

***Christian Poulsen:***

*Questionnaire on Work Conditions for Full Professors in Europe: The Swedish Case*

*AND*

***Christian Poulsen and  
Juan Martín Fernández:***

*Professors talk on Prestige: The Case of  
Sweden and Spain*

***TP 03/06***

### **About the Project**

The normative concept of gender equity which exists in European societies is contrasted by a reality in which women in top-level positions are by no means a common occurrence.

Against this background, the European Research Training Network Women in European Universities, funded by the European Commission, is a joint research project of partners in seven European countries.

Its scientific programme aims at assessing the professional status of women in academia and at analysing the reasons for the under-representation in positions of authority in European Universities.

The network structure includes regular conferences and meetings to provide a forum to present outcomes, exchange knowledge and to discuss about research planning as well as findings and outcomes.

The **Training Paper Series** are essays authored by the doctoral students of the project in every research phase. They give an introduction to the research topic and an overview of the findings in the research country of the doctoral student.



***Abstract***

The study is set up as an enquiry of working conditions for full professors in Sweden. A web-based questionnaire was sent out to all full professors in a range of scientific fields. Using Internet as a media for the enquiry was experienced as an interesting method with its pros and contras. On one hand the cost of the enquiry was very low and the results were easy to compute but on the other hand it resulted in a very low response rate.

As the response rate is under standards it is not possible to abstract any findings from the study.

During the process of handling the response some good ideas for future research was gathered. A working hypothesis would be that women are less likely to be married when they occupy a professor's chair than men. When they are married they are more likely to be married to a PhD than men are.

Not to be cited

The low response rate does not allow for any generalisation.

If interested in reliable data, please contact the author.

***List of content***

Abstract.....	1
List of content.....	2
State of the art .....	4
Methodology .....	7
Presentation of results .....	9
Administrative power and visible appointments.....	15
Financial situation .....	17
Questions on family.....	19
Personal statistics.....	23
A special hypothesis .....	24
Conclusions.....	25
Literature.....	27

## ***Introduction***

Under the work with FGII, the statistical profile of women's situation among staff in European Universities, one of the major conclusions was the lack of public available statistics on working conditions for superior staff in higher education institutions. As Women in European Universities is both a training and a research network the undertaking of an enquiry among full professors would both give the participants training and provide some of the missing information on working conditions. The current paper is a first result of these efforts.

In the process of working with FGI, the literature review of higher education and gender in the respective countries, some hypothesis showed interesting for further exploration. A very popular hypothesis among scholars who treat the issue of the low representation of women among full professors is that women's representation among full professors is a result of the "leaking pipe line" that combining family and work means for women's careers. By constructing some indicators it can be tested whether having children are considered a hinder for a university career for women.

Nevertheless the current paper also constructs an alternative explanation to this rather over rated explanation. As explained in Poulsen and Martín (2003) the difficult task of combining family and work cannot alone explain the low percentage of women among full professors in either of the participating countries. We have thus developed the hypothesis that the perception of prestige can influence the careers of academics and this paper sets out to give a preliminary understanding of this possible relationship. Some of the questions related to prestige are only present in the Swedish version of the questionnaire. This is explained by the special interest I have in prestige and the perception of it and the extra material will be fully explored in my dissertation<sup>1</sup>.

The outline of this paper is very simple: The results of the questionnaire will be presented by a simple count from each question. Whenever relevant the results will also be split in a female and male section of answers. At the end a few simple hypothesis will be tested by regression analysis.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Poulsen, forthcoming

---

***State of the art***

The following is a compilation of the empiric work (quantitatively and qualitatively) on academia and career chances with a special emphasis on gender. The list is elaborated of reports on women and equal opportunities in Sweden during the last decade most of them relying on statistics or quantitative methods <sup>2</sup>. For studies based on qualitative approaches I will ask the reader to consult FG IV Poulsen and Martín (unpublished), and Schenk (2001 and 2002).

**State level:**

- The National Agency for Higher Education (Högskoleverket) has in their affinity to live up to their responsibility of supervising universities and university colleges, to evaluate examination decrees and the development of higher education in Sweden and Europe, undertaken some interesting studies on women and academe. These are: “Karriär genom befordran och rekrytering” (2001), “Goda exempel hur universitet och högskolor kan arbeta med jämställdhet, studieinflytande samt social och etnisk mångfald” (2000), “Genus och jämställdhet. En utvärdering av JÄST-projektet 1993/1994-1996/1997” (2000) by Lisbeth Lewander and Birgitta Jordansson. All are published by Högskoleverket and printed in Sweden.
- Moreover the ministry of Education and Science (Utbildningsdepartementet) has published “Värderingar av kvinnors respektive mäns meriter vid tjänstetillsättning inom universitet och högskolor” (1996) by Ulla Riis and Leif Lindberg. The study is to my knowledge the largest investigation undertaken of its kind in Sweden. It investigates how many publications women and men have when they apply for a position in the higher education sector and how their success rate is.
- The Council for Planning and Co-ordination of research (Forskningsrådsnämnden) published the often cited ”Varför beviljas så få kvinnor forskningsbidrag” (1993) by Anita Nyberg#.
- Finally, the National Office for Gender Studies (Nationella sekretariatet för genusforskning) published the sugesting title ”Jämställdhetens villkor – Politiska intentioners möte med den akademiska världen: Exemplet ”Thamprofessorerna””,<sup>1</sup>, (1999). Carl Tham was a minister of Education who tried to increase the number of women full professors by creating special funds for professorships reserved for women. This politic met considerable resistance among the academic community. Although the report does not use own data it is included in this section because of its central place in the Swedish debate. The report is written as an evaluation of the

---

<sup>2</sup> The list was elaborated from data Anett Schenk kindly supplied.

---

---

professorships (and the other Tham-positions) that were given to strengthen the position of women and of that of gender studies.

### **Studies taken place at universities:**

- **Halmstad University College:** Ulla Johansson (FD) were during 2000-2002 undertaking a study called "Kvinnor I akademien". Departing from an international symposium by the Academy of Management in Toronto 2002 the group of study discuss women's working condition with a gender angle.

- **Royal Technical College:** Mai-Britt Hanström is leading a project called "Rekrytering av kvinnor till forskarutbildning och akademisk karriär", that deals with how doctoral students are recruited at Royal Technical College and SU. The project resulted in a publication, *Kvinnor och män, lika möjligheter till forskning? Rapport från KTH's jämställdhetskomité*, Stockholm (2000), which explores the obstacles women face to make an academic career. Currently the KTH is setting up a training and research network with similar conditions as Women in European Universities.

- Mai-Britt Hanström also completed another study "Kvinnliga teknologie och filosofie doktorers karriärmönster", on obstacles for women on the further career from dissertation and forward.

- **Lund University:** Karin Jonnergård is 1997-2000 following 12 female doctoral students over a period of time to see which strategies they use to get integrated into male dominated settings, in the project "Kvinnliga immigrationsstrategier – om samspelet mellan kvinnors karriärstrategier och institutionella förutsättningar inom universitetsvärlden".

- Of considerable interest to gender researchers is also the series of studies on gender and gender equality at the sociological departments of Swedish universities. The series is called *Jämställdhets- och genusperspektiv vid ...* and includes a questionnaire study at each department. The series is published as Research Reports 1998: 8, 9, 10, 12, 13 by the Department of Sociology, Lund University.

- **Stockholm University:** Ylva Elwin-Nowak was 1991-1994 leading the project "Kvinnor I matematiken. Et trevligt inslag på lika villkor" that resulted in a book with the same title by Jacobsson, C and Elwin-Nowak, Y, Högskolans Grundutbildningsråds skriftserie, nr. 14 (1994). A questionnaire and interview-study was conducted to explore the difficulties for women at a faculty of mathematics. The results of the study lead to changes in the study plan at the faculty.

- **Umeå University:** Sylvia Benckert runs a project from 1993-2000 with the title "Kvinnliga fysiker och kemister 1900-1989", where she maps the number of women in physics and chemistry in the last decade.

- **Uppsala University:** Martha Blomqvist (1998-1999) “The participation of women researchers in the TMR programme of the European Commission”. The project examines the part played by female researchers in the Training and Mobility of Researchers (TMR) programme, particularly in connection with research training grants (the Marie Curie Grant Scheme). Information was gained through statistical data and personal interviews covering all countries participating in the programme. The report provides an overview of the representation of women in TMR applications and success rates. It presents data on the representation of women in the participating countries at different levels and within disciplines and discusses the impact of partnering and parenting on the ability to exercise mobility and progress in research careers. Based on fellow suggestions strategies, to promote the representation of women in research, are identified.

- Fredrik Bondestam who worked on an evaluation of positive discrimination had previously published *Mentorn – en hjälpande hand för kvinnor i karriären?* (1996) Uppsala, Psykologiska Institutionen, Uppsala Universitet. The later dealt with mentorship as a possible way of helping women in their academic career.

- **Göteborg University:** An interesting project that is currently going in Gothenburg is “Kvinnliga studenters föreställningar om forskarutbildningen och forskning som yrke. En komparativ studie av Litauen, Mexico och Sverige”, lead by Inga Wernersson. The aim of the study is to study the Swedish situation of gender inequality by comparing it to a university in Kaunas, Lithuania and the UNAM university of Mexico. The basic element of comparison is the image undergraduate and doctoral female students have of graduate studies and of research as an occupation.

It is convenient to close the state of the art factors with a link to the broadest data base on works on gender studies in Sweden: the Kvinnsam data base. The database is accessible on <http://www.libris.kb.se/kvinnsam.html> and is edited at the University of Gothenburg.



### ***Development of the questionnaire***<sup>3</sup>

The questionnaire was developed centrally in Muenster and no crucial changes have been made. A pilot-questionnaire was constructed in Warsaw by the doctoral students but did not play any role in the construction of the so-called final version adopted by the coordinators in Muenster. In order to increase the value of cross-country comparisons no fundamental changes were made in the version sent out by Muenster. There has only been corrections of grammar, language, spelling and evident incoherencies.

The core issues of the questionnaire were decided centrally in Muenster. Apparently the core issues were social background of the respondents, perception of discrimination in academia and working conditions.

### ***Methodology***

#### **The web-based enquiry:**

In doing an enquiry many factors would have to be taken into consideration in the way about of the sending of the questionnaire. These reasons could be costs, researcher control, interviewer bias, response rate and intimacy of the respondents<sup>4</sup>.

In June 2002 a small pilot study of the questionnaire was run on 6 professors at Handelshögskolan i Stockholm. With the pilot there was a possibility of testing the preliminary questions and testing the software of Luvit e-val. Similar pilot studies were taken out in the other participating countries (Poland, Germany, Austria, Spain and France) and the short comes and inconveniences of the questionnaire were reported back to the co-ordination unit in Muenster.

The questionnaire was sent out late summer 2002 to the total population of full professors in a range of disciplines selected centrally from the co-ordination centre of WEU. After a process of clearing the sample where promoted professors and emeritus professors were withdrawn the total population amounted to 877 full professors. As of today when three reminders have been sent out in a time span of 5

---

<sup>3</sup> The following passage summarises the personal opinion of the doctoral student and network participant Christian Poulsen.

<sup>4</sup> See for instance Herbert Hyman (1963), pp. 29-39 or Neuman (1991).

---

months, 270 professors have answered, which make up an answer quota of 30,8 %. The fact that no sampling at all was done, but the questionnaire was sent out to the total population, is evidently an advantage. Despite the good press random and other samplings are surrounded with, we would logically reason that non-sampling comes second to none.

The professors received an e-mail inviting them to answer the questions on a homepage provided by Luvit E-val. The E-val service provides requisites for the elaboration of the questionnaire, distribution of e-mail related to the questionnaire and simple analytical tools. For a thorough analysis the answers should, however, be exported to an SPSS-programme.

There are 2 purposes of the 220 questions long questionnaire: 1) Questions are included that should provide evidence of working conditions in European Universities as specified in the WEU goals 2) Questions are included to enable an analysis on how prestige is understood and how prestige and merit is distributed in academia. As a matter of example, in one question the respondents are asked to name the most prestigious professors in their faculty.

Choosing an e-mailed based questionnaire is foremost a response to a lack of economic resources. This type of enquiry is very cheap when it comes to sending the questionnaire and an appropriate number of reminders. The researchers time invested in it is however, as this process has demonstrated, at least at level with a real mail delivered enquiry. What was furthermore appealing to the method was that it represented a novelty and a fine way to learn more about different survey methodology. Arguably an e-mail based enquiry would be able to reach does mobile professors who would not be at their desk.

There is however a series of disadvantages to the e-mail based survey. As the process enlightened different computer networks and software will react differently to the e-mail received. A handful of people answered back that they were not able to open the referred web page with the survey. Presumably more professors would not be able to open the page but would not bother to report back. Half a dozen of people reported that once inside the page, they filled it in, but were not able to submit the response. These two examples show that the web based inquiry demands extra technical ability of the researcher.

The low response rate is very worrying for the generalisation of this enquiry because as Kalton (1983) puts it: "The cause of concern about non-response is the risk that non-respondents will differ from respondents with regards to the survey variables, in which case the survey estimates based on the respondents alone will

---

be biased estimates of the overall population parameters”<sup>5</sup>. There are some methods available to estimate the bias involved, nevertheless these methods and tests does never make it up for a good response rate.

### **Non-respondents test:**

As we mentioned before we have gathered the names of the professors from the Sveriges Statskalender. This publication also contains data about the year the professors were born and when they became a professor. The publication also contains all the names the professors might have so it is fairly reliable to construct an index of the number of women in the population. With these three data we are able to make equally three comparisons of the results of the respondents and the Statskalender information of the total population. Such control has been done overtly and finds there is no great difference between the two groups. The percentage of women respondents were 14 %.

### ***Presentation of results***

The results will be presented by a basic counting with comments and at the end I will present a few core hypotheses. During the basic counting I will use a comparative approach with male and female professors. For a thorough presentation of important hypotheses imbedded in the questionnaire and follow up studies please consult Poulsen (forthcoming). For the hypothesis a regression analysis was done in the SPSS programme.

