying my hair, etc. My objective was not only to create a trusting situation for our interactions but also to make it possible for me to observe the women's interactions among themselves. I let them know that I did all my household chores myself which allowed us to talk and share our experiences, thus allowing me to understand their situations better.

The Association

All of the 53 women who formed the Association of Women Beekeepers in Rameh were married or had been married at least once. Their husbands were mostly literate, with a few even studying at local universities. At the time of this study, five or six of them were unemployed or worked seasonally, some were tradesmen, and a few were underling employees. The women whose husbands were tradesmen had a better financial situation. Four of the married women had no children and one of them had 10 children. The mode of the number of children was 2.0 and the mean was about 3.4. The youngest member of the Association was 27 and the oldest one was 68 years old. Forty-six was the mode age and the mean was 41.

Another significant attribute of the Association was that its members were mostly literate. What is interesting to note here is that as a result of working together some members of the Association became inspired to pursue or complete their education. Some got their high school diploma and a few attended adult education schools.

Gender Aspect of Money

As was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, members of the Association received three distinctly different kinds of money. These included the initial seed money from the Land and Water Project, the loan from the Bank, and the grant from the Programme. Each of these various forms of "money" carried with it different obligations, expectations, and requirements. But as far as the women of the Association were concerned, money was money and they referred to all the three kinds of money as "our money". Understanding these women's perception of money helps in better understanding their financial behavior.

Globally, money is recognized as an abstract impersonal concept, and in Simmel's words, as "the purest reification of means" (2004, 280-281, Zelizer 1989, 345). Based on this idea, there is no difference between making and having money, and actually having ownership (control) of money. However, it seems that the women Beekeepers perceived money differently. That is to say, they understood money more as a sociocultural concept. In order to understand how these women

defined the concept of money and how they treated monetary issues, we need to know how they earned and spent the money. It is significant because their perception of money influenced their decisions related to it.

Making and Spending Money

For many of the women, working with the Association was not their first experience of making money. Most of them had been earning money, be it 'visible' or 'invisible.' Traditionally, women of Rameh worked in the private vicinity of their homes by keeping chickens, collecting their eggs, and growing vegetables in the yard making what could be termed as invisible money. Apart from their own household consumption, some of their production could also be 'spent' in special cases, such as substituting for gifts for their married children or other newly wed couples in the community.

Many of the women also sold dried fruits and walnuts, which not only earned them more visible money, but also brought them into interaction with the public in their community. This money was usually spent for very specific purposes. For a woman of Rameh, collecting her daughter's dowry has customarily been her main concern. It is usually the mothers who provide the money to purchase the necessities for their daughters' future life. Being able to respond to the dreams of their children is another concern of theirs that would require saving some money. Buying some gold rings, bangles, and necklaces as their savings was a common strategy among them. Not all of the women of the Association, however, could fulfill these traditional and customary desires. This was particularly true for those few women whose husbands were unemployed. Whatever money they earned, both visible and invisible, they had to spend on necessities such as rent, food, and clothing.

Reviewing their life stories, I realized that they, as mothers, felt they needed to be making money. Their children were the primary group for whom they spent their money. Their dreams and wishes mostly included their children. A significant source of money making for women was collecting fruits. Customarily, women of Rameh were responsible for climbing the trees to pick the fruits. But while what was collected from branches belonged to the men, the fruits fallen on the ground belonged to the women – they could do with them as they pleased. Often women collected and sold dried fruits from their family gardens. Occasionally, these women would get some of the men's share by claiming that the fruit had fallen. In my conversation with some of their husbands, they told me that they were aware of their wives' "tricks", but that they overlooked them, realizing that their wives did so because they wanted to prepare dowries for their daughters, for example. At the same time, some of the men would give their wives some gifts after selling their own share of the fruits. The money made in this way would be spent on various items for their daughters' dowries.

Moving from the village to the town, however, changed the opportunities for making money for many women. Living in the village, they could earn money by selling chickens and eggs. They also picked and cleaned cotton or pit apricots at home. These kinds of activities also had a social nature, because the women would carry them out collectively. They would normally gather in a neighbor's

house and while they were working they would talk, exchange news and information, help each other, gossip, and have fun.[5] They would also work as agricultural workers in other villagers' gardens. Collecting and preparing herbal medicine was another livelihood. Carrying out these activities collectively, they would work and make money individually, while enjoying the social relationships and communal interactions.

A few younger members of the Association had some special job experiences. These included (1) working in a biscuit manufacturing plant, (2) reselling dresses to neighbors and relatives at home, (3) hairdressing and cosmetics; (4) sewing at home for relatives and neighbors, (5) doing secretarial work in a small cooperative (6) being a security guard at the girls' dormitory in Garmsar. While these official and semi-official jobs enabled women to make visible money, enjoy their income, and have social relationships with their co-workers, the work atmosphere and the ensuing relationships were quite different from those the women were accustomed to while working in the village community.

About five or six members had to work and make money because their husbands were unemployed or were employed as seasonal workers and could not earn sufficient money to run the family. These women were less educated and typically took part in various "income generating" activities. The amount of money they made was relatively substantial and could fall under the category of "all purpose," which means it is the sort of money that could be used for different reasons. For these members, however, the formation of the Association provided a new chance for making all-purpose money.

A number of younger members had high school diplomas, but this level of education was apparently not enough to get a good job in their community, as is often the case in modern Iran. They, too, were therefore often forced to make money in the same way the older members did. At the same time, living in town was not conducive to keeping chickens at home, nor did they have the benefit of having a fruit garden. Consequently, many lost those very traditional sources of income. For most of these women, their husbands or sometimes their fathers were the only source of money. By 2010, a few younger women showed entrepreneurial initiative and flew to Kish Island on the Persian Gulf to buy some clothes and other accessories. They then sold them to their neighbors, family and friends. However, they conducted this business individually. Therefore, before and after working with the Association they mostly worked individually.

New Sources of Money, New Expectations

The women in Rameh had not previously owned the kind or the amount of money that was first provided to them by the Land and Water Project. This experience was new and unique because traditionally it was usually the men who were in touch with different donors and organizations and thus the beneficiary of this kind of money. Women of Rameh had no such prior experience and they

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[5] See Jenny White for discussing a similar relationship between fun, labor, identity, and work among Turkish women workers (White 1994, 4-7).

had not had a chance to deal with such a large amount of money. The Land and Water Project money carried with it a specific objective and expectation. The women recipients were required to use it for buying beehives, i.e. to start a business. As such, the stakeholder's objectives and expectations were clear to the women and they had no problem understanding them.

The money lent to the Association by the Bank was meant to be used to initiate a business as well, but there were no restrictions as to how it was to be spent. This allowed the thirty-three borrowers who were the beneficiaries of the loan to decide to allocate some $300 of their total loan ($1000 each) for their own family matters. As for the Programme grant of about $17,500, members of the Association were expected to perform certain environmental tasks as agreed to in their original contract and were required to report them back to the Programme.

The three stakeholders gave money to the Association with specific expectations of how the money should be spent and what kinds of obligations and responsibilities the women had. The women were required to implement some activities by using these monies. From the point of view of the members of the Association, however, money was money. They perceived the money they received from these three different sources as all the same – it was "their" money, as they had repeatedly told me. They wanted to spend the grant for other business matters. When I asked them why they considered the Programme grant as their own money and why they wished to spend it for buying a piece of land – which had not been defined in the environmental project – they mentioned that they had had the experience of receiving money from the parent Land and Water Project, implying that they viewed them both in a similar way. The two funds were, in fact, quite different.

The parent Project presented a special opportunity for members of the Association to make money by raising beehives and selling honey. It also, inadvertently, created two different kinds of expectations:
- Their husbands expected the women to make money and spend it for family matters. Some members of the Association told me that initially their husbands had not allowed them to take part in the first meetings with the Project facilitators. When the women informed their husbands that they might be able to earn money and to contribute towards the family and household expenses, they then gave them permission. Many women of the Association, in a sense, negotiated with their husband over their ability to make money and thus help with family expenses.
- Most members of the Association came to expect that future donors, whom they seem to have perceived as 'wealthy father figures', would provide them with money without expectation of return. I believe that such an expectation was reinforced because of the similarity of function between the parent Project money and the sort of money their husbands and fathers had traditionally given them. The amount of money was also significant. Compared to what they were used to receiving either from their husbands or fathers, the money they received from the parent Project was much more substantial.

While the Agricultural Bank is a well-known lender in the rural areas of Iran (Mafy 2008 (1387 solar), Balaly 2007 (1386 solar)), the loans typically used to go to men. The Bank's decision to lend money to individual women instead of to the Association, despite the advice of the facilitators, caused a divide among the members of the Association. The loans empowered the younger members who were the recipients of the loans. However, the younger members of the Association were not skilled in traditional knowledge. So despite this chance, they were typically the ones who lost their bees, consequently failing to repay the loan installments on time after losing the bees.

Regarding the Programme grant, which was given to the Association based on a proposal submitted to the Program, the members were under the impression that they were actually performing the tasks of the Project, in return for which they typically expected to earn money. It did seem, however, that some members of the Association, especially the elderly women, had not recognized the specifications involved in this money. When the Project was concluded successfully, they began to criticize the way the money was spent, deeming some activities to be irrational and a waste of "their money". The Project was evaluated as successful by consultants, but the members of the Association were not satisfied. Apart from some representatives and some younger women, the rest of the members were not able to distinguish this money from that provided by the parent Project. Some of them never really understood why the donor gave them the money and then made them pay for publishing a book, for example.

New Opportunities, New Money

With the microcredit money received from the above sources, all women of the Association bought four beehives and managed to keep them for 2-3 years. By the second year of their venture, younger members of the Association had managed to raise the number of their beehives to as many as fourteen thanks to the loan from the Bank. Some told me that they were able to produce as much as 5-12 kilos of honey per beehive, which they could sell for about $8 per kilo. If they produced, on average, about seven kilos per beehive, each beehive earned them about $56. They collected honey from the beehives twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall. So each woman was able to earn $112 per beehive, totaling to $448 from four beehives per year. Given the good income the Association members were making, they could easily continue with their monthly $2 contribution towards their collective savings.

In the second year, the younger members of the Association received 10 more beehives, made possible by the loan they received from the Bank. Assuming that they continued to produce about seven kilos per beehive, they could be earning about $1568 per year or about $130 per month, which is a substantial amount of visible money. The loan significantly increased the younger members' capacity for making money, and could no longer be treated merely as pocket money in the community.

The few women who managed to keep their bees told me that in 2010 they sold the honey for about $25 per kilo. By then it was reasonable to assume that given their experience, they could harvest 12 kilos per beehive each time. These women could then earn about $600 per beehive per year. The younger women who managed to keep their 14 beehives were able to make about $8400 in 2010. The change for younger members was quite considerable and the older members never found such an opportunity. The way the younger members talked about the bees showed that they were quite satisfied. Repeatedly, they said that "the bees are a blessing," that "the money you make by selling honey is a gift from God," and that "bees are sacred". In fact, the younger women had been given this chance by the Bank without having any significant privilege compared to the elder women, and although those younger women who did manage to keep the beehives felt empowered by the money they earned, most of them lost the beehives, leaving them with, not money, but debt as discussed below.

There were different reasons for women beekeepers losing their bees and thus their source of revenue. Officially, drought was reported as the basic reason. Many women suggested other reasons as well, such as keeping the bees separately, not having practical skills,[6] bees being purposefully poisoned by neighbors, aerial spraying of nearby fields, and falling victim to 'evil eyes'. A number of the older and more experienced women beekeepers told me that the younger members were not skillful in keeping bees and solving problems that arose. Culturally, many women preferred to run their business individually, primarily because they did not want to share the amount of money they made. Such an individualistic behavior ultimately denied many younger women the opportunity to take advantage of the knowledge and skills of the older more experienced women beekeepers. When the business problems arose the younger women easily gave up, and either sold their business or lost their beehives. On the other hand, some older members, and a few of the younger ones, were able to keep their bees and even increase them, under similar circumstances.

With the infusion of the grant money, some members thought that they could spend this money to start a new business. But the grant could not support such desires as it was not provided in the objective of the original contract. Based on the Programme contract, the four women who were representing the Association and performed administrative duties were supported by wages. Each received about $250. The rest of the members benefited from meetings with the stakeholders and facilitators, participated in field trips and in other communal activities, but did not receive any money. This discrepancy created some tension within the Association and ran counter to many of the members' expectations, particularly the older ones, who expected to receive money from the grant. Only one of the younger members told me that implementing a new project is more important than making money. They all believed that they were more successful in establishing new social relationships than making money through this process. Misunderstandings about the money coming from the Project created a situation that did not allow them to take advantage of another grant from the Programme.

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[6] In the year 2001 some of the women beekeepers lost their bees because they over harvested honey from beehives. They left too little honey for bees to survive the winter.

Dissatisfied women began criticizing their representatives for wasting the money, which they assumed to be "their" money. On their own initiative, the representatives saved a portion of the grant for the Association – about $100 per member. But far from appreciating this saving, the membership in fact became more inclined to believe that the 'small' amount of the saving was due to incompetence. Some elderly women told me that, "$100 was nothing. We could have had more. They wasted our time and our money and we have no excuse for the time that we spent out of our home."

The Association obviously provided new ways of making money for its members. As discussed above, before the formation of the Association there were few ways available for women of Rameh to make visible money. Furthermore, the amount of money they made after the Association was formed was significantly larger than before, particularly for the younger members who received the loan from the Bank. With this new situation, new avenues of spending money emerged for women while creating new expectations on the part of various members of their families, particularly their husbands. Therefore, when the women lost their bees and their business, a majority was eager to restart earning money using other means available to them. As mothers and wives, they wanted to continue to play a role in addressing their families' financial problems. The younger members also had to pay the installments of the Bank's loan, on which some had defaulted. As it turned out, none had enough savings to restart their businesses but despite this situation, interestingly, they believed that "they were successful". It seemed that for them, actually "making money" was the most important feature. The interesting point is that many of them said, "we were more successful socially than financially," implying that they "did not make as much money as they expected." Even the women who kept their bees stated that they did not have enough savings to improve their business.[7] So the question arises, if they did not save the money, what did they do with it? Clearly they had their own understanding of being successful, making money, and spending it.

Consequences of Earning Visible Money

As mentioned before, women of Rameh are traditionally responsible for raising some money, mostly visible, towards the preparation of their daughters' dowry from the time of their birth. All the members of the Association told me that if a bride did not have a sizable dowry by the time of her wedding, it would be considered her mother's fault and the mother would be perceived as an inept woman.

Women's obligation or desire to provide their daughters with occasional gifts does not end with providing adequate and decent dowries for their daughters. Some of the older women who prided themselves in giving their daughters a decent dowry still tried to make visible money in order to give small gifts to their children whenever they visited them. A sixty-four year old woman said that in the

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[7] At first I was skeptical, but when I saw how they searched desperately for some loan, I was convinced that they did not have significant savings.

old days when they lived in the village, she would raise chickens in the yard and fruits or vegetables in the garden, which would be considered as reasonable gifts. But after moving to town she lost all of these resources for gift exchange. In other words, in the course of transition from village to town, she lost the resources for making 'invisible' money.

But with living in town and getting involved in the activities of the Association, this woman, like others, started making visible money, which included the three different kinds of money specified earlier in this paper. Under this new condition women were able to perform their obligation as mothers differently. Instead of getting eggs from their own farm raised chicken, they would buy eggs from the local shop and gift them to their daughters. Two of the members of the Association supported their daughters to continue their education. Now that the women of the Association were making money, they showed greater interest in their sons' education, while at the same time wishing to contribute to their sons' wedding expenses as well. This, however, was something new for them. One of them told me that holding a very magnificent wedding party for her elder son made her completely penniless. I asked her why she did that, and whether she regretted it now. She said nothing and just smiled. But another friend who was present said, "It was a magnificent party, everybody remembers that party." The mother mentioned that her younger son wanted a similar wedding party, adding laughingly: "I told him, I cannot afford to do the same for you." Given that spending money brought visibility and prestige for them, I would think that she may try to do the same for her younger son as well, even if it means borrowing some money. Saving did not have such an important community impact. This may, in fact, be the reason why they spent about one third of the Bank's loan for family expenses.

In the course of my research, I visited them many times and every time they had added some new furniture or changed the decoration of their houses. One of the women of the Association said, "My husband encouraged me to work because I had bought new furniture and appliances for our home". He also told her, "You showed a new world to me." So it seemed that at some point the material quality of their family life had improved.

A number of women also spent money on their health. Taking care of their health, however, did not seem to be their first priority nor was it the first priority of other family members. When suffering from one ailment or another, they seldom visited a physician. Rather, they preferred to use herbal medicines, at which some older women of the Association were quite adept. The younger members were also concerned about their beauty. Although they could not afford to visit a dermatologist, they would purchase inexpensive skin care medications from a local pharmacy.

The amount of visible money that the women of the Association earned affected the family relationships and their expectations as well. Five of the women told me that their husbands had asked them to contribute to buying a new car or repairing their home, which the women were not traditionally expected to do. Seven of the women gave their money to their husbands, though later on they mostly regretted it because they had relinquished control over their own property. One of

the women, who was qualified to receive a loan from a commercial bank, gave the loan to her husband but finally had to repay it herself. Two of the women sold their gold and gave the money to their husbands to buy cars but then they had neither control over the cars nor any hope of receiving their money back.

It seemed that the social spotlight highlighting the Association and the money paid to its members by various donors had generated some financial expectations amongst some of their husbands and children. Some husbands tried to intervene in order to become part of this process of making money. Five of the women mentioned that their husbands had asked them to be made a partner to their honey-producing business. Two elderly women actually had partnerships with their husbands. But three younger women reported that they were reluctant to be their husband's business partner. One of them had decided not to have any joint venture with her husband. The other two women wanted to sign a contract that would let them become equal business partners. They were afraid that their husbands would take control of the partnership, and their money as well. A few men tried to take control of the Association directly or indirectly. One woman, following her husband's demand, even suggested that her husband be one of the representatives of the Association, something totally unacceptable to the majority of the members. Four women, feeling dissatisfied with the activities of their representatives, criticized them strongly in their open meetings and tried to push their husbands into the Association and even had them evaluate the Association's reports that were produced by the representatives. At times, some of the husbands even showed up uninvited to Association meetings. All these events changed the women's relationships with their husbands: it meant that they reached to an equal footing with their husbands.

Interpreting the Association's activities within the cultural context of a small town in Iran, it becomes evident that there were elements of social control that put some restrictions on how the visible money could be spent (Douglas 1967, 119; Zelizer 1989, 349). When women made a significant amount of visible money, which was traditionally perceived to be a man's prerogative, they were socially and culturally expected to allow their men to take control of spending their money. This expectation was further reinforced since, as mentioned before, many of the same men had given permission to their women to take part in the workshops only when the women promised to share their earnings with their husbands should they make any money.

Table number 1: How the women beekeepers spent their money after the Association

Children	Husband	Home	Her own expense
Girls dowry	Automobile	Furniture	Dress and clothing
Boys wedding	Clothing	Appliances	Gold jewelry
University education		Repairs	Skin care and beauty
Small gifts for married children		Food	Health
Skin care and beauty			
Dress and clothing			

The women beekeepers wanted to and were expected to spend money for their family. This left less money to be used as business capital. After forming the Association, they not only spent more money in traditional categories but also started spending money in new categories (see table 1). For example, on top of their daughters' dowries, which were their most important concern, they became involved in their son's wedding party, and in repairing the home, which basically meant that the money the women made was no longer the "special purpose money" it used to be. This was more pronounced for younger women because of their larger income. Their money had been transformed qualitatively.

Consequences of Not Saving Money

After losing their bees and their honey-producing business with it, women of the Association were no longer in a position to be making money. But the raised expectations that had emerged among the women and their family members remained. Some of the members were interested in starting new ventures. Others wanted to continue their business as beekeepers, if they were given another chance. They were fully aware that they needed capital in order to start a new business or to improve their beekeeping business. But it seems that they never saved enough money to get them started on a new venture. They kept searching for new donors to pay them low or interest-free loans, or development money, to get them started on a new money-making business. Usually, from their point of view, it was the "government" that was in a position to give them money, as the initial donation had come from the parent Project that had been a government project.[8]

In 2009, twenty-two younger members of the Association said that they were unemployed or housewives which means they could hardly make visible money. Fifteen members of the Association introduced themselves as beekeepers but only three of them believed that they could make enough money to sustain their business. About eight women believed that they were skillful enough to start a business. Not having many – or any – prospects for the women to start a new money-making business, the Association decided to split into five smaller groups in 2009. At the time, the Association had some $5000 saved, which the representatives decided to divide among the five groups, and each smaller group received about $1000 for 10 members. The members considered possible future businesses, including gardening, planting mushrooms, preparing herbal medicines, keeping bees, producing mineral water, undertaking animal husbandry, opening a clothing store, and establishing a small shop for producing socks. They hoped to implement these plans by receiving new grants. They had enough money to start planting mushrooms but none of the newly formed smaller groups actually started this business. They thought that their savings were not sufficient for a new venture. They could not imagine using their own money as capital for a business and instead continued to await another input of funds, as well as advice on what to do with it, from another 'fatherly figure'.

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[8] By "government" they meant any outside organization, be it a bank, a non-governmental organization, or an international grant agency.

Only two members made a profitable business for themselves. One was a successful beekeeper who wanted to improve her business. She actually tried every possible resource to get some capital but she neither found a loan nor a reasonable business partner. She was ready to risk and sell her house. The second woman decided to open a small clothing store. She told me that she had nothing but her neighbors' trust. Her neighbors lent her some money to start and continue her business.

During the last three years the women tried desperately to find new sources of money, without much success. At the same time, they kept spending their money instead of saving it because they wanted to be visible. Spending money improved their families' material lives. Spending money also established them as good mothers and wives. The men influenced their decisions but it was the women who decided to spend the money that they had made.

Conclusion

There are different experiences with microcredit in different countries, especially in the Middle East. The World Bank believes that, in the Middle East, different factors and trends influence societies and communities. On the grounds of this belief they focus on global features that are similar among countries, for instance: globalization, modernization, institutionalization, etc. (Grais & Kantur 2003, 3-4). Focusing on these features, development planners expect similar results in different countries. This article shows the impacts of social context on the process of one such developmental intervention.

Women, especially rural women, are the main target group of micro loans. In this context, there are special social expectations and roles that form women's life opportunities in and out of the home. Different governmental and non-governmental development programs have been applied to change this situation and improve it. Initially, such programs raise hope for improving poor women's lives and providing some opportunities for them. Unfortunately, these programs are not always successful in the long run. While the social context and the historical experience of every country and every community is unique, there is enough common ground, particularly in communities with a similar cultural background such as the ones in the Middle East, to draw some general conclusions from specific case studies such as this one.

Before the Association was formed, husbands and fathers were women's primary resource for money. Traditionally the visible money that the women made was limited, and was not actually connected with the formal economy. But the Association changed all that. Working as a member of the Association changed not only the sources of money that were available for women, but also the kind and the amount of money that they could earn. Alas, these sources were not sustainable, and considering the women's almost self-imposed obligation to spend on the family, there was less chance of them saving the money. Making money had empowered them to fulfill new roles in family affairs, which in fact turned out to be important obstacles to saving money.

Since traditionally women had little visible income, this new significant income formed a new family financial balance. The women spent significant amounts of time outside their homes while they were making money and spending it for their family. They wanted to pay for family expenditures because traditionally their time had always been devoted to their family.

In Iran, to reiterate, there are limited opportunities for rural women to receive small loans or be given different kinds of funds. This situation changed when the Association of Women Bee Keepers received three kinds of money from three different national or international donors. Each kind of money carried special rules and expectations, which in retrospect were perhaps not made completely transparent to all members of the Association, particularly to the older and less educated women. Women beekeepers were mostly unable to differentiate the grant from the development money because they recognized the money from the parent Project as 'their money'. They often referred to all three kinds of funds as "our money", and this instigated an important misunderstanding. Consequently, when they lost their bees, they stopped paying their installments, opting instead to await further inputs of funds, but no new donor was available. Therefore they found themselves in a new situation where they were obliged to respond to new expectations with no sustainable source of money. It seemed that the women beekeepers were presented with more money than they could handle in their first experience with donors. This large amount of money changed everything around them before they were ready for it.

Based on the microcredit approach, the women of the Association were expected to save money to promote their business while also paying installments. However, most of the women failed on both counts. Furthermore, by the time the women beekeepers lost their bees, they were not in a position to restart a new business. They had lost their capital mainly due to the fact that they either chose to spend their money, or were expected to spend it, instead of saving it. The immediate reasons for spending instead of saving were:

(1) As mothers and wives, they chose to spend their money on their family.
(2) Some of their husbands expected to control their money and some women felt obliged to obey their husbands.
(3) Some of the women had promised their husbands to make, and spend, money in order to get their permission for taking part in meetings and workshops.

There were also less immediate, more underlying reasons for this behavior, namely:

(1) They expected further inputs of funds from donors.
(2) Spending money made them visible, which they enjoyed tremendously.
(3) They decided not to work collectively. Had they done so, there would have been more formal controls on spending.
(4) Lacking prior experience dealing with the large amount of money they earned made them and their family members susceptible to overspending.
(5) Lack of full understanding of the expectations attached to the funds they received made for unreasonable expectations of money that was not theirs to spend as they wished.

Based on the experiences of women of Rameh with microfinance and money making adventures, I conclude that more observations need to be made *a priori*, to hopefully understand some of the unintended consequences of developmental interventions and take appropriate steps to deal with them.

