Gender Inequalities in British and German Universities: A Quantitative Study

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The aim of this paper was to explore perceived similarities and differences between male and female academics in the higher education systems of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the United Kingdom (UK). It was based upon questionnaire responses from 387 respondents of whom 38 per cent were male and 62 per cent female. The contribution of female academics was much valued in the workplace, and very few employees had experienced gross forms of bullying and harassment at work. However, women were self-deprecating about their ability to network and strategise for career advancement. Men and women colleagues had mutually positive perceptions of each other in several important respects, and there was a certain convergence in their accepted norms and values which could indicate an erosion of binary gender structures and hierarchies in academe. A large majority believed that more needs to be done to remedy inequalities arising from maternity leave and child bearing and that their universities were still gendered organisations with few women at the top.

"[M]ost people who experience unfair disadvantage do so because they are female, or black, or disabled, or gay, or old (and any combination of those)." University and College Union[2]

1 Background to the Study and Research Questions

Gender equality is a major policy objective for the European Union. The Bologna Declaration of 1999 set out the objective of achieving a European Higher Education Area with mutually recognised, harmonising qualifications based on a three-cycle structure of bachelor-master-doctorate. It was progressively supplemented by other communiqués to include a Social Dimension which was emphasised as an integral part of the Bologna Process at Prague in 2001, Bergen in 2005, and more recently London in 2007. The Social Dimension aims at equity and *equality of opportunity*, including *gender in higher education*, and makes these a goal for universities throughout Europe.[3] The concept of Gender Mainstreaming has been adopted by the European

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[2] http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/d/4/eqreview_interimreport.pdf The Equalities Review: Interim report for consultation. Response from the University and College Union (UCU), accessed 13.8.2009.

[3] http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/actionlines/socialdimension.htm The Social Dimension of the Bologna Process, accessed 12.8.2009.

Union (EU). A commonly accepted definition by the United Nations Economic and Social Council states that:

"Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality".[4]

The Fourth Action Programme (1996–2000) on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men featured mainstreaming as its most important element and called for it to be incorporated into all community policies and activities.[5] It is clear from the above that equality for *men* is also a policy target, and that equal, fair structures must apply to both genders: the United Nations (UN) Population Fund declares gender equality a *human right* and sets its face against reverse discrimination. The Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men has also devoted specific attention to the question of men and gender equality. The main objective of its activities around this issue is to draw attention to and initiate a debate about the fact that gender equality cannot be achieved by women alone, but by women and men working together.[6]

The present study undertakes an analysis of gender perceptions among academics in British and German universities. These represent two seminal models of higher education with two very different career structures. In the UK, there is a career ladder of tenured lectureships before professorships, whereas in Germany, the rank of professor is the main career grade, and one *normally* has complete a post-doctoral thesis (*Habilitation*) in a fixed-term position and then "jump" to one's first full professorship. Note, however, that this qualification is more important in some disciplines than in others – in Engineering, it is not important. It is not always possible to match UK and FRG data year by year, because one country sometimes lags behind the other in publication of its statistics. In the UK, the proportion of female professors was 17.5 % in 2006/2007, and reached 18.7 % in 2007/2008; 38.6 % of senior lecturers and re-

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[4] United Nations. "Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997". A/52/3.18 September 1997, accessed 18.8.2009.

[5] Jean Monnet Working Papers, http://www.jeanmonnetprogram.org/papers/00/000201-03.html, accessed 1.4.2010

[6] http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/equality/08._men_and_gender_equality/096_EG(2002)07.asp#TopOfPage Promoting gender equality: a common issue for women and men. Compilation of Council of Europe texts dealing with the question of men and gender equality 1995–2000, accessed 13.8.2009.

searchers were female, as were 47.9 % of lecturers.[7] In Germany, the highest professorial salary grade is designated C4 (for new employees "W3" with revised terms and conditions of service): in 2006 the proportion in these top categories was 11 %, having doubled between 1993 and 2004.[8] Comparisons for 2004 show the UK with almost 16 % of female professors, and the FRG with 9.2 % which demonstrates that rapid progress has recently been made in the FRG.[9] Pay in Germany is normally individually negotiated for professors; figures are not held and compared in the same way as in the UK, so there is not full transparency. However, in the UK, equal pay *is* an issue. The gap between average pay for female academics compared with their male colleagues is narrowing, albeit slowly. There has been a small decline in inequality from 15.6 % in 1999–2000 to just over 14 % from 2003–2006.[10] The largest gaps (18.5 %) are at the research intensive universities (the "Russell Group"), and the smallest at specialist colleges (5.6 %).[11] Positional inequality and pay are two of the most salient forms of gender inequality, and in this paper, we shall try to find answers to the following questions:

- How do participants define professional "success"?
- What are the perceived similarities and differences between male and female academics in the workplace?
- What is the perceived effect of university equality legislation designed to remedy unfair practices in the workplace?
- To what extent are women academics believed to be making a valuable contribution in their workplace?