The first ten questions in the survey measure the importance of a series of reasons for the respondent to choose an academic career, when they first started. The respondents could answer on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates that the respondents attach low value to the reason and 5, high. The results could be summarized in the following scheme, where the variables are ordered in accordance to importance:

---

<sup>5</sup> See Kalton (1983), p.63.

---

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
To follow specific interest	4,39	0,89
To be autonomous in work	3,96	1,10
Professional advancement	3,22	1,14
To do a socially meaningful job	3,19	1,19
To teach	2,81	1,08
Prestigious job	2,72	1,13
Enable to combine family and work	2,50	1,28
Job security	2,27	1,16
Financial reasons	1,86	0,94
Source: authors SPSS elaboration	Valid N	251

It appears that the only variable with a mean over 4 is “to follow specific interest”, which is also the variable with the smallest deviation in responses. However as the variable has little explanatory value and it is more interesting to observe that autonomous is rated as high as an average of almost 4. Maybe it is also interesting to see that teaching is number 5 in the list of importance, perhaps one would have guessed it to be lower. The mean for the question whether the choice of picking such a career was a matter of taking what was offered was 2,78 with a standard deviation as large as 1,43. As much as 17 % of the respondents (valid N=264) indicated that this was very much so the case and 26,3% opted for the other extreme that this was not at all the case.

The next scheme is for the same variables (except teaching), but for what the respondents think of for their reasons to continue in academia with the results in hand:

Variable	Mean	Std dev
Job security	4,30	0,90
To be autonomous in work	4,16	0,91
To follow specific interest	4,12	0,87
Prestigious job	4,00	0,91
To do a socially meaningful job	3,79	1,01
To have satisfactory income	3,65	1,02
To advance professionally	3,63	1,13
Be able to combine family and work	3,55	1,09
Source: Own SPSS elaboration as all other figures and tables	Valid N list wise	254

A real comparison of their current situation and how they rated things when thinking back on their start of their academic career is of course difficult as teaching is not in the second table and because some of the variables are formulated differently. Nevertheless it surprises us to see “job security” go from a second last position when they think back to a clear first position now. To have a prestigious job also seem more important to them at this state than it was when they first choose the career. On average they seem very satisfied with their situation today, thus no variable has a value lower than the middle value, 3.

The respondents are also asked if there are any other things that their current situation enables or disables them to do. 32 people answer this question, and significantly 8/32 explicitly responds that they have too much administrative work.

The mean year for taking a first M.A was 1971. Only 107/270 answered that they did take a second degree.

Only 94/259 (36,3 %) took their first degree where they work now, 124 (47,9 %) in another national university and 41 (15,8 %) at a foreign university.

A large majority immediately started their work on the PhD after taking their M.A. (179/246 or 72,8 %). 26 (10,6 %) started another career within a university/research institute while 41 (16,6 %) started another career outside academia.

The respondents answered that they on average took their PhD in the year 1979. A very crude measure for the length of the PhD study and the passing of this career step would then be to subtract the average for finishing M.A. from that of PhD (1979 – 1971) and we would appreciate the average length of the PhD study and

the passing of this career step to 8 years. Very few people took a second PhD (38/270).

Slightly more people took their first PhD at their current university (114/260 or 43,8 %) compared to those who took their first M.A. where they now work. Some 106 (40,8 %) took their PhD at another national university and 40 (15,4 %) at a foreign university. These are indicators that mobility affects a large majority of academics in our population. It is rather revealing that only 17 persons did not finance their career step from PhD to full professorship by employment at a university or research institute. The large majority, 167 persons (63,5 %), were only covered by their employment in academia.

The following scheme explains the duration of the career of the respondents and their mobility:

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.
Number of worked years	26,89	8,68
Number of years employed at current university	17,54	10,89
Since when employed home	Ca.1984	Ca. 11
Different institutions from M.A to PhD	1,87	1,19
..after finishing PhD and first professorship	2,41	2,38
...since first professorship	1,72	1,17

Almost 27 years have the respondents worked on average, but the standard deviation is almost 9 years and this speaks of the respondents being of very unequal seniority. They have on average worked far more than half of the worked years at their current university and the other indicators also show that the respondents has not had a very large mobility throughout their career. The point in their career when they apparently moved the most was between finishing the PhD and their first professorship.

A whole 185/263 (70,3 %) has not had any interruptions in their academic career. Interruptions were understood as periods of 3 months or longer. The reminder had an average of 1,59 interruptions (std deviation 0,90). More than half of the people who had any interruption just had the one. It seems like it is either you take it or you leave it for the respondents. The reasons for the interruptions were multiple. The most frequent cause of interruption was child rearing, 24 of a total of 77 used that as an explanation for the interruption of their career. 19 wanted to look for something more interesting and 10 did it because of financial reasons. Finally some 15 persons alleged “other” reasons to explain their break-of.

A total of 103/249 (41,4 %) explained that their direct supervisor in their institution helped them in their career. An equal number (98) said their colleagues helped them at some point in their career.

113 helped Males go abroad and 22 helped women go abroad. Furthermore 116 helped males obtain research grants or stipends, 39 helped females obtain grants, 127 helped males write articles and 71 helped females write articles. Also 89 helped a male get a position and 26 helped women get a position.

These figures reveal that most frequent kind of help of the mentioned was the one of assisting in writing an article. In all cases a man was more often helped than a woman. However this explains little and does not unequivocally speak of discrimination. Presently there are more male than women the professors could help among the academic staff or doctoral students and if we go back some years the mass of male colleagues was even bigger.

How does academics become full professors then? One way to find out is to ask them what factors contributed. In this question a “fence” is introduced to prevent people from answering “their skill”. The results are summed up in this table:

Contributing factor	Score	Share of valid in %
Earlier corporation with faculty members of your current university	61	33,2 (61/184)
Other personal contacts	42	22,8
Programmes promoting women (gender parity)	4	2,2
New openings because of expansion of higher education	65	35,3
Your formal or informal position in the non-academic world	49	26,6
Other	32	17,4

Of the respondents who chose to indicate others many insisted that it was their skills (14/45) that did it for them or that it was their network that helped them (7/45). The above scheme show to us that the expansion of higher education helped quite a lot of people to their current post as full professors. Almost a third of the responses indicated that earlier corporation with faculty members had helped them to get the post.

On average the professors applied 1,80 (std. Deviation 1,17) times for their first appointment as a full professor. More than half (132/242) applied only once before they got an appointment. For a comparison the mean for women (N=32) was 1,78.

So that is, women apply virtually the same amount of times as men before they get their position in our population.

The respondents had the following means in publishing:

Type of publication	Mean	Std Dev
Book authored	0,72	1,25
Book edited	0,68	1,44
Articles	7,87	22,34
Research reports	6,09	18,60
Newspaper article	3,63	6,27
Book authored abroad	0,46	0,85
Book edited abroad	0,56	0,94
Articles abroad	19,02	38,54
Research reports abroad	3,19	7,59
N, list wise=114		

The most interesting publication seems to be articles published in Sweden or abroad, where N is 191 and 236 respectively. The mean values for women are 6,5 (N=27) and 6,9 (N=32). It seems thus that it is quite close to the general mean in the case of national articles and very much inferior in the case of articles abroad. The extreme value of articles abroad is 300. This figure has been accepted although it is suspiciously high.

The mean of women for books authored is 0,7 (N=20) and for books authored abroad 0,3 (N=17). Again in the first case the figures are similar and in the second women are behind the general pattern.

There a similar pattern to the way funding of research projects is distributed as we see in this scheme:

Projects financed by:	Mean all (N)	Mean women (N)
University	0,71 (179)	0,48 (25)
Government	1,36 (160)	0,78 (19)
Academic institutions	0,72 (115)	0,59 (17)
National research funds	2,33 (202)	2,09 (32)
Private business	1,21 (114)	1,08 (13)
Private foundation	1,07 (125)	1 (14)



Nevertheless one should control for AGE and years in office. NB the small N on women.

31,1 % of the respondents (270, whole population) have been abroad longer than 3 months for academic purposes before they completed PhD (26,3 % of women N=38). Between PhD and first professorship 46,6 % had such a stay (55,3 % of women, N=38) and 31,5 % had a stay abroad after their first professorship (28,9 % of women, N=38). 77 persons (28,5) did not answer the question and could therefore be seen to not have been abroad for a longer time.

As of an average the respondents helped 3,23 times (N=220) a male junior colleagues in obtaining a grant and females 2,26 times (N=211). 1,55 (N=198) times the respondents helped males go abroad and the same happened 1,08 (N=189) times for women. 2,84 (201) times they helped men in writing articles or books and 2,02 times (200) women. 1,84 times (192) they helped a man get a position and 1,28 they helped a woman (188). Not really revealing stuff considering that men are more numerous among junior colleagues in the disciplines we are studying.

### *Administrative power and visible appointments*

If we take a further look on the positions the respondents occupy or has had occupied within their career there is also a visible pattern:

Administrative position	All (N=270)	Women (N=38)
President/vice president	3,3 % (9)	11 % (4)
Dean/vice-dean	25,5 % (69)	26 % (10)
Director/vice-director	35,9 % (93)	42 % (16)
Head of research team	79,6 % (215)	82 % (31)

Interestingly, the pattern is reversed compared to the publications. In all categories women have more administrative power than men. We would have to control for age and length of career again. Maybe we are faced with the problem of women being asked to be the “face” of the institutions and that this will rest them time to carry out investigation. The participants in focus group interviews carried out in Spain and Sweden mention the possibility that women feel a greater obligation to work in the administration (Poulsen and Martín).

It is also of importance to ask which other positions of power the professors are occupying. Such questions were also included in the questionnaire and the results are shown in the following frequency table:

Positions of influence within academia	All (N=270)	Women (N=38)
Member of editorial board	62,2 % (168)	55 % (21)
Member of scientific institution	54,8 % (148)	68 % (26)
Reviewer of accomplishments	88,5 % (239)	95 % (36)
Expert on committee	85,9 % (232)	92 % (35)
Member of national professional association	51,8 % (140)	50 % (19)

17 did not answer 1 of them women.

Women are virtually members of a decision making national professional association to the same degree as the population as a whole. They are marginally less members of editorial boards and equally marginally they have more chances to be a member of a scientific institution, reviewer or experts on committees. The three last mentioned are all highly visible public posts and it could be good for these to have a nice profile to the public.

We can make a similar scheme to show the answers on the question gathering international participation in similar organs.

Positions of influence within academia internationally	All (N=270)	Women (N=38)
Member of editorial board	62,2 % (168)	58 % (22)
Member of decision making bodies in scientific institutions	27,0 % (73)	39 % (15)
Expert/consultant	71,1 % (192)	66 % (25)
Participant of international project	72,2 % (195)	76 % (29)
Member of decision making bodies in professional association	38,1 % (103)	32 % (12)

25 persons did not answer affirmatively, 3 of them women.

If we take in to consideration the low number of women among our respondents the uncertainties on how a different response from one or two respondents would push the female percentage so much that we can conclude that men and women are fairly equal in all these categories. The exception, however, is “member of decision making bodies in scientific institutions” were the female participation is notably higher in our population.

Their public appearances were as in the following table:

Public appearance type	Mean all (N)	Std dev	Mean women (N)
Presentation at public meeting	3,58 (255)	1,26	3,8 (38)
Radio or TV	1,80 (249)	1,00	2,1 (38)
Newspaper or magazine	2,39 (249)	1,16	2,4 (38)

The respondents could choose a figure between 1 and 5 where “1” was not at all and “5” was very often.

Maybe a bit surprisingly we can conclude that women professors in our sample have greater public exposure than men in all categories, except newspapers or magazines. The explanation could maybe be the same as with administration that women represent the “face” of the institution.

### ***Financial situation***

The large majority of the respondents, 65,7 %, (171/260) hold no other paid positions outside their university. The second largest group had a position of an academic nature (23,1 %) and yet a smaller group had a position of a non-academic nature (15,4 %). Some 5 % were included in both the last categories.

On average the respondents get 87,2 % of their salary from their basic salary from their university.

The average satisfaction of women with their income is 3,03 (N=37) on a five point scale where as it is 3,07 (N=256) for all respondents. That is that the main conclusion would be that both men and women find their wage to be acceptable (3). The payment the respondents receive at their university is in turn at an average of 327 131 Swedish kronor or in its equivalent in Euro 35 550. The standard deviation however is as big as 171 512 kronor! (The last statistics are not cleared).

Some of the feelings about work are quite surprising. They can be summarized in the following scheme:

---

Feel overloaded with:	All (N)	Std dev	Women (N)
Teaching	2,59 (261)	0,95	2,8 (38)
Research	2,91 (261)	1,2	2,9 (38)
Administrative work	3,76 (259)	1,19	3,9 (37)
Serving on committees	3,17 (259)	1,15	3,7 (37)

The results could be transformed into a ranking over the least desirable of academic duties and it would be headed by administrative work followed by serving on committees and then teaching and as most desirable teaching. In an international comparison it might be very surprising that teaching is the feature the Swedish respondents are least overburden with and not research as it probably would be in other countries. It could come down to the fact that Swedish full professors have no legal obligation to teach. The ranking for women is equal to the one of all respondents. Nevertheless the level of emotional overload with serving on committees is significantly higher for women. That could be explained by the explicit will of most committees to have at least one woman on their board. If the board is made up of seven or less persons their will be relatively more women on the board if one woman accepts than among the total population of full professors (which is 14,1 % among my respondents and 12 % among all Sweden's professors<sup>6</sup>). This of course means that, *ceteris paribus*, there is a higher pressure for women to accept being on the boards than on men, thus their feeling of being overloaded with serving on committees.

Some respondents also expressed their general overload with work or with raising funds or advising PhD students.