Acknowledgements

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Role of Gender Quota Systems in Polish Parliamentary Elections After the Fall of Communism

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Abstract

In this article, we will present the specific situation of Poland. Poland is somewhat of a mosaic of traditional and non-traditional systems of values, behaviors and expectations towards women and men in terms of family, work and politics under the conditions of the ongoing systemic transformation. The following questions will be explored in this article: What has been changing in terms of expectations (and whose)? Are women and men adapting in the same manner to the changing conditions of living? What are the new areas of conflict and agreement? The cultural capital of women and men is changing; what are the strengths in the new reality of public life, after the systemic transformation, while inequality of women and men remains a fact? What are the real determinants of access of women to power?

In the text, I refer to Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, the theory of social networks by Castells and the theories on the roles of stereotypes. What is the role of habitus in shaping the so-called masculine and feminine roles? What is the role of stereotypes in confrontation with actual traits and attitudes? How should we assess the role of social networks in the creation of access and barriers to empowerment of women? What are the opportunities created by the modern "society of risk" (as defined by Ulrich Beck)? In other words, where should we look for justification of the less prominent presence of women in the political structure and in positions that would allow them to exert influence on decisions and decision-making processes that are of significance for themselves and for the entire society?

Introduction: Democratization Processes and Gender Equality Issues

The findings of many empirical studies show that although democratic institutions have existed since much earlier than gender equality, at the present moment in history the increasing emphasis on gender equality has become a central component of the democratization process (Inglehart, Norris, Welzel 2003). It is a part of a broad cultural change, which has been transforming industrial societies and bringing increasing mass demands towards the increasingly democratic institutions (Inglehart, Norris, Welzel 2003:91). The emergence of democratic institutions as such does not mean that the number of women in the broadly understood public life – in the bodies functioning on the basis of elections, as well as those based on nominations – is automatically increasing. Cross-national analyses show that this process of changes is associated with an increased education level, which, on the other hand, indicates a change in the system of values, including the perceived need for equalization of the status of women and men. This does not mean, however, that the power elites are eager to accept such changes (Siemieńska 2000). Implementation of gender equality in both the private and public sphere of social life requires – apart from a perception of the need for the implementation of gender equality in both spheres of social life – a shaping of the democratic infrastructure, i.e. existence of the appropriate institutions, standards, and "rules" of collective activity, which will allow it to be brought to life. An emphasis of societies or certain groups in this direction has been observed in many countries.

Analysis of World Values Survey (WVS) and European Values Survey (EVS) data from several dozen countries (Inglehart, Norris, 2003; Inglehart, Welzel, 2005; Welzel, Inglehart, 2009) indicates that attitudes towards gender equality and roles played by women and men are among the "emancipation" values that condition democratization of countries, development of liberal democracy and intensification of demands in terms of creation of institutions that would function in accordance with the emancipation attitudes. "Gender equality dominant over patriarchalism" includes acceptance of the concept of women having the right to have children without being married and rejection of the view that men are better political leaders, that education is more important for boys than for girls, and that men have a greater right to employment than women when jobs are scarce.

The high level of internalized support for democracy may emerge and has emerged prior to the systemic transformation and democratization of a country, e.g. in non-democratic countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Czechoslovakia, Poland, Estonia and Hungary). The emergence of the need for freedom was conditioned by the process of modernization that brought a certain increase in the income level, a sense of existential safety, an increase in the level of education of citizens and increased access to information. The authors referred to above underline that emancipation values are clearly not endogenous for democratic institutions. The concept that an increase in emancipation values results from an increase in resources seems more reasonable on the basis of empirical data than on the basis of the hypothesis that these values result from experience gathered under democratic conditions. This causality surely runs from values to institutions and not in the opposite direction. Therefore, social and economic modernization contributes to democracy mainly through the emergence of emancipation values in the society (Inglehart, Welzel 2009). In this context, attitudes concerning the roles of women and men in the sphere of public life are viewed as the immanent part of processes that determine the course of democratization.

Determinants of Women's Presence in Politics

It is often emphasized that there exists a set of intertwined cultural and institutional factors that act against the presence of women in politics. In his work "The Political Role of Women" (1955), Duverger sought to explain women's barely perceptible presence in politics, why voters preferred to vote for men rather than women, the conspiracy of men dictated by the unwillingness to permit women to positions traditionally reserved solely for men, and the issues within the election system itself, which may to a greater or lesser extent be unfavorable for women.

An analysis of the relationship between the electoral law and the number of elected women in different countries shows that the proportional system, as opposed to the majority one, is more favorable for women. Additionally, large electoral districts are more favorable to female politicians, as the likelihood that a given party or group taking part in the election will obtain more seats in parliament is greater. A very important factor affecting election results is the degree to which

women are organized, and to which they have managed to create strong institutionalized interest groups inside the various political parties and within the country (Matland, 1998).

Duverger believes that any disinclination of voters towards supporting female politicians, if present, originates from stereotypes of women that perpetuate the belief that women lack traits that would enable them to be successful politicians. Such a way of viewing women as potential politicians is typical not only for men, but for a substantial number of women as well.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, observers of the political scene in western democracies have stressed that women are more willing to get involved in *ad hoc* political activity, where the goal is to exert pressure on political decisions in a way which is not an integral part of the institutionalized political mechanisms (Randall, 1982). This activity is directed at problem-solving rather than institution-building (Randall, 1982; Evans, 1980; Owen and Zerilli, 1991).

Yet more detailed analyses show that the behaviors of the women's electorate in western democracies have definitely changed in the last few years. Women vote, and the way in which they vote and the motives of voting behaviors differ from those of men. The process of forming this difference was greatly affected by the growth of women's level of education, their increased economic independence and the influence of the women's movement, which has made women aware of discrimination and of the various forms of experienced discrimination.

Whether or not a man or a woman will vote for a particular politician is not preconditioned by the candidate's gender. Rather it is dependent upon his or her quality as a politician and the perceived attractiveness of the problems that the politician intends to tackle in the eyes of the voters (Zipp, Plutzer, 1985).

The political career of women is also more difficult because it includes a collision with the traditionally defined role of the woman mainly concentrated on activity in the private sphere and the need to gain acceptance and support of family members for an atypical career (Rinehart, 1992; Siemieńska, 1994). Another obstacle encountered by women includes the need to overcome party selectors (gatekeepers) who decide on the make-up of candidate lists and awarded seats, giving chances for success in the elections. Yet another barrier for female politicians is the possibility of gathering funds for the election campaign. As studies have shown, it is more difficult for female politicians to raise funds because they usually give rise to questions among potential sponsors about whether, as a woman, the candidate is likely to win the elections and whether later on she will be able to effectively represent the interests of a given group (Lovenduski, Norris, 1993; Rinehart, 1992; Darcy, Welch, Clark, 1994; Carroll, 1994; Fox, 1997).

Our goal is to show only to what extent the mechanism for selecting candidates used by political parties and other social and political groups, as well as voting behaviors in the parliamentary elections to the Sejm (lower house) in the last 20 years in Poland, increased women's chances of

becoming candidates and being elected. In this context, attitudes and stereotypes among the members of different social groups, the electoral law (including gender quotas) and the pressure provided by women's groups, affect the behaviors of the party gatekeepers. We are not presenting here analyses concerning the dependence of women's chances to be elected on the size of electoral districts and the level of their development, etc., although these factors are also helpful in understanding the reasons for women's successes and failures in elections.

The Polish parliament has consisted of two houses since 1989 when, according to the agreement between the communist government and the opposition, the structure of the parliament was changed from one house to two: the Sejm (lower house) and the Senat (higher house). The elections to the Sejm are based on a proportional system, while the elections to the Senat are based on direct voting for candidates. According to the Polish constitution, parliamentary elections take place every four years. In cases where parliament gives the government a vote of no confidence, elections can be conducted earlier. The number of seats in the Sejm is 460, and there are 100 seats in the Senate.

Attitudes Toward Women's Participation in Politics, 1992-2011

Representative studies on national samples show decreasing acceptance of negative stereotypes of women's role in politics between 1992 and 2008 (Fig.1). They also showed that significant differences in opinions between women and men still exist when it comes to assessing the "natural" ability of representatives of both genders to deal with politics (Siemieńska 1996, 2000, 2005, 2012). Women, more often than men, disagreed with the view that men were better suited to politics. Female respondents with higher levels of education were more likely to disagree with this view than women with lower levels of education (Fig.2). As for men, there was no correlation between this view and educational level; male respondents representing various educational levels – from the lowest to the highest – were almost equally eager to declare that men were better suited to engage in political activity. In fact, this tendency was even stronger among the most educated. Older respondents tended to agree that men were better suited to politics than women.

Fig. 1: Acceptance of negative stereotypes of women's role in politics according to gender in years 1992-2008 (in %) PGSS (Polish General Social Survey) (*Source of graph: Siemieńska (2009)***)**
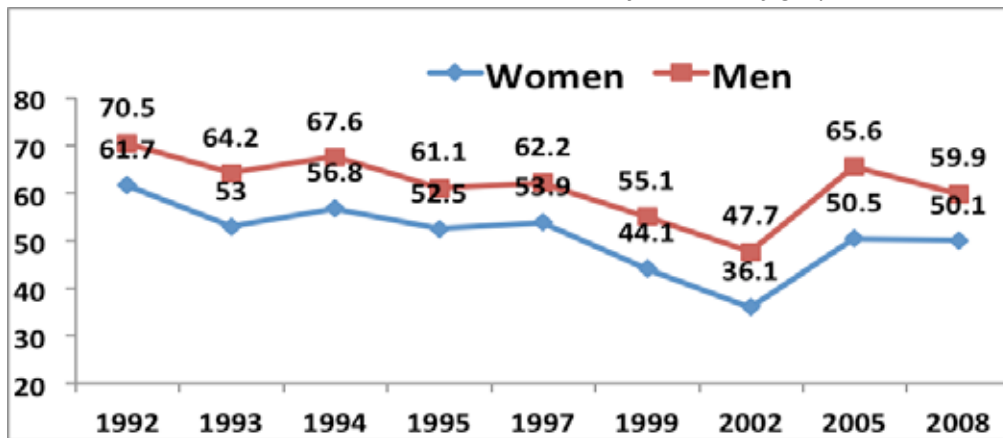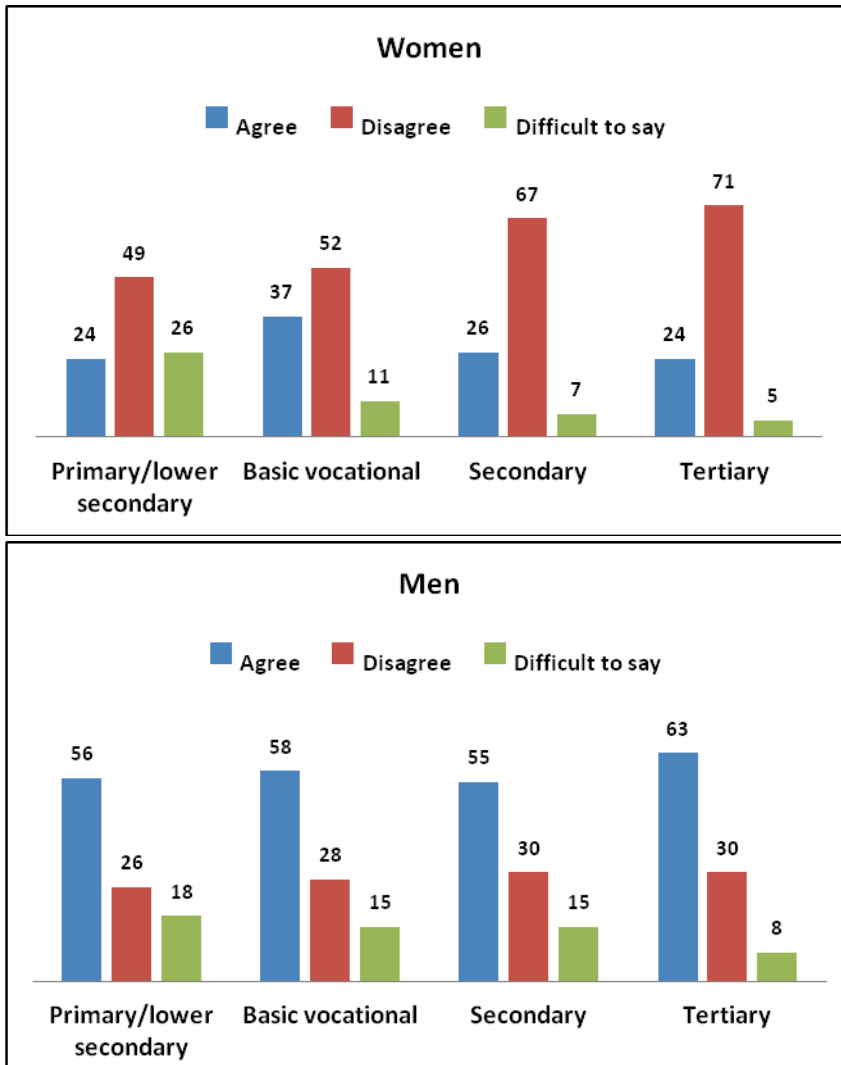
Fig. 2: Opinion "Men are better suited to politics than women" (agree, disagree) according to gender and education (in %) 2011

Source: Study conducted for the author after 2011 elections on national representative sample of 1000 respondents by Pentor (Research Center of Public Opinion and Market).

Women as Candidates and Women Elected To Parliament, 1989-2011

Changing attitudes are not followed by equally significant changes in the presence of women in politics. Below I will analyze the changes in women's representation in parliament between 1989 and 2011, with special attention paid to the results of elections to the lower house (the Sejm).

In the semi-free election of 1989, which resulted from the fall of the communist government, women constituted a minority among candidates of the opposition and the communist government. Among 2,500 candidates, there were only approximately 200 women. From the Citizens' Committee (representing the opposition), of the 161 candidates running to be members of the Sejm (referred to

as "deputies"), 16 of them were women. Among 100 candidates running for a seat in the Senat, six were women. In total, among the 460 persons elected to the Sejm, 62 (13%) were women, and 6% of elected Senators were women.

Table 1. Percentage of women candidates and women elected in elections to the lower (Sejm) and upper (Senat) houses of parliament, 1991-2011

Year of elections	Sejm Women as total number of candidates (%)	Sejm Women deputies as total number of deputies (%)	Senat Women as total number of candidates (%)	Senat Women senators as total number of senators (%)
1991	12.9	10	8.8	8
1993	n. d.	13	9.9	13
1997	15.7	13	10.4	13
2001	23.2	20	14.7	23
2005	24.5	21	15.9	13
2007	23.1	20	n. d.	8
2011	43.5	24	14	13

n.d. = no data, Source: State Electoral Commission

Results of the elections to Senate between 1991 and 2011 showed that the highest number of elected women was 23 (23%) in 2001 (table1). In 2011 the percentage of elected women as senators was 13%, like in the elections of 1993, 1997, 2005.

Table 1 shows the significant increase in the percentage of female candidates to the Sejm before the 2001 and 2011 elections, when some quota systems were introduced. Generally, in the period between 1991 and 2011, the number of female candidates to the Sejm more than tripled, while the number of female deputies (women actually elected to the Sejm) only doubled. Female candidates running for the Senate increased 1.5 times, but the number of female senators remained almost the same.

During the same period, electoral legislation was changed several times. Important changes include the number of votes that parties or coalitions needed in order to enter parliament (now 5% of the total votes, whereas before there was no minimum) and the size of electoral districts, as well as the parties taking part in the elections differing from one election to another. A quota system was introduced by some parties in 2001 that required 30% of the parties' candidates to be women and a general rule was introduced in 2011 requiring that at least 35% of each gender be represented in all parties and on all electoral committees.

After the fall of the communist government in 1989, the new Polish party system was very unstable. Many parties based on the former opposition were established but few are still in existence today. Therefore a comparison over time of women on lists of candidates in particular parties is almost

impossible. However, we are able to say that there is not a strong relationship between the ideological orientations of parties and the number of women present on their lists. Lists of candidates of individual parties and coalitions have differed greatly with regard to the number of women and positions occupied by them on lists of candidates.

The Election of 2001
Political context: gender quota system introduced by some parties

Women as candidates and elected deputies

A gender quota system was first introduced by a coalition of two parties, DLA-LU and UF. The leftist coalition DLA (Democratic Left Alliance) and LU (Labor Union) and the European-oriented party based on the former opposition DU (Democratic Union) included more women on their lists of candidates than others. Consequently they later adopted the regulation that the number of female or male candidates could not be lower than 30%. However, some other parties also increased the number of women on their lists as they became aware that the presence of women among candidates had become a publicly articulated issue and that having women on their lists could help them get additional votes.

Among the parties that entered the Sejm in 2001, the following groups of parties can be distinguished:
- *Parties that had a higher percentage of women deputies than the percentage of women listed as candidates*; these are CP (Civic Platform) (20% of total number of elected deputies were women and 16.9% of candidates were women) and LPF (League of Polish Families) (26.3% of total number of elected deputies were women and 24.7% of candidates were women).
- *Parties that introduced less women than they listed;* these are DLA (25% of candidates introduced were women) and LU (31% of candidates introduced were women) (36.3% of candidates listed on DLA-LU's common list of candidates were women); SO (Self-defense) (17% of candidates introduced were women, 20.3% of listed candidates were women), L&J (Law & Justice) (13.6% of candidates introduced were women, 17.9% of listed candidates were women).
- *One party, that did not introduce women at all* – PPP (Polish Peasant Party) (14.6% of listed candidates were women).

Thus the number of women who were elected as representatives of individual parties and coalitions depended more upon the number of women listed as candidates than the political orientation of the party (classified on a continuum of left – right).

In all parties and coalitions that entered the Parliament except for CP and LPF, the average position of women on lists of candidates was a little bit lower than that of men and becomes even lower after counting the number of votes given to men compared with those for women. People occupying a top

position on the lists of candidates had a much greater chance of being elected. Persons occupying the first three positions on the lists of candidates made up, in the case of women, 48.3% of the elected and in the case of men, 69.7%. The voters voted for women relatively more often than men, who were positioned 4th or lower on the candidate's list. A significant part of those elected from lower positions were female candidates of DLA-LU. As during previous elections, the DLA voters were more willing than the party gatekeepers who managed the lists to see women among Parliament members.

On average, voters of the DLA-LU and SO (Self-defense) parties voted relatively more often for women than for men in comparison with voters of L&J and CP, as well as LPF, who on average voted more often for men (Siemieńska 2005).

Due to the previously mentioned changeability of the political scene, the changing share of women in representation of political parties can be analyzed only for the DLA. As a result of the parliamentary elections in 1991, female members of the Sejm made up 15% of all DLA representatives; in 1993, 16.4%; in 1997, 18.9%; in 2001, 25%.

The Polish Peasant Party (PPP), which has had its representatives in the Parliament since 1991, introduced female representatives only during their second term (during which 6.1% of all representatives were women). In 2001 PPP failed to introduce women into Parliament.

Leftwing and centre-oriented parties have been introducing an increasing number of women to the Parliament since the early 1990s. In 2001, suddenly the newly created conservative party called the League of Polish Families introduced a relatively large number of women (26.3% of all representatives). The reason for this change was significant frustration of LPF's less affluent, older, and less educated supporters. For years this segment, largely women, has made up a circle of loyal listeners of the Catholic, conservative radio "Maryja". Radio Maryja, as it has been observed frequently, is skilled in manipulating its listeners.

There were significant differences between individual regions. In the regions with more votes for the leftist DLA party, more women were elected due to a more favorable atmosphere for the participation of women in public life (Siemieńska 2005).

In summary, women's increased presence in the 2001 Parliament elections was caused by a set of different events and initiatives that occurred between the parliamentary elections in the years 1997 and 2001, demonstrating the role of democratic mechanisms in changing attitudes toward and creating opportunities for women. These changes include:
- **The electoral law was changed.** In 2001, constituencies were larger with a greater number of seats due to their adaptation to the new administrative structure of the country. This change resulted in an increased number of women listed as candidates: the more candidates there were per constituency, the greater were the chances for women to be listed (Siemieńska 2000).

- **Attitudes towards women in politics changed.** In 2001, 60% of women (compared with 50% in 1997) and 40% of men (compared with 28% in 1997) did not agree with the opinion that, "men are better suited to politics than women" (Siemieńska 2000, 2003b).
- **Women's lobby became stronger.** Fifty organizations joined the Pre-Electoral Coalition of Women – an open agreement between women's organizations and groups of centre and left orientation, created a few months before the elections. The coalition was also supported by the Women's Parliamentary Group. Female members of the Parliament organized an action entitled "Women run, women vote" to convince the voters to vote for women. The participating women belonged to all parliamentary parties.
- **Gender quota was introduced by the coalition of DLA-LU (post-communist party Democratic Left Alliance and the Labor Union party) and DU (Democratic Union, a liberal-centre party).** These parties accepted the rule that neither of the sexes should be represented by less than 30% of all candidates, and lists presented for individual constituencies should be approved only when they comply with this condition. Moreover, even right-wing parties such as the LPF were influenced by these changes.
- **The electoral preferences of the society changed.** In the Polish election of 2001, the coalition DLA-LU obtained the highest number of votes (signaling a shift from right to left) which was important from the point of view of women, since this coalition has, for a long time, been willing to take women into consideration in its political plans and reforms. As a result, the number of women listed as candidates was much greater than before. The number of elected women depended greatly upon the number of women listed as candidates, their positions on the lists given to them by party gatekeepers (positions 1-3 tend to have a higher chance of being elected), as well as the attitudes of the general population toward women's presence in politics in the different districts.
- **In the 1990s there was a significant increase in the number of both women and men who voted for both women and men, as opposed to voting only for men**. In 2001, 46% of men in comparison with 31% of women voted exclusively for men, but 39% of men and 55% of women voted for both men and women (Siemieńska 2000, 2003a).

The Election of 2005
Political context: reorientation of society from left oriented to right oriented

The next parliamentary election, in the fall of 2005, occurred in a completely different political situation. The left oriented parties, which had previously been in power, lost their support. They were criticized for using their election success in 2001 to strengthen the financial position of their members and for creating strong, often corrupt bonds between representatives of politics and the business world. Additionally, the split of the DLA into the DLA and the Polish Social Democrats (SDPL), which sought to dissociate itself from the moral sins and flaws of its mother party, weakened its election potential. This situation was conducive to the strengthening of right-oriented parties, particularly the Law and Justice and the center-right Civic Platform, which achieved almost identical results in 2005. However, thanks to a slight advantage of the Law and Justice party, led by Jarosław

Kaczyński (who later became Prime Minister of Poland), the party was able to gain a majority in the Parliament, creating a coalition with the populist Self-Defense and the nationalist League of Polish Families (the last two parties mentioned now shifted towards the margin of political life). The Civic Platform, the Democratic Left Alliance, and the Polish Peasant Party became the opposition, rarely undertaking any tasks in the Parliament together. The position of Law and Justice and its leader Jarosław Kaczyński was strengthened when Lech Kaczyński, Jarosław's twin brother, was elected the president of Poland in the fall of 2005.

Women as candidates and elected members of Parliament

The number of women elected to the Sejm in 2005 (20.4 percent) did not change. In the Senate, women's representation decreased from 23% to 13%. Women constituted 24.5% of all candidates to the Sejm. The percentage of female candidates in first place on the lists of candidates was particularly low on the lists of the nationalist LPF party (7.2%), the conservative L&J party (12.2%), the leftist DLA and the PPP (14.6% each). It was significantly higher in the center-right CP party (22%) and the populist Self-Defense party (25%). Thus, in the 2005 election there was no correlation between an ideology supporting the equality of women and men and the devising of candidate lists. As a result of the 2005 election, the percentage of women among the parliamentarians of the right oriented parties increased by 5.4% in the Law and Justice party and by 5% in the Civic Platform party, which got the most votes, and by 10% in the populist Self-Defense of the Republic of Poland in comparison with the election of 2001. On the other hand, in leftist parties these percentages decreased by 5% in the Democratic Left Alliance and by 11.3% in the nationalist League of Polish Families. The Polish Peasant Party brought one woman into Parliament (3% of all parliamentarians). Among the thirteen women in the newly elected Senate in 2005, seven were from L&J, five from CP, and one from Self-Defense.

The Election of 2007
Political context: reorientation of society from right oriented to center liberal

The next parliamentary elections took place in the fall of 2007, only two years after the elections in 2005. The parliament dissolved itself after the crisis of the governing coalition consisting of the Law and Justice party, the League of Polish Families and the Self-Defense party. As a result of the elections, Civic Platform (the center-right oriented party that had previously been the opposition) received the highest number of votes. However, in order to have a majority in the parliament it created a coalition with the Polish Peasant Party – a rather conservative party. The new coalition was more liberal than the one that formed after the 2005 elections. The political orientation of the coalition and its style was more open to the West and to pursuing membership in the European Union for Poland.

Women as candidates and elected members of parliament

As in the 2005 elections, women's issues were almost absent from the 2007 electoral campaigns of the parties receiving enough votes to get elected to the parliament. The Women's Party, which was

created shortly before the elections, got about 1% of the votes. The political parties did not talk about quotas for women. The parties that were part of the coalition after the 2005 elections emphasized a traditional role for women and family in the 2007 electoral campaign. The number of women elected in 2007 was almost the same as in the 2005 elections. The systematically increasing number of women on candidate lists did not cause an increase in the number of women elected. Women constituted 20% of the total number of deputies to the Sejm. At the party level, women constituted 22.9% of Civic Platform's deputies, 22.7% of Left & Democrats' (L&D) deputies and 22.4% of the Law & Justice's (L&J) deputies. These results show that the political orientations of the parties and earlier commitments to promote women in elections were not reflected in the gender structures of the party representations in the Sejm. Women were almost absent in the Polish Peasant Party (one woman and thirty men) and there were no women in the German Minority. The number of women in the Senate decreased to eight after the elections in 2007.