2   Methodology

The research was based upon questionnaires consisting of 100 statements with four response options ranging through Strongly Agree (SA)/ Agree (A)/ Disagree (D)/ Strongly Disagree (SD). A neutral option was consciously avoided. The instrument was piloted on samples in the UK and the FRG similar to the target sample for the main study, using people in a variety of academic positions from fixed term staff to Deans and Heads of Departments. The types of institutions chosen were full universities in

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[7] http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/content/view/1397/161/ Higher Education Statistics Agency Press Release 131, accessed 12.8.2009.

[8] http://www.cews.org/statistik/hochschulen.php?aid=50&cid=18 Percentages of Women: *Habilitationen*, new professorial appointments, professorships and highest salary grade professorial appointments, accessed 11.8.2009.

[9] http://www.cews.org/statistik/hochschulen.php?aid=51&cid=18

[10] http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/d/t/ucu_genderpaygap96-06.pdf UK academic staff gender pay gaps and average salaries 1995–6 to 2005–6 & HEI data for 2005–6. University and College Union, accessed 11.8.2009;

[11] http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/h/9/ucu_genderpay05-06.pdf Gender pay gaps and higher education institutions 2005–6, University and College Union, accessed 13.8.2009.

Germany (excluding Applied Sciences higher education institutions (HEIs; *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften*)) and pre-1992 universities in the UK. Four subject areas were covered: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects; Economics and Business Studies; Humanities; and Social Sciences. These subject groupings emanate from the research of *Becher (1989)* on academic groupings and associated sub-cultures which has become an influential model, recently re-edited and re-issued *(Becher and Trowler, 2001)*. Certain items were refined, supplemented or eliminated on the basis of the pilot study. The questionnaire data from the main study were entered into SPSS. Frequencies and percentages were calculated, and the results were broken down by country and by gender. At first these were performed on a four point scale; later the results were dichotomised into the combined categories of Strongly/Agree (S/A) and Strongly/Disagree (S/D) thereby creating independent categories. Chi square tests (2X2) were then calculated on valid cases only (i.e. excluding missing values) to determine whether the differences were statistically significant. Not all the statements have been tabulated as this would make for an over-complex and over-long presentation: some findings are reported in prose form.

3   Description of the Sample

There were 387 respondents of whom ten people did not give their gender. Of the 377 who did provide this information, 38 % were male and 62 % female; 49 % were from the UK and 51 % from Germany, so the sample was well balanced between the two countries. Table 1 gives details of the respondents' employment status or career grade. 12 % of the total sample had special posts such as Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellor, Dean, Head of a School or Institute; 59 % had tenure, whereas 41 % did not. Of the 41 % who did not have tenure, about three quarters were on fixed term contracts of three years or less. Approximately half of those who did have tenure had been employed for up to ten years, and about three quarters for up to 20 years. So the profile of the respondents was that many of the tenured staff had had long experience of academe, and some were very senior in position. Asked to give details of their personal and family lives, 47 % stated that they had children, though 7 % of the sample chose not to give information about their families. The overwhelming majority (84 %) had a life partner, either within or outside marriage, and of those who were not "partnered", only 14 claimed *never* to have had one even in the past. Therefore, most had experience of close personal relationships whether legally formalised or not.

Table 1: Employment contract or career grade

	Frequency	per cent
Contract Researcher	70	20
Doctoral Student	52	15
Postdoctoral Researcher	45	13
Lecturer	111	31
Senior Lecturer	20	6
Professor	50	14
Other	9	3
Total	**357**	**100**
Non response	30	
	387	

4 Presentation of the Findings

4.1 How do participants define professional "success"?

In table 2 below, the S/A responses are given first and are followed by the S/D responses. As it shows, most people (UK & FRG, Male (M) & Female (F)) believed that becoming a full professor was the ultimate criterion of success, and this academic grade was regarded as much more important than an administrative promotion such as becoming a Head of School or Dean. A large minority of women believed that men are more strategic than females in managing their careers (M 12 %: F 48 % S/A), and endorsed the option that they themselves "need to behave *the same* as men in order to succeed" though by comparison not so many men thought that this was true (M 14 %: F 37 % S/A).

Of the sample as a whole, 77 % (including almost twice a large a percentage of women as of men (M 27 %: F 50 %)) rejected the statement: "I find it rewarding to do administration"; the Germans rejected it particularly *strongly* (UK 35 % and FRG 42 %). Asked whether they would prefer to leave academe altogether and do a different job, over 79 % strongly disagreed; but 14 % of the German sample compared with 7 % of the British sample *did* indicate that they would like to embark upon another career (Untabulated (UT)). Both countries and both genders believed that they had good prospects of success in the future, but somewhat more of the UK respondents were confident that they had "already achieved significant career goals" (UK 39 %: FRG 35 % S/A UT). About two thirds of the sample disagreed that females adopt submissive attitudes towards authority (No significant difference (NSD) between countries) but 27 % of the women themselves compared with only 7 % of male colleagues did *accept* the statement (thereby showing self-criticism? (UT)).

