How to improve the research cultural environment

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Chapter II: All-hands-on-deck: organizational leadership and beyond

As the effectiveness of gender equality efforts depends greatly on genuine support and engagement from all stakeholders, this section covers the discussion on how to attain and sustain this support both inside and outside the scientific institutions. It refers to the GENERA “Engaging Leadership” Field of action“. Accordingly, the role of leadership in making gender equality a vital aspect of the research organization's policy and approach as well as the mechanisms for enhancing the leaders' responsibility for gender equality efforts are firstly discussed. Secondly, vital categories of stakeholders inside and outside research organizations are identified and the factors that influence their attitudes towards gender equality programmes are debated.

1. Leadership accountability

Establishing clear leadership and responsibility for organizational change are believed to be critical to the success of gender mainstreaming and the equality initiatives in the workplace (Rao, Kelleher 2005; Kalev et.al. 2006; Sturm 2006; European Commission 2012a; Bleijenbergh, Van Engen 2015; McClelland, Holland 2015; Wharton 2015; Graham at.al. 2017; Vinkenburg 2017). It is argued that “only an observable full commitment of an institution's governing body will guarantee the long-lasting effect of a gender policy since this proximity to 'power' prevents a gender policy from becoming just another policy paper, guaranteeing that the policy is actually carried out, is continuously tested against 'reality' and adapted to changing needs and challenges by implementing new measures” (European Commission 2012a: 27)[1]. As a consequence, establishing clear organizational responsibility for diversity, namely intervening into organizational structure, leads to considerable increases in managerial diversity and better effects from initiatives aimed at supporting the agency of individuals, such as diversity training and evaluations, networking, and mentoring (Kalev et.al. 2006; see also Bleijenbergh, Van Engen 2015).The need to win leaders hearts and minds, and overcome their attitudinal barriers to equality and diversity policies is therefore urgent, as it counteracts breeding “a 'compliance' mentality, of 'ticking the boxes', without necessarily generating any real commitment to change or any real understanding of why change is necessary or how to achieve it” (Lee, Faulkner, Alemany 2010: 93). It is argued that interventions - to be effective in promoting diversity in upward mobility systems - should assume active involvement of gatekeepers “as they are power holders and important “carriers” of the belief in meritocracy” (Vinkenburg 2017: 9; see also Bleijenbergh, Van Engen, & Vinkenburg, 2013)[2]. Including gatekeepers in the modeling process increases their commitment, facilitates implementation of interventions and supports the transformation of stakeholders into change agents. Moreover, gatekeepers as problem owners identify particular rather than universal barriers and opportunities// //to increasing diversity in their own context. Therefore, getting and keeping gatekeepers on board throughout the course of the intervention is a challenge,

but if successful, the impact is palpable" (Vinkenburg 2017: 14).

Leaders regulate discourse through formal and informal mechanisms and play a key role in establishing work climate perception (Dragoni 2005; Wharton 2015). Therefore, through their acceptance or denial of responsibility and their narratives about gender, work and family which are believed to be "a central ingredient in the broader system of practices that reproduce inequality" (Wharton 2015: 16), leaders can heavily influence change efforts in an organization. It has been demonstrated that leaders can deflect personal responsibility for change and deny gender inequality to be structural or systemic by emphasizing the choices made by others, mainly female employees (Wharton 2015) as well as by referring to meritocracy[3]. Similarly, some policies - including the work-family policies - may face resistance or indifference among key organizational gatekeepers, such as managers or supervisors. Meanwhile, workers who may want to use these policies avoid doing so, as they recognize that their employer's commitment is more symbolic than real (Blair-Loy and Wharton 2002: 816, Wharton 2015).To avoid such situations, training (up-skilling) of the decision makers, including organizational gatekeepers is vital. It is for example argued that "university leaders should as part of their mandatory overall management efforts hold leadership workshops for deans, department heads, search committee chairs, and other faculty with personnel management responsibilities that include an integrated component on diversity and strategies to overcome bias and gender schemas" (Committee on … 2006a: 7). These workshops should be integrated into the fabric of the management of universities and departments.