In ranking how often the responding professors had experienced symptoms of overwork the average rated less (2,61 with a std dev of 1,22) than the middle value (3) on the scale where 1 was "very seldom" and 5 was "very often". Women had a significantly higher average (3,1 N=38), which means that they experience anxiety, exhaustion or feeling burned out more often than men.

The subsequent question was on the professors overall satisfaction with their career progress. On average the respondents were very satisfied (3,99 std dev 0,83). Women respondents were even more satisfied with their career (4,3 N=38) and as many as 20 of 38 pinned out the value 5 (highly satisfied). As a matter of fact a

---

<sup>6</sup> This latest figure includes promoted professors.

whole 229 of 254 (90,16 %) would choose an academic career again. This percentage is virtually the same for women (35/37 or 94,6 %).

### *Questions on family*

A very large group of the responding full professors, 223 of 263 (or 84,8 %), were married or living together with a person and as little as 4,9 % (13/263) were never married compared to 8,4% (22) divorced. If we isolate the women in the material however we find that only 66 % 25/38 were married or living together. There could be a basis for further exploring this difference from the thesis that, women have comparably less time for a personal life if they will succeed in academia. Astonishingly as much as 23,7% (9/38) are divorced (and not remarried) or widowed as compared to 8,5 % (18/213) of men! This is a significantly big difference that could indicate that once divorced or widowed the women devote themselves entirely to their career.

In general only 16,5 % (37/224) have a partner who is also a faculty member at the university, but in the case of women it occurs in 40 % (10/25) of the cases. Of course in this question the age of the person might influence if they have a partner of similar characteristics to their own.

By large the responding professors thought that their partners had just a little less workload than themselves (average 2,56 std. Dev 1,15 on a 5 point scale with 1 being lower and 5 higher). On average the partners had a bit less prestige (2,15 std dev 1,13), income (2,12 std dev 1,28) and responsibility (2,73 std dev 1,14). Women had a very similar score on prestige (2,4 N=25).

Only 10,7 % (20/224) of the partners were negative or very negative to the job as a professor.

66/231 of the partners of the respondents were or are active in voluntary work. 6/32 women had the same situation. So the women have somewhat more.

2,3 children are the average of the respondents which is higher than an average Swede of today (1,5 per woman)<sup>7</sup>. Women had about the same average.

---

<sup>7</sup>Please see: Pressmeddelande från SCB, 2000-03-03 Nr 2000:052.

232 respondents had at least one child and the mean year of birth for the first-born was 1976 (std dev 9,32) and for the youngest 1982 (std dev 9,11). 31 of the women had children and they had it all over the years.

229 answered the question on who cared for the children when they were of school age: 5 (2,2 %, 2 of them women) answered they took care of them themselves, 52 (22,7 %, 1 woman) that primarily their partner, 33 (14,4 %; 3 of them women) reported an equal share between partner and themselves, 12 (5,2 %; 1 woman) had combination of family members taking care of it, 19 (8,3 %; 2 of them women) said primarily in private care and 108 (47,2 % 25 of them women) said that they used primarily publicly financed care. 7 women did not care to answer this question.

In question 56 on how often the children after school act impaired performing work the mean indicator was 2,62 (std dev 0,98). And in 57 between outside work and university a conflict was noted by the rate of 3,14 (std dev 1,11).

The most sacrifices for the professors to get them where they are today was:

Personal time	3,93	1,04
Friends	3,44	1,05
Time with partner	3,11	0,96
Time with children	3,00	1,03
Material standard	2,50	1,19
Not having children	1,72	1,12

The order of the preferences was exactly the same for women.

Men/women answers on care taking of domestic work:

1) not at all	2	
2) less than half	86	2
3) half	83	13
4) more than half	19	11
5) completely	17	8
total	208	34

It seems from the schedule above that women academics tend to do comparably more domestic work than their male colleagues.

For men the highest level of agreement of the statements were b, a, d, c, f and finally e ranging from about 3,8 to 2,8. For women the order was a, b, c, e, d and f ranging from 4 to 2<sup>8</sup>.

In the statements 61 a-e men agree most on d then e, b, c and finally a. Women prioritise between the statements in the order b, c, a, e and finally d. As we see a considerable difference in the attitudes of the two sexes. Given the low number of female respondents we would anyhow have to be hesitant with conclusions.

On the questions 62 a to c men prioritised as follows: a, b and finally c ranking from 4,6 down to 2,0. Women had the same ranking but from 4,8 to 1,5.

### **Assessment of prestige:**

The respondents were asked to put a figure on their own academic prestige and their prestige outside academic circles. The scale was from “1” to “10” starting at a poor level of prestige and finishing at a maximum. Thus no other information was given on how to evaluate prestige. It seems though that the most reliable figure would be the one that comes from deducting the academic prestige from the outside prestige. Men rated themselves on average as having in academic prestige: 7,4 (std dev 1,6) with N=(207) and women 7,6 (std dev 1,5) with N=38.

In prestige outside academic circles men had 6,6 (std dev 1,9) N=207 and women 6,9 (std dev 2,4) N= 38. A first conclusion would apparently be that women are more generous with the estimations than men. It should not be forgotten however that the figures the evaluation rests on has no real anchorage other than the feeling the respondents have of for instance “7” being a somewhat high figure. Nevertheless the relation between the two auto-estimations could give us a precise picture on how the respondents value their own prestige outside and inside the “ivory tower”. Undoubtedly both women and men think of themselves as having a higher prestige inside of academia than outside. Although logical this is an important path-shoving trend. Alone by their status as full professors the respondents have a considerable academic prestige and on top of that we have to add the personal actions and merits the respondents think that has been valued by their near surroundings. The reason why they do not give themselves such a high ranking in outside circles is not because they think that university professors are not valued by society, as the subsequent question will demonstrate. It is likely that they perceive that their actions are not known off in a broader audience.

If we construct an index that describes the relationship we would have that the index value for men would be “inside prestige”/”outside prestige” (7,4/6,6)=1,12

---

<sup>8</sup> For a look at the questionnaire please contact the author.

and for women  $7,6/6,9=1,10$ . More or less the same figure then, albeit the female could indicate a little tighter relationship between outside and inside prestige.

As the next question shows, both men and women find that jobs with a high content of intellectual work and economical power has a high status. Equally it is interesting to see how they agree on the status hierarchy of different professions.

Status ranking:

<b>Men (std dev)</b>	<b>Women</b>
Manager 4,1 (0,9)	Uni prof 4
Doctor 4,1 (0,7)	Manager 4
Uni prof 4,0 (0,7)	Doctor 4
Writer 3,6 (0,8)	Writer 4
Bank manager 3,4 (0,9)	Bank manager 4
Nurse 3,0 (0,7)	Journalist 3
Priest 3,0 (0,9)	Priest 3
Journalist 3,0 (0,9)	Accountant 3
Teacher 2,9 (0,7)	Teacher 3
Carpenter 2,8 (0,8)	Nurse 3
Accountant 2,7 (0,8)	Carpenter 3
Secretary 2,5 (0,8)	Secretary 2
Taxi driver 1,9 (0,8)	Taxi driver 2

TV-host was about average 3,0.

Most of the respondents say there are affirmative action programmes at their university. Maybe not surprisingly more women than men say the programmes should be continued and more men than women say they should be changed.

2/3 of men know of a woman being promoted due to affirmative action and 28/38 that is 74 % of women know. Of the few that doesn't know one a majority of women and men think there should not be such programmes.

When asked, people think to know of people mostly discriminated by age. Nevertheless some women also know of women discriminated.

When asked directly more people know of cases of gender discrimination. In the case of men 20/205 do and of women 15/35 do say they know of a case. Thus a considerable higher amount of women full professors (43 %) know of a case than men (9,8 %).



When it comes to their own feeling men felt discriminated 1,44 times during their PhD era and women 1,9 times. Equally women felt more discriminated during professorship with 2 times on average as 1,64 for men.

13 men of 215 (6,0 %) felt they had been offer of some kind of mild sexual harassment. 5 women out of 38 (ca. 13 %) felt they had been offer of an sexual harassment. 2 of these reported they were raped (sexual violence).

### *Personal statistics*

Not surprisingly men in the respondents group where a bit older than the women. Men were as an average born in 1947 (std dev 6,8 N=211) and the women on average were born in 1949 (std dev 7).

As the following scheme shows a great majority of the respondents were Swedish or born in Sweden:

Men 183 Swedes	13 Nordics	15 Other European	6 Rest world	N=217
Women 25 Swedes	3 Nordic	8 Other European	1 Rest world	N=37

In nationality speaking seven more males were Swedes.

And likewise 29 women were Swedes.

When it comes to educational background 38 of men's mother had university degree or higher out of 223 responding (17,0 %).

Apparently a little more, 9 of women's mother had university degree or higher, out of 38 (24 %). This could of course be partially explained by that they are on average 2 years younger.

Like wise 74 of men's father had a university degree or higher out of 217 responding, which gives a percentage of 34,1.

14 of women's father had university or higher out of 38, which in turn gives a percentage of 37. Thus the background on the father's side is very similar between men and women. Nevertheless when it comes to the closer family the patterns are very different between men and women. There is still an important part of the wives and partners of men that have no higher education, whereas the figures for women indicate that it is almost half the population that are couple with a PhD

awarded. 40 of men's partner has a PhD of 202 (19,8 %) and 15 of women's partner had a PhD of 31(48 %).

The respondents were also asked if their parents performed any voluntary work when they were 14 years of age. This was done to see whether party membership or membership of a lobby group would help some to obtain better results in academia. For men some 122 of 219 (55,7 %) had parents who performed these kind of activities and for women the number was equal about 21 of 38 (55 %).

### *A special hypothesis*

It would be very interesting to see how the auto-evaluation the respondents made of the prestige they carry relate to other variables in our sample. Presumably people who had a high evaluation of the status of university professors would also have a high perception of their own prestige in circles outside the university. To test this relationship and others we will run a regression analysis with the SPSS programme.

When we run the regression alone with the auto-evaluation of outside prestige as dependent and evaluation of the status of university professors as independent, we get a non-relationship with an R square of 0,051. When we add the variable number of articles published to our model the R square improves slightly and the value is 0,55. Nevertheless it could be that natural science professors have a bad feeling about their public appearance. In order not to let the natural science professors (who publish a lot of articles) be to determinant on the outcomes we would change articles for books. Our model with status of university professors and authored books as independents improve the relationship to an R square of 0,079, in the coefficients how ever we can see that the most important of the independent variables is still the status of university professors. If we add to this model the independent variable of newspaper articles published we might see a change. After all the people that get to publish in newspapers would notice the affection the public has for them better. The model improves considerably and the R square is now 0,122 and even better if we add government financing we would have a R square of 0,159. It is plausible that financing from the government would give the scientist a higher evaluation of his own prestige in a bigger audience. Nevertheless we find that the relationship is even stronger if the financing in our model would be from a private source then the R square is 0,194. If we add another independent variable to the model the relationship becomes even stronger. If a person has been

---

interviewed for press he might find that the appreciation of his person is bigger than else. Thus the R square with these 5 variables is 0,254. Interestingly enough the model does not improve if we add salary. The salary, that in some ways could be seen as the internal value thus does not co-variate with the feeling of having prestige outside academia. The highest R square I have found in this relation is 0,284 when the independent variables were articles in newspaper, books authored, private business sponsoring research, status of university professor and being interviewed for a media, and prestige of partner.

### *Conclusions*

Because of the low response rates it is not possible to draw any significant conclusions from the gathered material.

It is thus possible to say something about the methodology used and what kind of hypothesis it would be interesting to work with when more material is available.

The use of a web-based questionnaire has evident advantages and disadvantages that are interesting to highlight giving the only very recent introduction of its use. Until today the use of a web-based questionnaire has been restricted primarily because of the slow spread of technology. It has in the last few years been possible to reach selected populations via Internet based communication. During this study it has been possible to see that at least 99,5 % of the population of full professors within the targeted areas of knowledge has a publicly available e-mail address. It is my estimation that an equally high percentage of the full professors in the population that actually uses e-mail in their daily work<sup>9</sup>. This has nevertheless only been the case in very recent times and it is very doubtful that professors use e-mail on a day-to-day basis in for instance Spain. It was thus a big advantage for the study that the practical totality of the respondents was possible to reach via e-mail. This opened the door for an enquiry with very limited material costs. The price of the enquiry is thus only the simple software and the time employed by the researcher. The reminders for instance, were sent to the non-respondents instantaneously and with great ease. Another considerable advantage of the web-

---

<sup>9</sup> In a late proces of the investigation telephone interviews has been conducted by the author with those that did not answer the e-mails. Not one single time from the about 100 telephone contacts has the professors alledged that they do not use e-mail in their work. The results of the telephone enquiry is not presented in this study; for this please see Poulsen, dissertation, forthcoming.

---

based enquiry is that the time employed with normal mail enquiries in coding the responses into a statistical programme in the present case is done with a simple computerized data transfer.

When this is said it should also be noted that there are considerable weaknesses with the web-based enquiry. In the course of this study it was experienced that the logging of the questionnaire into the form the computer programme accepts for questions took considerable time. More seriously, some professors reported that they had technical problems with getting to the page or submitting the answers. It was also my impression that e-mail with the introduction and instructions on how to answer was not taken as serious as a letter. Some reported they were only willing to participate in the enquiry if they received a paper version of the questionnaire. Professors reported that they receive up to 70-80 e-mails a day and thus does not give the same priority to respond as if they would receive a letter. It could very well be that the enormous amount of e-mail professors receive was part of the explanation to the low response rate.

When an adequate level of response is reached through additional interviews it would be very interesting to test some hypothesis. There was indications that women full professors were not married to the same extension as men, but if married they were much more likely to be married to someone who also had a PhD.

***Literature***

Hyman, Herbert: *Survey Design and analysis*, Free Press of Glencoe, USA, 1963 (1955), pp. 29-39

Kalton, Graham: *Introduction to survey sampling*, SAGE university paper, no 35, California, USA, 1983.