Table 2: Success and career management

Positive response tendencies		UK S/A*	FRG S/A	χ^{2**}	male S/A	female S/A	χ^2
Becoming a full professor is the ultimate indicator of professional success.	64 %	113 30 %	129 34 %	.24 NSD	84 23 %	152 41 %	.15 NSD
Men are more strategic than women in managing their careers.	60 %	101 27 %	122 33 %	.13 NSD	44 12 %	174 48 %	.00
Women need to behave the same as men in order to succeed.	51 %	85 23 %	103 28 %	.21 NSD	50 14 %	135 37 %	.00
Negative response tendencies		**UK S/D**	**FRG S/D**	χ^2	**male S/D**	**female S/D**	χ^2
I find it rewarding to do administration.	77 %	132 35 %	157 42 %	.04	100 27 %	186 50 %	.01
I would prefer to leave higher education and embark upon another career.	79 %	155 41 %	141 38 %	.00	122 33 %	168 46 %	.02
Females tend to adopt submissive attitudes towards those higher up.	66 %	126 34 %	116 32 %	.10 NSD	111 31 %	128 35 %	.00

*Items are listed under S/A if the percentages for the sample total 50 % or more; otherwise they are listed under S/D. The total percentages for S/A or S/D are given after each statement.

**Probabilities are given in this column, and NSD represents No Significant Difference in the probability figure.

4.2 What are the similarities and differences between male and female academics in the workplace?

If quite a lot of women think that they need to behave *the same* as men in order to succeed, it may be worth exploring perceived similarities and differences between the genders in the workplace.

4.2.1 Emotionality and caring

It is often said that women are specialised in the affective domain and may be marginalised by funnelling them into pastoral care roles *(Toller et al., 2004)*, therefore the respondents were asked whether male academics can perform the caring role as well as female academics. Table 3 shows that it was the British who agreed much more strongly that this was indeed the case (UK 43 %: FRG 35 % S/A). Significantly more women than men expressed agreement that men could "care" too, so clearly females do not believe that their male colleagues are necessarily lacking in emotional intelligence. Asked furthermore whether women are just as emotionally robust as men, again the British tended to agree more than the Germans (NSD between the genders here). The majority of the sample did *not* believe that "women care more about good personal relations within the department" (in fact 59 % of the whole sample *dis*-agreed).

Table 3: Caring and emotionality

Positive response tendencies		UK S/A*	FRG S/A	χ^{2**}	male S/A	female S/A	χ^2
Male academics can perform the caring role as well as men.	78 %	163 43 %	131 35 %	.00	122 33 %	157 45 %	.01
Women academics are emotionally just as robust as men.	77 %	158 42 %	134 35 %	.00	115 31 %	170 46 %	.26 NSD
Negative response tendencies		**UK S/D**	**FRG S/D**	χ^2	**male S/D**	**female S/D**	χ^2
Women care more about good personal relations within the department.	59 %	108 29 %	110 30 %	.46 NSD	106 29 %	110 30 %	.00

4.2.2 Professional values

As the first two items in table 4 indicate, the Germans, both male and female, attached much greater importance to interpersonal capabilities than the British. And somewhat surprisingly, far fewer people in the FRG accepted that "In research, … men and women should be judged by a single standard" (UK 37 %: FRG 17 %). Over one third of Germans (FRG 35 % UT) and a similar percentage of females (F 35 % UT) actually *disagreed* with this statement. The proportions in the sample as a whole accepting that "women academics have embraced male values in academe" were almost equally balanced (S/A 49 %: S/D 51 %) though women did accept this statement significantly more readily than men (M 15 %: F 34 % UT). A small majority rejected the notion across countries that women and men have distinctive ways of approaching research or teaching.

Table 4: Professional values

Positive response tendencies		UK S/A*	FRG S/A	χ^{2**}	male S/A	female S/A	χ^2
The ability to communicate is as important as high-grade research success in my subject.	74 %	121 32 %	158 42 %	.00	103 28 %	170 46 %	.90 NSD
The ability to get along with human beings is vital for academic success in my area.	64 %	108 28 %	139 36 %	.01	97 26 %	144 38 %	.26 NSD
In research, I firmly believe that men and women should be judged by a single standard.	54 %	140 37 %	65 17 %	.00	103 28 %	95 26 %	.00
Negative response tendencies		**UK S/D**	**FRG S/D**	χ^2	**male S/D**	**female S/D**	χ^2
Women academics have embraced male values in my discipline.	51 %	92 25 %	996 26 %	.40 NSD	78 22 %	105 29 %	.02
Women and men have distinctive ways of approaching teaching.	53 %	105 28 %	92 25 %	.38 NSD	97 26 %	99 27 %	.00
Women and men have distinctive ways of approaching research.	61 %	117 31 %	110 30 %	.14 NSD	107 29 %	118 32 %	.00