The inevitability of leadership training is also expressed in the conclusions of the project PROMETEA, which aimed at identifying common obstacles that inhibit the effective implementation of gender equality and diversity policies in engineering organizations. According to them organizations must get managers on board by not only winning them around to the policy objectives, they must also train them in the techniques or procedures needed to realise those objectives. "A major priority must be to improve line managers' ability to give their staff ongoing guidance and support in career management and development. (…) Explicit training is clearly needed in constructive approaches, to realise the full potential of all staff by building up rather than undermining confidence and horizons[4]. Managers might also be engaged in discussions about how to avoid penalising candidates in promotion rounds for taking periods of parental leave or for working reduced hours in order to care for family members" (Lee, Faulkner, Alemany 2010: 92).

In case of academia leadership, which is multilayered, the role of the departmental leader is identified as critical. Chairs influence many aspects of departmental life, including practices, policies, routines, relationships and dynamics. By doing so, they also shape faculty's satisfaction with their careers, colleagues, and work environment (Wharton 2015: 13). The results of the ADVANCE project revealed that although many departmental leaders were generally supportive of change towards gender equality, "they did not feel that large-scale organizational or structural correctives were needed, nor did change require significant actions on their part" (Wharton 2015: 15). This attitude, labelled as "passive responsibility" (McClelland, Holland 2015), combines outward support for change with ambivalence about the need to 'challeng[e] existing structures and stereotypes' and a belief that responsibility for change belongs to others rather than oneself" (Wharton 2015: 15; see also Bleijenbergh, Van Engen 2015).

2. Multi-actor engagement

Any change is challenging to achieve and subject of resistance as it threatens existing individual and organizational assumptions about power, role, status and control (: 90). It has been argued that multiple motives - including men's fear of losing even small relative advantages in workplace power

and income as well as perceived assault on dignity and masculinity - “can scuttle efforts at organizational change, even when top management is supporting such change” (Acker 2006: 455). In addition to individual fears of loss of current status as well instability, uncertainty and effects on individual time and workload, there are organizational sources of resistance to change, including “a conservative culture, fierce protection of current practices, and prevalence of disciplinary or territorial viewpoints” (Lane 2007: 85). As bureaucratic organizations of all types may resist change, academic institutions are perceived as especially resistant. They are characterized by conservatism in practice, goals, and culture and conservatism is believed to be especially prevalent in the scientific disciplines (Lane 2007: 86; see also Benschop and Brouns 2003).

Since the probability of resistance to change is high, any efforts to enhance the position of women in science - as in any occupations traditionally dominated by men—requires awareness of and support for gender equality and diversity across the whole organization (Lee, Faulkner, Alemany 2010: 96).The lack of the involvement of all the actors inside the organization early in the process was identified as seriously limiting its' results (EIGE 2015 , 2016; see also EC 2009). Moreover, successful efforts appear to have combined active support from insiders with the actors from outside the organization (Acker 2006: 455).

Involvement of different categories of stakeholders both inside and outside the institution to initiatives promoting gender equality has multiple advantages. It not only reduces resistance to change, but also “creates a feeling of ownership for gender equality actions implementation, allows the combination of different expertise and types of knowledge, guarantees that tasks and responsibilities are shared, allows for reaching different organizational and/or disciplinary staff and departments, increases the commitment and potential impact of gender equality measures, helps achieve sustainable changes institution wide and ensures that the process is more transparent inside and outside the institution” (EIGE 2016: n. p.).

It is argued that to 'make the case' for gender equality and diversity policies at least three steps are necessary. Firstly, “people have to be persuaded that there is indeed inequality” (Lee, Faulkner, Alemany 2010: 94). The point is to encourage open and not trivialising discussions about gender, mainly by providing hard data on retention, attrition and career inequalities to demonstrate the extent of gender imbalances at all levels of the organization[5)]. Secondly, “people have to be persuaded that there are good reasons for seeking to change the situation revealed by the data” (Lee, Faulkner, Alemany 2010: 95), as gender imbalances in retention and progression are not exclusively the result of individual choices or gender differences in ability and inclination. Thirdly, “people need to be persuaded of the case for specific gender equality and diversity policies” (Lee, Faulkner, Alemany 2010: 95). This demands raising awareness of how staff members individually, or the wider organization, contribute to enhancing or inhibiting gender equality and highlighting the benefits of specific policy objectives, which often extend beyond gender change (Lee, Faulkner, Alemany 2010: 93)[6)]. As far as the stakeholders inside the institution are concerned it is additionally argued that willingness of those of them who have never been exposed to issues related to gender or gender issues in science and technology is critical to acquire (McGregor, Bazi 2001: 24).