Neuman, W. Lawrence: *Social Research Methods*, Allyn and Bacon, USA, 1991.

Poulsen, Christian: *Prestige in academia – a source of gender discrimination*, dissertation, unpublished.

Poulsen, Christian & Martín, Juan: *Professors talk on prestige*, Muenster, 2003



**Women in European Universities**

TRAINING PAPER IV

*CHRISTIAN POULSEN & JUAN MARTIN FERNANDEZ:*

Professors talk on Prestige:  
The Case of Sweden and Spain

***Abstract***

The study embraces the way full professors talk on prestige in academia and consists of 3 (4) focus group interviews performed in Sweden and Spain. Groups of female full professors in the life sciences were sampled and a moderator in a semi-natural setting conducted group interviews. The interviews were then transcribed and a thematic content analysis was made. A more thorough ethnographic analysis was done on particular interesting parts of the interviews.

The results of the analysis shows that the professors tend to talk in a dialectical manner about prestige and how to get access to it. On one hand the participants talked in terms of merits generating prestige on the other hand they spoke about a specific academic style as more prestige generating than others despite objective merit criteria. The respondents' vocabulary announced that there are differences between how men and women accrue prestige and that the style more performed by men could be more rewarding.

The analysis shows that focus group interviews on matters of academia might be a fruitful method for further investigations. Future research on delicate subjects among members of academia could very well include focus group interviews.

***List of content***

Abstract .....	30
<i>List of content</i> .....	31
Introduction .....	32
State of the art .....	33
The methodological state of the art.....	35
Methodology .....	35
A multiple case study- .....	35
The focus group interview- .....	36
Analysis.....	40
<i>Ethnographic analysis</i> .....	42
<i>Description of prestige</i> .....	42
1.- <i>What is prestige (in natural sciences)</i> .....	42
Inside of the Academy (professors/professional opinion) .....	42
Outside of the Academy (social perception – as seen by professors).....	45
<i>Access to prestige</i> .....	48
2. - <i>How prestige is obtained</i> .....	48
<i>Distribution of prestige</i> .....	56
3. - <i>Who has prestige in Academia</i> .....	56
<i>Experienced gender differences</i> .....	59
Concluding remarks .....	66
Literature.....	68



## ***Introduction***

This report was written as a joint paper under the project *Women in European Universities*<sup>10</sup>. The idea of writing a paper together was appealing to us as it speaks to the very nature of the idea of networking across European borders. The research prevailing this paper thus included interviews in Spain and Sweden and work carried out in three European languages.

More importantly a cross-border study offered the possibility to carry out research in different institutional settings that could answer our questions on life in academia. We were particularly interested in questions on the distribution of prestige in academia. We were curious about how full professors talk about prestige and its distribution and what importance they attach to it.

When we chose to carry out the interviews at the university of Lund, Sweden and the Complutense University it was in part, obviously, due to convenience sampling. Nevertheless the choice involves an interesting methodological consequence. Lund and Complutense are the biggest universities in the respective country if measured in staff employed (reference). The names of the universities are also among the oldest to be founded in Spain and Sweden. Thus Lund and Complutense have been a reference in the university history of each country for centuries<sup>11</sup>.

Furthermore the two universities have a parallel development as both have experienced a huge expansion of their teaching activities. The number of students in Lund has boomed in the last 15 years whereas the amount of student shovelled through Complutense has dramatically risen since the transition to democracy in Spain. A further resemblance between the two universities is that, we believe, they have an equal high position in the status hierarchy of universities in respective country.

During the work with Working paper I and II we were confronted with the insight that there is no one single explanation to why women are underrepresented among full professors in either of the two countries<sup>12</sup>. Furthermore it seemed to us that the

---

<sup>10</sup> For more information on *Women in European Universities* please see other reports in the series or [www.women-eu.de](http://www.women-eu.de)

<sup>11</sup> Admittedly it is a tricky question when it regards Complutense. Lund is the second oldest university of Sweden after Uppsala but in the case of Complutense it is only the name of the university that is old. Some three decades ago, 1970 the university of Madrid bought the name from what is now known as the University of Alcalá de Henares. In 1499 Complutense was founded in Alcalá de Henares.

<sup>12</sup> See Poulsen 2001 and 2002

prevailing explanations, like the specific difficulties for women to reconcile family and work, did not fully explain why the percentage of women full professors has not passed the 20 percent mark<sup>13</sup>. A good illustration of this is exactly the fact that Sweden, with an extensive public care system since the 1970s with day care centres for a very large part of the children 0-6 years of age, has worse proportion of female full professors. In comparison Spain has not yet a global day care system and nevertheless has more women full professors. We have thus set out to find other possible explanations to the fact that women are not equally represented among the highest positions of academia. The perception of prestige and its distribution presents itself as a novelty explanation that is worthy of examination. Ones touched upon the issue of prestige seemed so interesting so that it will be the theme of a dissertation<sup>14</sup>.

### *State of the art*

We present a compilation of the qualitatively empiric work on academia and career chances with a special emphasis on gender that has been performed in Sweden the latest years. For an equivalent Spanish introduction please see Vasquez Cupeiro (forthcoming). For a state of the arts of empiric work in Sweden on gender and academia with a quantitative approach please see Poulsen (forthcoming).

- Bondestam, Fredrik: *Från policy till praktik – om implementeringen av jämställdhet och det lokala jämställdhetsvillkor*, Uppsala University, 1999. The study is examining the process of selection of senior colleagues at Uppsala in the period 1997 to 1999 when positive discrimination was adapted. By using the concept of time Bondestam analyses how women are structured out of the selection process.
- Eliasson, Mona: ”Makt och kön i akademien”, in *Kvinnor i akademien*, Göteborg, Chalmers Teknologiska Högskola, 1997, pp. 12-15. Norms of academia is also structuring the roles of scientists and these become gendered.
- Johnsson, Elisabeth is running a project at *Göteborg University called Kunskapens innehåll och organisation – dess innebörd för jämställdhetsfrågan*

---

<sup>13</sup> A recent study on women and family in international business shows that children are not a hinder for women to prosper in their career (Catalyst and Boston College Center for Work and Family 2003#).

<sup>14</sup> See Poulsen, forthcoming

---

*vid universiteten*. The project analyses the recruiting process and investigates if the women proportion on each field represent a different profile of the scientists.

- Jordansson, Birgitta: "Kvar I kylan? – Universiteten och jämställdheten", in *Feministisk perspektiv*, 2000:2, pp. 5-11. The article is on mainstreaming and equality in universities.
- Mählck, Paula (ed.): *Mapping gender in academic workplaces – ways of reproducing gender inequality within the discourse of equality*, Doctoral theses, Umeå University, no 33, 2003. The book is a re-compilation of articles on gender inequality at Swedish universities. The author(s) use primarily qualitative individual interviews as her method to investigate the role of gender in academia. Paula Mählck also carries out a bibliometric study to analyse how co-authorships are distributed in a determinant academic field. The articles are preceded by a thorough literature review of studies on working conditions in academia in Sweden and abroad.
- Norlander, Kerstin is running a project called *Forskarideal i samhällsomvandling 1945-1999* at the Umeå University. The project aims to explore how the role of the scientist has changed over time when women gradually have entered the field.
- Wennerås, Christine: "A chair of one's own – the upper reaches of academe remain stubbornly inaccessible to women", in *Nature*, 408 (2000): 6813, p. 647. Wennerås investigates how the accruing of research grants is related to gender and gender studies.

### ***The methodological state of the art***

The knowledge produced by FGI and II will be the context on which the analysis is made later. In FGI and II we were not able to explain the low transition of women to professorships. Talking to professors about status and prestige might reveal hindrances for such a transition.

### ***Methodology***

The present paper is presented as a multiple case study and the *methodology* used is that of comparison between the cases. The *technique* used to produce data is the focus group interview.

#### **A multiple case study-**

The case study is recommended when one wants to highlight a specific occurrence or phenomena connected to a specific setting. Many authors seem to agree about that case studies should be used when the case is not distinguishable from its context (Yin, Bassegy, Bengtsson). To us the way professors talk about prestige is such a phenomena. According to Yin replicating one study after the other sets up a multiple case study design (Yin 1993). He recommends using replication logic for sampling cases if the number investigated is small. In this paper we set up only 4 interviews and have proceeded in a manner as suggested by Yin and have grouped cases with “organisational specialities”, such as female hard science full professors represents. (Yin says: Ask what are your unit of analysis? I think it could be the talk female hard science full professors produce.) This paper presents a multiple case study that is explanatory, or theory seeking as Bassegy calls it (1999), to its essence. Yin and Bassegy find that statistical generalisation from a multiple case study is not to be considered and the former is of the opinion that an analytical generalisation is the only appropriate form. Bassegy suggests the use of “fuzzy generalisations”, implying that our findings could be generalised to a certain degree. In selecting cases Yin recommends to take three criteria in to consideration: Criticality, topical relevance and feasibility. As we will now explain the later rather than the two former has had to prevail. It is feasible to the extent that we work in Lund and Complutense and have knowledge of gatekeepers’ function in the respective universities. As the topic we chose was prestige in academia the research design also seemed a relevant choice. Finally we supposed that choosing women professors, the underrepresented sex, for our study we would live up to the criteria

---

of “criticality”. To do what is possible is a natural limitation that does not prevent us from making comparisons of meaning in one group (or case) with other groups (Bohnsack 2002).

### **The focus group interview-**

The choice of technique was made both from methodological reasoning and from the possible gain each technique could deliver in terms of enrichment of our scientific tools. To begin with the last, Focus Group Interviewing presented a genuine chance to learn about an interesting technique that was a novelty for both authors.

Methodological speaking, the Focus Group approach has a range of characteristics that fits our unit of analysis. We are interested in how professors talk about prestige among themselves. To get a full access to this kind of talk of course an ethno methodological approach as for instance the ethnographic field work by USA researcher Bob Emerson would be the most suitable. However as there was not time enough to carry out such a study<sup>15</sup>, the focus group was the best option to get access to this kind of talk. There is a double interest in accessing the talk, in groups, on “prestige” as prestige is not a matter of auto-evaluation but requires the evaluation of an audience<sup>16</sup>.

As Wilkinson (1998) reports, “focus group methodology ...providing access to participants` own language, concepts and concerns...”

In the 1980s the technique was virtually non-existing in research conducted by university researchers whereas it has had a presence in non-academic research. However in the last 10 years the technique has gained popularity among scholars as well (Wilkinson 1998). The “group” in “Focus Group Interview” implies that the number of components is small enough to permit interaction among all its members (Fratczak-Rudnicka 2001).

The Focus Group Interview is a semi-formal discussion among selected individuals about a selected topic<sup>17</sup>. The literature in the field recommends the composition of the group to be rather homogenous especially regarding status factors as occupation, class and age. Evidently by picking only full professors from the same

---

<sup>15</sup> Bob Emerson recommends an average of 6 months field study depending on the subject an access to the field. (see Emerson 2001)

<sup>16</sup> For a full account of the term “prestige” please see Poulsen, forthcoming.

<sup>17</sup> Or in the words of Morgan cited by Wibeck (2001): “Focus groups are a *research technique* that collects data through *group interaction* on a topic *determined by the researcher*”.

---

university in each group we will hardly violate this advice. It is especially advisable to choose participants who already know each other as they can share half forgotten memories or re-interpret a concrete incident they have all witnessed or been part in. This was, as we will see later on, exactly what occurred in our interviews. Nevertheless at first we wanted the components not to know each other to live up to quantitative methods and reduce respondent bias, but for practical reasons it is virtually impossible to encounter 5 or 6 female full professors from the natural science departments of one university that does not know each other. It is far too small a group, at least in Lund, for that to happen. Bohnsack (2002) recommends probing with phrases like “please make a description” to make the participants talk of concrete action and thus reveal “second level intention”. Wilkinson is not that clear on the point of matching moderator to group components. In one place she finds it necessary for the moderator to be somewhat familiar with the idiom of the selected group and elsewhere she states that Focus Group is particularly useful in enabling researchers to understand subjects who “may be very different from themselves” (Wilkinson, 1998, p. 189).

The Focus group offers a good opportunity to hear “the way of talking” in an almost naturalistic environment for full professors. The most “naturalistic set up would nevertheless be an embedded scientist in a ethnographic approach. The quality added in comparison to individual interviews is of course all the group interaction going on. Feminist research has also used focus groups as it allows the participants themselves to negotiate a meaning and to “...facilitate the grounding of the research in participants’ own understanding of the issue...”(Wilkinson 1998, p. 184-185)<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore it is particularly advantageous to use Focus Groups when one is interested in observing how people are engaged in processes of collective sense making. We believe that the distribution of prestige in academia is a non-taken for granted thematic and thus do apply to the former. Apart from the before mentioned ethnographic set up, the Focus Group offers the most “naturalistic or ecologically valid” talk. With the very few interruptions the moderator makes the participants are aloud to develop their chat in a close to natural way. To Bohnsack (2002) letting the group discussion be “lead” by the participants themselves is creating “the collective meaning of the group”.

There are some disadvantages with the method like limited reliability and validity and some forms of moderator and respondent bias. Nevertheless the interviewer bias may be reduced in comparison with individual interviews by the mere fact that

---

<sup>18</sup> It should be noted however that feminism was not first with looking at how integrants of a group “negotiate meaning”, but rather this idea has been elaborated by Anselm Strauss#. Thanks to Beata Zawadka for pointing this out.

---

she/he is only one of many in the Focus Group situation. But that it should be a “cheap, quick and easy to run” method like Wilkinson suggests (1998, p. 186) is far from the truth in our case. Evidently tracking down and convincing a series of very busy and occupied full professors is both time consuming, requires some tricks and a bit of diplomacy.

The purpose of our research would very well be to “elicit peoples’ understanding, opinions and views” (Wilkinson, 1998, p. 187).