4.2.3 Teaching and research

The following items show no significant difference either on cross-country comparison or on gender comparison:

■ *"My students and the quality of my teaching are more important to me than promotion."* (UK/ FRG and M/F: 57 % agreed with this statement)

■ *"Teaching is my highest professional priority."* (UK/ FRG and M/F: 74 % disagreed)

■ *"Research is my highest professional priority."* (UK/ FRG and M/F: 54 % disagreed)

■ *"Research and teaching are equally important to me."* (UK/ FRG and M/F: 59 % agreed)

■ *"There are more rewards for research than for teaching."* (UK/ FRG and M/F: 88 % agreed)

Most people rejected either teaching or research as their highest priority though they did attach considerable importance to their teaching. They wanted a balance between the two functions, and were very clear where the rewards lie (in research).

As table 5 shows, there was much stronger agreement in Germany that men have dominated their disciplinary field historically, and continue to do so right up to the present day. The majority did not think that there were satisfactory structures in place to support junior women scholars, but nor did they agree either that research investment tends to privilege men: 66 % of the overall sample rejected this proposition. Research was perceived predominantly as a competitive business: 57 % disagreed that it was cooperative, including over a third of the women; and the females believed to a greater extent than the males that "Competition in research reinforces the dominance of men" (M 13 %: F 33 % UT).

Table 5: Gender influences in teaching and research

Positive response tendencies		UK S/A	FRG S/A	χ^2	male S/A	female S/A	χ^2
Historically men have tended to dominate in my subject.	89 %	145 39 %	188 50 %	.00	123 33 %	209 56 %	.17 NSD
Even now, the leaders in my subject still tend to be male.	80 %	126 33 %	179 47 %	.00	106 28 %	194 52 %	.03
Negative response tendency		UK S/D	FRG S/D	χ^2	male S/D	female S/D	χ^2
There are structures in place to support women in junior positions in my subject area.	58 %	110 30 %	105 28 %	.11 NSD	62 17 %	150 41 %	.00
The way we pursue our discipline is predominantly cooperative rather than competitive.	57 %	102 27 %	107 30 %	.59 NSD	76 21 %	128 36 %	.82 NSD
Research investment tends to privilege men.	66 %	112 31 %	126 35 %	.50 NSD	112 32 %	122 34 %	.00

4.2.4 Networking, academic sponsorship and role modelling

As table 6 shows, there was strong agreement overall (86 %) that in order to get promotion, it is essential to have a good network, but as the figures demonstrate, significantly more Germans agreed that this was so (UK 39 %: FRG 47 %); and a larger minority of them considered that it is more difficult for women than for men to develop a good network (UK 20 %: FRG 27 % S/A UT). It is worthy of note that 36 % of the females strongly agreed with this statement. A majority (62 %) agreed that senior male academics are good at encouraging women staff but many (54 %) also perceived some of them as quite sexist: it seems that positive and negative perceptions co-exist in the workplace. It was the UK participants who were more conscious of positive role models in their subject areas for younger female academics (UK 38 %: FRG 33 %); more women than men felt that this was the case. Perceptions of communication included the delicate matter of social interaction. The respondents were asked whether in mixed discussions the men tended to communicate predominantly with each other (thereby excluding the women). Two thirds disagreed, especially in the UK (UK 33 %: FRG 28 % UT), but in a related statement, the Germans agreed to a significantly greater extent than the British that the men tend to communicate with the *most important person* when having a discussion (UK 30 %: FRG 38 %). This person could be male or female and focus on such figures is certainly indicative of being influenced by "power" *per se*.

Table 6: Networking, socialising and role modelling

Positive response tendencies	UK S/A[*]	FRG S/A	χ^{2**}	male S/A	female S/A	χ^2
It is essential to have a good network in order to get promotion. 86 %	147 39 %	180 47 %	.00	107 29 %	212 57 %	.00
Senior male academics in my department are often good at encouraging junior women staff. 62 %	107 29 %	122 33 %	.39 NSD	97 27 %	128 35 %	.00
Some senior men in my subject are quite sexist in their outlook. 54 %	106 28 %	98 26 %	.14 NSD	66 18 %	136 36 %	.02
There are senior women in my subject who are good role models for the younger women academics coming up. 71 %	141 38 %	121 33 %	.00	121 33 %	140 38 %	.00
When men and women are having an academic discussion, the men tend to communicate with *the most important person* whether man or women. 68 %	113 30 %	143 38 %	.00	80 22 %	170 46 %	.00
Negative response tendencies	UK S/D	FRG S/D	χ^2	male S/D	female S/D	χ^2
It is more difficult for women than for men to develop a good network. 54 %	107 28 %	96 26 %	.05	105 28 %	96 26 %	.00

In order to forge professional relationships, it is necessary to invest time in them. A greater percentage of British than of German academics (table 7) claimed that they socialised regularly with their academic colleagues, but they were also more likely to claim that they worked long hours in the evening and at weekends. Yet, surprisingly, the UK participants were more satisfied than the FRG participants with their work-life balance. Both countries and both genders are convinced that there is no possibility of changing this balance at present anyhow.