In this context it is worth discussing participatory modelling, which a method of institutional intervention which supports stakeholders in tackling an organizational issue. Bleijenbergh and Van Engen (2015) reported on the results of participatory modelling used to support gender equality in two Dutch universities. With the participation of researchers stakeholders were able not only to reach a shared problem understanding and analysis of gender inequality, but also to identify and implement tailored interventions. The involvement of both researchers and stakeholders in the modelling process allowed for integrating professional knowledge on gender inequality in academia with the day-to-day knowledge of organizational stakeholders. Building causal loop diagrams together helped to identify self-reinforcing and interrelated feedback processes - including masculinity of norms, visibility of

women and networking of women - which explain gender inequality in organisations. Understanding how these different feedback processes are interrelated helped stakeholders to identify possible interventions to support gender equality. Moreover, including organisational stakeholders in the modelling process increased their commitment to the results and responsibility for gender equality, as well as facilitated implementation of interventions, as “in both universities the boards were quick to accept the outcomes and recommendations, and started developing interventions soon after the projects were rounded off” (Bleijenbergh and Van Engen 2015: 434).

Among the stakeholders outside the institution the role of professional societies and higher education organizations, research founding agencies and governmental institutions is discussed. Professional societies are believed to “have a responsibility to play a leading role in promoting equal treatment of women and men and to demonstrate a commitment to it in their practices” (Committee on … 2006a: 9). More specifically, the role of scientific and professional societies is at least fivefold. Firstly, they should “serve in helping to set professional and equity standards, collect and disseminate field-wide education and workforce data, and provide professional development training for members that includes a component on bias in evaluation” (Committee on … 2006a: 9). Secondly, they are supposed to “develop and enforce guidelines to ensure that keynote and other invited speakers at society-sponsored events reflect the diverse membership of the society” (Committee on … 2006a: 9). Thirdly, professional societies should “ensure reasonable representation of women on editorial boards and in other significant leadership positions” (Committee on … 2006a: 9). Fourthly, they must “work to ensure that women are recognized for their contributions to the nation's scientific and engineering enterprise through nominations for awards and leadership positions” (Committee on … 2006a: 9). Last but not least, they should “provide child-care and elder-care grants or subsidies so that their members can attend work-related conferences and meetings”. (Committee on … 2006a: 10). A specific role in enhancing gender equality and addressing the issue of gender dimension of knowledge is attributed to women's professional science associations. They are argued to play an important role in articulating the views of women concerning issues of science, acting as fora that highlight the special concern of female perspectives, and women's role in the development of science (McGregor, Bazi 2001: 60).

As far as higher education organizations are concerned, it is advised that they could together form an inter-institution monitoring organization, which would “act as an intermediary between academic institutions and federal agencies in recommending norms and measures, in collecting data, and in cross-institution tracking of compliance and accountability” (Committee on … 2006a: 9).

The role of all research funding agencies would be to:

- provide workshops to minimize gender bias
- collect, store, and publish composite information on demographics, field, award type and budget request, review score, and funding outcome for all funding applications
- make it possible to use grant money for dependent care expenses necessary to engage in off-site or after-hours research-related activities or to attend work-related conferences and meetings
- create additional funding mechanisms to provide for interim technical or administrative support during a leave of absence related to caregiving
- establish policies for extending grant support for researchers who take a leave of absence due to caregiving responsibilities
- expand support for research on the efficacy of organizational programs designed to reduce gender bias, and for research on bias, prejudice, and stereotype threat, and the role of leadership in achieving gender equity” (Committee on … 2006a: 10-11).