There was an interesting change in the electoral behavior of men and women in 2007. In comparison with the 2001 parliamentary election, in 2007 the number of people voting only for men increased (for men, from 46% to 48%; for women, from 36% to 42%). On the other hand, the number of men voting for men and women increased from 39% to 47%, but the number of women voting for both men and women decreased from 55% to 50% (Siemieńska 2009).

The Election of 2011
Political context: continuity of center liberal orientation of society

The last parliamentary election was held in 2011. The situation was different from that observed during the previous election. The ruling party – the Civic Platform – still enjoyed support and managed to gain the largest number of seats in the Sejm. Like before, the Civic Platform formed a coalition with the socially conservative Polish Peasant Party.

Quota system for neither sex in electoral regulations

This time, thanks to mobilization of a strong lobby supporting an increase in the share of women in the Sejm and the Senate, a quota-based system was introduced obliging all parties to place at least 35% women and men on their lists of candidates. The introduction of the quota-based system was, to a certain extent, a novelty. It was a step ahead in comparison with the quota-based system introduced by some of the parties prior to the election of 2001. The new electoral regulations were due to pressure exerted by a strong lobby of the Congress of Women. The congress members are women representing very different political views (from leftist to liberal), mostly well or very well educated, and representing various professional careers.

Attitudes toward women's participation in politics in 2011

The success of the Congress as a strong lobby is also determined by the changing social and political context. During the past two decades an evolution of views with regard to social roles of women and

men took place. It does not mean that support for gender equality and acceptance for upward mobility of women is equal in all social groups. (Fig. 3).

The study conducted after the Parliamentary election of 2011 showed that significant differences in opinions between women and men still exist when it comes to the "natural" ability of representatives of both genders to deal with politics. Women, more often than men, disagreed with the view that men were better suited to politics than women. The number of respondents disagreeing with this view increased along with their education level among women. As for men, there was no correlation between this view and education level. However, more educated male respondents tended more often to declare that men were better suited to engage in political activity. Interpreting the findings we may suppose that better (especially the best) educated men perceived women as rivals to the positions to which they aspired more often than less educated men.

Figure 3: Opinion "Men are better suited to politics than women" (in %), 2011
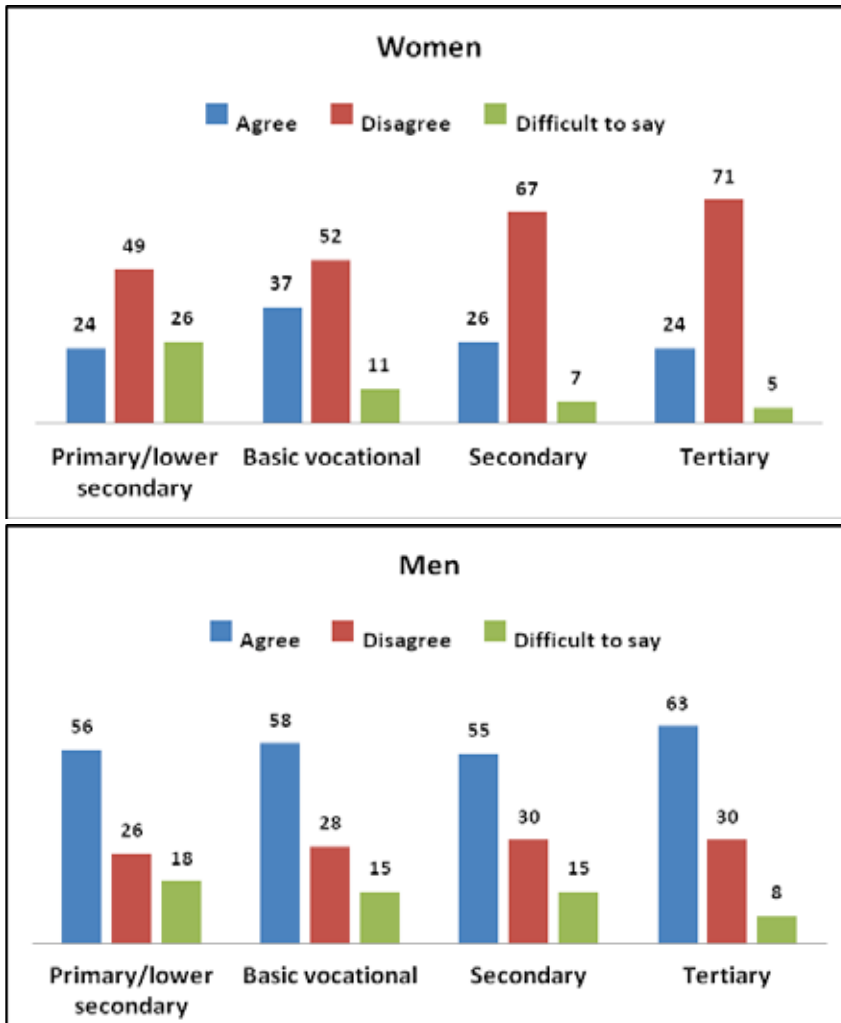
Source: Study conducted after the 2011 election on a nationally representative sample by Pentor for the author of the paper.

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Limitations of newly introduced gender quota system in parliamentary election in 2011

The number of women becoming candidates is growing over time, although disproportionately few of them succeed. Moreover, the liberal, European-oriented Civic Platform is playing a dominant role in the present government, along with the small conservative Peasant Party. The two have a majority of votes in the Sejm and the Senate, which makes it easier to promote legislation more sensitive to gender equality. A certain role is also played by the change in the structure of education of men and women – for more than twenty years the latter have been better educated.

It was known before the last election that a change in the electoral regulations demanding at least 35% men and 35% women on the candidates' lists could not bring a radical change in terms of the number of elected women to Sejm. Studies conducted after each election have confirmed that in the existing electoral regulations (proportional), except for towns below 20 thousand inhabitants with single-member constituencies, constituents usually vote for persons who are on the top of the candidate lists in parties for which they vote. The proposal for the introduction of an obligatory construction of lists of candidates as follows: woman – man – woman or vice versa has been rejected by parties. It was only possible to introduce the principle of at least one woman being present among the first three candidates on the list of candidates and two among the first five in the CP. This regulation was important because results of the previous elections showed in less popular parties, that in many districts, only one person – or none – has any chance to enter the Parliament.

Women as candidates and elected members of parliament

The newly introduced quota system was directly related to the increased number of women on the lists of candidates of all political parties; women constituted about 40% or more of all candidates within each party. This was almost double the number of female candidates than there were in the elections in 2007. However, women's positions on lists of candidates differ (See Table 2).

Table 2: Number of women in places I-V on the party lists of candidates in the 2011 parliamentary elections (in 41 electoral districts)
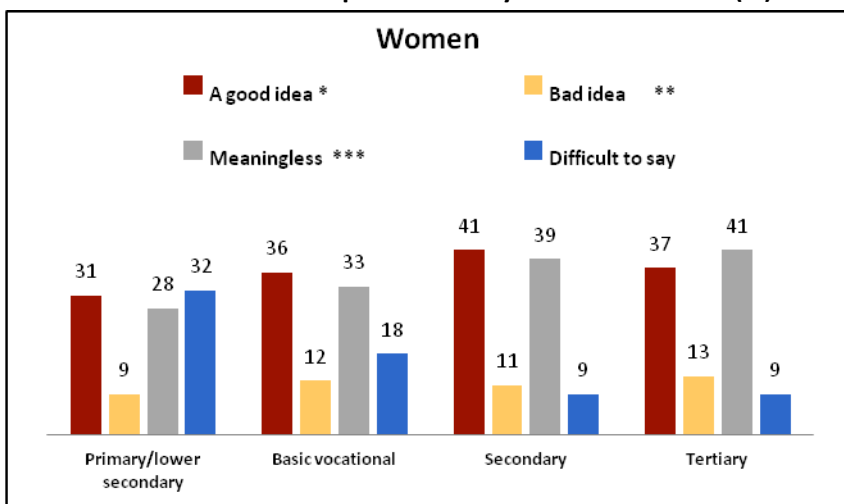
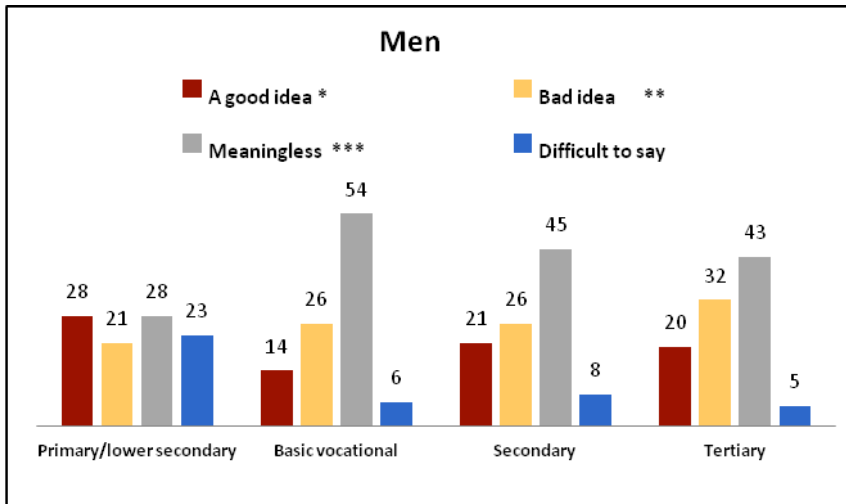| Name of Party:	I place	II place	III place	IV place	V place
Law and Justice *	10	6	11	13	15
Poland is the Most Important	6	11	15	20	14
Alliance of Democratic Left*	6	18	21	10	19
Palikot's Movement*	4	20	25	30	10
Polish Peasant Party*	6	7	14	23	23
Polish Labor Party – August '80	15	16	19	21	19
Civic Platform of Polish republic*	14	19	17	14	21

Parties that have deputies in the Sejm as a result of the 2011 election. The German Minority (not shown in the table) also has a few seats in the Sejm. (Source: State Electoral Commission)

The Civic Platform included the highest number of women in the first position on its lists of candidates. It was much more than for the next party (Law and Justice) considering its size, in regard to having deputies in the Sejm. These high numbers of women among candidates did not result in a significant increase of women among elected deputies. The percentage of women among those elected was 23.9%. That is only 4% more than in the elections in 2007 when women's issues did not play any important role in public debates during the electoral campaign and the quota system had yet to be introduced. The percentage of elected women differs. In the Civic Platform the number of elected women is the highest; they constitute 34.8% of the total number of the party's deputies (206 persons). It is a significant increase in comparison with the 2005 and 2007 elections, in which women constituted 24.5% and 23% of Civic Platforms total deputies elected, respectively. The Civic Platform and the Polish Peasant Party are the only parties in which the number of elected women in 2011 was higher than in the earlier elections. In the Law and Justice party, women constituted 17.2% of the total number of deputies (137 persons); in 2007 – 20.5% and in 2005 – 18.7%. In the Democratic Left Alliance – 14.8% of the total number of deputies (25 persons) while in 2007 – 20.8% and in 2005 – 20.0%. In the Polish Peasant Party – 7.1% of the total number of deputies of the party (29 persons), while in 2007 – 3.2% and in 2005 – 4.0%. In the Palikot's Movement – 12.3% of the total number of deputies (34 persons); the party was created before the last election (Fuszara 2012).

Opinions on the quota-based system as a mechanism to increase the number of women in Parliament are also diverse among the respondents, although not as much as the attitudes towards participation of women in politics. It may seem surprising that a large number of respondents believe that this mechanism will not change much when it comes to elected positions (similar results were obtained when asking about the quota-based system after the election of 2001). Nevertheless, women more often than men declared that introduction of quotas on the lists of candidates would increase the chances for women to engage in politics (fig.4).

Figure 4: Opinion on the introduction of quota not less than 35% of one gender (men or women) on the list of candidates in the parliamentary elections in 2011 (%)

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Men

Education	A good idea *	Bad idea **	Meaningless ***	Difficult to say
Primary/lower secondary	28	21	28	23
Basic vocational	14	26	54	6
Secondary	21	26	45	8
Tertiary	20	32	43	5

*A good idea because it will result in more wise deputies in the Sejm
**Bad idea because it will result in more deputies not having the right skills to work in the Sejm
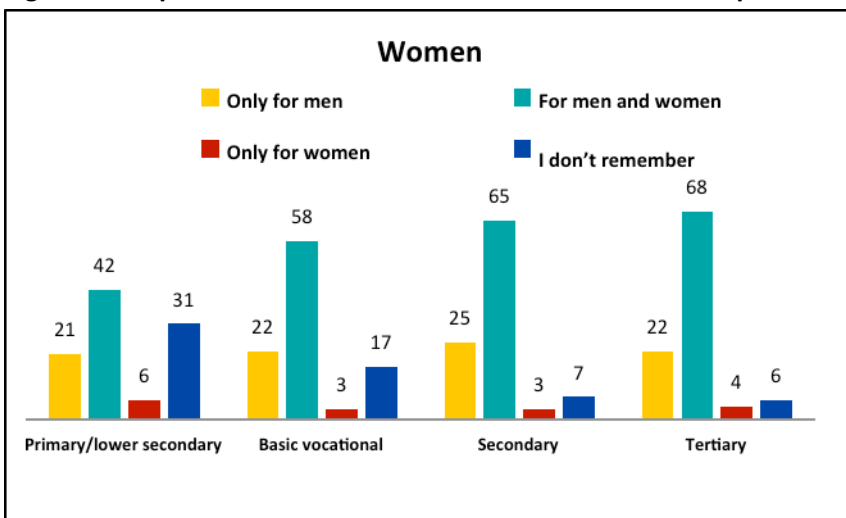***Meaningless because voters may choose to elect those candidates whom they consider to be the best
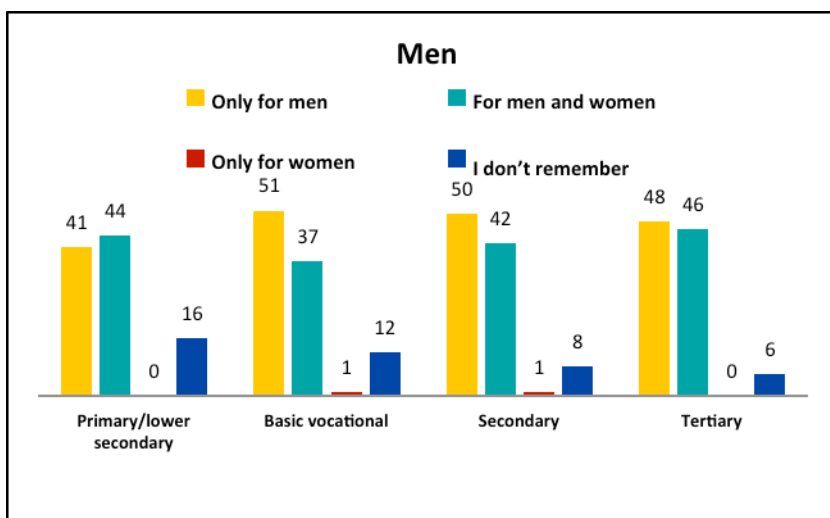Source: description under fig. 5.

Electoral behavior in 2011

Like in earlier parliamentary elections women tended more often to vote for both men and women (taking into consideration voting for candidates to the Sejm and the Senat) than men. The tendency is correlated with the level of education in their case. Among men the tendency to vote only for men as well as for both men and women correlates with level of education; more educated people vote more often in the ways mentioned. Women, especially lower educated women, more often than men did not remember whom they voted for (fig.5).

Figure 5: Respondents voted for men, women or for both in parliamentary elections in 2011 (in %)

Women

Education	Only for men	For men and women	Only for women	I don't remember
Primary/lower secondary	21	42	6	31
Basic vocational	22	58	3	17
Secondary	25	65	3	7
Tertiary	22	68	4	6

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Source: Study conducted after 2011 election on a national representative sample by Pentor for the author of the article.

Conclusions

To sum up, the electoral behaviors and attitudes of men and women towards women in politics have been changing during the last 20 years. Due to the large increase in the level of women's education, women are entering the labor market as highly skilled employees gathering experience in the public sphere and believing in the need to have social and cultural capital in order to be active actors in politics. Many women want to enter the world of politics. This is demonstrated in the growing number of women among candidates. However, support for them is not evenly distributed in the Polish society. Lower-educated men and women as well as higher-educated men are less supportive. However, the greatest problem is still the parties' lack of willingness to put women in the top positions on their lists of candidates, which is one of the only ways for a candidate to have a chance of being elected.

It turns out that introduction of a quota-based system by DLA-LU and DU in 2001 and as the general rule in the parliamentary election in 2011, did not produce similar results – a high increase of female deputies. In 2011, the quota-based system led to a small increase in the number of women elected because of a reorientation of society towards the right, in comparison with early 2000. Also, we can assume that paradoxically the rule of having a large number of women (at least 35%) on the lists of candidates turned out to be partially dysfunctional in the case of some parties. In order to meet the required number of women on their party lists, their activists put a number of unknown women in lower positions on the lists, guaranteeing that the women would not be real rivals in the elections. It happened especially often in the parties with small electorates where the party leaders wanted to give the best chances to their male politicians. Comparing the elections of 2001 and 2011, in the case of the 2011 elections we may list the following as factors that facilitated the increase of women among elected deputies: a strong, visible women's lobby (Congress of Women), a government and parliament that were rather positively-oriented to facilitate women's access to politics, public

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debate, and the need to respect the European Union's expectations regarding the issue of Poland's admission to the European Union. The reorientation of public opinion to a conservative one, as well as sometimes putting unknown women on lists of candidates, resulted in diminished support for female candidates in the election of 2011.

The significant increase in 2001 was also due to the creation for the first time of a women's lobby, to administrative changes and the creation of larger districts that have more available mandates, and the strong position of the left oriented party (DLA) which emphasized a need for policy based on gender equality in their program. As far as public attitudes are concerned, a large part of society was disappointed by the policies put in place by the earlier ruling right oriented parties. The disappointment stemmed from the fact that society had been expecting the creation of a democratic political system and a free market economy after the fall of communism to immediately improve the standard of living and provide opportunities to influence the decision-making process in the country.

Nevertheless, the existing values and attitudes serve, to an increasing extent, as a basis for the creation of formal and informal mechanisms to support gender equality in the future. At the same time, we may still refer to the existence of culture-based premises (with the support of the Catholic church) that preserve the unequal status of women and men on the individual and collective level. Significant discrepancies in views between the older and the younger generation, as well as between the poorly and the well-educated, are a source of conflict between these groups with regard to the roles of women and men, their rights, their rightful demands and the established patterns that they should follow. It is a conflict that pertains to the division of goods and access to power.

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Key words:
Gender quota systems, candidates, deputies, Sejm (lower house), attitudes toward women in politics, voting behavior

Irish Women Today:
Perspectives from Galway to Dublin on
Gender (In)Equality

by Brenda Gael McSweeney
with Raffi Freedman-Gurspan, Rose O'Connell-Marion & Jade Sank

UNESCO/UNITWIN Network on Gender, Culture & Development

Abstract

Ireland is a highly developed country that has an intriguing story as regards gender disparities. Ireland fell from 7th to 33rd place on United Nations development indices in 2011 when a gender lens was applied, revealing a wage gap between men and women, a gendered division of labor and work force participation, as well as a lack of women in elected office. This paper examines gender inequality in Ireland in two snapshots. The first snapshot was taken in 2011, and is based on interviews with women – and men – from across Ireland during that year. The second snapshot takes another look at the situation of women in Ireland in 2014, relying on 2013/2014 data for an assessment of Ireland's progress towards gender equality.

The authors examine factors that led to the disparities between the sexes in Ireland that were reported in 2011, and share viewpoints from Ireland that offer potential ways to continue to rectify these inequalities. Political empowerment and effective equal employment opportunities for Irish women emerge as powerful vehicles to foster further improvement. The adoption of political party quota systems and other strategies for boosting Irish women's political participation appear to be promising steps in securing more equality overall. By 2014, the picture for Ireland on global development indices has improved significantly, yet the latest UNDP Human Development Report and other recent data show that the gender wage gap and women's limited participation in politics are still major barriers to gender equality in Ireland.

Origins of our quest and future directions

We were startled to see Ireland plummeting on United Nations Development Program (UNDP) 2011 rankings on gender equality. The picture was bright for Irish women's education and health. In fact, in terms of maternal mortality, Ireland's women give birth in nearly the safest conditions worldwide. Nevertheless, to explain the slide from a gender perspective, one needed only to look at the gender wage gap and the paucity of women in politics at the time.

I was keen to learn more through discussions and research on the spot, as was my Research Assistant at Boston University, Raffi Freedman-Gurspan. We began our enquiry in Ireland's countryside, through conversations with extraordinary 'ordinary people' encountered during our trip – on buses and trains, at B&Bs and shops, in restaurants and pubs. We would then meet with university faculty, non-governmental activists, and policy-makers. The discoveries along the way were fascinating.

Our goal was to capture a 'snapshot' of the situation of Irish women to share through our UNESCO/UNITWIN (University Twinning) Network website and to spark ideas in my seminar at Boston University on gender and international development. We were most fortunate to benefit from the time and rich ideas of many Irish and other interlocutors. Brandeis University's Women's Studies Research Center also supported this initiative through its Student Scholar Partnership Program for a literature review and designing a questionnaire that Raffi and I used during the month of June 2011 in Ireland.

Origins continued…

Upon our return to Massachusetts, Student Scholar Jade Sank participated in reviewing our interview notes and select documents to produce draft materials. Rose O'Connell-Marion (Assistant Editor of this volume of case studies) analyzed the 2014 data on Ireland against the earlier 2011 data, and helped to synthesize the two snapshots. A series of UNESCO/UNITWIN E-Books of gender case studies of which I am initiator and Editor with Gloria Bonder, who heads the Buenos Aires-based Global Network of UNESCO Chairs on Gender, provides a platform for us to share a glimpse of our interactions and viewpoints gleaned for debate among activists, students, and faculty alike.

The situation in Ireland regarding gender gaps appears fluid, with recent positive shifts on global indices after debates on the introduction of a gender quota system. We feel that the country merits ongoing attention from those militating for gender equality globally, for the lessons learned along the way in Ireland.   ~ Brenda Gael McSweeney

Context

Ireland's 2011 drop on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Gender Inequality Index (GII) drew our attention to the situation of women on the Emerald Isle. The country struggles when the issue of gender inequality is brought into the equation of human development.

The GII can be interpreted as the loss to potential human development due to shortfalls in the arenas of reproductive health, empowerment, and labor force participation, measured as a percentage. As shown in the table on the next page (an extract from the 2011 GII), Ireland's human development achievements dropped a total of 20.3% in these categories once gender parity was factored in through the GII.[1]

According to the 2011 UNDP Human Development Report, Ireland ranked 33rd among 185 countries on the GII.[2] This GII decrease does not represent a loss on the Human Development Index (HDI) itself – another measure of the UNDP focusing on life expectancy, income and knowledge. In recent years, Ireland has been ranking an excellent 7 on the HDI (2011 and 2013), and 11 in 2014.[3] In many ways, the degree of gender inequality has been fluctuating in Ireland over the past few years, especially since the worldwide economic recession hit the country. According to David Joyce (at right with Paul Sweeney) from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), "One of the things we've been saying throughout this crisis is that any measures taken by the Government need to be seen through a

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[1] From UNDP, Human Development Reports website, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Gender Inequality Index (GII).
[2] See full table at: UNDP, 2011 Human Development Report, p. 139.
[3] UNDP, Human Development Reports from 2011, 2013, and 2014.

gender lens. The agreements we have with the EU (European Union), IMF (International Monetary Fund), ECB (European Central Bank), I doubt contain the words 'gender' or 'women'."[4]

HDI rank	Gender Inequality Index		Maternal mortality ratio	Adolescent fertility rate	Seats in national parliament (% female)
	Rank	Value			
	2011	2011	2008	2011[a]	2011
VERY HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT					
1 Norway	6	0.075	7	9.0	39.6
2 Australia	18	0.136	8	16.5	28.3
3 Netherlands	2	0.052	9	5.1	37.8
4 United States	47	0.299	24	41.2	16.8[c]
5 New Zealand	32	0.195	14	30.9	33.6
6 Canada	20	0.140	12	14.0	24.9
7 Ireland	33	0.203	3	17.5	11.1
8 Liechtenstein	..	..	..	7.0	24.0
9 Germany	7	0.085	7	7.9	31.7
10 Sweden	1	0.049	5	6.0	45.0

Source: UNDP 2011 Gender Inequality Index

And yet when prompted, community leaders in Ireland spoke animatedly about the gender wage gap in relation to the current economic crisis, and women missing out on opportunities in the work place – and beyond. In fact, Ireland's National Women's Strategy 2007-2016 focuses on three themes – labor market, health, and (political) participation and voice – which tally with the GII components.

This complex picture led us to explore several key measures in our field study in Ireland in June 2011 – notably the 'gender wage gap' and the low presence of women in elected positions. We are hopeful that the following 'snapshots' will contribute to the dialogue on promoting gender equality, one of UNESCO's two over-arching global priorities for the period 2008-2021, that is:

> For UNESCO, gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. It means that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is a human rights principle, a precondition for sustainable, people-centered development, and it is a goal in and of itself.[5]

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[4] Interview with Paul Sweeney, Chief Economist, and David Joyce, Equality Officer, at Irish Trade Unions Congress, June 14, 2011. See References for specific June 2011 dates of other Key Interviews/Meetings.
[5] UNESCO's Promise: Gender Equality – A Global Priority. The Division for Gender Equality, Office of the Director-General, Paris: 2014, p. 3.

Gender Wage Gap

One of the strongest indicators of gender inequality is the existence of a gender wage gap, where there is a difference in pay between men and women – with the comparative female earnings expressed as a percentage of male earnings. To learn why Ireland's wage gap exists, we spoke and corresponded with numerous individuals in Ireland about factors behind the gap and how the recession has exacerbated the problem.