Table 7: Work-life balance

Positive response tendencies		UK S/A[*]	FRG S/A	χ^{2**}	male S/A	female S/A	χ^2
I socialise regularly with my academic colleagues.	51 %	109 28 %	88 23 %	.00	77 20 %	119 31 %	.75 NSD
I regularly work long hours in the evening and at weekends.	66 %	142 37 %	111 29 %	.00	104 28 %	143 38 %	.04
I am broadly satisfied with my work-life balance.	58 %	117 31 %	102 27 %	.03	91 25 %	123 33 %	.05
I see no way of changing my work-life balance at present.	74 %	140 37 %	147 37 %	.81 NSD	107 29 %	173 46 %	.90 NSD

4.2.5 Lifestyle patterns, partners and family life

Almost three quarters of the sample felt that their friends and family were more important to them than their own professional success, but the British were stronger on this claim (table 8). Germans, however, felt that it is especially difficult for women with children to get to the top (UK 35 %: FRG 44 %). Opinions were almost equally split (51 % S/A: 49 % S/D) on the statement that "The roots of gender equality lie in values conveyed within the family" and there was NSD between countries and genders.

Table 8: Partnerships and family life

Positive response tendencies		UK S/A[*]	FRG S/A	χ^{2**}	male S/A	female S/A	χ^2
My friends and family are more important to me than professional success.	74 %	144 39 %	130 35 %	.00	104 29 %	165 45 %	.45 NSD
It is especially difficult for women academics with children to get to the top.	79 %	132 35 %	167 44 %	.00	95 26 %	196 53 %	.00
The roots of gender inequality lie in values conveyed within the family.	51 %	89 25 %	92 26 %	.28 NSD	60 17 %	118 34 %	.26 NSD

4.3 What is the perceived effect of university equality legislation designed to remedy to unfair practices in the workplace?

It is easier to change working practices than to change the nature of the family, so the participants were questioned on the effect of legislation and of university policies designed to alleviate the problems of gender inequality.

4.3.1 Bullying and harassment

A sequence of questionnaire items was developed about bullying and harassment; in order to give the wording authenticity and currency, it was derived from an analysis of some university equality policies. Since there was a very strong negative response syndrome for most of these statements, they will be reported in table 9 by *disagreement*; NSD responses are reported here for UK and FRG. It can be seen that in both countries, participants are not normally subjected to offensive behaviour of a gross kind, though a minority of 43 % do feel that they have on occasion been unfairly treated by a superordinate. Women especially tend to *disagree* that they have been the object of malicious rumours, deprived of information, managed aggressively, and above all, most of them claim that they have *not* been subject to sexual coercion by superordinates: only 3 % of the female sample claimed that this was the case, and only 0.3 % of the men (UT).

Table 9: Rejection of certain bullying and harassment charges

Negative response tendencies		UK S/D	FRG S/D	χ^2	male S/D	female S/D	χ^2
On some occasions I have been treated unfairly by a superordinate.	57 %	97 25 %	120 32 %	.06 NSD	95 26 %	117 31 %	.00
I have been blocked from training opportunities.	95 %	175 46 %	184 49 %	.81 NSD	139 37 %	215 58 %	.21 NSD
Malicious rumours have been spread about me.	89 %	162 43 %	173 46 %	.87 NSD	131 36 %	198 53 %	.03
Unpleasant jokes have been made about me.	93 %	167 44 %	185 49 %	.06 NSD	136 37 %	210 56 %	.14 NSD
I am sometimes deprived of information that is necessary for me to do my job.	71 %	132 35 %	135 36 %	.82 NSD	112 30 %	151 41 %	.01
My line manager is sometimes aggressive and unsympathetic.	88 %	156 43 %	164 45 %	.75 NSD	125 35 %	190 53 %	.02
I have been subjected to unjustified criticism of my work.	85 %	154 41 %	165 44 %	.77 NSD	124 34 %	189 51 %	.17 NSD
I have on occasion been subjected to coercion for sexual favours by someone who could influence my career.	97 %	178 47 %	187 50 %	1.0 NSD	141 38 %	218 59 %	.03

Table 10, also presented according to *disagreement*, but this time with significant levels of difference across countries, shows that there was especially strong *German* rejection of the proposition that they had been subjected to unfair employment practices, and strong overall rejection by the sample as a whole. Women too rejected the notion that they were being isolated from social activities