Finally, the role of governmental agencies would be to:

- move to enforce the national anti-discrimination laws at universities and other higher education institutions through regular compliance reviews and prompt and thorough investigation of discrimination complaints
- evaluate whether universities have engaged in any of the types of discrimination banned under the anti-discrimination laws, including: intentional discrimination, sexual harassment, retaliation, disparate impact discrimination, and failure to maintain required policies and procedures
- encourage and provide technical assistance on how to achieve diversity in university programs and employment. Possible activities include providing technical assistance to educational institutions to help them to comply with the anti-discrimination laws, creating a clearinghouse for dissemination of strategies that have been proven effective, and providing awards and recognition for model university programs (Committee on … 2006a: 11-12).

3. Recommendations and good practices

This subsection summarizes main recommendations how to attain and sustain this support both inside and outside the scientific institutions. Where possible, examples of good practices utilizing these recommendations are added.

According to the results of the literature review to improve **leadership accountability** for gender equality policies it is necessary to:

- incorporate training on diversity and gender bias into mandatory leadership workshops for staff/faculty with personnel management responsibilities (Committee on … 2006a; see also Science Europe 2017).
- identify and overcome “passive responsibility” of the departmental leaders (McClelland, Holland 2015;Wharton 2015)
- improve managers' ability to give their staff ongoing guidance and support in career management and development (Lee, Faulkner, Alemany 2010)
- sensitize managers to the problem of penalising candidates in promotion rounds for taking periods of parental leave or for working reduced hours in order to care for family members (Lee, Faulkner, Alemany 2010).

Examples of good practices include:

**Lund University (Sweden). ** AKKA - a leadership program with an integrated gender perspective has been established in order to ensure training about gender equality issues to all individuals in leading positions. The program is based on an assumption that academic leaders are gender eguality change leaders in academia (Widén 2011).

**University of Duisburg-Essen (Germany). ** It has a vice-rector for diversity management — the first post of its kind at a German university (Mühlenbruch, Jochimsen 2013).

**CNRS (France). ** The CNRS fostered an establishment of Steering Committee for Gender Equality, ensuring commitment and support from the top-level decision-makers; using top-down power (e.g. by asking the President to invite CNRS decision-makers to INTEGER activities; by asking the CNRS Institute directors to contact their Lab directors); a promotion video, featuring a commitment message from the CNRS President, and showcasing the INTEGER project, was released nationally through various means, including via the weekly CNRS e-newsletter received by all staff working in CNRS joint laboratories (Pépin et al. 2014).

**University of Washington (USA). ** It has professional development programmes (looking at evaluation bias and mitigating impact) for university administrators, including department chairs (European Commission 2012a).

To raise **engagement of all stakeholders** in the gender equality policies it is necessary to:

- recognize and manage the sites and sources - both individual and organizational - of resistance to change (Lane 2007)
- involve all the actors inside the organization early in the process (EIGE 2015, 2016; EC 2009)
- raise awareness of all the actors about 1. the extent of inequalities in the organization (by using hard data), 2. the reasons for seeking to change this situation and benefits of policy objectives, and 3. the mechanisms of fostering and inhibiting gender equality (Faulkner, Alemany 2010)
- recognize the roles of the stakeholders outside the organization, mainly including: setting standards of gender equality (governmental bodies and professional societies), encouraging, assisting and evaluating the process of implementing gender equality policies by organizations (governmental bodies and professional societies), improving visibility of female researchers (professional societies), financially supporting scientists with care-giving responsibilities (research funding organizations and professional organizations)(Committee on ... 2006a).

Examples of good practices include:

**CNRS (France): ** creation of implementation teams and working groups to best tackle the issue of researchers' recruitment, promotion and rewards procedures and practices, including STRIDE-like Committee (comprising: the Chairs of the different standing peer-review evaluation panels of the "*Comité National*", Deputy Scientific Directors of all CNRS Divisions, HR Officers, senior women researchers and gender experts; proposing concrete measures to improve gender equality and gender balance in the recruitment, promotion and scientific recognition of researchers) and teams including women and men, junior and senior researchers, both CNRS researchers and university faculty; participatory approaches (e.g. through workshops and seminars); creation of ownership (e.g. by undertaking actions proposed by teams); developing peer-to-peer learning by involving external scientific leaders as Ambassadors or representatives of mentoring peer institutions to foster buy-in among researchers. (Pépin et al. 2014)