Very important for the discussion of what could be a sensitive subject, prestige, Wilkinson kills the myth that one-to-one interviews are more likely to produce intimate or sensitive information (p. 192 and Fratzak-Rudnicka 2001).

### *Analysis*

Many researchers treat analysis just like they would in a one-to-one interview. Basically one can analyse it by content analysis or by ethnographic analysis. In the later recommends presenting inter-active examples (many participants). Wibeck (2001) recommends to or use thematic content analysis, analysis of “topical trajectories”, analysis of the discursive construction of agents and agency or analysis of analogies, distinctions, metaphors and prototypical examples or finally analysis of “virtual participants” and quotes. “Topical trajectories” is a method that describes how topics reoccur in a focus group or between various focus groups. The method is particularly interesting in a Focus Group Interview because of the low moderator bias as compared to individual in depth interviewing.

Fratczak-Rudnicka (2001) finds that Focus Group Interviewing can be used in any research but are particularly good for exploratory research and “focus group results are best illustrated with commented big extracts.” A related method is the “documentary method by interpretation of group interview” which Ralf Bohnsack has used a lot in his investigations.

### *Sampling*

The Focus Group conducted in this study is a mixture by what the traditional literature on Focus Group recommends and the advice given by professor Bohnsack. Thus it was his idea to make different Focus Groups with as few non-identical variables as possible. In the four Focus Groups we conducted they were all women, over 50, professors in hard science subjects. The only intended

variation was that half of the interviews were conducted at Complutense and half at the Lund University.

Bohnsack recommended choosing participants from a discipline rather than institutions. Anyhow as explained in the chapter on case study, feasibility would, at the end be a vital selection criteria. It was concluded at our meeting in Muenster that institution was not so important for career perspectives as discipline.

To follow the before mentioned guideline, not letting the participants in different focus groups vary in more than necessary amount of variables, we choose to have women only in the groups. This would allow us to narrow the analysis and make more comparisons on the only apparent variable with a group variation, university. By choosing one sex only we have thus tried to make the analysis easier although we are familiar with the fact that we let out interesting theoretical perspectives.

One of choices that required a major time of reflexion was which disciplines should enter the sample. A straight forward convenience sample would urge us to choose full professors from our own disciplines, political science and sociology, but it would present us with difficulties to control the groups. Foremost there was the obvious danger of choosing someone that might know the moderator, one of us, or have heard of us and would then try to lecture us or intimidate us. Secondly we had a fear that we might loose out on some aspects that would seem at first to obvious for us, that we would “go native”. Therefore we choose full professors from the natural sciences as they, we hoped, would present themselves as subjects more isolated from “our world” and thus not produce embarrassing situations or limiting the flow of talk. Then it is also the case that by choosing female natural sciences professors, the respondents would represent a higher proportion of the total amount of professors within their field. At the end we sampled four groups of full professors from the natural sciences, 2 in Lund and 2 in Complutense.

The interviews had a length of a little more than an hour of which one hour was recorded. The respondents and the moderator were isolated in a separate room of the faculty and either cheese and wine or cookies were served. After the interviews the tape recording were fully transcribed and field notes were taken from what was remembered from the remains of the interview.



## Analysis

### Thematic content analysis-

We have conducted a thematic content analysis by giving a header to each chunk of the interview we find particularly interesting. Some headers reappear several times in the same interview or in many of the interviews. Only a small part of the headers are found several times in all interviews. The result of the counting of the headers appears as follows:

#### DEFINITIONS

prestige 'fx' audience [fx = depends of]	external recognition no'fx' professional prestige	hierarchy: Research, Teaching	human quality --> prestige
internationalism=>prestige, coherency=>prestige, only divulgation?>prestige	prestige != social recognition	prestige != to be popular	prestige=external recognition, different media = diff prestige
Prestige=publication in selected places+inovation+ coherency+recognition of scientific community	prestige?status	to have prestige != to have recognition	

#### ACCESS

administration is needed	administration --> good professional --> prestige	administration --> funds (resources)	coherency, good work => prestige
Disagree teaching?>exterior prestige	divulgation+publication=>prestige	hierarchy: 1. Research, 2. Teaching, 3. Administration, 4. Human quality	hierarchy: 1. Research, 2. Teaching, 3. Administration, 4. Human quality
network=production of investigations=>prestige, good manners+adm in groups=>network=>production	international recognition => scientific prestige, prestige in Sp=>politics, wom<interested in politics, - prestige=more time for politics	prestige no'fx' personal situation	politics !=> prestige
prestige 'fx' social impact	prestige in teaching vs. Prestige in research	prestige=>+prestige=>+material conditions=>prestige etc. (Merton)	prestige=productivity
publication	research isn't the only one	strategic thinking=>funding	teaching!=>prestige, international audience =>prestige
to have prestige != to have recognition	prestige 'fx' audience		

#### DISTRIBUTION

biological aptitudes wom != men	future: >wom witnesses	future: >wom witnesses	future: >wom witnesses
male control 'fx' old generations	glass roof -> <wom		

The headers have rather a limited use: They are a result of a purely quantitative procedure and by large it can give an overview of ideas to be found in the interviews. In the last section of this chapter, experienced gender differences, we have tried to elaborate this procedure somewhat more. The labels can be grouped into sections according to our evaluation of what was important in the interviews. These groupings we will keep on using when we turn to the ethnographic analysis. The groupings are as follows:

Description of prestige

1- What is prestige (in natural sciences)

- \* Inside of the Academia (professors/professional opinion)
- \* Outside of the Academia (social perception – as seen by professors)

Access to prestige

2- How prestige is obtained

- \* Variables & factors
- \* Formal rules/criteria versus informal criteria
- \* Strategies to get prestige

Distribution of prestige

3- Who has prestige in Academia

- \* Who
- \* Why

4- Experienced gender differences

*Ethnographic analysis**Description of prestige**1.- What is prestige (in natural sciences)***Inside of the Academy (professors/professional opinion)**

It was natural for the participants in all the focus groups to discuss the nature of “prestige” even when it was taken for granted by the researcher. As a rule the dialogues on what prestige is was done in the beginning of the interviews. However the respondents came back to the question on occasions. Concentrating on defining with great exactitude a phenomena or word in the beginning of a dialogue seems to be a frequent behaviour in scientists and does have resemblance with their daily tasks when doing research. Thus in all the carried out interviews, it is observed that the definition of the concept prestige constitutes a priority for the interviewees. This question is especially clear in Sp2; where in remark 8 the participant identified as D (it is interesting to observe the position of leadership that D assumes in Sp2, which seems to be derived of the professional prestige that she possesses) intends to approach the definition of prestige that they come back to not much later on:

Sp2

15. D: *for me, prestige is always professional, never a post. I at least can't go in there. I think that it is professional, as teacher and as researcher.*

16. S: *I completely agree.*

17. C: *I think that majority of us coincide on that.*

In remark 15, D insists on her opinion saying that “prestige is always professional, never a position” and she thinks, this is: "as teacher and as investigator". Here for the first time these two dimensions appear (that will be a key on the idea of prestige which will be manifested by the interviewees). S and C agree with D.

In the Swedish interview it appears that administration would generally give more power and less prestige:

SW1

54. R: *But it is this with people who go on in the hierarchy then and becomes dekaner and prorektor then what about that? Is that another track within the university that, that gives something back? Cause I mean research (speaking at the same time) and scientists*

55. B: *Yes more power and less prestige I would probably say*

56. All: *Ha he ha*

57. R: *Yes that is who's prestige you could say*
58. G: *You will be a celebrity maybe Doesn't it have that to it Oh that is the viceintendent, oh that is the rector, it will come to that maybe then that you get to be known a little publicly so but in the scientist world I don't think ones prestige grows there, do you think so?*
59. S: *No not, it depends on if you succeed...you have to chose when in the career you take such assignment*
60. G: *Yes, yes*
61. S: *really, you have so to say, if you have a successful science career and then goes on to dekan and so then I think it is a good decision, if you take it when you are relatively young and are going back after a couple of years and is to go back on the market again so to say then I think that it is only, you are only a loser*

The remark 61 reveals that the respondents perceive the field of investigators as a “market”. Being away from the market will have your value on the market fall unless you are able, preferable in a later part of your career, to “transfer” prestige from the administrative power field to the researchers field.

In the subsequent passages (245-257) of SW1 the respondents conclude that administrative posts before an elevated age are not good for the career of the actor. Remark 257 in this way sums up perfectly what the respondents in general and B in particular think is the mechanism of prestige: On one hand, a certain portion of prestige has rewarded the academic with a position in academic administration, described earlier on as of “power” and here as “leading”. On the other hand this position prevails them from getting prestige, which in a longer perspective narrows their prestige and career perspectives. That is, women are in their view quite well represented in positions of power and prestige conceding organs, but as there are not many women in the higher hierarchies of academia, there are not a lot of women left to concede this prestige to (SW1 remark 257 and 258)

In the interview Sp1 they are also taken into account aspects like personality, social behaviour and personal coherence:

### Sp1

39. P: *(meanwhile) the prestige for which you would vote a person for a position*
40. C: *I believe that prestige also determines a lot the personality,*
41. P: *when a person doesn't have prestige about his investigation skills and however is a person whose behaviour is*
42. A: *yes, but I also believe that this must be related to the education, that, unfortunately, the bad education reigns in many professors and then*
43. P: *but they are not of academic prestige neither scientifically*

44. A: *No, but they are also, let see, imagine that I am thinking for example about a person to be the Spanish society of chemistry president, so I want that he/she is somebody of prestige, I want that somebody noted represents me, I would not vote neither propose for president a person who I consider has bad manners, for me it doesn't matter how good curriculum he/she has, but if I know that he/she goes (sah) to a meeting room or if he/she won't allow to speak to the other ones because is not able to listen or he/she doesn't know how to go appropriately dressed or they are the kind of people that wear the hair until here, the beards until there, look! no, this was ok on the year 68 but that time has already gone and if you want to be in a certain level you have to be accord to the roll you have and you represent*

45. P: *That is*

46. C: *but this is what we have seen recently, we have had a professor like that*

47. P: *but this is what I call coherence in the way of acting*

48. C: *yes, yes we agree totally*

49. P: *I have never seen, may be as I already forget more than what I remember, but I have never seen a great scientist that was incoherent in her/his presentation and I don't know if we are referring to the same thing, people that before having an important academic representation as scientific were noted, then when they have been given an academic position, suddenly they are coherent and they put on ties and they cut her/his hair and they change of,*

Nevertheless, we find the most precise definitions of what the interviewees consider as professional prestige in an extract of Sp2 where, in remark 162, D affirms that it is necessary to be able to measure the prestige. And with the contribution of the following concrete variable: "people's international recognition of serious work", and that it can be seen in a c.v. by means of the published works which have international profile. Then there would be two parameters or dimensions key to measure the scientific prestige: 1) only people of the same scientific area can recognize scientific prestige and 2) that recognition should have international reach. Who complete both approaches; they are supposed to have true prestige.

D sketches an elitist-meritocratic-aristocratic position according to, which who gets those levels of prestige is called to occupy positions of responsibility in the Administration (it can be useful to remember here that such conditions seem to be given in her case). In fact, she uses the following expression: "they see that within their field this is one of the persons that are of a higher level". That means that there is usually a positive correlation between worth-prestige-recompense of the system.

D continues differentiating between two categories of individuals with social recognition but without scientific prestige (besides the previous, authentic): 1) who obtain it by means of the media or for the promotion of "some groups of power with money". It would be the case of some famous or popular scientists, but with scarce prestige inside the area. 2) "people that divulges", who "carry out a great work... but that is not prestige" in spite of being very socially well-known.

The position of D sounds somewhat arrogant -she, of course, seems to consider herself framed in the first group of *true prestige*- and it seems to bother the other participants. In fact, after their long intervention a small silence is made, that practically forces D to ask to the others if they agree with her. The positive answer that some of them give to her doesn't sound very convincing.

### **Outside of the Academy (social perception – as seen by professors)**

A matter that clearly appears in all the interviews is that for the participants there exists a strong difference between what is the "real" academic prestige and the perception that the rest of the society has, this is, the external recognition.

In remark 65 of Sp2, B (recapturing an idea that appeared in remark 19) affirms that the external recognition not always coincides with the prestige that one has in a certain moment. According to her, temporary delays exist between both facts:

Sp2

*64. D: when people recognize it? When people say so?*

*65. B: one thing is that she/he has it and another that people recognize it. Maybe it is when it is recognized- I'd even say more- is when you loose it. In my opinion, when they begin to recognize a gentleman and to give him prizes, it is when he no longer does anything. The level of actuality or prestige of that person already went down in that moment. A lot of times one person is in her/his maximum moment of prestige as human quality, as researcher, as teacher, as everything... so probably she/he is yet in the step in which she/he does not care. What people give isn't in concordance with what exist in that moment. There is like an important delay.*

As we can see, certain resentment toward some cases of undeserved recognition that would go beyond such temporary imbalances is appreciated in the expression: "when they begin to recognize a gentleman and to give him prizes, is when he no longer does anything". Particularly significant is the election of the term gentleman, because it accuses certain idea of identifying that supposition with the masculine gender.