In discussions with Catherine Byrne, Senior Advisor at The Atlantic Philanthropies and earlier of the ICTU, she explained, "Ireland was decades behind Europe until say around 1995 onwards; as the economy expanded, so too did the need for women in the market. The increase of women in the labor force was driven by the economy, not by equality. Any bit of childcare policy was driven by the labor market, not by the quest for equality and equal participation".

The Equality Authority of Ireland (merged with the Irish Human Rights Commission on 1 Nov. 2014 to become the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission) explores some of the reasons behind the gap in earnings between women and men in Ireland in the publication *The Gender Wage Gap*. This study posits that a gap between women's and men's earnings exists due to a number of factors including: the differences in years of work experience between men and women; which of the sexes takes more leave or career breaks, as well as who works full time versus part time; comparative level of education; and family responsibilities.[6] For example, earlier studies found that while 23% of all employed Irish women worked on a part time basis, this was true for only 5% of men.[7] The gender wage gap is also often attributed to the fact that when women take maternity leave they miss out on new technology and changes that occur during their leave, and may be perceived as insufficiently dedicated to their work. The negative impact of these kinds of differences can be seen in the fact that Irish women are not receiving promotions with the same frequency, and are typically making less money than Irish men.[8]

Women in Ireland have been disadvantaged even further by the economic recession. David McWilliams, popular broadcaster, economist and author wrote in July 2012, "At the beginning of the recession, the vast majority of people losing their jobs were men. This was mainly the result of the collapse in house building and the evaporation of jobs on the sites. In the past year, this has changed. We are seeing the rapid feminization of unemployment. In the 12 months to June, long-term

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[6] McGuinness, Seamus, et al. The Gender Wage Gap in Ireland. The Equality Authority. p. ix.

[7] Baker, John (2009). *Equality: From Theory to Action*, p. 8 (in turn citing Tony Fahey, Helen Russell and Emer Smyth).

[8] McGuinness, *loc. cit.*

unemployment among women rose more than three times faster than among men. Male long-term unemployment went up by 4%, while it shot up 13.6% for women."[9]

Orla O'Connor, now Director of the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI), explained during our conversation, "As a result of the recession, we're certainly tracking the way cuts are being implemented, services being withdrawn with a huge disproportionate impact on women. There are unemployment shifts to areas where women work, women dealing with huge amounts of debt, and health impacts with reduced services at a local level for women, such as domestic violence prevention work being cut." She added, "There is a deep need for a women's movement, aside from economic pressures, which existed even prior to the recession. That equality for women has been reached is a myth."

Carol Baxter, Head of Development, Development Section of the Equality Authority when we spoke with her in 2011, offered a reflection on the areas in which the entire evaluation of the gender inequality issue in Ireland could improve. Baxter discussed reports on the gender pay gap and stated, "The issue is how the data is interpreted." According to a 2009 report by the Equality Authority and the Economic and Social Research Institute, women's participation in Ireland's labour force significantly increased between 1998 and 2007.[10] But according to Baxter and her colleague Renee Dempsey, then CEO of the Equality Authority, this increase is being looked at too generally. While more women are joining the workforce, there is still obvious segregation. A large population of women are filling 'traditional women's jobs', which are frequently lower status and lower paying, or working only part time. Such (mis)interpretations of data help support the myth that Ireland has achieved gender equality.


The state of gender equality in Ireland may also be a result, in part, of a history of laws that discouraged women from joining the workforce and the cultural norms that they stemmed from. For example Anne O'Máille, manager of O'Máille's – The Original House of Style in Galway City, explained in an interview that up until 1972, married women in Ireland were legally excluded from holding a job under a law known as 'the marriage bar.' This law was abolished in 1972, and in the 1990s Ireland introduced a number of policies that support female participation in the workforce, including maternity leave

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[9] McWilliams, David. (2012, July 18). Dead-end street politics – we won't accept pay cuts so now we're stuck. *Irish Independent*.
[10] New Research Investigates Changes in Women's Participation in the Irish Labour Market 1998-2007. Press Release – The Economic and Social Research Institute, Nov. 13, 2009.

benefits, paid parental leave, and funding for childcare.[11] Policy, however, is not the only factor in women's participation in the workforce. O'Máille explains that, "women may be highly educated and 'soar to the top' – yet, they have difficult questions of childcare to face up to, and difficult decisions requiring family support."

O'Máille's observations resonate with research findings, such as those set out by the National Women's Council of Ireland in the publication "Who Cares". The report shows that women shoulder the vast majority of household tasks and childcare, which often means choosing to pass up career opportunities. Even though eight in ten care providers say that they are happy with their choice of work-life balance, the report reminds us that these choices are "influenced by the different roles and expectations society ascribes to men and women."[12] While abolishing laws like the "marriage bar" and implementing policies that support women in the workforce are certainly positive steps towards reducing the gender wage gap, there will always be a divide between men and women in the workforce if perceptions of gender roles do not change.
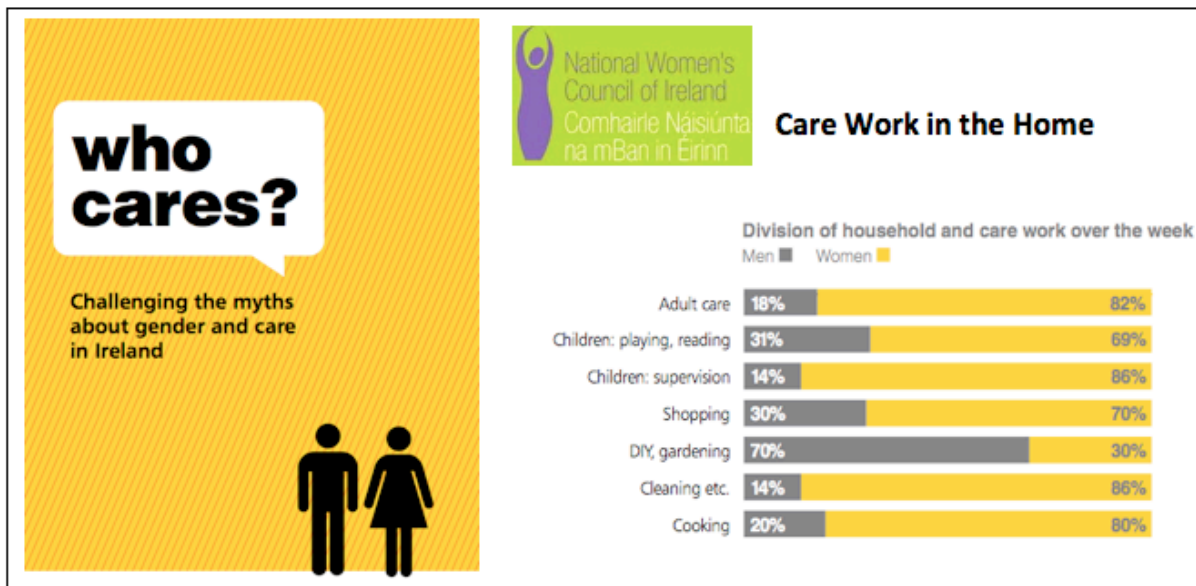
While gender disparities exist in the workforce throughout Ireland, there are individual companies and agencies that are taking steps to close the gap and bring women into their workforce. One such company is Bus Éireann, Ireland's national bus company.

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[11] Daly, Mary; Clavero, Sara. (2004). Contemporary Family Policy in Ireland and Europe. *School of Sociology and Social Policy*, Queen's University of Belfast, pp. 54-56.

[12] National Women's Council of Ireland. (2009). Who Cares? Challenging the Myths about Gender and Care in Ireland. Dublin: National Women's Council in Ireland, pp. 17-18. See also Baker, especially on 'caring work and the women's movement.'

Bus Éireann: Striving to Bring About Change

We travelled with Bus Éireann throughout most of our stay in Ireland, and had a chance to meet with three individuals who work at the company's headquarters in Dublin to discuss ways Bus Éireann is promoting gender equality.

Karl Flood, Manager of Accounting Services and Payroll at Bus Éireann whom we initially encountered during his special studies at Boston College, shared with us that, "Bus Éireann has had both an equality policy and a diversity policy since about five years ago." According to the company's equality and diversity policy, "Bus Éireann is committed to creating an inclusive workplace where different ideas, experiences and skills are welcome. People differ in many ways, from variations in age, gender, physical ability, nationality, ethnic background and socio-economic background to other differences such as intellectual ability, sexual orientation, marital status and family status. Bus Éireann understands that embracing these differences enriches the workplace and contributes towards creating a dynamic work environment."[13]

Paula Douglas, Regional Personnel Manager, East, explained that despite the existence of the equality policy, work is still required to foster the kind of gender equity the company would like to see, "My role is more operational than the corporate level – we implement: we have 300 drivers here in the office, but only a handful would be female – we operate 24/7. That does not lend itself to people with young families and babies, so we tend not to get a high number of females. Females that we do get are usually single. In Dublin, we have literally four women drivers..."

Karl Flood and Paula Douglas with Andrea Keane,
Company Secretary/Manager Finance and Administration

Interestingly, during our travels, a female Bus Éireann driver in Letterkenny replied to our query, surprised at our interest in her work, "There are only three women bus drivers in this area (County Donegal)... don't you have women bus drivers where you're from?"

While progressing toward gender equality in such a heavily male-dominated industry presents daunting challenges, the firm's policy implementation is seeing progress. One promising illustration: a woman who headed Bus Éireann's garages went on to become its Chief Operating Officer.

(*Meetings and interviews, June 16th, 2011 in Dublin*)

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[13] Bus Éireann, n.d.

Companies like Bus Éireann are helping to create a climate in Ireland that supports women's participation in the workforce and their success in careers not traditionally associated with women. Along with continued attention to policy, it is important that companies and organizations continue working to shift perceptions of gender roles if we are to see increased equality in the workforce.

Political Inequality

Another arena where gender inequity is strikingly obvious is in political decision-making. Ireland's first female president, Mary Robinson, was elected in 1990 and was followed by Mary McAleese in 1997. Their elections to this post, sometimes considered primarily ceremonial, nonetheless dramatically elevated women's faces to a national level. They used their positions creatively and received positive acclaim for their work, yet the visibility of their positions as head of state did not translate into substantial growth for Irish women in politics.

According to Carol Baxter of the then Equality Authority, thanks to Robinson and McAleese's leadership, "…there was significant progression in the 1990s and in ways too there may be a generational cohort of younger women that have different expectations and role models." Renée Dempsey of the Authority added, "Now children think all presidents must be female!" However, encouraging Irish women to enter into politics is still a necessity. In the late 1990s Pat O'Connor, a sociology professor at the University of Limerick, wrote of ambivalence towards women in the world of politics. She wrote that this ambivalence was "…soberingly demonstrated by the electoral annihilation of most of them who were ministers in the last government." In a 2011 phone interview, she continued to wonder, "Will Irish women vote for Irish women?"[14]

As a Parliamentary system, real political power in Ireland lies in the position of the *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister) and with members of *Oireachtas* (Parliament), those elected officials who craft, debate, and vote on the enactment of Irish legislation. The Irish Times published on June 6th 2011, "At the recent general election (25 February 2011) 15 percent of the *Teachtaí Dála* (TDs or members of Dáil Éireann, the lower house of the Irish Parliament) elected were women… only 85 of the 566 candidates contesting the election were women."[15] The Fine Gael party claimed the majority of seats in the Dáil. Prior to the inflow of these Fine Gael legislators, a proposal of adding a gender quota for elections had been floating for years. John Drennan of the Irish Independent newspaper explained in a May 2011 article, "The abysmally low level of representation for women in national politics has been an ongoing source of embarrassment for the political system. Under new government proposals, driven by Minister for the Environment Phil Hogan, political parties will have to select a minimum of 30 percent female candidates to qualify for full political funding."[16]

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[14] O'Connor, Pat. (1998). *Emerging Voices: Women in Contemporary Irish Society.* Dublin: The Institute of Public Administration, p. 252, and phone interview from Limerick, June 27, 2011.

[15] Women and Politics. *The Irish Times*, June 6, 2011.

[16] Drennan, John. (2011, May 22). Parties Will Lose Funding if they Fail to Fill Gender Quota. *Sunday Independent*.

Senator Ivana Bacik of the Labour Party had long been a leading voice for an "opportunity quota" for women, and a national figure in promoting women in Irish politics. In early 2011 she wrote, "Ireland has an appalling record on women's representation in politics. In 1990, when Mary Robinson was elected as our first woman President, we were in 37th position in the Inter-Parliamentary Union rankings of women's representation in the lower or single house of national parliaments. By February 2011, we had fallen to 85th position. We are well below the world and European averages and the internationally recommended figure of 30%."[17]

Professors Niamh Reilly (at right) and Nata Duvvury of the Global Women's Studies Programme at the National University of Ireland, Galway, who spoke with us in 2011 about the proposed quota spearheaded by Bacik, explained, "at least 30% of each political party's candidates have to be women. If the parties fail to do so in a certain amount of time, two years, they will lose 50% of their funding! In fact, if the political parties fail in their first attempt, in addition to the loss in public funding, they will be required the second time around to have 40% of their candidates be women!" They added in jest, "Of course, the Government wants a 'cap,' since no government could stand, say, 70% women!" Despite all the previous talk about increasing women's voice in politics and turning to a quota system, *Taoiseach* and Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny's 2011 cabinet included only two women out of a total of 15 Ministers (the portfolios of Social Protection and Children and Youth).[18]

Franchine Franchessca: A Voice from the Arts on Women's Political Voices

"Are the men hearing the important issues from the women, from those in parliament with them; and are the female politicians speaking about these crucial issues: the family, children and women's other priorities?"

Franchine in June 2011, at left:
Curator & professional actress
Nora Barnacle House in Galway

Debates on the political gender quota were often present in our conversations with Irish women and men from differing walks of life in Galway, Donegal, Dublin and Limerick. A female *garda* (police officer) in Limerick wondered if women would come forward under the proposed gender quota

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[17] Ireland's Record on Women in Politics. (2011, Feb. 21). *National Women's Council of Ireland*.
[18] Houses of the Oireachtas. (n.d.). *31st Dail.* Retrieved from www.oireachtas.ie.

system. A museum worker in County Donegal stated that she gave priority to her family and that gender equality was not an issue for her or for the way she is raising her daughters. She argued that there are few women in Irish politics because women have other priorities, especially in the evenings. She herself had once considered running for political office on the county level, but chose her family life instead.

The gender quota, known as the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012 did pass, but since there have not been Parliamentary elections since 2011, we have yet to see the impact of the quota. One positive sign is that Enda Kenny's 2014 cabinet has twice as many female Ministers as his 2011 cabinet (now up to four women).[19] Still, people are monitoring female political representation in Ireland. According to Gail McElroy, political science professor at Trinity College, Dublin in her Briefing on Women in Politics for Ireland's Convention on the Constitution, there has been a "sea of change in Irish society in recent decades," in regard to gender equality in many areas.[20] Unfortunately, female political participation seems to be one area that has yet to be fully reached by this wave of change.

Speaking Out for Change

Continued struggle is required if gender inequalities are going to end in Ireland. We met and reconnected with fascinating people across Ireland who are already taking innovative action, in many different ways and in different roles, to close wage gaps between men and women and increase women's participation in politics.
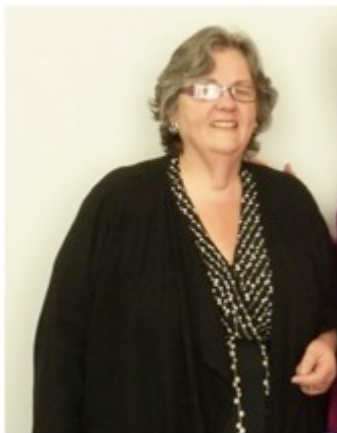
Bride Rosney, former Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice, is a human rights and environmental justice activist. Bride declared, "One of the greatest disappointments is the near absence of women in the local and national elections. It's worrying because the breakthrough has not happened and it's not clear there will be one…" She added, "I'm concerned that some women who have broken through the glass ceiling have replaced it with a steel floor! They do not bring up the next generation." When asked how change could be brought about, she responded, "What's the way forward: Education, as simple as that." (*Interview, June 15th, 2011 in Dublin*)

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[19] Ibid. Kenny's 2014 cabinet includes: Joan Burton, *Tánaiste* (Deputy Prime Minister) and Minister of the Department of Social Protection; Jan O'Sullivan, Department of Education and Skills; Heather Humphreys, Arts, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht; Frances Fitzgerald, Department of Justice and Equality.
[20] McElroy, Gail (2013). Women in Politics: Elections. Briefing Document for the Convention on the Constitution.

Anthea McTeirnan *(at left)* is an Irish Times Journalist and a women's rights activist as the former Chair of the Irish Family Planning Association. Anthea agreed that work was required to bring women into a more permanent and equal place in the workforce, as well as to see a change in political participation, yet she passionately argued that reproductive rights are key to fighting inequality. "Yes of course gender inequality is alive and well! As long as half the population cannot control their bodies, yes – until women have the right to control their own bodies, there is no equality. You can forget about everything else, like the work place." (*Interview, June 15th, 2011 in Dublin; pictured with Una O'Hare, General Manager at the Irish Times*)

Achieving gender equality will require intersectional cooperation amongst a range of groups in Ireland, including the transgender community, which also strives for gender justice. Broden Giambrone left his home in Canada to serve as the Director (now Chief Executive) of the Transgender Equality Network of Ireland, and has co-founded and served a number of voluntary rights associations. "My point of view is that we need to be doing capacity building in the trans community. For sustainability, my feeling is that we need to prioritize the personal capacity building. I think it's telling that they hired a non-Irish person for this job; there isn't a huge pool of trans people to do this work, to make leaders. Gender legislation is 'in', and potential doors are open for funding. The Government needs to balance legislation and follow through. We need to collaborate with women's, LGB (lesbian, gay and bisexual), and immigrants' causes, and raise trans awareness as to how they are all interconnected." (*Interview, June 14th, 2011 in Dublin*)

Ways Forward & Areas for Further Exploration

A first look at recent international gender (in)equality indices might prompt premature celebration of the improving situation for women in Ireland, in comparison to other countries. For example, it may be tempting to attribute the more positive 2014 rankings on several key indices, in comparison to 2011, in part to publicity surrounding the campaign for and introduction of the gender quota. Further examination of UNDP's Gender Inequality Index components, however, reveals a change in methodology in calculating seats in national parliament (in 2014, the GII counted seats in the upper house and the lower house, whereas before only the lower house was counted). So while Ireland's ranking in comparison to other countries improves to 20th on the Gender Inequality Index of 2014 –

certainly to be acknowledged – the actual number of women in parliament remains the same, since there have not been Parliamentary elections since 2011.[21]

The World Economic Forum's announcement of Ireland's 5th place ranking on its 2012 Gender Gap Index could also contribute to an exaggerated sense of accomplishment. Yet the Report also shows Ireland, "well down the list for female political representation," and finds on pay that, "Irish women only earn three quarters as much as Irish men."[22] Inclusion of, "years of female head of state (last 50)," in this index results in a remarkably favorable rating for Ireland and other parliamentary system countries with female heads of state, when compared to other composite measures.[23] As novelist Anne Enright declared to Brenda McSweeney at Boston College in February 2011, "Ireland *seems* high on the gender list since it's skewed, given that Mary Robinson and Mary McAleese have been presidents!" Although Ireland's overall score is higher on the 2014 Gender Gap Index, the country dropped three places down to 8th because three other countries had even greater improvement. While 8th place is still an achievement to be commended, Ireland's lowest categories among the report's four categories are still economic participation and political empowerment.[24]

The latest report from Ireland's Central Statistics Office (CSO) confirms that despite some gains, gender inequality still persists in the arenas of labour force participation and political voice. In 2014, the male labour force participation rate stands at 65.7%, while female participation is 55.9%. Looking more deeply into women's labour force participation, the CSO reports that women are far less likely to be employed full-time with 44.1% of married men working 40 hours a week compared to only 16.8% of married women. The dollar for dollar pay difference between men and women has decreased significantly, but since women work far fewer hours outside the home than men – often a consequence of the gendered burden of care work – their total earned income is still only about three quarters of men's income. Women also continue to be under-represented in politics in comparison with other countries in the European Union. Female representation in the Irish Parliament was 15.7% in 2013, compared

> **24-year old waitress in County Galway**:
>
> *"Women are lesser than men – men are the owners, women are the staff. Women take on the work at home. Yet, Ireland thinks of itself as a modern country!*
> *Marriage is not on my radar. My priorities and those of my girlfriends are career and travel."*

with the EU average of 27.5%.[25] The July 2014 appointment of a woman as *Tánaiste* (Deputy Prime Minister), with women heading four Government Departments (of 15), could however signal an important turning point.

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[21] UNDP 2014 Human Development Report: Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience.
[22] Aideen Sheehan. (2012). Ireland Now in Top 5 Countries to be a Woman. *Irish Independent.*
[23] World Economic Forum. (2012). *The Global Gender Gap Report 2012.* Geneva.
[24] World Economic Forum. (2014). *The Global Gender Gap Report 2014.* Geneva.
[25] Women and Men in Ireland 2013. (2014, July 29). Central Statistics Office, Ireland.

Future Approaches to Gender Equality

In reflecting on gender equality in Ireland and developing a way forward in this arena, it is helpful to consider different frameworks for conceptualizing the factors that contribute to gender inequality. Niall Crowley, the first Chief Executive of the former Equality Authority, human rights activist, and author suggested the following framework that we find most interesting:

> One key element to this is posing equality in terms of the interlinked framework of access to resources (economic); recognition (cultural); representation (political); and relationships (affective). This is a useful framework to trace out the inequalities experienced by women in Ireland and elsewhere. There are data gaps but a convincing picture of the problem is all too easily painted. It is a framework that also suggests the needs for strategic responses that combine action in all these areas, and shows up an inadequacy in many current responses.[26]

A related debate concerns focus: some advocates in Ireland and beyond support a coalition or 'intersectionality' approach towards achieving gender equality alongside other socio-economic priorities. On this, Crowley wrote:

> Women are diverse and strategies for equality for women need to take on this diversity – class, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, etc. Intersectionality has implications for responding to gender equality – for how women organize, with whom women might seek alliances – for the change agenda and what equality might look like.[27]

Kalyani Menon-Sen, feminist theoretician and activist in India who is often tapped to inspire United Nations thinking, also speaks of intersectionality – as broadening the conceptual framework and the gender mainstreaming (taking gender into account in *all* policies, programmes, etc.) agenda, beyond "a strategy that identifies gender inequality as the primary axis for exclusion." She writes:

> An intersectional approach to analyzing the disempowerment of marginalized women attempts to capture the impacts of interactions between multiple forms of subordination. It addresses the issues of women existing at the intersections of racism, patriarchy, class, caste, race and other systems of discrimination.[28]

We concur with both Crowley and Menon-Sen on the persuasiveness of taking a 'comprehensive' approach to the challenges of gender inequality – along the very lines adopted by the Equality Authority in Ireland, tackling discrimination on a broad range of grounds. Yet in addition to the

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[26] Correspondence (2011-12) with Niall Crowley, Former Chief Executive, Equality Authority.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Menon-Sen, Kalyani. (2010). Gender Mainstreaming: A road well-traveled but miles to go for equality, p. 25.

powerful synergy and socio-political coalition building of the foregoing, we see the necessity as well for the clout of a UN Women at the international level and a National Women's Council of Ireland at the country level, for analysis and action with a focused 'gender lens'. We also acknowledge the immense gains that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people have made in Ireland and beyond over the past decades. This especially includes recent positive cultural and policy changes transgender people have accomplished, notably in Ireland, for a greater sense of gender equality under the paradigm of respect for gender identity and self-determination.

Future Approaches: Gender Wage Gap

In addressing the gender wage gap, we find that a focus on gender-differentiated overall time use is crucial. As demonstrated by the earlier "Who Cares?" graphic, women are portrayed carrying a lopsided, triple workload of household tasks, childcare and care for the seniors and the ailing, plus paid labour outside of the home. The mere achievement of gender pay parity, let alone broader gender justice, appears to be an elusive dream in Ireland and beyond. We hear similar debates across the globe, from remote villages in West African countries such as Burkina Faso to internet dialogue that has 'gone viral' between top female executives and policymakers in the United States. One of the dreams – that the workplace would change dramatically for women *and men*, together with more equitable division of household tasks between the sexes – has by no means come to fruition. This despite having been argued for since at least the first United Nation's World Conference on Women, Development and Peace in Mexico City in 1975.

The European Union set a target for women in employment at 60% by 2010,[29] a target that was not yet met by Ireland even in 2012.[30] Paul Sweeney and David Joyce from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions emphasized in our conversations that European minimum standards and various directives on a wide gamut of issues in the formal employment sector and social schemes have been positive for Ireland, including for gender parity. However, a gap remains that may not be easily fixed by mandated legislation or policy incentives. We also find that the lack of readily available sex-disaggregated data and of its demystified interpretation clouds the picture and makes it difficult to determine appropriate approaches to policy and action. If the approach to creating policy can shift to systematically incorporate the implications of sex-disaggregated data analyses, policy-makers and activists will be far better equipped to address the existing gender gaps. In fact, UNESCO has also identified increased attention to data gaps, and new methods of data

> **Two high school girls from St. Catherine's School in Killybegs, County Donegal**
>
> On equality of women in Ireland: *"Yes, this exists."* Will their wages and job opportunities be the same as for young men?
> *"YES!"* Both said they are satisfied with their situation.
> (June 2011)

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[29] Conference 'Equality Between Women and Men,' European Commission DG Justice – Sept. 19-20, 2011, Brussels, Session I, Equal economic independence: The contribution of women to achieving the Europe 2020 targets: Background note: 'Achieving the Europe 2020 employment target.'
[30] According to the UNDP's 2014 Human Development Report, female labour participation rate was 52.7% in 2012.

collection on gender equality and sex disaggregated data on all its forms, as a focus area in the Organization's Priority Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) for 2014-2021.[31]

Another great concern is the apparent waning of public resources for gender equality programmes. As one illustration, Irish feminist organization Banúlacht opted to shut down after two of its major funders cut funding in half in 2011 and 2012. One of the funders, Irish Aid, had shifted its policies to disallow funding for campaigning and advocacy, which was an important part of Banúlacht's work.[32] Smaller, creative initiatives and organizations with a positive track record require at least modest public financial support to continue their work. It is unfortunate that it is the current tendency in Ireland and beyond to prioritize short-term quantifiable, 'concrete' results at the expense of powerful yet less measurable advocacy work for gender justice.