**The Trinity College Dublin (Ireland): ** expert advice was sought, and availed of, both as an input to the T-GAPs and, via the engagement of guest speakers, as a means of informing the university population and securing buy-in for institutional transformation; The College Implementation Team is responsible for implementing College-wide T-GAPs at an institutional level and making recommendations to College governance. In addition, it provides an essential forum to which matters arising at the School teams which have wider institutional implications, can be referred to and via which they may be addressed. (Pépin et al. 2014)

**Swiss Federal Equal Opportunity at Universities Program (Switzerland). ** For the years 2013-16, the Swiss federal government has dedicated CHF 10 million for the universities' gender equality actions. The goal of the federal program is 25% women professors at Swiss universities, with 40% at the level of assistant professorships, as well as an increased proportion of women in academic leadership positions at universities and related institutions. The federal government provides funding for gender equality actions on the basis of the universities' individual action plans, which must address the issue of gender equality on a structural level in all key areas of activity: teaching, research and community service. (Lipinsky 2014; https://www.gleichstellung.uzh.ch/en/politik/aktionsplan2013/bundesprogramm.html)

**Greek Association of University Women (EL.E.GY.P.) (Greece). ** EL.E.G Y.P. is a non-profit scientific

organisation founded in 2008 with the aim to improve the position and status of women in academic institutions of Greece and to promote their scientific work and social contribution. The ELEGYP holds every year a series of events about women in academia. Between 2013 and 2015, ELEGYP implemented an action programme for the “Promotion of a gender perspective and combating gender discrimination in universities” co-financed by the Ministry of Interior. Within the framework of this action programme, many events took place in cooperation and co-organisation with other Greek universities in order to promote the integration of a gender perspective in Greek universities. (http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/gear/legislative-policy-backgrounds/greece)

**Association of Hungarian Women in Science (Hungary). ** An association with the objectives of: increasing the ratio, representation and decision-making role of women in scientific research and innovation; analyzing the background and conditions of gender equality in the area of research, technology and innovation; supporting the scientific/technical career of women; awareness raising and changing of public opinion/attitude; contributing to increase the number of the new generation of researchers and engineers; raising the support of women's scientific career to national program level. (http://epws.org/interview-of-the-month-association-of-hungarian-women-in-science-012016/)

**The TOTAL E-QUALITY Award (Germany). ** It has been established by the association TOTAL E-QUALITY Deutschland e.V. (since 1996). The association comprises of several German companies, trade unions employers' associations, selected federal ministries and agencies as well as educational organizations. The award is presented to organizations from the private sector, science and administration and associations with a minimum of 15 employees that successfully implement gender equality in their personnel and organization policies. It comprises a certificate and an achievement award for sustainability, in combination with the TOTAL E-QUALITY logo, which can be used by the organizations in all internal and external relations for presentation and image cultivation. Certificates are awarded once a year (https://www.total-e-quality.de/en/).

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1)
A study based on a sample of 81 large, publicly traded companies in the USA revealed that the hierarchical rank of the individual certifying the company’s required, confidential federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) report – rather than the presence of an HR executive on the top management team – translate into enhanced gender diversity in management (Graham at.al. 2017).
2)
The remaing specifications for effective systemic diversity interventions include optimizing decision making and mitigating bias. Engaging gatekeepers and optimizing decizion making through mitigating bias are these kinds of interventions that are especially sutiable for upward mobility career systems with their fixed steps or routes and formal promotion criteria—such as in academia (Vinkenburg 2017).
3)
Therefore it is essential to change the narratives about gender inequalities in science as a result of private choices of women and to acknowledge it is a public issue and the result of multiply responsibilities and factors including structural, legal/institutional and cultural ones.
4)
However the results of a number of analyses suggest that the effects of diversity training on bias and stereotypes are weak or even counterproductive by generating backlash (comp. Kalev et.al. 2006; see also: Kalinoski et.al. 2013). Kalev et.al. (2006) argue that the effects of training on equality are better when organizations establish responsibility for diversity by assigning responsibility for diversity goals to a specific office, person, or group
5)
In this context it is worth to cite the study which revealed that discussing in a high school physics

class the underrepresentation of women in science may lead to an increase in physics identity for female students (Lock, Hazari 2016).
6)

For example, the case for flexible work practices typically points to the benefits for employees of a better work-life balance, and for employers of a healthier and more efficient workforce.

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