In other points the difference between professional prestige and social recognition is manifested more clearly. The interviewees analyse the influence of factors like audiovisual media, popularity and fame:

Sp2

157. L: *anyway, I commented it before, that, what is called prestige? I stay with my opinion. Because the very XXXXX is very well-known, but if you investigate those that know very well what he has done and what it is that he is doing now, that prestige would be a little bit lower inside the social threshold. I mean, that you ask a person if he sounds familiar to her/him: "yes, yes, a gentleman that also has a spot on his head and he is very famous and that they have made him a building". But then you ask those that know the trajectory of XXXXX and they tell you: "well, in his moment he did something, but now he is no longer doing so much". So that is, sometimes prestige is very relative (according to) who you ask and who you consider. Then examples like this there could be 2000000. If we qualify prestige, perhaps socially we could give him a 10 and then you begin to investigate at another more scientific level and they tell you: "no, now he is up for a 6 as a top" and which is the one that works? the 10 that is what people know, that he lets the cancer be known and that the cancer is very important and that? or the 6 of his peers that know that he has already arrived to where he will arrive, that he vent because he will no longer do more?*

158. S: *Let's comment again what you have pointed out from the beginning: while we don't establish prestige, to what will we refer? to the social recognition or the recognition inside the discipline that each one is developing? It is that it is different.*

159. B: *with this gentleman, here the audiovisual media have intervened and..*

160. D: *yes, a lot, but like "fame factory" or the "Big brother" or anything else, those gentlemen have prestige? They don't have any prestige. But are they popular? The most popular. That they are the most bumpkins? So the most bumpkins. As soon as the media enter... I don't mean that is the example of XXXXX... or that you take it...*

161. B: *yes, yes*

Of course this confirms that sometimes the contradiction existent among the real prestige -fruit of the coherence and the professional solidity- and the undeserved social recognition -that is to say, the "fame". This matter of affairs somehow bothers the interviewed.

Sp1

58. A: *that person that was very famous and that had an impressive prestige*

59. P: *that was very well-known*

60. A: *very well-known and had prestige in the newspapers and was...venerated for a lot of people because it was supposed that he/she was a, of an impressive cultural quality, the truth is that was a bad-mannered.. but much worse that any farmhand that you can find,*

*he he, that allowed you to pass the door and asked you for the floor you wanted in the elevator*

*61. C: but for that reason I say that the prestige doesn't have anything to do with the behaviour, then (dth)*

*62. A: fame!*

*63. P: fame not, but what I understand for prestige yes, if you have it, fame you can as society is nowadays, you can be famous even for knowing how to give a span (dth) or for the most disparate things and you make yourself main character in television programs, because the more scandals and more banks you rob the more possibilities. But academic prestige that maybe is something that you see in the others, that you would like that others saw in you, I find it is the nobility of actuation what gives the prestige, not the fame, because the fame can be very demagogic. Here in this department one can make the Save the whales days and the demagogue arrives saying and then he becomes famous among the students of first (grade) because it is necessary to throw the power so that the whales I don't know what and demagoguery makes a lot of fame but but prestige that a continuous line of coherent performance in difficult moments give, in difficult moments in that your opinion can be against the demagoguery of most and that after a time you say I want to be like that person, prestige is the solidity in the way of acting more than the curriculum, for me... without a doubt, because it is not the curriculum. Do I seem a little strange? (dth)*

That posture of scorn for this other type of supposed prestige, derived of an undeserved external recognition is especially patent in the expression “demagogic fame” that P uses in remark 99 and in the statement of A (remark 102) of not having gotten “neither a gram in a lifetime” of it. Instead of that, they defend the prestige consequence of the “academic job well done”. Sometimes the fame one has acquired outside of academia can help you gain prestige inside academia.

SW1:

*112. B: But compare then Bodil Jönsson and XXX who both are famous from TV*

*113. Ah*

*114.B: I think that XXX s participation has amounted to XXXs prestige but more Bodil has been more well known but I shouldn't interpret it as it has contributed to her prestige,*

*115.Mm*

*116.B: more that you respect her as she is*

*117.S: not prestige as a scientist*

*118.B: (samtidigt) but yes exactly*

*119.mm*

*120.B: But in the case of XXX then it has done it so that's just (5 sec)*

*121.S: Yes the question is what the difference is*



122.R: *What is it (dth) is writing*

123.S: *yees, That's what I hear in my circles (5 sec)*

124.I *first believed that he was you know more merited?*

125. *that it has grown like*

126.S: *He is also debating a lot of scientist questions*

127. *yes, I mean, it is not a..*

128. G: *It is also the activity Bodil Jönsson is carrying out at Certec and then that it gets to be a litle tribalism about it, that you work on helping aids for handicaps, so it is not only her roll in Fråga Lund*

In remark 112-128 B, R and S compare a woman and a man who have reached outside fame, but only the man has had the fortune to converge it into prestige inside academia.

### ***Access to prestige***

#### ***2. - How prestige is obtained***

Along the different interviews, the participants were identifying the mechanisms for which prestige is obtained. Now we present the results contained in variables, approaches and strategies.

#### **Variables**

Under this epigraph are included the elements that the interviewed considered key for the obtaining of prestige.

An outstanding place occuppies concepts like research, teaching and hard work:

Sp1

18. C: *I also believe that, then prestige in the research's field, prestige is also given to you more outside of Spain than in the very Spain, at least, us, my group that work in XXX, we have more prestige outside than inside, on the other hand prestige gives you a good teaching of the students, because with the dialogue, with the desire of continuing working in the laboratory and in research, (8 sec)*

19. P: *prestige is reached when one wants, for example there are people that want to have prestige and they look for it and to reach it or not to reach it, but I believe that (dth) work is what gives prestige (6 sec)*

20. C: *for me at least I know very few people that have worked a lot and that don't have prestige in their field, he/she can have more or less prestige but, I believe that yes, that prestige is reached.*

21. A: *What you have just said I am very much in agreement with, that for me at least it is easier, it is a personal experience, it is easier that they consider you prestigious outside of Spain than in Spain.*

22. C: *certainly I have it very proven*

23. *hi yes*

24. A: *completely, for the appointments, for the knowledge, for what they ask you, on the other hand in Spain they recognize you less. I don't know if it is my case or it is because we work in vertebrates, and here there will be people that work in XXX, but the thing is that when you go to international congresses, they recognize you, everybody know you, but here you go to a department of XXX and they recognize more the work in clinic or in medicine or in XXX (3 sec)*

It is shocking to check how professors in the Sp1 interview complain about the lack of recognition from their prestige at a national level, in contrast with the treatment received outside of Spain. In spite of it, in remark 19 and 20, they seem sure that it is possible to reach prestige if one proposes it.

In accordance with the data, certain consensus exists in considering that the key variables when speaking of prestige are, in this order, research, teaching, administration and human quality (see, for example, remarks 23 to 28 of Sp2). The inclusion of that fourth complementary variable “personal quality” gives an interesting shade when considering that that personal facet, although it is not measurable, is fundamental for “the integrity of a person prestige” (remark 23). They recognize that it is not the base of prestige, but that it “just put the icing on the cake ” (remark 23) (“acaba de redondear el prestigio”).

Nevertheless, we see that the interviewed they are aware that not all of the variables have the same force. That is, that a hierarchy of variables exists, in the zenith of which the researching activity seems to be placed, being the scientific productivity its main indicator:

## Sp2

80. D: *I believe that prestige, I fetch the University and the only way of measuring it fairly is with the productivity that you have had...*

81. S: *in that I agree*

82. D: *...teaching we will leave separated. Teaching doesn't give prestige. Prestige is given for well-done work during a certain time and when the international scientific community supports it. And then, good, people can believe or not believe or what ever, but if there is an objective thing that you can measure, people go acquiring prestige according to that.*

83. L: *of course, but You realize that of all the possibilities that we were seeing, you have focused on the research question*

84. D: *because it is the only one that is measurable*

85. C: *it is that even to get any position in the University, when does teaching count in the curriculum? You should have it, but then...*

86. L: *for that reason, for that reason I say it. Then it is that, of all the possibilities, neither the personal one, neither teaching, neither... it is researching.*

Nevertheless the intent of putting research above everything, even affirming that it “is the only one that is appraisable” (remark 84), some interviewed defend the good results of teaching for the obtaining of prestige and also –for being a very affectionate way of life - the personal satisfaction that it gives as much to the professors as to the students:

Sp1

143. A: *there are typically two actions that give prestige, one refers to the one that comes close to teaching and another is linked with the research tasks, those people that give good classes are granted a prestige, those that take their classes very seriously, to fulfil their obligation, this can be a concrete action, every time it is evaluated more, if one has not written anything, books or articles, she/he will have her/his notes in CD-ROM, he/she makes the students go into Internet to manipulate a didactic program, one can make a lot to delight the student, so that the student has the sensation that she/he is learning. It is more difficult to delight them in second grade than in fifth, well first of all because they are 120 in the classes of second course and only 30 in first*

144. P: *I totally agree on that it is more difficult in second. Prestige usually arrives to a reduced public (in your field of investigation), but in class you have the audience right at your face, a wider audience, you have the daily contact to transmit vocally and that gives fame to the professor, the well done teaching*

145. C: *You remember when we were students, there was after 5 days with a professor a feeling that you missed to be at home and with others no*

146. *the respect toward the professor from the student was important*

147. *it is noticeable the professor that dominates her/his matter*

148. A: *and then there were others who you didn't tolerate and after a while*

149. C: *you stopped going*

150. A: *or at least you went only for obligation*

151. *Good, then we agree: the well done teaching gives more verticality in the prestige (it sounds as a small thing to give classes), but you have to think a lot*

152. A: *That something that captures you arrives, that captures your curiosity, that one notices that behind 50 minutes of classes there are hours and hours working*

153. C: *There was a gentleman that had a lot of teaching prestige although he didn't publish and of course nobody know him abroad and the class was full*

As we see there might be a tendency to value teaching higher in Spain as compared to Sweden. Nevertheless all speak in terms of research or at least the visible results of research, the publications to be very important for prestige. In remark 20 one of the respondents tries to define aspects of academic life that might or might not give prestige:

SW1

20. G: *no, that's true there is a lot of other things that we do there is the lectures and so that it is also that you educate people to tutors and that can be very important though but it is not the education that gives prestige that you educate eh but it is more that if you get to get your name on a lot of paper oh that is like what is important, to be an author with a paper to be on a lot of documents so so that is entirely true here that you do as prefekt as I have done now in a lot of years yes but now it is a bigger institution with around XXX persons and then it's then you know afterwards that that is not exactly wise and afterwards it is such a coldness and you have missed afterwards with the research which is what you are doing now and then comes...it's empty around you..that is , that goes for both men and women who holds..as prefekter, there maybe are women more duty reliant*

21. R: *I was getting at that.*

22. S: *Mm*

23. R: *Are you bomb sure on this that you follow this criteria. I am sure that if you find a person that you will want to promote or more persons you want to promote then other criteria is of equal worth, so if you sum them then they are then you will probably get the same pay level and you get to ..a merit or what it could be about that takes into account the other things. I believe possibly that then when its granting for research then you are very follows exactly what the norm says but but this whole list that I had to fill in before the pay negotiation it had All aspects in it. It had the third assignment, it has exactly everything that you would think of*

In the example above we see that the respondents indicate that Co-authorship will give you prestige, but that it is a diversity of aspects that will give you a high salary. She is also describing some of the disadvantages of being a “prefekt” in academia. G, R and S also find that women are more “duty doing” than men, which could be a reason why they take responsibility as “prefekts” and other administrative posts. The phrase *it's empty around you... (är det tomt omkring en)* is difficult to give significance. Possibly she means that in order to get prestige it is necessary for the surroundings to be the opposite: full of people and with a great flow of communication. In remark 23 we see that if there is a connected group of people working for promotion, little can be done to avoid promoting this person. At

the end of the remark she is disapproving on a previous statement that the setting of the salary is subject mostly to international publications, citing and successfully conducted experiments.

Then the moderator let the last question draw the attention to concrete actions that might influence prestige. In the following remarks the respondents conclude that a certain level of “social competence” is needed to convert all the publications into prestige. Even if the man in question had headed a council, another of the prestige accruing conditions, according to the respondents he did it in a “non-social” way.

### SW1

499. Moderator: *This is the last questions now: Can you Are there any cOncrete actions you can take outside your institution to get prestige among the other academics?..*

500. B: *publish*

501. G: *well that depends on if you mean within the same field, if you mean in the same discipline, then to public more or to sit in some council*

502. *yes*

503. S: *so to come up with some discovery that opens something*

504. G: *yes exactly*

505. R: *it doesn't do it just to publish, we do have a (dth) at ours*

506. B: *No; no it has to be*

507. R: *who is getting so cited, very incredibly cited, but he does not have any prestige anywhere because he has never sat down and*

508. *he does not participate*

As we see in the above citation, publication is very important to prestige but it does however not work alone if one wants the maximum amount of prestige. They speak in terms of writing giving prestige and counselling giving prestige. They will also get more explicit and claim that writing and being public gives prestige. On the other hand writing without being public will not accrue prestige.

### Formal rules/criteria versus informal criteria

In this section it is analysed how the variables identified before are materialized in concrete approaches that it is necessary to complete to obtain prestige. Particularly interesting is to show the possible contradictions existing among the formal approaches (that the institution makes explicit) and the informal ones (non explicit, but fundamental), that is to say, between “theory and practice”.

Thus, the importance of informal factors -that are known among colleagues and that transcends the information that can be revealed from a curriculum vitae- is recognized, such as the personal coherence (see remark 25-37 of Sp1).