Future Approaches: Political Voice

We feel that the enacting of new gender quota legislation sets the stage for powerful momentum towards effective change. Anne O'Máille of Galway – the entrepreneur and women's rights activist cited earlier – reflected on the decline of women in politics in Ireland, "It is disappointing that few women were elected to Parliament in 2011, and even those who did well, did not fare well in the formation of the Government." However, she added that the National Women's Council in Ireland was pressing to see women's representation in parliament "50/50 by 2020". Legislation that would halve Government funding to Irish political parties unless 30% of their candidates at the next general election are women passed in the Dáil in July 2012. This figure would rise to 40% at subsequent general elections if the initial 30% is not met in the first year after becoming law. It will be fascinating to track the impact of this legislation in Ireland's next general election, which must be held no later than April 3, 2016. UNESCO likewise spotlights lack of women's leadership, which tends to perpetuate unequal gender relations through absence of women's voice and input into decision-making processes, as another of just four focus areas in its Gender Equality Action Plan 2014-2021.[33]

Interestingly, we are seeing Irish women rise to the top in at least one political arena: the European Union. Six out of Ireland's eleven MEPs (Members of European Parliament) elected in May 2014 are women. Just under 1/3 of European commissioners are women, as was Ireland's first female commissioner, Máire Geoghegan Quinn (2010-14), and a number of Irish women hold important positions within the EU including Secretary General Catherine Day.[34] It would be very interesting to explore the

> **Anne Enright, Author and Booker Prize Winner:**
>
> *"…I was the girl who would win in the end, despite the fact girls so rarely do."*
> ~ The Forgotten Waltz: A Novel (2011)

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[31] UNESCO's Promise, *op. cit*., p. 6.

[32] Sad News – Banúlacht Closing. (2014, Feb. 22). *Cork Feminista*. http://corkfeminista.com/2012/02/22/sad-news-banulacht-closing/

[33] UNESCO's Promise, *op. cit*., p. 8.

[34] The EU and Irish Women. European Commission. Retrieved Sep. 15, 2014 from: http://ec.europa.eu/ireland/ireland_in_the_eu/impact_of_eu_on_irish_women/index_en.htm

reasons behind the much higher representation of women in the EU Parliament than in Ireland's own Parliament.

Looking Ahead…

Our intention in this essay has been to share a glimpse of opinions concerning progress towards gender equality in Ireland, alongside remaining challenges posed by seemingly intractable gender wage gaps and imbalance of political voice. In signposting areas for further exploration, our goal is to generate fresh dialogue on the roots of enduring gender inequalities in Ireland – indeed globally, and especially dialogue on promising ways forward. We feel that sculptor John Behan dramatically captures these phenomena in his "Equality Emerging" statue:

"*This statue is dedicated to people everywhere who are struggling for equality and to those suffering because of its absence. The emerging figure represents the forces of equality, the wall, those people and systems in opposition.*"

(Dedication inscribed on the nearby monument stone)

Above and cover photo by Brenda Gael McSweeney: "Equality Emerging" Statue in Galway

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Confronting Domination

"Indrer Pori" – Nachni, a Tragedy

by Jharna Panda

UNESCO/UNITWIN Network on Gender, Culture & Development

Note: in Hindu mythology *Indra* is considered the God of heaven. In his palace there were many dancers who would entertain the Gods. They were placed in a high position among the dancers. *Indrer Pori* is understood as "*Indra's* angels". *Pori* is the angel.

Abstract

"'Everybody belongs to the world and the world belongs to everybody,' sings Thé Lau, a famous Dutch musician. If we want to include 'everybody' in our fast evolving world, it is necessary to give 'everybody' a face."[1] But today there is a burning question in front of us: "Did we succeed in giving faces to 'everybody' standing in the 21st century?" In order to identify the 'faces,' it is our attempt to study those whom we think are excluded from social life and social services in our region, namely the "nachnis". The "nachnis", meaning "God's own slaves" in the ancient *devdasi* tradition, refers to girls "dedicated" to the worship and service of a deity or a Hindu temple, namely through the performance of ritual and religious dances, for the rest of their lives.

Although practice of this *devdasi* tradition was officially outlawed in 1988, it still survives in various forms in several districts of the Indian state of West Bengal.[2] It is important to recognize that social exclusion is almost never complete: a person or group may be excluded from society in many ways but is often included in society in other ways. Using historical analysis and field research, this case study will illuminate the lives of the nachni and the ways in which they are excluded from various privileges of the dominant society while their dance – their work of art – is included.

Introduction and Context

Studies prove that social exclusion has a multidimensional aspect, related to the relative position of an individual or a group (a region) in the entirety of society. Exclusion can affect categories of persons differently depending on whether they are treated in terms of gender, ethnicity or class. However, it is important that social exclusion and social inclusion are not conceptualized as a dichotomy: one is normally not totally excluded from or included in society. This situation of partial exclusion and partial inclusion can be practically observed in the village of Satra, Purulia district (West Bengal), India, where many nachnis live. "Nachni", meaning God's slaves in the ancient *devdasi* tradition, refers to girls "dedicated" to the worship and service of a deity or a Hindu temple, namely through the performance of ritual and religious dances, for the rest of their lives. While the *devdasi* dance was created in the temple area, the dance of the nachni was created in the palace of the king. As the days of kingship declined, the nachnis began to perform their dances in the forbidden areas of "common people", thus losing all their glory. Control over the nachnis shifted from the kings to the *rashiks*, who treated the nachnis as "objects" used to earn money and entertain.

While the nachnis are generally excluded from society, their dance is not only included but is a respected artistic tradition. Coming from poverty and the lower strata of Indian society, performing as a nachni is one of the only ways open to these women to make a living. A nachni's way of living, however, deprives her of a family – a husband and children – and thus of social acceptance. In an

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[1] Citizen First: A short Introduction to Social Exclusion.

[2] Mukherji, Rina. God's Own Slaves. *Tehelka* archives. April 23, 2005. Retrieved 24 October, 2011. The author refers readers to this interesting article that inspired some of her thinking about the history of the nachni tradition.

incident in Purulia district, people belonging to this group were thrown in garbage pits or left with a rope to be pulled away after death.

Objective and Methodology

The objective is to use this case study to ignite thinking and then action from the general public, policy makers, administrators, etc., on: i) the nachnis' social, economic, and political status, ii) their distress/isolation/exploitation, iii) breakthrough towards positive change and iv) suggestions as to any way to end the practice of the nachni tradition. This case study is based on field visits that were conducted in Arsha block, Satra Police Station, Village of Satra, in the Purulia district of West Bengal, on October 15-21, 2011. The study is further supported by a number of other sources that can be found in the references section.

Short History of the "Nachnis"

In numerous branches of ancient Bengali culture, we do not have adequate information about dance. However, when studied closely the classic literature, epigraphs, and history of art relating to ancient Bengali culture reveal important details about the role of dance in this rich history. With information from these sources, "and specially from terracotta and sculptures found during the Pala regime, we can deduce that the dance culture prevailed in both higher and lower classes of people in Bengal." A Bangladeshi source states that women, "belonging to the community of slaves to gods usually participated to dance performed in temples. Reference to dance is also found in Charyagitika and Nathagitika, which are considered the oldest instances of Bengali literature. The bratya domineers (lower class of women) of charyapada were expert in dance and music."[3]

As well-known journalist Rina Mukherji reports, "A carryover of an ancient tradition that probably originated in ancient Gaur, and thrived during the heyday of the Pala regime (8th to 10th century) as indicative from sculptures in temples all over West Bengal and Bangladesh, *devdasis* thrived here in the Middle Ages…"[4] Until the reign of the 18th king, King Kshetramohan, everyone was a connoisseur of the nachnis. Nachni Sindhubala Debi danced in the Kashipur Kings' palace for two generations. The *nachni* tradition, in its present form, may date back five centuries. However, when Lord Cornwallis's "Permanent Settlement Act" was introduced in Bengal in 1793, the kings and *jotdars*[5] were removed from power and the glamour of the nachnis faded with them. Mukherji explains that nachnis became, "dancers for the common masses. This binds them to the rasiks, or gurus, with whom these women tour adjoining villages and districts and dance for a living." After the "Permanent Settlement Act", the use of musical instruments declined. The harmonium, flute, and *dhol (mridanga)* are the instruments presently used to perform the songs composed for the nachnis. Nachnis are an integral "face" of many festivals, such as Holi, in this region.

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[3] Pabna, Shuvo. Dance Tradition in Ancient Bengal. *Anthropology-Bangladesh* (Blogspot). http://anthropology-bd.blogspot.com/2012/12/dance-tradition-in-ancient-bengal.html
[4] Mukherji, *op. cit*. http://archive.tehelka.com/story_main11.asp?filename=Cr042305Gods_own_slaves.asp
[5] The jotdars were a social class of large landowners during the period of Colonial Bengal.

According to Mukherji, nachnis today come from lower castes and are born into poverty. As a result of their economic situation, they are often forced by circumstances to become nachnis.

> "The term swadasi may refer to someone who willingly takes up the profession at her own behest. But this is not exactly the case when it comes to the devdasis. […] They do not have too much of a choice for earning a living, as research into their backgrounds reveal. […] In a region largely bereft of electricity and running water, with low literacy and no industry, a passion for the 'arts' provides a better option than anything else, given the fact that a single performance at a wedding or religious function fetches anything between Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 for a 10-member troupe."[6]

Field Visit in Purulia

During my field visit in Purulia district, West Bengal, India in October 2011, I interviewed a number of nachnis. The information below is based on my own observations from these visits and my interviews with the nachnis. I will reference the experiences of two women in particular, Malabati and Bimaladebi, who shared their stories with me.

The nachnis are truly angels of the night. During this time starts her day in which her status as a social being is not questioned. Daylight, however, brings her to the practical world of darkness that keeps her away from the benefits of traditional society, such as a family and social acceptance. When a girl or woman becomes a nachni, she is treated like an "untouchable".[7] She has to move when the villagers sit to eat, she lives in the corner of the house, and does not have permission to enter the kitchen.

The nachnis were deprived of their voting rights until 2005. It was not because of any laws; it was a result of the social discrimination they face every day. Sri Prashanta Rakshit, a founding member of *Manbhum Loksanskriti o Nachni unnayan Samity*, an organization that works with nachnis in the district of Purulia, provided me with background information on nachnis' access to voter ID cards. In order to receive a voter identity card a woman needs a guardian's name, or a husband's name in the case of married women. A nachni neither gets a guardian's name nor the name of her rashik, as he never agreed to give his name as the nachni's husband. For the rashik, he is afraid of keeping two wives – as having two wives is illegal in the Hindu marriage act – and afraid that the nachni or her children may try to claim his property in the future. The political parties were also unwilling to give the nachnis a voter ID card and the local government rather discouraged giving nachnis voter IDs by saying that there were no nachnis in their villages. Thus opposition from home, political parties and the local government prevented the nachnis from getting voter ID cards. In recent times (2006) after the initiative of *Manbhum Loksanskriti o Nachni Unnayan Samity*, some nachnis now have their voter ID cards. People of the organization have managed to convince rashiks that there are several government schemes that the nachnis can benefit from if they have the ID, and that ultimately the

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[6] Mukherji, *loc. cit.* Rs 5,000 – Rs 10,000 equals approximately $111-$222 USD.
[7] Traditionally, the groups characterized as untouchable were those whose occupations and habits of life involved ritually polluting activities.

rashiks would benefit too. Through different advocacies these people have managed to convince the political parties and the local government to give the nachnis ID cards. Though women in India got their voting rights in 1950, the nachnis are still struggling for their rights.

If a nachni gets pregnant she has to abort her child. However, if by any chance she has a child with her *rashik*, the child would not get recognition of the legal father and would be deprived of certain rights (the right to property, etc.). Such children can only marry children of other nachnis, who are similarly deprived of social rights for lack of a legal father, and for not having been born in a so-called family. Thus the newborn baby too is wrapped by the word *bratya*.

Previously, the *rashiks* would sing and play different musical instruments when the nachnis performed. However, in recent years people from various castes have slowly begun entering the domain of the *rashiks*, choosing it as a profession by keeping nachnis and earning money through their performances. Most of these people can neither sing nor play instruments; for them it is only a means of earning money. The best performer (nachni) is at times bought from one *rashik* by another, or is convinced to join some other group. This process results in the nachni's further seclusion from society. Buying nachnis from one *rashik* or handing them over to another *rashik* increases the sexualization of the woman, which only serves to put her in an even more unacceptable position within the male dominated society. Thus in a nachni's later years when she is no longer able to earn money for her *rashik*, she is left with no money. At the time of my field visit, the only support a nachni received from the government was a one-time pension of a minimal amount. Some nachnis may also qualify for *Indira Abash.*[8] She receives no support from the *panchayat*[9] or from the *rashiks* she had served, thereby turning an artist (*devdasi)* into a beggar. After the death of the *rashik*, the nachni is thrown out of the house in a destitute condition. When a nachni herself dies, she may not even be given the customary after-death rituals.

I met with Malabati in a village in Purulia district. She told me that if she had gotten the *chhut* money (the money the audience throws to the nachni when she dances, which is not included in the contract between her *rashik* and the event organizer), she could have satisfied her few desires. Instead, her *rashik* takes away the money and when she needs something she is heckled and beaten by her drunken *rashik*.

Most nachnis experienced poverty in their childhood; the hard earned money of a father or widowed mother was not sufficient to feed the entire family. This situation often leads to the nachni's way of living as an adult. If she ever thinks of returning to her father's family she is crippled by the thought that if she returns, her poor father would have to invite the whole village for lunch or dinner. Her return to the family would also serve to stigmatize the family. There is a custom in the society: if a girl runs away from her house she is shunned from the caste and society too. On her return her father has to feed the villagers at an occasion that would make her acceptable in the society again.

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[8] *Indira Abash* is the financial assistance provided for new construction from the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

[9] Panchayat is local self-government at the village or small town level in India.

The thought of the pain of the poor father prevents her from returning. Therefore the only option left for her is to endure the torture from the *rashik* and seclusion from society.

Bimaladebi was married at the age of seven, but by the age of nine she was a widow and returned to her father's family with her six brothers and six sisters. Her parents returned from work at night carrying rice for their dinner. That was the only time they got to eat. Bimala lived to age 17 in extreme poverty and hunger. Bimala could not see any future for herself; she could not get married for the second time (*Sanga*[10]), so she went to the city to earn money where she became trapped in the trafficking of women. Bimala, at age sixty, states that she would never want to return to those black days of her life when she was a trafficked person. After being passed through several hands she came to a *rashik*. Extreme poverty prevailed there too: the *rashik's* family consisted of six children, three sisters, a wife and his mother. The *rashik* started to train Bimala in dance and music. His wife ran away from home because he was keeping a nachni, but the villagers convinced her to return, as the nachni would earn for the family by dancing. In the meantime Bimala's father located her and offered to take her home, but she declined to return since her father could not afford to buy the villagers' acceptance of her. Thus Bimala's life as a nachni began with performance in public dance programmes, and she started earning money. Her hard-earned money supported the family of the *rashik* and she was left untouched in the house. To prevent her from having a child the *rashik* gave her contraceptive roots, but after the death of the *rashik's* children she had his child. Bimala started to be famous, got many programmes, bought land and built a house. Her *rashik* died at the age of 55. Her son, now 23, sings *jhumur* (folk) songs. Bimala was acknowledged by the government at the age of sixty, but still society has kept itself away from her. She holds a respectable post in the nachni committee − she has performed at Panchkoth king's palace, has taught music and dance to many artists, and has released music cassettes. Today she is respected in the family of her son, yet still she is untouchable and excluded from society. Unfortunately Bimala too treats nachnis of so called lower castes as untouchables!

Society has somehow been able to overcome the problem of untouchables regarding this group of women. Though they are reluctant to eat food prepared by untouchables, untouchables can fetch water from the public well. They are gaining entry to a certain level of work, for example, bringing material for the masonry work of building a house, in agricultural work, and government projects. It must be noted, however, that in domestic work they still cannot wash utensils, bring water, or perform everyday work where "touch" is essential.

In 2007 a meeting by the organization for the nachnis from the states of Jharkhand and West Bengal was conducted by some volunteer groups called *Manbhum Loksamskriti o Nachni Unnayan Samity,* in which they tried to ensure some rights for the nachnis. These included the right to receive a certain amount of the profit of her performances, the right to the *rashik's* property for her children, the right to health and education for her children, the right to government pension,

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[10] Lower class widow women marrying for the second time is called "Sanga" (local dialect). Marriage of a Hindu widow woman belonging to the upper class of the society is still not accepted.

acknowledgement as an artist (socially and from the government), and other related rights. Presently, there are 86 nachnis residing in the district of Purulia.

We can hope the struggle, the movement, and the fight of the nachnis will ensure their rights some day, and that they will become accepted in mainstream society.

Conclusions

At times in the cultural events or felicitation programmes that nachnis are invited to perform at, they are also called for media interviews or shows. Those who get a call from the media come into the limelight and suddenly become more popular. This helps them to receive calls for programmes more frequently, but the remaining group of nachnis still carries on with their struggle. On one hand, receiving fewer calls for programmes leads to economic loss, which leads rashiks to leave the nachnis for earning less. This can bring about an extreme existential crisis for the dancers. If the print or visual media provided nachnis a platform to communicate with the society at large, most of the nachnis would be able to reduce the unhealthy competition for fame that exists between them. Along with the government, if non-government sectors facilitate initiatives for the economic betterment of the nachnis, their battle for inclusion will come closer to success.

Below is a summary of my observations from my field visit and research. Based on these observations, I have made a number of suggestions for ways to improve the lives of nachnis and help them become more included in society.

a) Observations

i. Few of the *rashiks* today accept nachnis as their legal wives. Some have accepted their right to inherit property; however the number of people to do so is negligible.

ii. Nowadays people from different castes and communities have become *rashiks*. Traditionally, being a *rashik* simply meant having a group of singers. Today, with people from different communities entering into the business of being a *rashik*, "traditional" *rashiks* are losing their positions. These modern day "*rashiks*" often attain young nachnis through female trafficking and derive sexual pleasure and status from the business title of "*rashik*". The result is not at all positive. Women migrating from different parts of Bengal in search of work are getting trapped in the hands of the traffickers. Women thus are made nachnis not by choice but by force.

iii. A nachni today, when deprived of the money she earns, works as a sex-worker without the knowledge of her *rashik* in order to make a living.

iv. On the question of untouchability, not only do the nachnis suffer the problem of being untouched, but the nachnis themselves treat nachnis of lower caste similarly. Therefore the question of the untouchables affects lower castes and not only nachnis in particular. The problem of untouchability is so deeply rooted that nachnis who have been rewarded gain celebrity. Nachnis who are in a position on the committee (Nachni Organization) gladly speak of the lower caste nachnis as untouchable. After death the caste system dominates the

process of ritual. Lower caste (*Dom*, *hari*, etc.) people are thrown in garbage pits or left with a rope to be carried away, whereas nachnis from upper castes can express wishes for rituals after their death.

v.   Though some of the nachnis are members of organizations, they do not have a clear idea about their development, chances of being economically improved, or getting a better position in social and family life. When asked about their demands, most of them have a common answer of desiring "*shilpirswikriti*" (acknowledgement as an artist), but their eyes are blank. This acknowledgement would be for them a great honor, but still leaves the question of social inclusion far behind.

vi.   Attempts to bring nachnis into the public light with the help of different media coverage, outstation programmes (programmes outside one's own region), and programmes abroad have created an unhealthy environment within the nachnis. The competition surrounding getting calls from different people and programmes has led to conflicts between them.

vii. Another attempt to bring the nachnis into the mainstream is to form a self-help group (SHG) for nachnis.

viii. Organizations, social activists, political persons, and non-governmental organizations are trying to make an academy for the nachnis. They are trying to make programmes like *guru parampara* which would help them in sustaining the tradition of nachnis. But our interviews brought out a totally different view on this. Nachnis do not want to be born as nachni again. They never want other women to come into this "line". Thus it is really important for us to ascertain if the nachnis are satisfied with their present status. Do they really want to carry on their tradition or is it mere business that has kept the "nachni" alive?

b) Suggestions

i.   If an SHG is formed with only nachnis as its members, it would make them more excluded. If it has mixed members with other women it would minimize the gap.
      In different government and non-governmental projects, if the service is directly provided through nachnis, there is a chance of gradual improvement in their social acceptance. In the case of serving mid day meals at schools a few years back, there was resistance from parents to the so called lower caste women cooking food for meals. Today that problem has been significantly reduced.

ii.   Presently, young and educated women who are becoming nachnis can be trained for different health services in villages. This simultaneously creates an earning opportunity and a chance to maximize their acceptance in society.

iii. Legal steps should be taken to assure the remuneration of the nachnis. The local government, district government, and all political parties should take an active part in ensuring it.

iv.   If the nachnis were able to participate in programmes organized by the Information and Cultural department and by other departments of the government, they would have a better chance of being exposed to and recognized by the public, which would bring them closer to different groups of people in the society.

Social discrimination is not bound only within caste, religion and class; it is widespread and has its influence in most of the districts in West Bengal. There are fragmentations in social acceptance and social recognition. It becomes more prominent when I look into the lives of the nachnis. Being a woman, and moreover being a nachni in the patriarchal world, is never a blessing for her. We have to travel far, with hope for a day to sing aloud the words of Lau's song.

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THE STORY OF BURKINA FASO OVER FOUR DECADES

Women's Roles and Rights from 1975, the First UN International Year of Women, to Women's History Month-March 2014

Background and Context

The story of Burkina Faso's women is complex, including both immense progress over the past several decades and remaining societal and economic obstacles to equality and quality of life. A landlocked country in Sub-Saharan Africa, Burkina Faso is particularly economically disadvantaged, consistently ranking towards the bottom of global indexes. Women have historically shouldered a disproportionate burden under these circumstances, taking on the majority of child-care and home-based responsibilities in addition to income-earning activities. Compounding the problem is a lack of literacy among the female adult population as compared to men. Given that literacy can be key to success in small business and other economic ventures, improving this situation is an important factor in the empowerment of Burkinabé women. To address this disparity, UNESCO/The United Nations Development Programme in partnership with the Government of Burkina (then Upper Volta) launched the Project for Equal Access of Women and Girls to Education in

1972. This project aimed to improve female access to education by lightening workloads, thus freeing up enough time for women to attend trainings while still fulfilling their roles within the household. The project has shown marked success – currently, the adult female literacy rate is 22%, as compared to 8% from 1985-94. Furthermore, girls have made strides towards closing the educational gap between the genders. Perhaps as a reflection of their increasing levels of education and resulting voice within their communities, females have also made gains in the political arena – in 2013, they held 15.7% of the seats in national parliament. These encouraging facts point towards a brighter future for Burkinabé women, as domestic and international forces push for the education and representation of women, and thus the betterment of whole communities.

(Data courtesy of UNESCO, BBC, the UNDP, and The Guardian)

Story based on the Women's Education Project research and work of Brenda Gael McSweeney and Scholastique Kompaoré, assisted by Cassandra Fox

Photos by/©Brenda Gael McSweeney

Photo above, left: First UN International Year of Women (1975), a griot chants in praise of the contributions of the Women's Education Project.

Map from Nationsonline.org.

West African Women's Empowerment: Burkina Faso over Four Decades

Our surveys in Burkina in the 70s showed that girls worked an average of 8 hours a day, as compared to 4 hours for boys – thus, few girls attended school.

Even older women were expected to play an important role in household tasks. These pottery jugs contain millet beer.

Women and girls undertook half the agricultural production back in the 70s…

…And over half the income-generating and household workloads combined.

Only unsafe water was available in the 70s, and even for that, women and their daughters trudged for kilometers, for several hours a day.

The introduction of wells brought amazing relief to the women, and lightened water-borne diseases in their families.

The intense manual labor of pounding and grinding millet and other cereals fell solely on the women.

The introduction in the 90s of a Multi-Functional Platform, operated and managed by the women themselves, freed up their time and energy.

A story in photographs based on action-research by Brenda Gael McSweeney and Scholastique Kompaoré

The workload lightening technologies enabled women to allow their daughters to study instead of helping with agricultural and household tasks.

Women too could attend functional literacy classes, thanks to simple technologies that reduced their non-stop workloads. The woman here practices calculations.

A rural women's group leader expresses her views during an interview in the 1970s.

Women celebrate a profitable day's work, thanks to their workload lightening technologies, which allowed them to use their time more productively.

Scholastique Kompaoré, National Coordinator of the UNESCO Project for Equal Access of Women and Girls to Education, contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage through this traditional Kassena dance.

Another result of the new technologies—a woman proudly and jokingly shows off her smooth hands, as she no longer grinds her grain with a stone.

A member of the women's group, which managed the Multi-Functional Platform, was insistent to show off some of their earnings!

Reflecting continued progress, this modern-day woman has shattered traditional stereotypes by taking on the role of motorbike mechanic – once an all-male domain.

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Burkina's Women:
Breaking barriers and inspiring change...

Another example of modern-day success, this now-renowned painter overcame harsh gender-based adversity. She currently conducts courses to help along young aspiring female artists.