Table 10: Unfair practices in the workplace

Negative response tendencies		UK S/D	FRG S/D	χ^2	male S/D	female S/D	χ^2
I have on occasion been isolated at work from social activities or conversation.	76 %	124 33 %	164 43 %	.00	121 33 %	161 43 %	.00
I have been given disproportionately more work than my colleagues.	75 %	114 30 %	169 45 %	.00	111 30 %	168 45 %	.32 NSD
Unrealistic objectives have been set for me.	84 %	141 37 %	178 47 %	.00	127 34 %	187 50 %	.07 NSD
Things that I have said are sometimes twisted out of context.	77 %	124 33 %	165 44 %	.00	109 30 %	175 47 %	1.0 NSD
I have been unfairly denied promotion.	88 %	148 40 %	180 48 %	.00	122 33 %	202 55 %	.62 NSD

Therefore, on a whole battery of questions designed to probe injustice in the workplace, the participants overwhelmingly claimed to be reasonably treated and neither bullied nor harassed. Let us now look a little deeper at university practices.

4.3.2 University legislation

As presented in table 11, there was cross-country agreement (73 %) that the respondents' universities are still gendered organisations, and that the higher education system sustains inequality (though the majority was tiny at 51 %). The Germans agreed more strongly than the British that there are too few women at the top of the system (UK 34 %: FRG 44 %); females too agreed significantly more often than males with this statement together with the proposition that their universities were still "gendered organisations". A majority (59 %) thought that the EU was an important influence in promoting gender equality: in fact, significantly more British than Germans endorsed this item (UK 35 %: FRG 24 %) which is surprising as Germany is generally more pro-EU than the UK. Only 52 % thought that universities were better terms of gender equality than comparable organisations; three quarters of the sample admitted that a large number of people within their HEIs accepted the need to achieve gender equality. However, 61 % thought that "Equal treatment of both sexes is insufficient to ensure gender equality", and women assented to this statement significantly more often then men (M 18 %: F 43 %). In untabulated data, almost 78 % thought that "The prospects

of women academics will improve within the next 5–10 years", and a large majority (80 %) thought that policies that are good for women are also good for promoting excellence within higher education as a whole.

Table 11: Perceptions of institutional gender equity

Positive response tendencies	UK S/A[*]	FRG S/A	χ^{2**}	male S/A	female S/A	χ^2
My university is still a gendered organisation. 73 %	118 32 %	148 41 %	.07 NSD	77 22 %	184 51 %	.00
The higher education system sustains inequality. 51 %	93 26 %	92 25 %	.24 NSD	40 11 %	143 40 %	.00
Our university has too few women at the top of the system. 78 %	128 34 %	164 44 %	.00	87 23 %	201 55 %	.00
The European Union is an important influence in promoting gender equality. 59 %	119 35 %	81 24 %	.00	65 20 %	131 39 %	.06 NSD
Universities are better in terms of gender equality than other comparable organisations. 52 %	103 28 %	88 24 %	.00	84 23 %	104 29 %	.00
Equal treatment of both sexes is insufficient to ensure gender equality. 61 %	95 26 %	126 35 %	.01	63 18 %	152 43 %	.00
Most people in our institution accept the need to achieve gender equality. 74 %	147 40 %	125 34 %	.00	117 32 %	152 42 %	

Equality legislation is therefore broadly accepted and is believed to be operating in a beneficial way. However, the rights of men and minorities also need to be considered. Is the legislation beginning to operate in a way that makes the men feel disadvantaged? Table 12 below explores these issues. The overwhelming majority (80 %) felt that the legal framework was *not* operating to the disadvantage of men, but females endorsed this option significantly more frequently than males (M 25 %: F 55 %); they also rejected the notion that women were exploiting the law in an unfair way, or that men were now disadvantaged within the system. Twice as many Germans agreed with the statement that men are now disadvantaged, though the percentages are tiny (UK 3 %: FRG 6 % UT). But 12 % of German men agreed that male academics are the new disadvantaged people, and 24 % that equality legislation was beginning to work to their disadvantage. This FRG finding may be due to the procedure of according preference to women in appointment panels where there appear to be male and female candidates of equal merit; 79 % especially in Germany thought that there is still work to be done to achieve equality in relation to parenting. The Germans were particularly pessimistic that prejudice against gay people would have disappeared in the near future, and a small majority (52 % UT) would like to see equality legislation broadened to include a greater number of inequality dimensions. Two thirds of the sample disagreed that "Men and women have achieved full equality in my department"; 59 % claimed that gender issues had been "mainstreamed" in their HEIs, though somewhat

revealingly one third (UT) had to admit that they were "not exactly sure what "mainstreamed" means". More women than men claimed to know about this.