The contradiction among formal and informal factors was shown with special virulence in a moment of the interview Sp2:

Sp2

167. B: *yes, but many times also besides that, people have to know how to divulge it and to get it to be known of and know to communicate it. There are people that stay more in the anonymity because they don't cover that facet.*

168. S: *yes, but knowing how to divulge it sometimes also comes conditioned by the...*

169. B: *no, to publish, to publish*

170. S: *ah!*

171. B: *because, that is to say, for the papers yes, but then there are also other factors*

172. S: *but I don't know if always the prestige that you have mentioned, that I find the most coherent thing: the one that you can measure, there are times when it also costs to reach it depending on scientific politics that, for example, might be. Thus, know how to move in certain spheres, in certain communication spheres or in certain spheres that have more economic options, for example. Because prestige calls for prestige. Then you have more options of receiving resources, you have more scholarship holders, more people working and the more people, more productivity... And all that continues allowing you to ascend a little. And there are times in that it is not so easy. that Is, you can always reach prestige in a trajectory that has been mentioned here, that is to say, you try to work, to be coherent, to have a coherent line, a production,.. and then does that always lead to success? Because sometimes not, because maybe you did not know, I don't know if to divulge or to contact with the appropriate sphere so that that continues progressing.*

*Then maybe not everybody has reached that option of having that recognition that is reflected in an economy, we will say, to allow you that there are more people inside the group that can work with you or not; that you have more possibilities, that you have, instead of a national program, a program of much more span... There are times that I believe that not everybody has that option.*

173. D: *More spanning programs inside the European Union, those, international relationships in international congresses and so, that allow you to settle down inside what is to work in the UE and that the work that you do can be fitted into or to be inserted inside a group coordinated by someone. What happens is that many times one also has to realize that perhaps the line one takes is not inside the high-priority areas and if that won't be financed, of course perhaps it is convenient to see, with what one know how to operate, to try to look for what other things could have more succes in that moment. And that doesn't put your under an obligation to stop working, if you are very convinced that that is very important in basic science, because if you have financing you can do the other*

*thing and whatever you are doing. But do not become obstinate in doing a thing that the UE doesn't mark as high-priority line because therefore you will have complications to find financing.*

174. S: *yes, yes, clear*

175. D: *that is to know how to move.*

176. S: *that is it, that is it*

177. B: *no, but there already comes the...*

178. S: *apart from all that*

179. D: *it is necessary to do what we have to do and that part...*

180. S: *of seeing the option*

181. D: *no, look, we know some things and those things can be applied to many different lines. If you see that for a line the thing doesn't go well, if you are convinced you can maintain that line like "the silly son", you maintain it, but you look for another place where...*

182. S: *no, of course, that is what there is*

As we see, a certain confrontation took place among D, firm defender of the *official/meritocratic* line (the one that –we remember- she seems to be a representative of) according to which the important thing is research and the scientific production and B and, mainly, S who point out the determinant influences that informal factors have in those formal approaches. In remark 167, B recognizes the necessity to fulfil the formal factor of letting the public know about the work that is carried out, to know how to divulge it, fundamentally by means of its publication (remark 169). But quickly S remark that it is conditioned by informal factors as the dominant “interests of scientific policies”, to know “how to move in certain spheres” where having better access to media or economic resources is important. Then you can mount strong teams to increase the productivity of the work or to get wider research programs. S synthesizes the **feedback** of prestige very wisely in the expression: “prestige calls for prestige”. She also points out the difficulty that many times exists to access those privileged circles even when fulfilling the variables and factors we described before.

The reproach of the elitist position of D is clear when S affirms that “there are times that I believe that not everybody has that option”.

### Strategies to get prestige

The next step in our line of argumentation would be to check how those variables and approaches are developed by means of practical strategies.

Thus, it is recognized that there are concrete strategies. For example, to put your stakes on mobility, carrying out part of your career abroad and, if possible, with professionals of great prestige:

Sp1

116. A: *they do many times ask you for advice about what is the best thing to do, if to make the thesis outside Spain and then try to return to Spain, if to make the thesis in Spain and then to make a post doctoral outside Spain and then try to get reinstated in Spain, this type of advice they do request from you*

117. C: *very often*

118. P: *but they are punctual on*

119. A: *of course, but it is not*

120. P: *(meanwhile) certain things*

121. A: *not, how I will get prestige, they simply come close to what would give the touch that they like and nothing else*

122. P: *as all of us have done*

123. A: *I believe that*

124. P: *when we have seen*

125. A: *also when I have known people that have been working with somebody of real prestige, that is to say, an exceptional person, the year, two years, the time in that they have been with this person is always the best, and they have been marked, what they have learned simply of being beside that especially bright person as a researcher, because it is a luck to be able to be two years working besides someone that then later will be granted with the Nobel prize, I am speaking of this level now.*

Nevertheless what prevail are the typical recommendations appealing to the effort, the dedication, the seriousness, the well-done work (see remark 152-153 of Sp2) or even the "love of Science" (remarks 103 to 109 of Sp1).



## *Distribution of prestige*

### *3. - Who has prestige in Academia*

After we have shown that prestige is an important question inside the university world, we pass to consider its distribution and how it affects the different agents. We will now analyse how prestige is distributed inside the university institutions, who *possesses it* (which doesn't necessary imply that they “*have it*” as an essentialist gift), why they carry it and in what measure that determines the position that each one have in the academic hierarchy.

The contradictions observed among the mentioned aspects will take us to analyse the phenomenon from a gender perspective in the subsequent chapter.

We often see in the interviews that the respondents' talk about persons acting selfish and that this in turn will attribute them prestige.

Again the message they want to transmit to each other (and the moderator), is to think of oneself is good for academic prestige but against corporative ethos and the moral of the respondents.

It is also convenient to be considered an expert if one wants to get prestige as we see below:

SW1

149.G: *And it is admired*

150. *yes but*

151.G: *Certainly and then that you eh get to, that you are considered the expert and what we have now so*

152. *if you are a man yes*

153.G: *If you are a man, yes. Women there are supposedly none who behaves in that manner*

154.S: *Oh yes there are such, but they won't get the same prestige so to say*

155.G: *Noh*

156.B: *Yes, I actually believe that sadly, but I have to say that it is really those who have to stand in line there (dth)*

e that the actual distribution of prestige as seen by the female respondents does necessarily mean that does being an expert will accrue prestige, but more specifically that being a male expert will give you prestige, although the issue is contrasted.

There is thus a certain disagreement on if there is a gender issue to it or not. This aspect could be compared to the veiling between Scandinavian official gender neutrality and discrimination of women as we saw in the test focus group (SW0).

Moreover, they talk about men bragging more, and spending a lot of time on measuring their prestige. In specific, G gives the example of men telling openly

about their own results in citation analyses in SW1 remark 185-187. While they disapprove of bragging they meanwhile make a distinction between the duty people and the braggers. As we have seen earlier the duty people were often thought of as having a higher possibility of being women. In the 188-190 SW1 passages the professors are almost accusing the ones who make these analyses of their appearances in literature for not doing their duty and not being "responsible".

In the remarks 195-199 of SW1, G stresses that she is not really conscious about if what she is doing in her day to day life will give her prestige or not. She does come to the conclusion that administration will not accrue prestige to her.

SW1

*195.G: No, we have little positive view on this, no I wouldn't say. That it is a little, You do not really have the time to reflect upon if what you are doing is prestigious, not*

*196.G: And think that they are a bit silly almost those who keep on talking so much on prestige, even if it is then a reality of course that to be prefekt like I am now that is not prestigious, it only takes time and it is nice maybe because you meet nice people so*

*197.B: AND you get a whole lot of respect from those who have been in that situation before*

*198.G: yes oh yes*

On the phrasing of their words it seems like they use "respect" in a more restricted way than "prestige". Remark 198 is the second time that B mentions that you will get respect from a certain audience in the relation to the performance of a certain activity. In a later remark (205) G emphasises that if it is true that the persons who perform as "prefekt" will be respected it is only while they are doing this function. It immediately comes into mind that although some may recognize your face some time after you performed such an administrative task they, that is a larger audience, will not recall if the person in question did a good or bad task, as they were not in contact with this person for more than a punctual affaire. However if you have done any of the other actions that give you prestige, which are mentioned in the focus group (publications, sit in council or make an important contribution to science in terms of a discovery) the recognition of these actions are longer lasting as they are visible in posterior time. That is, evidently, once something is published, the audience will get reminded of this as soon as they see a reference to the publication. In the second case the other members of the council will remember that you were in this council after the sessions are over and as these members generally tends to have important positions in their particular field they are equally more important in terms of acceding prestige while performing as source (see theoretical chapter). The case of doing a great scientific discovery will have long-

lasting effects for the same reasons as publications, as they are documented as such, in the actual case of Biology, the discovery of a new specie will allow the discoverer to name the new specie and thereby be recorded. In their tone of voice (by for example looking up with an upset face after remark 195 SW1) it is noticeable that they disapprove of administration not accruing prestige. They are insinuating that

if administration gives less prestige then administration will become a woman's job.

### **A non meritocratic reality**

When the interviewed approach the topic of who have prestige they show that they are not necessarily the same people that occupy the highest places in the academic (formal) hierarchy. Even in remarks 64 to 69 of Sp1, they recognize –laughing- that although the prestige should be the key variable to determine the position that is occupied in the universities, the reality is that many times the institutional structures “don't allow the gifted people to arrive above”, in such a way that “valuable people [...] doesn't have any opportunity”.

Especially relevant is the fact that in spite of that they recognize and even denounce this situation, a posture of passive acceptance is observed, which seems to reflect certain impotence and distrust to the possibility that things could change.

***Experienced gender differences***

## Thematic Analysis Scheme

SPAIN 1			SPAIN 2			SWEDEN 1					
TOPICS	DEF	ACC	DIS	DEF	ACC	DIS	TOPICS	DEF	ACC	DIS	TOPICS
family/Work explanation			1		1		Personal situation				
Patriacal society			1			1	Male control		3		Measures vs duty people
Gender diff in academia			1			1	No gender discrim.				
N° of women/men teachers /prof			1			1	Glass roof				2 Duty people =won
					4	3	Politics/ wom not int.)				
						1	Biolog. aptitudes				1
						3	Future more wom witnesses				1
						1	Sexist stereotypes				1
						2	Wom don't compete				4 Bragging
						1	Sp situation better than EU				1 2 Men brag
						2	Wom arrive later				
								1	2		(Wom = adm) > (men = adm)

DEF = Definition of prestige

ACC = Access to prestige

DIS = Distribution of prestige

A first glance would tell us that the respondents talk quite a lot of gender differences, especially taking in to consideration that they were not at any point during the interviews proposed to talk about them. No questions were made in that direction, the moderator was in all cases a man and the only indicator of our interest in these affairs was our name of the network. The most common remark was that women and men prioritise differently between the different tasks in academic life. Across the national boundaries professors speak of basically three tasks in their day-to-day work: research, teaching and administration. They express that more prestige is attached to research, then teaching and finally administration. They say they value research and teaching before administration and in Sweden it seems like they put research higher than teaching. Nevertheless an important line of argument in the interviews is that women are more interested in teaching than men. In one of the interviews this discourse was presented as an antagonism between the academics that do their duty and give the doctoral students good training and “the measurers” who constantly pile up their merits in daily conversations with peers to measure their prestige. The respondents felt that women were comparably more frequent in the first group. A second argument observed is that because of equal opportunity measures implemented at the universities, like for example the recommendation to have at least one woman on the board, the few women full professors spend more time on committees, councils and other administration in comparison to men. Neither men nor women give excessive priority to administration, but women can sometimes feel a greater obligation, as their sex would otherwise not be presented. Obviously by attending these two priorities, teaching and administration, it leaves these women less time to work on the most prestigious task: research.

Also the respondents on various occasions express their nonconformity with the fact that teaching is a minor prestige giving action.

### *Ethnographic analysis-*

Basically the thematic content analysis has the advantage of, being in essence a quantitative approach, giving us an overview of the documents. We will however also need to get an understanding of “how” the respondents talk of the content. The analysis that follows will show how topical trajectories and meaning making develop illustrated by a range of citations from the material.

We observe a dialectical way of treating gender differences: The participants’ talks of a particular gender difference but immediately afterwards talk of the incident as though it could have happened to both women and men.

---

## Sp2 - five participants

*Remark 129. L: I was thinking now...Why do you think there are so few women in the Real Academia? I was thinking about the thing yesterday with Margarita Salas. You go to the Reales Academias and how many women are there?*

*130. D: Well that is, I think, answered with all that has been said before. For all these reasons: because we arrived later; that there also is a certain degree of politics or a high degree of politics to it. It depends on the Academias, in some there is less and in others there is all politics. And we [women] normally do not play at that.*

*131. S: No, we're not interested. We're not overly interested, at the time being.*

*132. D: No, no. We are always putting other priorities higher than that one. And as for now, we don't waste the time in...that's true*

*133. S: Yes, it's true, yes. That is, that the leading positions, the positions where the prestige is measured by society are not occupied by women*

*134. B: that is true*

*135. D: but much of the blame for that we have ourselves [women]. Because we are not competing*

*136. B: because in many situations we don't compete because we are not interested*

*137. S: exactly*

*138. L: It's that, that is the question*

Here we have an example of how the participants come to terms on how public positions with high status are politicised and object to behaviour of high competition. We see how D in remark 130 first vaguely is suggesting that such elections are politicised and when she finds understanding in the group she confirms it and strengthens the argument. The participants seem to find a very high degree of understanding although, or maybe because of that they don't define exactly what competition is.

## Sp1- three participants

*Remark 68. A: right on, there could be people who are comfortably installed as an public servant without doing anything during a long period, without doing anything in the sense of nothing more than giving their classes and that's it and nevertheless really valuable people with published investigations and they don't get a chance*

*69. P: and they will never be able to, surprisingly, now it is how they organise the chairs in university, in the academic world the scholarships.*

70. *A: (simultaneously) in these, in these universities, in this institution, you notice, that it's like, we are six, we are here, six full professors, (difficult to hear), and how many lecturers are there? 200? Yes, easily*
71. *P: yes, I'll, possibly*
72. *A: if they are not 200 at least more than 100*
73. *C: women?*
74. *A: full time*
75. *P: more than men!*
76. *A: many more!*
77. *P: many full time more Many more*
78. *A: right now we are 22 in staff and I think that women full time lecturers say 15 or so*
79. *P: see the monumental disproportion, but that comes back to causes, in my point of view very difficult to analyse, very difficult and very complex*
- 80. A: as you say very complex but certainly by prestige it is not how it is organised in academia...**

quote it is interesting to see how the linking of duty people and women goes without saying. In remarks 68 and 69 A and P make no connection what so ever of people with low position and high prestige and women and haven't done so in the preceding of the interview. In line 70 there is a turn in the argumentation and the link is not explicit but goes without saying and it is emphasized how few women are full professors in comparison with lecturers. The repetitious dialogue in remarks 71-78 underscores the importance of the matter.