In the early days, this woman leader expressed her views to Mrs. Kompaoré – but only in the privacy of her courtyard.

This female Interim Mogho Naaba (Emperor) of the Mossi Kingdom today maintains many traditional powers and also hosts a solidarity group for women in her village.

The next rare enthronement of a woman as village chief occurred only in this century. The above woman proudly carries this title of Traditional Female Chief, and speaks to visitors about the role of women in her region.

Brenda Gael McSweeney

Brenda managed United Nations development programs in Burkina for seven years. She focused on female education and livelihoods — while living in a traditional courtyard in the capital, Ouagadougou — and conducted research in the villages.

Scholastique Kompaoré

Scholastique was National Coordinator of the Burkina Faso (then Upper Volta) pilot Project for Equal Access of Women and Girls to Education. She is a pioneer of advocacy and action for female education and advancement.

Cassandra Fox

Cassandra is a graduate of Boston University, where she works as a Research Assistant with Dr. McSweeney. She has studied and worked in Niger, France and Haiti, focusing on international development, women's rights, and healthcare education.

L'HISTOIRE DU BURKINA FASO EN QUATRE DÉCENNIES

Rôles et droits des femmes de 1975 première Année Internationale de la Femme au mois historique des Femmes – Mars 2014

Historique et contexte

L'histoire des femmes du Burkina Faso est complexe: d'immenses progrès ont été obtenus en plusieurs décennies, mais pour atteindre l'égalité et une meilleure qualité de vie, des obstacles sociaux et économiques demeurent. Pays enclavé en Afrique sub-saharienne, le Burkina Faso est particulièrement économiquement défavorisé, et régulièrement classé vers le bas de l'échelle mondiale des indices du développement dans leur globalité.

Dans ces circonstances, les femmes ont historiquement endossé une part disproportionnée du fardeau dans la lutte pour le développement, prenant grandement en charge non seulement la responsabilité des soins aux enfants et des travaux domestiques mais entreprenant en plus, des activités génératrices de revenus. L'analphabétisme aggrave le problème dans la population féminine comparé à la situation chez les hommes. Étant donné que l'alphabétisation peut être la clé de la réussite des petites entreprises et d'autres projets économiques, améliorer cette situation chez les femmes burkinabe est un facteur important dans leur autonomisation.

Pour remédier à la disparité hommes/femmes, UNESCO / Le Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement (PNUD), en partenariat avec le gouvernement du Burkina Faso (alors Haute-Volta) a lancé le Projet d'Égalité d'Accès des Femmes et des Jeunes Filles à l'Éducation en 1972. Ce projet visait à améliorer l'accès des femmes à l'Éducation par l'allègement de leurs tâches, libérant ainsi du temps permettant alors aux femmes de participer à des formations tout en assumant leur travail au sein du ménage. Cette approche, endossé depuis lors par le gouvernement, est toujours d'actualité. Le projet a porté des fruits – actuellement, le taux d'alphabétisation des femmes adultes est de 22%, comparativement à 8 % de 1985 à 1994. En outre, les filles ont, à grands pas, fait des progrès pour combler le fossé existant entre garçons et filles en matière d'éducation.

Peut-être que, comme un reflet de leurs niveaux croissants en éducation et sa résultante, leur voix au chapitre dans leurs communautés, les femmes ont aussi réalisé des gains dans l'arène politique – en 2013, elles détiennent 15,7% des sièges à l'Assemblée Nationale. Ces faits encourageants montrent que l'on va vers un avenir brillant pour les femmes burkinabe, compte tenu du fait que les forces nationales aussi bien qu'internationales poussent pour l'éducation et une meilleure représentation des femmes, et donc pour le mieux être des communautés toutes entières. des femmes, et donc pour le mieux être des communautés toutes entières.

(Courtoisie de l'UNESCO, la BBC, le PNUD, et The Guardian)

Histoire basée sur les recherches sur le projet d'éducation des femmes et le travail de Brenda Gael McSweeney et Scholastique Kompaoré, assisté par Cassandra Fox

Photos par / © Brenda Gael McSweeney

Photo ci-dessus, à gauche: Première Année Internationale des Femmes (1975), une griotte chante les louanges des contributions du Projet d'éducation des femmes.

Plan de Nationsonline.org.

L'AUTONOMISATION DES FEMMES EN AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST: LE CAS DU BURKINA FASO EN QUATRE DÉCENNIES

Nos enquêtes au Burkina Faso dans les années 70 ont montré que les filles travaillaient en moyenne 8 heures par jour, comparativement aux 4 heures pour les garçons – en conséquence, peu de filles allaient à l'école.

On attendait des femmes, même âgées, qu'elles jouent un rôle important dans les tâches ménagères. Ces poteries contiennent de la bière de mil.

Les femmes et les filles réalisaient la moitié de la production agricole dans les années 70 ...

… Et plus de la moitié des activités génératrices de revenus combinées aux tâches ménagères.

Seulement l'eau non potable était disponible au village dans les années 70, et même pour cette eau, les femmes et leurs filles devaient parcourir des kilomètres, plusieurs heures par jour.

L'introduction des puits busés a apporté un soulagement étonnant aux femmes, et réduit les maladies d'origine hydrique dans leurs familles.
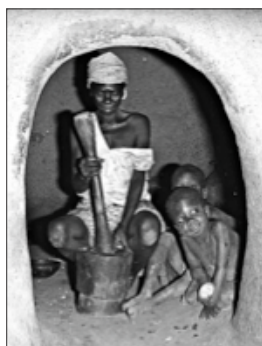
Le laborieux travail manuel de piler et d'écraser les mils et autres céréales incombait uniquement aux femmes.

L'introduction dans les années 90 de la Plate-forme Multifonctionnelle, exploitée et gérée par les femmes elles- mêmes, a libéré du temps et de l'énergie.

Une histoire en photos basée sur la recherche action par Brenda Gael McSweeney et Scholastique Kompaoré

Les technologies allégeant le travail des femmes, leur a permis d'autoriser leurs filles à étudier plutôt que d'aider tout le temps dans les activités agricoles et les tâches ménagères.

Les femmes pouvaient aussi participer aux cours d'alphabétisation fonctionnelle, grâce à des technologies simples qui ont réduit leur charge de travail non-stop. La femme ici pratique le calcul.

La cheffe d'un groupe de femmes rurales exprime son point de vue lors d'une interview dans les années 1970.

Des femmes célèbrent ici l'argent rapporté en une journée de travail par la technologie qui allège leur travail et leur permet d'utiliser leur temps de manière plus productive.

Scholastique Kompaoré, Coordonnatrice Nationale du projet UNESCO d'Égalité d'accès des femmes et des filles à l'éducation, contribue à la préservation du patrimoine culturel à travers cette danse traditionnelle Kassena.

Un autre résultat des nouvelles technologies – une femme montre fièrement et en plaisantant ses mains lisses, puisqu'elle ne moud plus son grain entre deux pierres.

Un membre du groupe des femmes, qui gère la plateforme multifonctionnelle, a insisté pour nous montrer une partie de leurs gains.

Reflétant ce progrès continu, cette femme des temps modernes a brisé les stéréotypes traditionnels en devenant mécanicienne moto – domaine autrefois exclusivement masculin.

Les femmes du Burkina Faso:

Brisent les barrières et inspirent le changement

Un autre exemple de succès des temps modernes – cette artiste peintre désormais célèbre a surmonté l'adversité fondée sur le sexe. Elle donne actuellement des cours pour aider des jeunes femmes aspirantes artistes.

Dans les premiers temps du projet UNESCO, cette femme leader a exprimé ses points de vue à Mme Kompaoré – mais seulement dans l'intimité de sa case.

Cette femme, intérimaire du Moogho Naaba (empereur) des Mossi détient aujourd'hui beaucoup de pouvoir traditionnel et est leader d'un groupe de solidarité pour les femmes dans son village.

La photo qui suit, montre, chose rare, une femme intronisée comme cheffe de village, ce qui n'a eu lieu que dans ce siècle. La femme ci-dessus porte fièrement ce titre de chef traditionnel, et parle aux visiteurs du rôle des femmes de sa région.

Brenda Gael McSweeney

Brenda a géré des programmes de développement des Nations Unies au Burkina Faso pendant sept ans. Elle s'est concentrée sur l'éducation des femmes et leurs moyens de subsistance – tout en vivant dans une cour traditionnelle dans la capitale, Ouagadougou – et mené des recherches dans les villages.

Scholastique Kompaoré

Scholastique était Coordonnatrice Nationale au Burkina Faso (alors Haute-Volta) du Projet pilote d'égalité d'accès des femmes et des filles à l'éducation. Elle est une pionnière en matière de plaidoyer et d'action pour l'éducation et l'avancement des femmes, dans son pays et avec le PNUD, en Afrique Sub-saharienne.
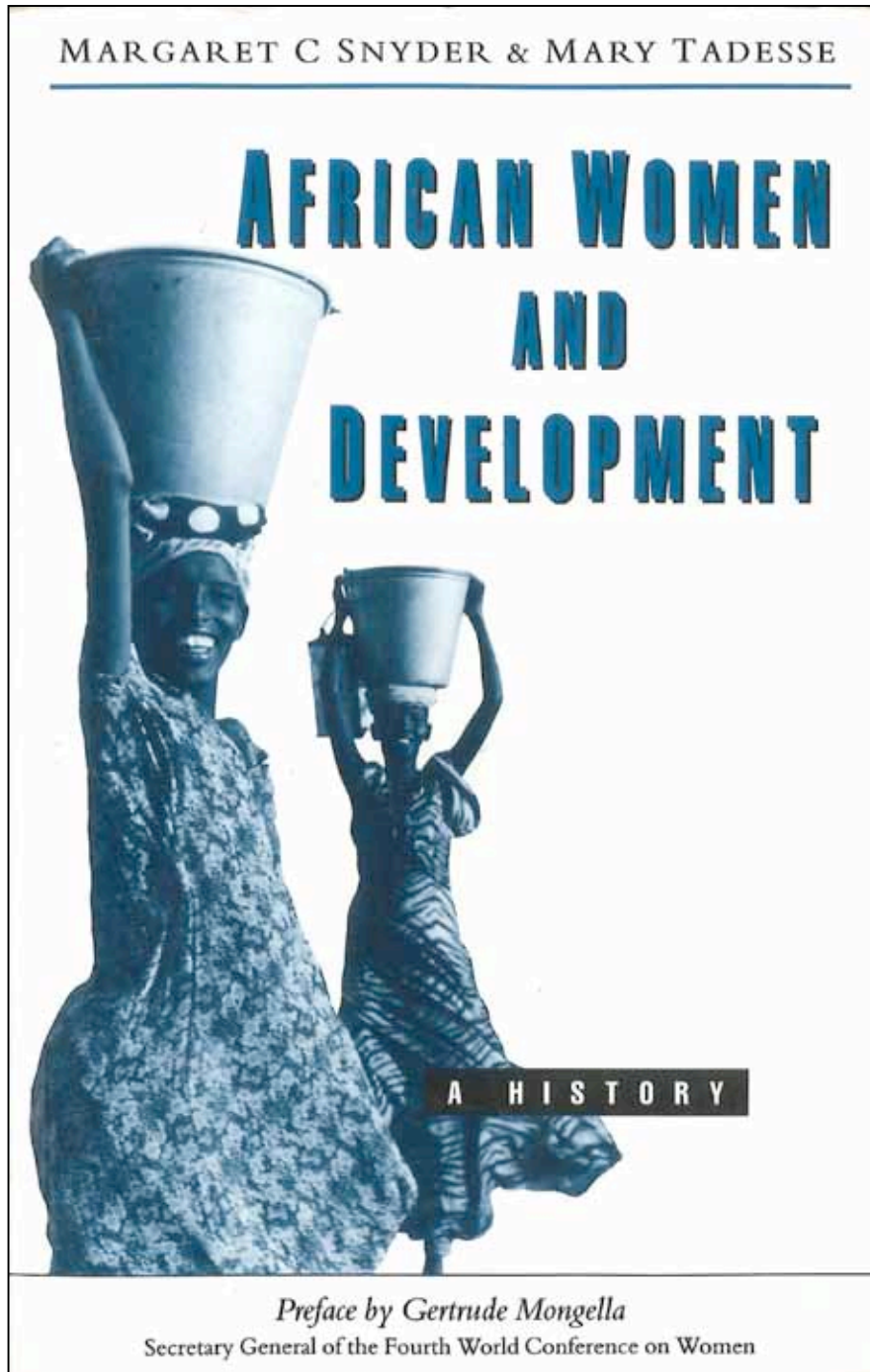
Cassandra Fox

Cassandra est diplômée de l'Université de Boston, où elle travaille comme assistante de recherche avec le Dr McSweeney. Elle a étudié et a travaillé au Niger, en France et à Haïti, en se concentrant sur le développement international, les droits des femmes, l'éducation à la santé.

Activism Across the Decades

How African Women Led the World:
The Story of the Women's Centre of the
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

by Margaret C. Snyder

UNESCO/UNITWIN Network on Gender, Culture & Development

MARGARET C SNYDER & MARY TADESSE

AFRICAN WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

A HISTORY

Preface by Gertrude Mongella
Secretary General of the Fourth World Conference on Women

Abstract

This paper identifies the events which led up to the 1975 founding of the first UN regional center for women, in a time when none of the other five UN regional commissions in the world had programmes or staff dedicated to address women's concerns. The programme, which later became the African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW), was formed in response to the demands from African women, whose roles in economic development were frequently unacknowledged in the modern sectors of agriculture, industry, commerce and government. Through institution-building, innovative approaches to women, documentation, and inter-agency cooperation, the ATRCW became a global model for addressing this major obstacle to development.

Introduction

"What we need is a centre of our own – a training centre for African women," the speaker said at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)'s itinerant training programme for community workers in Zambia. We had heard the same in other countries; this, the ninth of what would total 23 courses, underlined that consensus. Back at the ECA office in Addis Ababa, we took the women's message to Executive Secretary Robert Gardiner, who listened attentively and then to our surprise asked, "Where are your plans for this centre? Bring them to me."

The seeds had been sown in the 1960s for the first United Nations regional centre for women. In the 1970s not one of the other five UN regional Commissions in the world had a women's programme, or even had staff assigned to address women's concerns. ECA's Women's Programme would become *The African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW)* in time to announce its creation at the first ever global meeting of women: *The World Conference of International Women's Year* in Mexico City, 1975.

These were also the fledgling years of feminism in North America and Europe. Unsurprisingly, the international press painted near-pornographic pictures of bra burning and other protests among the late 1960s feminists in the West, and completely ignored Africa's pioneering action in recognizing women's central roles as farmers and merchants as well as wives and mothers. Northern women sought equality with men, while women of the global South asserted that women's empowerment could not be complete in unjust societies. Colonialism and apartheid, for example, constrained a whole country's progress. Despite the divergent approaches to women between the Northern and African concepts that surfaced at the Mexico City Conference, the ATRCW at ECA would flourish following its auspicious introduction at Mexico City and become a model for the world. Its story is written in *African Women and Development: A History* (1995).

Building on African Women's History

African women had a long history of working together in grassroots solidarity groups: planting, harvesting and promoting community activities, and protesting plantation working conditions. They organized women's groups to support their countries' independence movements of the 1950s and

1960s – moves that sparked women's conviction that they must be part of their nations' development in order to bring benefits to all. "The women who had worked with men in gaining

independence became our first teachers," Ndioro Ndiaye, a medical doctor and former Minister of Senegal said (AWD 177). [1] They established the All Africa Women's Conference (later renamed the Pan African Women's Organization, PAWO) after meetings in Mali and Tanganyika in 1962. They came together in their own countries and in west and east Africa to define their interests as full partners with men in shaping their newly independent nations. ECA, emphasizing a human resource approach, considered women in the context of African history and recognized them with a regional conference on urban problems in 1964.

It was on this solid foundation that African women sought to institutionalize their concerns several years ahead of the revitalization of the western women's movement. In Africa, 1969 became a pivotal year. "The role and participation of women in national development" appeared

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New horizons for women: a conversation with Minister Ndioro Ndiaye

Question: *How did the women and development movement arise in Senegal?*

NN: The role of women in development was clear long before the official independence of our countries.

The women and development movement arose from the independence movements. In some countries women were engaged with men in liberation wars. In others, where there were no wars, women were still conscious of the major roles they must play in the economic and social construction of our young states.

Here in Dakar, for example, our teacher training institute for girls has played a fundamental role in the formation of African women leaders. At the time of independence, the women who had worked with men in gaining independence became our first teachers.

By 1985, when we evaluated the work of the UN Decade for Women, we found that African women had contributed to their political parties, and some had risen to responsible posts in their new governments, and in their parliaments, in local government – areas that were previously male preserves.

Here in Senegal, we have seen how women have benefited from investments in education. Now, they engage in commerce, and create wealth. They are in all sectors where financial capacity is evolving. …

Dakar, December 1993 (English summary)
from African Women and Development: A History, p.37

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as an integral item in the Programme of Work of ECA's Human Resource Development Division. Internationally recognized agricultural economist Ester Boserup published her landmark book, *Women's Role in Economic Development*. Sweden's Parliamentarian Inga Thorsson, who later led the incipient global environmental movement, persuaded the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) to finance two staff persons at ECA to devise ways to implement resolutions of African women's conferences. ECA held another regional conference in 1971 in Morocco on "Education, Vocational Training and Work Opportunities for Girls and Women." This conference galvanized ECA's commitment to an Africa-wide programme – with the first of the SIDA-financed staff persons ready to get to work in what would be called the Women's Programme.

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[1] Ndioro Ndiaye was Minister for Social Development and Minister for Women's, Children's and Family Affairs before becoming the Deputy Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Based on its conviction that, "the traditional role of African women in economic development was neither evident nor even acknowledged in the modern sectors of agriculture, industry, commerce and government" (*Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 1972), and that the persistence of this situation was a major obstacle to development, the Women's Programme had four major features:

1. Institution-building

African women were fully aware that they needed to ensure the longevity of the movement they were creating by giving it institutional strength. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was mainly concerned with political issues, while ECA, in contrast, was concerned with economic and social development. Thus the women co-opted the ECA, the United Nations' African presence, as the "unlikely godmother" of their movement – their guardian and advocate. ECA had invited women to speak and then responded by moving forward rapidly in the 1970s to support the strategies they had articulated (African Women and Development, p. 35). The ECA article in the special issue of the *Canadian Journal of African Studies* on women and development set out its concerns and plans for action (1972).

Staff person Nancy Hafkin, who was one of the very first writers of a book on African women and among the first to enter the field of electronics in Africa, expressed her conviction that institutionalizing women's concerns, "at the heart of the UNECA," allowed the women's programme and its successor ATRCW to, "speak with a tremendous amount of authority. It is not simply an NGO, not simply a women's study group. The ATRCW can cite the backing, the support of Member States. It can speak in the name of the United Nations, and from both of those bases it has a tremendous amount of access and a tremendous amount of credibility" (AWD, p. 189).

2. Innovative approaches to women

The Women's Programme viewed women through a new lens: not solely as objects of services that UNICEF espoused, such as maternal and child health and day care, but as agents of economic and social change whose involvement in planned development activities was a necessary condition for effectiveness. They were no longer to be thought of as "unpaid family workers". They were farmers, merchants and entrepreneurs. "The myth of the male breadwinner" was modified to recognize the many female-headed households and households where women produced half or more of the family income in cash or in kind. With this vision of women's work, new and innovative programmes were created:

- introducing practical technologies to enhance women's economic productivity: improved, fuel-saving fish smokers; grinding mills to replace time-consuming hand grinding; water portage technology; new farming methods
- promoting women's involvement in government policy-making by introducing models of women's bureaus and national committees on women that existed in a few African countries as well as western ones, from which the most appropriate model could be selected for each country

- upgrading the skills of both governmental and non-governmental extension workers to reach women in rural areas.

Jaqueline Ki-Zerbo, advocate of fuel saving technologies for women in the Sahel countries for UNIFEM, summarized: "...for African women, development is the reverse of how they live every day. Development is seen as a positive answer to the needs for food, water, health, education and employment" (AWD p. 37).

Women in the Sahel
a conversation with Jaqueline Ki-Zerbo

Question: When were you first involved with the ECA?
JK: I represented my government at a regional conference in 1960 in Addis Ababa, and at several others thereafter. The ECA was a very good entry point for African women to development. At that time, the ECA was a strong point of communication and coordination of ministries of planning and it was very important to have women's issues discussed there.
Q: *Did the ATRCW influence national policies?*
JK: Yes, I'm sure. The ATRCW brought together African women leaders, to discuss their problems and to learn from each other. By setting up the sub-regional committees and the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC), women leaders could think through and discuss problems and make recommendations to governments. Those regular meetings were important for us to see from one point to another what were the priorities, what had been done, and what was left to do. …

Ouagadougou, December 1994
from African Women and Development: A History, p.37

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3. Documentation

To change the persisting perceptions of African women as victims and objects of welfare with men alone as economic agents, it was necessary to document women's actual work, their chances for education, and their consideration in national planning. Today, plentiful data exist in these areas in most countries, but in the 1960s and 70s it was the pioneering Women's Programme that first assembled *The Data Base for Discussion of the Interrelations between the Integration of Women in Development, Their Situation and Population Factors (1974)* and its popular version *Women of Africa Today and Tomorrow (1975). The Data Base* was a model that stirred a revolution in statistics-gathering, the first in a world region to highlight women.

ATRCW later sponsored national bibliographies and country studies in select countries, to set standards for information-gathering as a basis for formation of policies and programmes of governments, voluntary organizations and donors. It issued more than one hundred and fifty publications/documents between 1975 and 1992 (AWD Annex 14, p. 215).

4. <u>A truly inter-agency co-operative centre</u>

In all of the above fields, expertise was needed to design and implement activities. The Women's Centre started with a handful of staff and expanded to 20 at its peak. Over the years they were recruited from 24 different countries. Care was always taken to ensure that the necessary specialized fields were available through direct hire or from agencies willing to loan staff for extended periods. For example:

- Sweden (SIDA) financed the first two ECA posts
- FAO/UNFPA (UN Food and Agriculture Organization/UN Fund for Population Activities) assigned two experts in nutrition and food processing, and provided operational funds
- ITDG (the Intermediate Technology Development Group, UK) assigned an economist whose travel and technologies were paid by UNICEF
- the Voluntary Fund for the Decade for Women (later named UNIFEM) supported two senior ECA staff
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) gave $2.7 million
- UNOTC (UN Office of Technical Cooperation) and ILO (International Labour Organization) supplied an expert in small scale enterprise and paid her activities
- the Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and the United States provided various operational funds in particular for national seminars on women's bureaus and commissions
- the Ford Foundation financed country bibliographies and studies with assistance from the Rockefeller Foundation
- the Finnish UN Association and IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation) assisted in research for ATRCW's Data Base of country statistics and ZONTA International, a professional women's organization, gave $100,000 to support volunteer work

In summary, six United Nations organizations, five governments and six non-governmental organizations supported the cluster of innovative activities of ATRCW. As Dr. Nancy Hafkin expressed, "ATRCW was the only truly inter-agency centre existing at the time."

Growth and Current Status

From the time the Women's Programme and then ATRCW were created, several obstacles arose, apparently from some of the ECA staff's initial, "evident intellectual disability to cope with women's issues," as Ingrid Palmer, writer on women's issues in economic policy and planning, expressed it (Global Feminism, p. 46). For example, one Executive Secretary was persuaded by some staff of the Commission that the Centre should not be an integral part of ECA, but should be sent off to be sponsored by a single African Government. An External Review Mission was organized to assist ECA with that decision about the Centre's future. One member of the 1978 Mission made a telling comment:

"The problem, I fear, is that the Centre has, quietly and almost entirely on its own resources, gone about its business rather more effectively than its fraternal partners in other divisions. As comparisons of the Centre's work with that of other elements of the Commission are thus often embarrassing to the latter, and partly also because the Centre has been so successful in attracting outside donor support, the 'ladies' (as the Centre was called by one high ECA official) are a rather successful bundle of energy and drive who sometimes appear to threaten less progressive elements of the ECA bureaucracy" (AWD, p. 112).

Today, "The African Centre for Gender (ACG) provides technical support to Member States to address gender inequality and women's empowerment through developing tools and providing evidence for policy formulation and effective implementation. It also facilitates the tracking and monitoring of the implementation of the agreed commitments and declarations," according to the ECA website. As would be expected, over the decades and with different emphasis from ECA leadership, ATRCW evolved from being a Centre within ECA to today's position side-by-side with other Departments, and its Women's Committee became one of ECA's statutory Committees of Member States. Gender is one of the seven thematic areas of focus at ECA.

Tomorrow....

African women had reframed the development debate through their presence at ECA: women went from being objects of services to being agents of development. Women became a development issue, and development a women's issue. Some will argue that "mainstreaming women's issues" is the only way to go. We argue that women-specific institutions remain essential for innovative and experimental activities and for enhancing the solidarity that fosters women's strength in their families, their nations and the world.

It is our hope that young women may find ways to celebrate and write about the lives and actions of their predecessors, the Annie Jiagges, Phoebe Asiyos, Jacqueline Ki-Zerbos, Margaret Kenyattas, Jeanne Martin Cissés, Pumla Kissosonkoles, Delphine Tsangas, and many other pioneers of the modern women's movement in Africa.[2]

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[2] Justice Annie Jiagge: President of the Court of Appeals and founder of the national commission on women in Ghana; Phoebe Asiyo: women's organization leader, Member of Parliament and the first Kenyan woman to become an "Elder"; Jacqueline Ki-Zerbo: educator and advocate for gender equality in West and Central Africa; Margaret Kenyatta: Mayor of Nairobi, Kenya Ambassador to the UN and founder of the East African Women's Seminar; Jeanne Martin Cissé: Guinean trade unionist, member of the National Assembly, general secretary of the first Africa-wide women's conference, and first woman to chair the United Nations Security Council; Pumla Kissosonkole, born in South Africa, married in Uganda: the first African woman on the pre-independence Legislative Council, president of the Uganda Council of Women and Uganda representative to the UN; Delphine Tsanga: President of the Cameroun Council of Women, Minister of Social Affairs and chair of several international committees.