Table 12: Effects of equality legislation

Negative response tendencies	UK S/D	FRG S/D	χ^2	male S/D	female S/D	χ^2
Equality legislation is now beginning to work to the disadvantage of men. 80 %	150 42 %	138 38 %	.00	89 25 %	195 55 %	.00
Women exploit equality legislation in a manner that is unfair to men. 90 %	154 42 %	173 48 %	.72 NSD	110 31 %	212 59 %	.00
Men are now the new disadvantaged people within the academic system. 91 %	170 45 %	173 46 %	.05	115 31 %	222 60 %	.00
Everything that it is possible to do about the inequalities arising from maternity leave and child bearing has now been done. 79 %	128 35 %	160 44 %	.01	94 26 %	188 53 %	.00
Any prejudice against gays or lesbians will have disappeared within the next 5–10 years. 80 %	119 33 %	169 47 %	.00	102 29 %	184 51 %	.07 NSD
I am not sure exactly what "mainstreamed" means. 67 %	109 30 %	133 37 %	.11 NSD	90 25 %	150 42 %	.48 NSD
Positive response tendencies	**UK S/A***	**FRG S/A**	**χ^{2**}**	**male S/A**	**female S/A**	**χ^2**
Gender issues have been "mainstreamed" within our institution. 59 %	92 28 %	103 31 %	.36 NSD	81 25 %	110 34 %	.04

4.4 To what extent are women academics making a valuable contribution in their workplace?

Are women themselves making a sufficient effort in the workplace? Are all the activities of government, administrators and legislators to promote equity worthwhile? *Zimmer at al. (2007, p. 81)* quote some negative evidence in this respect, therefore in the present study, the respondents were asked about their perceptions of women's capacity for effective work. The overwhelming majority (95 %) agreed that women make a worthwhile contribution in their subject areas, and high percentages of the total sample *rejected* statements that they "do not really pull their weight within the department" (97 % S/D), that they "tend to put less effort into their work than men" (98 % S/D) or that they "take sick leave or stress-related leave too easily" (96 % S/D). The majority (88 % S/D) also refuted the statement that "Whatever inequality there is within higher education comes from women's own lack of single mindedness". It is clear that both sexes strongly respect the role of women in professional academic life.

5   Discussion

The academic contribution of women is highly valued and not disputed. It seems that most of the formal aspects of discrimination against women have been overcome, and that there is as yet little reverse discrimination against men. This is a real fear in Germany because some men feel that they have reduced chances in face of affirming policies towards women. Despite findings of a UK survey to the contrary,[12] in which 17 % of respondents had personally experienced some form of harassment at work in the previous twelve months, there is little or no personal experience of bullying, harassment or sexual coercion in the present sample, and employment practices are seen as broadly fair. Yet most thought that their universities were still gendered organisations, and that there were too few women at the top. They felt that there was unfinished business, and that work remained to be done particularly with regard to the inequalities arising from child bearing and rearing. Most people disagreed that *equal* treatment of both sexes was sufficient to ensure gender justice. *Sen (1993)* makes a distinction between process freedoms (e. g. participation in discussions) and outcomes (e. g. the content and level of education achieved). The ongoing processes have achieved much, but the outcomes are still developing; and the two countries under scrutiny have much to learn from each other.

The notion that gender issues had been "mainstreamed" was fairly widely accepted, yet fully one third of the respondents were vague about what this term actually meant. This may be due to the fact that it is usually implemented as a top-down strategy in which management is responsible for performing the process *(Bauer and Gruber, 2008, p. 119).* The policy aim of ensuring that all practices and behaviours are considered from the perspective of gender takes time to embed within the institutions; *Paseka (2008, p. 149)* emphasises that gender mainstreaming needs pre-established support structures and that there is subtle reluctance and resistance to it which can be long-drawn out. Historically, the weight of authority and merit has been attributed to men, and it is a long-term project to achieve a more equal balance of esteem. Moreover, the core value of "equality" may simply not have the same resonance as "freedom". *Baer (2008)* writes: "Liberty is framed as a social good, related to rational autonomy, while equality is construed as the site of the social limiting personal freedom." She herself would subsume quality under the banner of equality, and disparages the concept of "able-ism" in the sciences. She even believes in "diverse options of knowledge in a world beyond one truth" (ibid.: 25). This may raise hackles, but in the present study, about one third of the British agreed that men and women should be judged by a single standard in research, and one third of the Germans *disagreed*: so could or should women and men be judged by *different* standards in research? And why the cross-country difference in response to this item?

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[12] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rdreports/2005/rd09_05/ *Non-Disclosure and Hidden Discrimination in Higher Education.* Research undertaken for the Higher Education Funding Councils for England (HEFCE), Wales (HEFCW) and Scotland (SHEFC). May 2005 report, accessed 10.8.2009.