Sw1- four participants Remark 327. *G: no, no ha, no so that's so...but I think that the men, I say, they compete much*

*More in the university, or maybe whatever activity men are in, then men compete much more against one another, and that is clear, the prestige is where you are in the hierarchy, where you are best, second best and so on, and I don't wonder in these terms, I wouldn't say that, that you*

328. *B: but at the same time you could rank exactly right whom*

329. *G: Yes, yes*

330. *B: the closest you get to five etc if you were given someone*

331. *G: yes, yes if I was forced to do so*

332. *B: then you could rank them according to prestige, then you could do it exactly when*

333. *G: that's right*

As we said before a dialectical way of dialoguing is used very frequently between the participants. Here G's statement is with great accordance contrasted with B's statement. They argue that women do not think in terms of where they are in the hierarchy of prestige nor do they "wonder in these terms", as in remark 327, but at the same time G most admit that if she was forced to, she would easily recognize and describe exactly the prestige hierarchy in her field, as in the remains of the quote.

During the interviews as I mentioned it the interest of the participants to highlight the situation of inequality existent about gender was clear.

The situation is manifested with clarity in the proportion of lecturers and full professors according to their gender as we saw in Sp1 remarks 70-78.

That situation is also confirmed for the presence of women in congresses, conferences and national and international debate forums (remarks 110-114 of Sp2).

And all this despite, as the own interviewees recognize, that there are many more women than men among the students, and even among the lowest levels among the academic staff (Sp2, remarks 190-204).

### **Causes provided by the interviewed**

The participants begin to identify the causes of the difficulties that women find to ascend in the academic hierarchy, that is to say, the explanations of the glass roof, although they recognizes themselves that it obeys to very complex situations and that it is a phenomenon very difficult to analyse (remarks 79-81 of Sp1).

An outstanding place occupies the explanations that we can consider traditional, as the importance of personal factors derived of family environments or social factors of patriarchal type (Sp1, remarks 82-92). Related with that, but already bounded to the university world, it is also mentioned the permanence of sexist stereotypes (remarks 115-117 of Sp2). And, finally, factors derived of the power control that men continue exercising inside and outside of the academic institution (remarks 125 and 126 of Sp2).

But perhaps the most powerful analysis is the one that is encircled to causes that we could define as endogenous of the gender variable. From this perspective, which is less social and more psycho-biological, the focus of attention goes to the different conception of prestige that men and women have, which is decisive for the position of goals, objectives and strategies:



## Sp2

30. L: *it is that I also it is there, in the personal facet, where, if later we could enter to differentiate gender, where I believe that the difference influences more*

31. S: *I don't agree, I don't agree at all.*

32. L: *don't interpret me bad, I don't say at the level of prestige, I say at the level of a series of aptitudes that, for me, from a biologist's point of view, that I know that men and women's brains are not the same and therefore we don't have in general the same personal tendencies, neither the same aptitudes, neither the same objectives, we don't look for the same things. I believe that there, on that aspect I believe that it impacts in a certain moment...*

33. B: *"Yes" to that we have certain goals or not, because we don't have them as objectives*

34. L: *although that is a personal opinion, because I believe that this influences in the character, in general, of women it isn't a prestige understood in a certain way, that is to say, of getting... such, but rather it is to do a well done work, but without a search excessively focussed on end up being [important]. Which that, in a majority of men, for ideological or cultural features or whatever, is more focused on that. Then I believe that this aspect is something that, you want it or not, differentiates us a little bit.*

35. D: *I believe that it was like that some years ago, but not now. Now girls that enters the market, almost, almost, have the same restlessness as the boys. And I believe that they can be as much fighters as them.*

36. L: *I am not thinking in terms of being fighters*

37. B: *because I believe that we are more fighters*

38. L: *I am thinking as high-priority objectives. Then I think that women have some priorities that are not the same as those of men and that this, you want it or not, differentiates the obtained goals*

39. D: *I agree*

40. B: *me too*

41. D: *I see myself reflected in what you have just said*

So it isn't that women feel less prepared or less willing to compete, it is that they are not willing to pursue a high post only for the status that it provides. Their *raison d'être* is for the satisfaction of the well-done work and the professional and personal realization (remarks 45-48 of Sp2). This is captured with rotundity when, in remark 103 of Sp2, B affirms that it "didn't enter in our goals. That is all". S and C totally agree with her in this issue.

A complete synthesis of all these explanatory reasons is revealed by the interviewed in the following fragment:

## Sp2

129. L: *I was thinking now... why do you think that there are so few women in the Real Academy? I am thinking of that yesterday with Margarita Salas. You go to the Real Academies and how many women are there?*

130. D: *Well that is, I think, answered with all that has been said before. For all these reasons: because we arrived later; that there is also a certain degree of politics or a high degree of politics to it. It depends on the Academies, in some there is less and in others it is all politics. And we [women] normally do not play at that.*

131. S: *No, we're not interested. We're not overly interested, at the time being.*

132. D: *No, no. We are always putting other priorities higher than that one. And as for now, we don't waste the time in...that's true*

133. S: *Yes, it's true, yes. That is, that the leading positions, the positions where the prestige is measured by society are not occupied by women*

134. B: *that is true*

135. D: *but much of the blame for that we have ourselves [women]. Because we are not competing*

136. B: *because in many situations we don't compete because we are not interested*

137. S: *exactly*

138. L: *It's that, that is the question*

### *Concluding remarks*

As a conclusion, we would, first of all, like to point out a remark about the chosen methodology. In our opinion, the potential power of Focus Groups Interviews –and, in particular, of the thematic and ethnographic analyses- to study phenomena like the one that has been developed here has been demonstrated. However, we have to admit that it would be desirable to have had more time and resources to organize a more extensive and deeper investigation that, with no doubts, would provide us clearer outcomes. Thus, this work must be seen as an early and partial departure that draws a line we would be delighted to follow in the future. Despite of the rather small collection of data, relevant conclusions can be extracted of the work.

It is perceived that, despite of the remarkable differences existing in the conception of what prestige is -depending of the scientific field, the audience, the individual characteristics - it is clear that the concept is not experienced as being the same inside and outside of the Academia. Thus, we can affirm that there is a “social” prestige, close to concepts as fame or popularity, and an authentic “professional” prestige, that they don’t find easy to separate. This difference conducts, in the professors’ opinion, to quite a few injustices about recognition of trajectories and sometimes causes considerable resentment. The prestige we are interested in, the second one, we can define as “the recognition of the colleagues in the field”.

It is more complicated to point out how that prestige is believed to be obtained. However, it seems that there is consensus about the key variables for obtaining prestige, and we have been even able to establish the following descending hierarchy: 1) research, 2) teaching, 3) administration, 4) human quality.

Some factors were identified too, which importance in relation with prestige is marginal, like “being in politics” (can give power, but no prestige) and personal situations.

So, the concrete actions that give professors prestige is the well-done, serious, coherent work, always combined with the ingredients that it is known how to popularise it by publications and divulgation. Here is where the informal elements as “know how to move” appear, being determinant in the feed-back effect “prestige calls for prestige”: a well popularised productions give resources to get a higher productivity that in turn will provide a even higher and better production, that will

give more resources etc. By the interviews it is clear that not everybody have the opportunity to travel in this fundamental positive ring.

Specifically that amount of conditions and barriers are determinant in the distribution of prestige in the Academia, where a non meritocratical reality – marked by the perversion of the relation between “prestige/status” by “power/status”- prevails What.

The focus group interviews also offers us the possibility to watch the “style of debating” used between full professors. The metaphors were widely shared across national boundaries among the respondents and for instance the description of the field in which the agents publish, teach or administer (in this order) as a “market”. It is also observed that the professors widely discuss by using a dialectical idiom. An insecure respondent put up a dialectical set of possibilities as a suggestion to the others and if only one option or grouped options are set up, a dialectical possibility is presented by one of the other respondents. The often maintained prejudice that very educated people, like the respondents in our sample, talk in general terms is contrasted by the evidence. Very often the professors used concrete examples to precise what they were talking about. The mere election of the examples is evidently also an indicator of where the intra-scientific prestige discussions are moving.

Finally, we observe some women suffer this situation mainly, being contrasted by the existence of the “glass roof”. The respondents offer some explanations to this scenery, from biological reasons to the persistence of patriarchal relationships, including the remarkable fact that women aren’t interested or disposed to compete for prestige if it doesn’t imply personal and professional satisfaction. However, all of them seem to be convinced of that this situation of gender inequity tends to reform quickly and that it will be overcome in a close future.

***Literature***

Catalyst and Boston College Center for Work and Family, *Leaders in a Global economy*, 2003

Bassey, Michael: *Case study research in educational settings*, Open University Press, Philadelphia, 1999.

Bengtsson, Lars: *Att arbeta med case*, Liber Ekonomi, Malmö, 1999.

Poulsen, Christian: *Prestige in academia – a glance at the gendered distribution* (title not fixed), dissertation, forthcoming

Poulsen, Christian: *Statistical Profile of Women in the Austrian Higher Education System - Good statistics could get better*, Muenster 2002

Poulsen, Christian: *Austria's System of Higher Education*, Training Paper 01/06, Muenster, 2001

Poulsen, Christian: *Questionnaire on work conditions for full professors in Europe- The Swedish case*, Muenster, forthcoming

Vazquez Cupeiro, Susana: Not fixed, *Training Paper IV*, Muenster, forthcoming

Wilkinson, Sue: "Focus group methodology: a review", in *Int. J. of Social Research Methodology*, 1998, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 181-203.

Yin, Robert K.: *Applications of case study research*, SAGE, Thousand Oaks, California, 1993.

Lectures:

Bohnsack, Ralf, *WEU-workshop in Muenster 22/6-2002*, "The documentary method – Exemplified by the Interpretation of Group Discussions".

Bob, Emerson, *WEU-workshop in Lund 6/10-2001*, Conference Paper 01/07, "Ethnographic Field Work", Muenster, 2001

Fratczak-Rudnicka, Barbara, *WEU-training session in Warsaw 3/4-2001*, "Qualitative research methods".

Wibeck, Victoria: *WEU-workshop in Lund 6/10-2001*, "Focus Groups".

## TRAINING PAPERS

### - *Research Phase 1: Contextual Analysis* -

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Serial no.</b>
Jessica Bösch	The Integration of Women in Austria's Universities	TP 00/01
Susana Vázquez-Cupeiro	The System of Higher Education in the UK	TP 01/01
Anett Schenk	The System of Higher Education in Sweden	TP 01/02
Stéphane Portet	Higher Education System : Poland's Main Facts	TP 01/03
Lisa McGurk	The French Higher Education System	TP 01/04
Agnieszka Majcher	Women in German Higher Education	TP 01/05
Christian Poulsen	Austria's System of Higher Education	TP 01/06
Jessica Bösch	Women in Spanish Universities	TP 01/07

### - *Research Phase 2: Statistical Analysis* -

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Serial no.</b>
Susana Vázquez-Cupeiro	Are Women the creeping "Proletariats" of British Academia? – A Statistical Portrait	TP 02/01
Anett Schenk	Women in Swedish Higher Education – A Statistical Overview	TP 02/02
Stéphane Portet	Women in Polish Academia – A Statistical Overview	TP 02/03
Agnieszka Majcher	Women's inroads into German Academia	TP 02/04
Christian Poulsen	Statistical Profile of Women in the Austrian Higher Education System	TP 02/05
Jessica Bösch	Enough Women in Spanish Academia?	TP 02/06

Emanuelle  
Latour

A Statistical Analysis of Gender Inequality in  
French Academia

TP 02/07

*- Research Phase 3: Survey -*

*- Research Phase 4: Case Studies -*

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Serial no.</b>
Susana Vázquez- Cupeiro and Juan Martín Fernández	Career Trajectories and “Patriarchal Support Systems” in Spanish Academia – A Quantitative Approach	TP 03/01
Susana Vázquez- Cupeiro	and A Qualitative Review of the University in Spain – Meritocracy, Endogamy and the Gendered Opportunity Contexts	
Anett Schenk and Holger Krimmer	Academic Careers in German Higher Education	TP 03/02
Anett Schenk	Female Professors in Sweden and Germany	TP 03/03
Agnieszka Majcher	Gender and Academic Careers in Cross-national Perspective: Preliminary Results from a WEU Survey in Poland and Germany and Deepest Secret: Talking gender Discrimination with Polish Professors	TP 03/04
Daniel Bjerstedt	Women’s catch 22: Reaching the Top in an Academic Career	TP 03/05
Christian Poulsen	Questionnaire on Work Conditions for Full Professors in Europe: The Swedish Case and	TP 03/06
Christian Poulsen and Juan Martín Fernández	Professors talk on Prestige: The Case of Sweden and Spain	
Emmanuelle Latour and Stéphane Portet	Gender and Career paths in French Universities: an E-mail Survey and Building Networks in French Academia	TP 03/07
Beata Zawadzka	From social role to self-identity. A Cross-national study on PH.D.- students’ representation of the “Academe” and “Sexual Harassment”	TP 03/08
Lydia Buchholz	Professorship and Gender at Austrian Universities – An Analysis of Gender-specific Differences among Female and Male Professors and	TP 03/09



	Work Situation and Career Perspectives of the Junior Faculty in Austria	
Tanja Kreetz	Female Researchers in Public Non-University Research Institutions in Germany and Work situations and Career Perspectives of Female Researchers in Austria	TP 03/10
Jessica Bösch	Is Academia still an attractive Career Opportunity for both Women and Men? The new employment law in Austria from the new generation of Academics' Perspective	TP 03/11
Dagmar Ortner	Female Immigrants in Austrian Higher Education	TP 03/12
Miranda Leontowitsch and Susana Vázquez-Cupeiro	"Above the Glass Ceiling?" Preliminary Report of Postal Survey of University Professors in the UK and "Merit, Luck, and a good Nanny?" Exploring the Intricacies in the Career Trajectories of Women Academics in Psychology and Engeneering	TP 03/13