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Note: The image on the front page of this essay is from Snyder and Tadesse's *African Women and Development: A History,* which credits Andrew Corbett for their cover design.

The Women's Liberation Movement in India:
The Face-Off with Patriarchy

by Jean Chapman

Abstract

I question if there was a movement by women to 'liberate' women before, during and after the 1970s. On the face of it, women occupied all niches in public and private, political and apolitical spaces. A watershed moment was the Emergency[1]. The bifurcation between activists affiliated to political parties and those who remained aloof from political parties became more visible. The former investigated the lives of women at work. The latter raised issues of women's rights. Both took up the issue of dowry deaths, violence against women, and women's unequal status before the law, a fight that has yet to be won.

First…the title…I was over-reaching. The face-off with patriarchy is declared 'postponed.'

Second… this presentation is a personal narrative of student engagement with the Left in India in the 1970s, and that's it for methodology…

Introduction

The underpinning of the women's movement in the West was, and remains, the liberation of women. It was led by white, middle-class women. Together with racial minorities in the Global North, and feminists from the Global South, came a clearer understanding of the intersectionality of class, race, sexuality and gender. The underpinning remained the liberation of women. In India, since the 1970s, upper caste, middle class women led the women's movements. Dalit[2] intellectuals and activists shifted the paradigm to theorizing the intersectionality of caste, class, race, sexuality and gender. That women's liberation is under-theorized in the Indian context is beyond the scope of this presentation.

Certain unease about violence against women has been simmering for decades. Collective rage at the indignities meted out to women in postcolonial, democratic India erupted following the Delhi bus gang rape in December 2012. The response was immediate. Female and male professors, teachers and students, lawyers, journalists, bureaucrats, workers and peasants from all castes, religions, and regions took to the streets to chant, shout slogans, sympathize, blog, video and photograph Delhi in distress. There were calls for justice for the victims and the heavy hand of the

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[1] On 25 June 1975 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi unilaterally had a State of Emergency declared across the country and effectively gave herself the power to rule by decree: elections and civil liberties were suspended; the press was censored; students, trade union activists and political opponents were imprisoned; thousands of men were forced to undergo vasectomy; and slums and low-cost housing in Turkman Gate and Jama Masjid in Delhi were razed to the ground. The State of Emergency ended on 21 March 1977, and remains one of the most controversial periods of political history in modern India.

[2] Dalits are a social group at the foundation of the Hindu caste system practiced in the Indian subcontinent and wherever migrants from the subcontinent have settled. Over the centuries Dalits have been referred to as outcastes, untouchables, harijans or The Children of God, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Castes, among others. Dalits have historically been subject to discrimination, segregation, and exclusion from temples, schools and water sources. Dalits now comprise almost 25% of India's population.

law for the perpetrators. This impetus to go to the public square as an expression of, and to give expression to, outrage is a direct link to the Indian women's movement of the 1970s.

There is sound reason to liberate women

Control of the female body in general, and the Hindu widow in particular, is centuries old. We speak here of the ultimate sacrifice on the altar of misogyny as women lay beside their dead husbands on a burning pyre. *Sati*, or co-cremation, was a funeral practice among some communities. Shrines to the dead woman are treated with reverence and worshiped. According to Manu, the Hindu progenitor of man, a virtuous wife is one who, after the death of her husband constantly remains chaste and reaches heaven though she has no son (Verse 160). Brahmin scholars lauded the practice of *sati* as required conduct for women, and differentiated between *sati* and suicide. The former was sanctioned and the latter banned by the scriptures. Indian society remains tied to prescriptive textual models that have remained sacred.

Sati is now a rare phenomenon signalling that practices deeply embedded in India's system of hierarchy do fall into disuse. With the prohibition of *sati* in 1829 came several social reform laws such as widow remarriage, and property rights. However the force of tradition reduces those laws to the same status as the anti-dowry and anti-untouchability laws. They are made innocuous by vested interests. Also, because a practice falls into disuse it does not follow that its infrastructure atrophies. There is a new burning issue. A rough approximation of *sati* is dowry death. The acceptability of dowry has moved beyond Hindu upper caste tradition to other Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, animists and tribal communities. Passing property within the patrilineal family through dowry indicates the end of a daughter's rights to the assets of her parental family. Dowry was a voluntary act given to secure a daughter's future and what she took to her husband's home was hers for life. That changed, and the giving and taking of dowry was made illegal in 1961. Now, dowry gifts do not begin and end with a wedding. In spite of negotiations before marriage, the groom or his female and male relatives may one day demand even more money and begin to abuse or torture or sometimes return the now-shamed bride to her parents for what they decide was not a large enough dowry. Alternatively, every occasion following the wedding, pregnancy, childbirth, especially the birth of a male child, festivals, death of a father or mother-in-law, is accompanied by a flow of gifts to the husband's family. India's National Crime Records Bureau reported that 8,233 Indian women were killed in 2012 in dowry-related violence, or nearly one per hour. The incidence of dowry deaths grew by nearly 3% over the previous five years, and torture at the hands of a husband or family increased by 5.4%, with 99,135 cases reported by survivors in 2011.[3] Women continue to be sacrificed on the altar of misogyny. We have to understand why.

I speak here of Activism in the mid-1970s…

… when women took to the streets, in ever increasing numbers, into a politically-charged public domain. We demanded redress for dowry deaths and rape, protested rising prices for food, fuel and

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[3] National Crime Records Bureau. Ch. 5: Crime Against Women (2011). http://ncrb.nic.in/CD-CII2011/cii-2011/Chapter%205.pdf

transportation, championed land rights, and crossed religious, regional, caste and class lines. When the State of Emergency imposed under Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi's leadership was lifted, there was a paradigm shift. The work of political parties and the autonomous women's movement that had been forced underground during the Emergency emerged strong, vibrant, renewed.

At the time, I was awarded a BA (Honors) in Anthropology from McGill in 1977 and by 12 June was a registered student at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), founded in the early 1970s. The Prime Minister of India was its Chancellor. We had two campuses: the lower campus had been government offices and were converted into the library, classrooms, offices, student union, and other infrastructure included a swimming pool, a coffee shop and a bank. Upper campus was comprised of the student hostels segregated by sex, housing for professors and administrators, and a few bus shelters. The catalysts were the teashops that served freshly made tea in freshly chipped crockery cups and saucers from morning to night. Common ground was the bleachers close to the teashop used by students in the adjoining hostels. That is where politics was practiced.

Many of JNU's professors had been radicalized around issues surrounding the Vietnam War. Many returned to India, leaving teaching jobs in British universities to join JNU. They joined Marxist scholars from Indian universities and others who had been active in the anti-colonial struggle. They theorized that the uniqueness of JNU arose from the democratic space it offered, of which the student movement was the best guarantee. The student movement, they argued, had to be defended against all efforts to repress it, whether the threat came from politicians, the administration, teachers or the students themselves. The students, professors, and university employees each had our own unions: JNUSU, JNUTA and JNUKA respectively.

The university had come under siege during the Emergency and the suppression of dissent was brutal. Students were identified by other students, and jailed for their Left activities. Meetings were banned but held. Postering was banned, but displayed. Pamphlets continued to be circulated. Armed police encircled the hostels with fingers on triggers.

I arrived on campus six weeks after the Emergency was lifted. Students who had been incarcerated were released. The student union took up the issue of who had been responsible for excesses on campus during the Emergency. We demonstrated and shouted slogans and demanded that the Chancellor be removed. The Chancellor wanted Professor Moonis Raza, a freedom fighter, noted demographer, and a senior administrator, among others, to be removed. Students demanded that he stay. As to who was guilty of excesses was discussed at a general body meeting. Resolutions reflecting the mood of the hour were tabled and discussed. The resolution supported by Council was defeated. The President of the union stepped down. When elections were called a few months later the Left Front slate won handily. I joined the Student Federation of India (SFI). Moonis stayed.

I was elected the President of the hostel. During a worker's strike we kept the mess hall open; we celebrated the festival of *Holi* in the hostel. Elsewhere, the President of JNUSU went on a hunger strike; we hijacked Delhi Transportation Corporation (DTC) buses and asked the drivers to drive us to the campus, and leave the buses there. They did. We wanted a roll back of the proposed hike in

fares. We did indeed get the roll back, but we also got what we did not bargain for – private buses. Some were air-conditioned and made few local stops. Others were contracted to corporations to ferry employees to and from the workplace. Yet others recklessly sped along Delhi roads, gathering clientele along the way, some under false pretences as on the fateful day of the fatal gang rape of December 2012.

Students had access to cutting-edge expertise from: economists and India's place in the global economy; historians; politicians; film makers; singers and writers from their literary vantage points. We threw ourselves into international politics. Prompted by South African students, we held public meetings on apartheid in South Africa and started the discussion on the women's movement. We hosted Iranian students from across the country and together stopped the motorcade of the Shah of Iran near Connaught Place. Later, two of us lay in front of the paddy wagon transporting Iranian and JNU students to Tihar jail. In an effort to drag me to my feet so that the vehicle could make its exit from the police station, I wrestled the only female officer available to the ground. She went on to become the Chief of Delhi Police, Chief of Tihar jail and the winner of the Magsaysay Award. For years she asked after the 'green-eyed monster'! Over the years I have met three Iranian students in Montreal who had a vivid recollection of their JNU experiences. We remonstrated against Margaret Thatcher when she visited Delhi suggesting that she take a virginity test, a law that she passed in 1979-80 for migrant Indian women as a precondition for entering Britain. I was a blip on British telly.

The SFI is the student mass front of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) ('the Party'), which split from the Communist Party of India on 11 April 1964. The Party held State power in Kerala, Tripura, and West Bengal under Jyoti Basu (1977-2000). In 1996 Jyoti Basu was inches away from becoming the Prime Minister of India. The Party vetoed it. I worked for the Party weekly *People's Democracy.* I typed up the weekly article theorizing the Indian economy written by an anonymous scholar. He did not stay anonymous forever: he is Prabhat Patnaik, Professor of Economics at JNU. I took dictation in Pitman shorthand from the Party Leader, E.M.S. Namboodiripad (EMS), which included his memoirs.

The women's movement

In theory and practice the social and political, public and private lives of women have engaged the Party. Analyses of working class women and the critique of the State with respect to working women are plentiful and have made their way from speeches and Party documents into the academy and the popular press. The journal *Social Scientist* was founded in 1972. Contributions by JNU professors and students were commonplace, as well as articles addressing family planning, matriarchy, clan mothers, and *devdasis* in Thanjavur Temple. In 1975 there was a double issue on women's liberation. The lead article was written by EMS, who noted that his father's generation's radicalization took place around the issue of the status of women in his household. From a privileged position in society, they outed the Hindu traditions that yoked women to polyandry[4] and purdah[5] in the state of Kerala.

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[4] The practice of women having more than one husband at the same time.
[5] The practice of keeping women in seclusion, and imposing clothing that conceals them completely when they leave the home.

Their radical positions on women were passed down to EMS. He became the first communist to head a State government. One hundred per cent of the female population in Kerala is literate.

Running on a parallel track to party politics was the autonomous women's movement, which distanced itself from political parties. They had their Study Circles, and supported their own candidates at election time. Off campus women from the autonomous women's movement are prolific writers. They own and control publishing houses, journals, and international and national non-government organizations.

On her return to India from her job in Air India in London, Brinda Karat became a full-timer in the Party's trade union movement in West Bengal. She then moved to Delhi mandated to initiate a mass front for women. There was consensus that the women's movement operates on two fronts, a weekly legal aid clinic at which problems faced by women in the work place would be addressed, and the creation of a Delhi-based women's organization. Janwati Mahila Samitti (JMS) was founded, and Ashoka Lata assumed a leadership role in JMS. She was a student of Professor Moonis Raza. Her husband Prabir had been jailed during the Emergency. Shortly after leaving JNU she became a Party full-timer. Her mandate was to increase participation of women in the trade union movement. She was assigned a West Delhi working class colony.

She was a fine speaker, a natural, at the factory gate, at demonstrations and when she was positioning herself as a leader of the women's movement. She kept her eye on the growth and development of the Students' Federation of India (SFI) in JNU. We were trail blazing the transition from class politics to feminist politics, but it sputtered with Ashoka's untimely death aged 28. JMS is typical of the many women's organizations that were created across the country in the post-Emergency period. Today, the umbrella organization of all those women's organizations in the villages, towns and cities across India, is the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), which boasts millions of paid up members making it a financially independent body.

A giant on the cultural front was JNU Professor Govind Purshottam Despande, GPD, a Marathi playwright and intellectual. GPD and a group of cultural activists revived the discourse on Marxist aesthetics in India. It began with a seminar in Kasauli in 1979. Papers were presented and subsequently published in a special issue of *Social Scientist*, guest-edited by GPD. I was there. A new journal was launched and while it could not be sustained, a movement of cultural activism with SAHMAT at its apex survives.

As a founding member of the Delhi Science Forum, now a highly visible commentator on India's science and society interface, I had my first public speaking engagement on 'Women and problems associated with water supply and sanitation' to mark the United Nations Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. My paper was published. It was my first blip in India's publishing industry.

I was there for the excitement generated around the publication of 'Towards equality: the report of the Commission on the Status of Women in India (1974-5)'. It was the first attempt at collecting

aggregated and disaggregated data by sex, age, occupation in and outside the home, marital status, fertility, literacy, patterns of migration, and women in religion.

I was at the meeting in SNDT (Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey) Women's University, Bombay, which kick-started women's studies programmes. In Delhi the Centre for Women's Development Studies was founded by Vina Mazumdar. Her legacy is to weave together scholarship and Left activism.

There is a camaraderie that the politically positioned women's organizations enjoy because of their willingness to mobilize and be mobilized by the Party's mass front organizations for labour, the peasantry, students and youth. I would wear white kurta pyjama and join CITU, the labour union, to collect donations from the throngs at the Boat Club on for example, Republic Day. I was drawn into the cultural front and encountered Safdar Hashmi, playwright, actor, director, and author of children's books and plays. After the Emergency Safdar was a founding member of Jan Natya Manch or Janam (birth) which has its roots in the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPT). He inserted family, friends and JNU students into his plays enacted in small venues and large. He wrote and acted in plays on corruption and authoritarianism, the precarity of small farmers, on clerical fascism (an ideology that combines the political and economic doctrines of fascism with theology or religion), unemployment and violence against women. He was beaten to death in the middle of a performance of one of his plays. Janam, in which his wife played a role, went to the site of Safdar's death and finished the play. Fourteen years later ten people were convicted of his murder. SAHMAT, the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust was founded in his memory. It is a vibrant Delhi-based organization of politically active intellectuals, artists, and writers from across the country.

From grass roots activism to theorizing violence against women

The transition from class politics to feminist politics was met head on for my doctorate in which I tackled the gender dimension of landmine management in a minefield in northwestern Cambodia[6]. The trigger for my current research on women in contemporary India is the 12/12 Delhi rape and battery incident. The questions became: what contribution can a politically engaged student of the 1970s make to the women's movement in contemporary India and, secondly, does my experience as an academic researcher on gender further our understanding of misogyny in Indian society. To answer those questions I focus briefly on widows, India's Achilles heel, who face the brunt of misogyny in Indian society, and to further illustrate incidents of misogyny, future research will deal with the institution of dowry and dowry deaths in India.

According to the 2011 census, India has 34 million widows, which make up 8% of the total female population ranging in age from 10 to 93. Widows are shunned by family and friends. They are barred from venerated cremation sites, and their bodies are dumped into venerated rivers. They are banned from celebrating some festivals. They are not invited to weddings within their own family, as they are perceived to bring bad luck, and even to look at a widow is considered unlucky. In certain

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[6] See, for example, Chapman, Jean (2010). A gender perspective on landmine management in Kampuchea. Staarbrucken, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, GmbH & Co.

circumstances widows are expected to shave their heads, wear coarse white clothes, and desist from wearing jewellery and make-up. There is a taboo for placing the red dot in the middle of the forehead, effectively de-sexualizing, de-feminizing and uglifying her. With typical Indian ingenuity, widows are also re-sexualized as sexually available, sexually experienced and the object of sexual competition. They are, therefore, routinely subjected to sexual harassment and abuse, by women and men, within the patriarchal unit.

The source of marginalization of India's widows is patrilocal residence and patrilineal inheritance: under the laws of patrilocality, an Indian wife becomes the property of her in-laws' family, and when her husband dies, they can decide what to give her, and how to treat her. Having broken intimate ties with her birth family, when her husband dies she is not free to return to the parental home. Patrilineal inheritance denies widows inheritance rights over their father's property, and their customary and legal rights over their husband's share of family property.

In the neo-liberal economy the descent from bride to widow can be rapid. Arranged marriages are the norm. Importance is given to marriage within the same endogamous group. That has slipped a notch or two as the green card and citizenship of a Western nation, any nation, are favoured. A new set of problems has emerged. Dowry is negotiated and given. Marriages are sanctified. Brides are abandoned at home and abroad, and the cycle of negotiating dowry repeats itself, successfully. Some brides are abandoned in front of a temple in a holy city. Others are burned to death.

Conclusion

I want to thank Deborah[7] for inviting us to talk about the women's liberation movement in the 1970s. Until writing this paper I never self-identified as a woman's libber: I was an activist on the Left. I can barely believe Left political power was and has remained within physical and intellectual reach. Did I ever imagine that I would be in a position to invite the anonymous scholar, writing under a pseudonym for the Party, to be the Keynote Speaker at an international Conference, for the Left, for the academy, in Canada? I was at the forefront of a diversifying women's movement, and today I am theorizing gender to understand violence against women in contemporary, democratic India, which resembles a war zone for women.

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[7] Professor Deborah Belle, then also Director of the Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program at Boston University, and initiator of the "A Revolutionary Moment" Conference.

Comparative Analysis of the
Center for Gender, Sexuality & Activism at Boston University
and the *Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante/*
Association for Student Union Solidarity in Montreal, Canada

by Alessandra Goodfriend

A Directed Study with Dr. Diane Balser, in collaboration with Gabrielle Newton

UNESCO/UNITWIN Network on Gender, Culture & Development

Abstract

As a student activist at Boston University (BU), I learned firsthand the importance of student activism and its ability to improve academic environments. Having been involved in student advocacy on my college campus for three years, I have developed a better understanding of what has and has not been effective in cooperating with our administration and various student organizations in campaigning for common goals. As a coordinator on the leadership board at the Center for Gender, Sexuality & Activism at BU, I participated in the successful establishment of the Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Center in the spring of 2012.

This paper will analyze the organizing tactics used in achieving the formation of a rape crisis center. As a coordinator of the Center for Gender, Sexuality & Activism (CGSA), the student organization that helped catapult the cause to the immediate attention of the greater BU community, I have discovered specific techniques that are effective in getting administrators to acknowledge and respond to student demands. These include keeping ourselves accountable to our values, maintaining a professional yet secure relationship with the university administration, investing in training future generations of activists, finding ways to make sure students identify with the issue area, defining concrete goals, using the media effectively, and making student organizing fun. For comparison, I will examine the student-led strikes and continued efforts for lower tuition costs in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, which were organized by ASSÉ (*Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante*/Association for Student Union Solidarity) in Montreal, the Student Union, and supported by the 2110 Centre for Gender Advocacy at Concordia University.[1] The central lessons that the CGSA can take away from the experiences of the Concordia Centre are the importance of a reliable structure such as a student government, abridged consensus, a strong group identity, sustainable funding and financial accountability, and comprehensive training for student activists.

Introduction

The goal of this essay is to identify the most effective organizing tactics in order to help train the next generation of student activists. To do so, I will analyze the organizing tactics used by the Center for Gender, Sexuality & Activism to achieve the formation of a rape crisis center at Boston University (BU), as well as draw lessons from my observations of the student-led strikes and continued efforts to lower tuition costs in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, as primarily organized by the *Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante* (ASSÉ)/Association for Student Union Solidarity. Although student organizing at BU and at universities in Montreal do not form a perfect comparison because of differences in scope and political climate, it is my hope that contrasting the two experiences will help build understanding of effective strategies for student organizing. As a coordinator of the Center for Gender, Sexuality & Activism (or as we affectionately call it, "the Center", or the CGSA), the student organization that helped catapult the cause of rape culture to the immediate attention of the greater Boston University community, I have discovered specific techniques that are effective in convincing administrators to acknowledge and respond to student demands. In looking to the ASSÉ in Quebec, I

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[1] Renamed "Centre for Gender Advocacy" in 2013.

identify the limits of the Center as one of the only activist spaces on campus. While the Center may have been the most appropriate organization to respond to the issues surrounding rape culture at the time, moving forward I want to explore how the Center fits within the larger prospect of activist organizing at BU. I hope to combine the Center's work with that of students from many niches within the University as I envision the future of the activist scene at BU. I do this with the understanding that while there might be a difference in particular passions, we are united by more common ground, and only need a better forum for us to identify that common ground.

The Center: Student Activism at Boston University

My experience with student activism bloomed in the Center for Gender, Sexuality & Activism at Boston University. Established in 2008, the Center is a completely volunteer-run, safer-space institution devoted to creating programming around anti-oppression, with a special focus on the struggles of women, queer and trans* identified people. I started getting involved with the CGSA my first year at BU in 2010, and became a part of the coordinator board in the spring of 2011 as Activism Coordinator. My junior year, I served as one of the Co-directors of the Center. My experiences working with the coordinator team gave me the opportunity to observe both how the CGSA operates on a daily basis and how it fits into the more general scene of the University. Biweekly meetings with our advisor, Dean Stacy Godnick, helped push me to theorize about the best practices for the Center and have encouraged me to analyze my role as a liaison with the administration.

On December 11, 2011 a BU hockey player was arrested and charged with three counts of indecent assault and battery after entering the room of a female student.[2] On February 19, 2012 another BU hockey player was arrested for sexually assaulting another BU student in a BU dormitory.[3] Two days later, three female students, in three separate incidents, reported seeing someone holding a cell phone under a shower stall and attempting to either photograph or film them.[4] Only a week later a female student reported a sexual assault in BU's Mugar Library.[5] Four days later, members of Sigma Delta Tau, a BU sorority, were found heavily intoxicated and brought to the hospital because they had been forced to drink as part of a hazing ritual.[6] Not even a month later, BU's student newspaper the Daily Free Press released an April Fool's themed edition that included fake articles that mocked and trivialized rape and depicted violent rape scenes without a trigger warning.[7]

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[2] Jahnke, Art. (2011, Dec. 13). BU Men's Hockey Star Arrested. *BU Today*.
http://www.bu.edu/today/2011/mens-hockey-star-arrested/
[3] Jahnke, Art. (2012, Feb. 19). Hockey Player Arrested for Sexual Assault. *BU* Today.
http://www.bu.edu/today/2012/hockey-player-arrested-for-sexual-assault/
[4] Friday, Leslie. (2012, Feb. 22). Third Peeping Incident in a Month. *BU Today.*
http://www.bu.edu/today/2012/third-peeping-incident-in-a-month/
[5] BU Student Accused Of Assault At Campus Library. (2012, Feb. 28). *CBS Boston.*
http://boston.cbslocal.com/2012/02/28/bu-student-accused-of-assault-at-campus-library/
[6] Barlow, Rich. (2012, May 2). Sorority Suspended until 2013 for Hazing. *BU* Today.
http://www.bu.edu/today/2012/sorority-suspended-until-2013-for-hazing/
[7] Baker, Katie. (2012, April 2). Here's the 'Funny' Sexual Assault Parody Boston University's Student Paper Doesn't Want You to See [Updated]. *Jezebel*. http://jezebel.com/5898425/heres-the-funny-sexual-assault-parody-boston-universitys-student-paper-doesnt-want-you-to-see

The Center had always been a place for students, especially women-identified students, to come to report assaults because many students felt more comfortable talking to peers than negotiating the BU bureaucracy. BU alum and Center ally Allison Francis exposed such an experience when she called the BU crisis intervention hotline to see what process a survivor would have to go through to report a sexual assault. She was led in a circle of automated menus, revealing the hoops survivors have to jump through to get support.[8] While Center volunteers have always been trained by the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center in how to be a first responder to someone in an emergency, nothing could have prepared the Center for the influx of students that came to the Center triggered by the campus wide conversations surrounding rape and sexual assault.

The Feminist Collective[9] was revitalized in the spring of 2012 in the Center and became a locus for students to share stories and collaborate on small and large-scale activism that could be an immediate response to the multitude of tragedies. The Center organized a conversation with Dean of Students Kenneth Elmore that was made open to the BU community and streamed live online to ask the administration to respond to sexual assault and rape on campus.[10] The Center also hosted a town hall for students to share their feelings and to strategize.[11] A Change.org petition was started to demand that BU provide a rape crisis center for its students, and by the end of March the Feminist Collective was able to organize BU's largest Take Back the Night March and Rally in recorded history as a moment of healing and education for the community.[12] Feminist activists at BU had been advocating for a rape crisis center since the 1960s. This time, however, because of the intensity of media attention and the space and leadership for organizing potential, the Center was able to lead the BU community through a large scale conversation about the various ways that rape culture manifests itself on and off campus, and to demand from the university that a rape crisis center be created to respond to the needs of survivors.

