

Abstract

The present paper consists of a statistical analysis of the situation of women in academia in Poland. It will bring to completion a first training paper published in the framework of the Women in European Universities Network¹. That first paper aimed to present an overview of the Polish education system by focusing on current mutations (marketisation, financial reform,...) and career track. The paper stressed the following main facts: that the private sector is becoming more and more important, that the increase in the number of students was not followed by a similar increase in the number of academic staff, that Polish academia is, on a European scale, quite feminised, but that women are rare in the top-ranking positions. Moreover, the economic transformation led to a drop in the living standards of academic staff, whereas at the same time there appeared new opportunities in the private sector. The brain drain from the public to the private sector was mostly a male affair. So one could also analyse the above-mentioned feminisation from a very pessimistic perspective - according to Renata Siemieńska (2000), women should be regarded as "winners among losers".

In this second training paper we will analyse the current situation of women in academia and the evolution of the proportion of women among students and professors since the 70's. This study presents figures at the national and institutional level and is mainly based on data collected by the Central Office of Statistics (GUS). Our aim is to clarify the impact of recent transformations on the situation of women in academia, and above all to enlighten the mechanism of the glass ceiling.

This part of the research in progress allows us to sort higher education institutions according to the proportion of women among professors, and the feminisation process in general. These proportions could be regarded as indications of best and worse practices and thus help us to define a sample for the forthcoming case studies². Besides that, on the basis of problems we faced in collecting and analysing the data, we will propose some recommendations aiming at improving the gender sensitivity of Polish data.

All the results presented in this paper must be regarded as hypotheses that will be subject to further analysis through a questionnaire survey and case studies. The paper is divided into four parts. The first deals with the quality of data available, the second proposes an overview of the women's situation in studentship, the third part will be dedicated to an analysis of the body of professors

¹ Portet, S, 2001, "Women in HEI in Poland: the hidden face of the feminisation process", training paper, WEU Network, Munster.

² Of course, the difference in terms of female share among professors is partly due to the type of discipline one can find in a given university and such a bias will be taken in account in this paper.

and the last part to the verification of common hypotheses concerning the structural determination of feminisation in academia.