Tactic One: Keeping ourselves accountable to our values

To aid my analysis of the Center's own strengths and weaknesses as a student organizing body, I read selected articles about leadership practices on themes such as white supremacy and consensus. Tema Okun describes in her essay "White Supremacy Culture" various ways people can unintentionally ignore their peers due to our socialization. People often get caught up in a "sense of urgency" which sometimes results in losing potential allies for prolific results. Another trap that is easy to fall into is debating with an "only one right way" point of view. Missionaries tend to do this when they fail to see the value in other cultures and believe that their religion is the only right

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[8] Friday, Leslie. (2012, Feb. 27). Facebook Post Blasts BU Hotline Glitch. *BU* Today.
http://www.bu.edu/today/2012/facebook-post-blasts-bu-hotline-glitch/
[9] The Feminist Collective had existed previously in a smaller, unofficial capacity. Throughout the spring of 2012 a group of about twenty students met regularly for an hour of consciousness-raising discussion and an hour of action planning and successfully revitalized the Collective.
[10] Boston University. (2012, Feb. 27). *Boston University @ Ustream*
http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/20743793
[11] CGSA Events (2012, Feb. 27). *Boston University @ Ustream* http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/20745013
[12] Friday, Leslie. (2012, March 30). Time to Take Back the Night. *BU* Today.
http://www.bu.edu/today/2012/time-to-take-back-the-night/

doctrine. While movements need "type A" personalities, it is important that such an individual does not cloud the organizing by thinking he or she is the only one who can do something the right way. Furthermore, the greater number of actively involved people there are, the more dedication there is to the project.

The "Consensus 101: Getting Familiar with Consensus Process" document from the Yule 1998 Newsletter *Covenant of the Goddess* discusses different strategies for creating an organizing meeting that actively seeks out a group's various perspectives. Consensus process relies on the principles that everyone must speak, everyone must listen, and all should support the decision made by a group. Having a strong agenda is a first step to making sure that the group has a common goal. When the agenda is sent out ahead of time, everyone has the opportunity to add to it. It is the facilitator's job to move the agenda along, but with consensus process the facilitator does not consolidate all of the power. A time checker reminds the group of the agreed upon ending time at regular intervals to make sure that the discussion is not dwelling more than it needs to. The "stack taker" keeps note of who would like to speak so that participants don't hold their hand up thinking about what they have to say instead of listening to the current speaker. A general poll can be taken to initiate constant communication; "twinkling" fingers upwards shows agreement, forward is neutrality, and downwards is disagreement. Unanimous agreement is when everyone agrees with the decision. Pure consensus is when all people in the group accept the decision and are willing to support it, even though all may not agree.[13] These are just two alternatives to majority decision, which requires just more than half in agreement – leaving still a good amount of people unhappy. It is up to the group to decide which issues require unanimous agreement, versus pure consensus, versus majority decision.

The principles in Tema Okun's essay "White Supremacy Culture" apply not only to race, but to various types of privilege. One of the goals of the Center's campaign for a rape crisis center was to turn rape culture from a private issue to a public issue, without compromising individual privacy. Contrary to race however, when somebody walks into a room, it is not known if the person is a survivor of sexual violence. Furthermore, it is often not information that somebody wants shared. White allies are crucial to combating racism, just as allies to survivors of sexual assault are needed to keep the activism energy alive.

When two young women came forth with their stories about experiences of sexual violence with members of the BU hockey team, they opened the floodgates for many more people to come forward. Reliving a traumatic experience, and – for many people – feeling validation against self-blame for the first time, can be dramatic and life changing. It took a movement full of both survivors and their allies to show that BU had majority support for a rape crisis center. Not all survivors of sexual violence had the same experiences, or the same coping mechanisms. We knew that it was important to have a united front when presenting our demands to the University, but we also wanted to be able to cater to survivors' varied and diverse needs. The personal and sensitive nature of the campaign made it especially important to make sure that we were doing as much listening as speaking during meetings. Every instance of sexual violence is different, and the varied aspects of

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[13] Inspired by "Consensus 101": http://www.ladywoods.org/index.php/lady-letter-archive/4-consensus-101

our identity such as race, gender and class affect those experiences. During these conversations in the Center, we often encountered the problematic "hierarchy of oppression". It is important to be able to talk about how race, gender and class affect sexual violence, without invalidating anyone's experience or attempting to predict or understand their experience because of a particular factor.

Tactic Two: Maintaining a professional yet secure relationship with the administration

A student's relationship with the administration at a university reflects the complicated power dynamic within the university setting. On the one hand, the administrators have all the power; they make the rules and what they say goes. On the other hand, at many universities their salary is paid with students' tuition (whether the students themselves are paying for it or someone else is paying it for them).[14] Because many universities operate similarly to business corporations, the key factor that will convince an administration to make a reform is proof that the benefits will outweigh the costs – that quite literally this reform will make them money in the long run. Figuring out ways to present this argument can be especially difficult with issues that are personal to the activists.

One of the largest parts of the Center's campaign involved using the media to pressure the administration. First, the media needed something big to report: the numerous cases of sexual violence allegedly committed by members of the hockey team, and then more importantly the students' outcry in response. The news is much less likely to run a story about how rape culture is seen across America, globally, than it is to paint a picture of a villain and a hero. Unfortunately for BU, it seemed in the best interest of the campaign to highlight that the administration was not meeting its students' needs. It was important to put pressure on them to respond by identifying them as a responsible actor, but also to give them a recommendation that could be used to pressure them to act.[15] I kept this strategy in mind when I raised my hand at an annual student leaders meeting at the end of the spring 2012 semester and asked if, in response to the many stories of sexual violence being reported, students could count on the President of the University to support a Take Back the Night event to address the need for a campus-wide conversation about rape culture. Instead of using the opportunity for dialogue with President Brown to chastise the administration for its inability to address the situation, we offered an opportunity for collaboration with student activists.

While the President responded positively on the podium and agreed to set up a meeting, a lot of follow-up was required to ensure that the meeting happened in a timely manner. We wanted the administration to know that a meeting about Take Back the Night would not be the only thing we would expect the administration to say yes to. Within the three months it took to meet with the President, the Center worked to pressure the administration through third parties. One way was by organizing a webinar with the Dean of Students, the official liaison between students and the

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[14] For students who rely on scholarships to pay for their education, they face extra barriers to working with a university's administration. Many students are afraid they might jeopardize their scholarships if they participate in a protest.

[15] Baker, Katie J.M. (2012, April). Boston University Has a Sexual Assault Problem. *Jezebel*. http://jezebel.com/5898966/boston-university-has-a-sexual-assault-problem

administration, to talk about rape culture. What was initially expected to be a few students and the Dean ended up including an audience of more than 50 students. Luckily, the Dean did not cancel when he saw how packed the Center was, though he did not stay for questions afterwards. When student viewers saw for themselves how unprepared the administration was to respond to sexual assault on campus, and as more people saw how much a rape crisis center was needed at BU, support and demand for a rape crisis center grew within the BU community.

In addition to responding to interview requests, we also reached out to citywide Boston newspapers and issued a number of press releases in the Center's name. This was a very effective way to consolidate our message into one unified voice. Theoretically, this protected individual students from potential backlash from BU's administration. During this period, I was the Center's only point of contact for the President's Chief of Staff. When I spoke with him on the phone a couple of days before a meeting with the President of BU, he admonished me for the bad PR (public relations) that they were getting from our interviews with the press, claiming his identity as a father of two daughters as proof of his commitment to gender equality. I remained calm and assured him that I trusted he had his daughters' best interests in mind, but I was frustrated by his response. It was yet another example of how the administration often avoided addressing the need to create more support systems for survivors on campus and instead insisted on defending personal reputations.

Although BU's initiation of the Sexual Assault Response & Prevention Center was modeled almost exactly off of the student proposal from the Center, BU's administration did not give the Center any recognition for its role in the eventual creation of the rape crisis center. It was important to the administration to make it seem like the rape crisis center was their idea – lest they give the impression that student activism is actually effective.[16] While the Center did not rise up in arms over the lack of recognition from the administration, its members do still work tirelessly to remind students that they have the power to create change on their campus.

Tactic Three: Investing in training future generations of student activists

One of the biggest inherent problems that student activism faces is the activist turnover rate. This is especially true in the United States, where graduating college in four consecutive years is a cultural norm. Since it takes some students a few years to even find out that they might be passionate about activism, students may have even less than four years to develop their skills as student activists. The skills a student activist learns in college are often not ones taught in the classroom, e.g., how to plan a successful event that brings people together and leaves them feeling inspired. Take Back the Night is one example of an event that both brought people together and encouraged the BU community to reflect about its participation in rape culture. Every year, student activists struggle with event planning. If a similarly slow learning curve were applied to studying chemistry, science would not progress very quickly. Likewise, if we were able to begin training and educating activists at the beginning of their college career, we would have a much stronger core of student activist leaders on campus and therefore be able to organize and advocate more effectively.

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[16] Student proposal for a rape crisis center: http://www.bu.edu/cgsa/files/2012/05/ARPSfinal.pdf

While the campaign for the rape crisis center officially ended in May of 2012 when BU announced the opening of the Sexual Assault Response & Prevention Center (SARP) in the following fall, the Center for Gender, Sexuality & Activism found it difficult to revert back to its pace from before the campaign.[17] Every decision during the campaign seemed like a monumental decision, and people definitely looked to the seniors for direction. In the fall, their absence was felt strongly, as almost all of the Center's leadership board was new. As one of the new co-directors, it was important to convince the new board that they were not only equally as qualified as their predecessors, but also that they each already had the critical thinking skills to make decisions on their own.

The planning of Take Back the Night the year before, and the Center's first annual "professional development trip" to Montreal were two major ways of recruiting and training future leaders of the Center. Freshmen learned how to plan an event, who to talk to, successful PR tactics, and crisis management – all through a feminist lens. The trip to Montreal was an incredible opportunity to see what was possible at other universities. When we visited centers similar to ours, we were both proud of the fact that the work we do is completely student-led (without a paid staff person), and inspired to think of new and creative ways we could serve the BU community. The Center starts off each semester with a two-day retreat – a crash course in organizing skills that we do not learn in class. Two days is never enough time though, and we are continuing to look for ways to both make better use of our existing trainings and find time for more trainings throughout the semester.

Tactic Four: Defining concrete goals and finding ways to help students identify with the issues

At Boston University, there is not a very popular conversation about tuition hikes. There is currently one student group, !mpact, that is devoted to widening the conversation about tuition hikes, but it does not have the popular student power behind it – yet.[18] On the other hand, the work that the Center has done often makes the headlines of the Daily Free Press, BU's school newspaper.[19] Why is it that students are able to organize around issues such as gender and sexuality, issues that only a portion of students realize affect them, but not around tuition hikes, which directly affect every student? There are many reasons, but one explanation I have often heard is that students do not believe their actions will have an impact on tuition.

Bringing sexual violence from the private sphere into the public sphere is one way of communicating to our peers about how they too are affected by sexual violence. Many causes only become fads because there is not an organized momentum and people lose steam. It is exhausting to talk about sexual violence at all, let alone every day for months. Having many different ways that people of all talents can participate is key to keeping up momentum. It is just as valuable to be able to create an eye-catching poster as it is to be able to know exactly the right words to say in a press release. Similarly, it is just as valuable to be able to network with "Greek life" (fraternities and sororities) as it is to be able to network with administration. Because rape culture affects all of us, that means that each of the 500+ student groups on campus are potential allies. It is overwhelming for one person to

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[17] Boston University announces the opening of SARP: http://www.bu.edu/cgsa/2012/05/03/566/

[18] !mpact: http://impactbu.tumblr.com

[19] The Daily Free Press: http://dailyfreepress.com/?s=The+Center+for+Gender%2C+Sexuality+%26+Activism+

find the charisma to reach out to each of those groups, but delegating the outreach to many people is a great way to increase support.

Tactic Five: Using the media effectively

Utilizing social media is one of the most effective ways to spread information and create hype. Even though big news stations and corporations control almost all mainstream news media, applications like Twitter and Facebook allow people to be their own news reporters. Students are also able to work around the clock and speak their minds from anywhere using these applications. All they need is access to the internet (although that resource still comes at a higher cost for some than for others). By controlling the popular conversation, students are able to grab the ears of the larger news stations and thus sway the administration. Social media can also provide more platforms for accessible organizing within student groups. Though this is sometimes a burden because it seems like the work never stops, it allows students to multitask and find time for both their coursework and activism.

During the campaign for a rape crisis center we quickly learned that not all press was good press. Sometimes the school newspaper would quote a student out of context, and while it was done unintentionally and only read by a small percentage of students, these mistakes occasionally harmed the Center's rapport with the BU administration and with potential allies. Individually, student organizers also had to decide when it was best to speak on our own behalf, and not on behalf of the Center as a whole. In an attempt to control the conversation in the media, Public Relations Coordinator Michelle Weiser led the organizing of press releases in order to give the Center a unified voice. Practically speaking, this also helped us respond to the massive number of interview requests.

Tactic Six: Make organizing fun

Just as important as any other organizing tactic is the reminder to take self-care and have fun. With all the ways in which social media and technology have allowed us to work from wherever we are, emotionally it is still possible to burn out. Especially with issues that are so close to home, it can be easy to let the overwhelming forces exhaust you. Knowing when to pass the baton to fellow workers for a bit in order to rejuvenate yourself is important. One strategy to prevent burnout is to celebrate successes, even when they seem small. Another way to keep up the energy is by engaging in the creative potential of a group by incorporating events like flash mobs, which both get the message across and are fun for participants.

The activists at the Center spend a great deal of time together working on projects and campaigns. However, we have learned that in order to de-stress it is also important to spend time together relaxing and having fun. It was not uncommon to have sleepovers with our fellow activists where we baked tasty treats and projected Rihanna music videos on the wall while we huddled over our emails trying to figure out the best way to word a statement. Even with a little Rihanna therapy almost all of us burned out at one point or another. Everyone responds to secondhand trauma (and firsthand

trauma for that matter) in their own way, and there is no foolproof solution. It is important for activists to take the time to figure out what is right for them.

One of the best ways we tried to make organizing fun was by applying for travel funds to go to Montreal, Quebec for spring break on a professional development trip. It was an important opportunity to explore similar centers and see other models of organizing. We were inspired by our experiences shadowing student activists who reminded us of ourselves but had found a way to bring their movement to the forefront of the national agenda.

Comparing Montreal and Boston

Montreal has the highest concentration of post-secondary students of all major cities in North America, followed only by Boston.[20] For this reason we decided to study the two as sister cities. Admittedly there are still some major differences that need to be accounted for in comparing the two cities.

Quebec's education system is very different from the education system in the United States. In Quebec, most students participate in the *Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel* (CEGEP)/General and Vocational College program after what the US typically considers grade eleven. The goal of this two-year program is to specialize in a particular program before going to University. This means that students are encouraged to take time to figure out what they would like to specialize in before enrolling in University. Furthermore, Quebec has the lowest tuition fees in Canada for in-province students, averaging around $3,000 per year, which is about half of the national average for Canada. This is a stark contrast with the $43,970 tuition at Boston University (not including the mandatory room and board for freshman, priced at about $8,930).[21] There is a clear history of popular participation in government in Montreal that has resulted in access to education being much more institutionalized than in Boston and the United States. The legacy in Montreal of fighting for the right to education has largely set the scene for the popular student movements seen today. Conversations on the right to education lead into conversations about the privilege of accessibility in terms of gender and sexuality as well. The relationship between feminism and tuition hikes is understood differently in Quebec than in Boston and therefore perhaps a clearer connection is needed in Boston to mobilize students on this issue.

While in Montreal, we spent a good deal of time with Concordia University's "Centre 2110 for Gender Advocacy." Centre 2110 is similar to Boston University's CGSA, but unlike the CGSA, Centre 2110 does not only advocate for issues concerning gender and sexuality. Concordia's student union, known by its French acronym "ASSÉ", is currently leading a campus-wide campaign against tuition hikes and Centre 2110 is supporting and participating in this campaign. We sat in on organizing meetings about the school-wide strike that students from Centre 2110 were participating in, and

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[20] University attendance: Montreal ranks first in relative terms and fifth in absolute terms in North America. Canada Economic Development for Quebec regions. 1996. Archived from the original on May 26, 2008. Retrieved February 4, 2013.
[21] Boston University Housing Rates, 2013/14: http://www.bu.edu/housing/living/rates/year2013-2014/

marched alongside them with red patches of solidarity against tuition hikes – all the while in shock. We left the protests in part furious at ourselves for our own seeming apathy at tuition hikes, which we take for granted as fixed, and in part inspired by the mass level of organizing. When we came home, we decided to do more research to see how the students were able to mobilize so effectively. When we learned about the ASSÉ, we tried to imagine our own Student Government not only representing student interest, but also being courageous enough to take an activist stand. At first it seemed counter-intuitive to reach out to our Student Government and ask to work together. This is largely due to continually frayed relations between the CGSA and the Student Government that have borne much frustration over the past few years. Especially during the rape crisis center campaign, it was exhausting to reach out to peers to *convince* them of what felt like a human right. However, according to our research the single most effective strategy to achieve large student mobilization is a reliable all encompassing structure, such as a student government. Concordia's Centre 2110 for Gender Advocacy works with the ASSÉ, but could not attempt to address the needs of all of Concordia's students – let alone all the students of Montreal. Furthermore, working in solidarity means that they can spend half of their energy working on their own independent services and programs, similar to how our Center organizes.

Recommendations for the Future

In Montreal we sat in on student meetings discussing their reasons for going on strike, as well as the strategies behind the strike tactics they used. We learned that unlike our seemingly spontaneous student movement, theirs was rooted in a culture of activism that had been visible on campus for decades. The lessons we learned taught us about different student organizing structures, leadership practices and how to encourage a student body that is supportive of activism.

Lesson 1: A more reliable "structure" aka Student Government

Creating a structure that students can depend on to have their voice heard and can trust to work well enough to see tangible change on campus is key to creating a community of student activists. The ASSÉ is a national student union of over 70,000 members dedicated to increasing access to post-secondary education.[22] Each school has many small student unions that represent groups of people with similar interests (such as academic discipline) and each are connected to the larger ASSÉ organization in order to get a comprehensive picture of the needs of students.

At Boston University we have a Student Government, but some students and administration feel it does not actively represent the needs of the students. The Student Government used to have more of an activist orientation, but in recent years its members have been more hesitant to take a stand, afraid that they might ostracize members of their constituency. Especially since the creation of the Center in 2008, they tend to leave activism to more explicitly activist groups, and to work on

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[22] http://www.ASSÉ-solidarite.qc.ca/ASSÉ/presentation/

initiatives that are less controversial.[23] However, the gender neutral housing campaign and protest led by Student Government in the spring of 2012 did stand out as a turning point, possibly marking a change in the culture of BU Student Government. If the Student Government at BU continues in the direction that it is going, with a clear intention of recreating a structure that results in a more democratic and activist conversation, it is possible that it could help create a Boston-wide conversation about tuition hikes.

Lesson 2: Abridge consensus

At ASSÉ they use simple majority for the larger bodies like the general ASSÉmbly, and try to use pure consensus higher up in the student government hierarchy.

When we try to use pure consensus for all decisions made in the Center, not only does it become incredibly tedious and frustrating, it slows down production as well. I recommend that the Center figure out a way to decide which issues are important and need pure consensus, and when it is okay to make decisions based on a simple majority.

Lesson 3: A group identity

There are different organizing bodies in the ASSÉ that students can be involved in, whether it is the freshman class or the International Affairs department. Either way, there is a larger identity that the students feel invested in. Essentially, this system creates a very strong sense of "school spirit".

One of the goals of Boston University is for every student's experience to extend beyond attending class and become part of a community. In a large university, it can be difficult for these various identities to unite students instead of separating them into communities that do not communicate with each other. A student government that more comprehensively reflected the various communities at Boston University will not emerge overnight, but it would be a huge step towards creating a united campus identity.

Lesson 4: Funding and financial accountability

Another aspect of Montreal's student government system that helps it successfully unite students is that all students pay a mandatory fee to fund the ASSÉ. BU students all pay an "undergraduate student fee" which in part funds the Student Government, but this fee does not create the same understanding of personal investment as the fee for the ASSÉ. Additionally, BU's Student Government has not actually been using most of its budget.[24] At BU, we need a greater understanding that we have already funded the Student Government, so we should care about how

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[23] Anner, Steve. (2013, Aug.) Boston University Students Can Now Live With Someone of the Opposite Sex. *Boston Magazine*. http://www.bostonmagazine.com/2013/08/boston-university-approves-gender-neutral-housing-2013/

[24] In the spring of 2013 Gabrielle Newton and I met with Student Government president Dexter McCoy where he shared his insight on the organizing practices of working with Student Government.

the money is spent. Furthermore, we need to demand transparency as to where and why the money was spent in order to encourage greater results from the Student Government.

The Center itself could benefit greatly from a larger budget. Primarily, the Center needs funding for its operating costs, since the programming can be paid for by appeals from the various student groups.

Lesson 5: Training

The ASSÉ has a very comprehensive training program, consisting of two full days at a retreat outside the city. There are workshops and discussions on, for example, the intersection of feminism with tuition hikes. This type of workshop is fantastic because it enables students from Concordia's Centre 2110 to talk to people from other student groups that they might not normally interact with. Other workshops include *artivism*,[25] anti-imperialism, green capitalism, and "the right to strike." All of these workshops work to provide a supplemental curriculum on how to be a student leader, a skill that is not taught in the classroom but that is incredibly important in achieving change.

The CGSA and the Student Government at BU have a full day retreat each semester as well, but it is much more focused on operational protocols and does not have the funds to sustain as much training from outside facilitators. Looking towards the future, the CGSA has applied to include such programing, but has been unable to receive funding from the university in order to do so.

Conclusion

In imagining the future of student organizing at Boston University, we must recognize that there is no one-stop solution – but rather a combination is needed. Boston University is not going to create a student activist culture like Quebec overnight because of the (relatively short) history of political apathy, but it can take some steps in the right direction in order to pave the way for a robust student life. As much as it might be difficult for Center activists to admit, the CGSA cannot and should not be the primary activist hub of BU because it is impossible to address the issues of the entire community while still prioritizing its core focus on issues surrounding gender and sexuality. The ASSÉ is able to use a feminist lens in its activism without also being *the* place that students can go to organize around feminism. In order to raise mass consciousness about issues such as tuition hikes, the Center needs to work with the Student Government to share the identity of an activist organization. If the Student Government can effectively and actively engage the various communities of the student body with an activist agenda, while simultaneously building relationships with the administration, it would be able to orchestrate student-led change on campus with much greater success than in recent years. In the meantime, the CGSA could envision more active programing and coalition building with like-minded activist student groups on campus and in the Boston community in order to build alliances and the skill sets to support such partnerships.

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[25] "Artivism" is a slang word used to describe activists who use art to share their message and express themselves creatively.

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Note:

Gabrielle Newton and I worked very closely together in exploring the history of the CGSA, processing the actions and decision-making processes of the CGSA and studying the ASSÉ and student movements in Quebec. I wrote this essay as part of a directed study with Dr. Diane Balser in collaboration with Gabrielle Newton entitled *A Comparative Analysis of Student Activism.* The following is the objective of this study, as set out by myself and Gabrielle Newton:

> "Our goal is to compare the effectiveness of student activism in various college settings in the 21st century. This study focuses on students' abilities to bring about the implementation of progressive, social justices on their campuses. Analyzing the conditions and circumstances under which successful student movements have occurred will provide a better understanding of the political, and social climate of BU that is necessary in cultivating a successful student-led campaign. The relationships between administration and students will be analyzed in order to understand the importance of communication and reciprocity amongst various levels of university actors… This directed study is our opportunity to intentionally record our experiences as student activists at BU and use what we learn from the readings to inform our work, and will serve as a useful tool for future student activism. With the current climate facing our university (with ongoing campaigns for social justice), we hope to inspire and encourage future generations of students to continue to find their voices through student activism by highlighting the achievements of such work throughout recent history."

Afterword

by Gloria Bonder

Reading this E-book, the second in the series produced by the Global Network of UNESCO Chairs on Gender and Edited with remarkable dedication and passion by Brenda Gael McSweeney, Co-Coordinator of the BU-based UNESCO/UNITWIN Network on Gender, Culture and Development, and her team has been a highly enriching experience on an intellectual, personal, and political level.

On the one hand, the broad set of cases compiled by this issue offers a comprehensive look at gender relations and the living conditions and participation of women in numerous different countries and social environments.

In addition to providing important descriptive information and specific analyses, however, this set of cases contributes to the development of a framework of a) key interpretations of the various complex factors that condition and reproduce situations of inequality, marginalization, and oppression; b) historical, social, political, and institutional determinants that have propelled advances toward gender equality and women's rights; and c) ever-present obstacles and risks for regression.

Likewise, this compilation pushes us to experience the power and creativity of the strategies of resistance and the experiences of those contributing to the production of the social, cultural, and institutional transformations that are giving form to the vision that has accompanied us since the inception of this movement: a society of justice, inclusion, and solidarity.

This volume, then, is a significant demonstration of the constant growth of the multidisciplinary field of gender studies that, recognizing the singularity of contexts and subjects, is constantly producing novel conceptualizations, methodologies, and strategies that traverse distinct realities.

Another innovative aspect of this book is its inclusion of different kinds of media--visual storytelling, a conference presentation, etc. --- that appeal to a diverse audience.

The participation of undergraduate student activists includes fresh perspectives that dialogue with the experiences and reflections of pioneers like Margaret "Peg" Snyder, Founding Director of the African Training and Research Center for Women and of UNIFEM, a foundational institutional that protects and promotes the expression of the needs, demands, and proposals of women and their organizations in the international and regional political arenas.

Many partners of the UNESCO/UNITWIN Network contributed to this volume, reinforcing the role played by the Global Network of UNESCO Chairs on Gender and presenting new challenges.

The interest and support of UNESCO, especially that of Saniye Gülser Corat, and the skills and commitment of the coordinators of the Chairs that make up this network, however, demonstrate that we will be able to face these challenges.

The following E-books in this series will focus on critical topics in the field of gender and ICT (Information and Communications Technology)/knowledge society, as well as female education and empowerment in Africa.

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