It is possible that the existence of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in the UK has a homogenising effect upon standards by postulating nation-wide, gender-blind criteria of judgement. The effect of this may be to essentialise the individual scholar in a way that is incompatible with Baer's "diverse options of knowledge". It is true that an equality impact analysis was performed for the RAE; however, German policy aims not just at checking for unfair bias but at actually promoting gender equality achievements ("equal treatment is not enough…"). In the prestigious "Excellence Initiative" (a competition for funding support designed to stimulate universities to high achievement), gender is an important factor: a university that is unable to demonstrate that it is taking women seriously and capitalising on their talent will not be successful in this competition. Between 2006 and 2011 the German Research Council (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG)) will receive a total of €1.9 billion in additional funding for this initiative.[13] In 2008, the DFG launched "Research-Oriented Gender Standards" in which every institution will set its own goals for increasing the proportion of women at specific qualification levels. They are intended to ensure that resources within the universities are distributed actively with respect to gender quality issues *(DFG, 2008)*. The Standards "mean that universities and non-university research institutions must commit themselves to promoting equal rights for women and men in all areas of work in the coming years. Aspects of this include the official stipulation of the support of women as a central task for university and institutional managements, improving the compatibility of career and family life in research and science and increasing the proportion of women at professorial level and in other scientific management positions" (ibid.:1). The HEIs will be autonomous in the way they implement the Gender Standards, but this must be done by 2013, and will be used as a criterion in the award of funds by the DFG.

In some ways the women in our sample were self-deprecating. They regarded themselves as less strategic than males in managing their careers, more submissive to authority, and thought that they needed to behave *the same* as men to succeed. *Vogel and Hinz (2003)* invoke Bourdieu's statement (1997) that gender hierarchy can only have power if it is internalised by "dominated" women. Only small percentages of men endorsed these options in relation to women, so their response syndrome is positive, not mean-spirited, in its perception of female academics. In their turn, the females too had a generous perception of male colleagues. Many were convinced that male academics are capable of doing justice to a caring role, and that women have no monopoly of concern about good relations within the department. A larger percentage of female than of male respondents agreed that the senior men were good about encouraging the more junior female scholars (despite some residual sexism). Men and women colleagues clearly have mutually positive perceptions of each other in several respects, and indeed there is a certain convergence in their accepted norms and values. This could indicate

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[13] http://www.dfg.de/dfg_im_profil/aufgaben/chancengleichheit/index.html Chancengleichheit, accessed 17.8.2009.

"infiltration of feminine emotions into a public space" *(Knights and Surman, 2008)* and a displacement of masculinities or a negotiation of identities, but in any case it points towards an erosion of binary structures and hierarchies. *Davies (2008)* has stipulated that in order to guard the borders of our own identity, a process of category maintenance is necessary, sustained through what she calls "border work" in order to maintain the binary categories. *Arnot and Mac an Ghaill (2006, p. 9)* claim that a shift has taken place away from challenging structural inequalities between relatively fixed gender categories towards deconstructing the categories themselves. Gender is no longer seen as a simple natural fact, but in terms of how men and women articulate their understanding of being subjects in a world of flux. Yet there is one respect in which boundaries *are* being maintained: more than 80 % of the present sample believe that prejudice against gays and lesbians will *not* have disappeared in the next 5–10 years: there was much greater agreement about this in the FRG than in the UK. If *Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2006, p. 54)* are correct in their assertion that heterosexuality is structured through misogyny and homophobia, then it is important to broaden the basis of equality legislation beyond binary categories. This has now been done, but feelings have not yet caught up with the letter of the law.

In the UK, there was no legal requirement until 2003, to combat discrimination against lesbians, gay men and bisexuals at work, so their needs were often overlooked when it came to implementing workplace equality policies. In 2007, the existing Commissions for *disability, race and sex* were dissolved, and became subsumed under the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (October 1st 2007).[14] On 24 April 2009 an Equality Bill was introduced in the House of Commons.[15] Its stated aim is to "harmonise discrimination law, and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality". It will replace the three existing duties with a single duty covering the protected characteristics of *race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief*. In a new provision, Clause 72 seeks to promote greater transparency and dialogue about pay in the workplace by outlawing pay secrecy clauses and protecting people who wish to discuss their pay with colleagues. Terms of employment that restrict people from disclosing or talking about their pay will be unenforceable. In Germany, a general anti-discrimination law came into force on 18.8.2006, and covers *race, sex, religion and worldview, disability, age and sexual identity*.[16] Within HEIs, there is an increasing consciousness that equality issues need to be broadened beyond gender (as 27 % of FRG respondents *agreed* in the present study), and the terminology of Women's Representative is gradually being replaced by Equality Officer or similar. A UK-

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[14] http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20072602_en_1 The Equality Act 2006 (Dissolution of Commissions and Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Order 2007 NO. 2602, accessed 13.8.2009.

[15] http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/files/Equality-bill-briefing-04-09.pdf/view Equality Bill Briefing, equality Challenge Unit, accessed 13.8.2009.

[16] http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allgemeines_Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, accessed 19.8.2009.

type Clause 72 would enable university salary comparisons to be made, and data about them to become publicly available. This would give a further fillip to the gender equality movement.

We have seen that the women in the study feel themselves to be relatively mediocre career strategists, and can feel excluded in conversations when men are fixated upon the most powerful interlocutors. Women have less access to professional networks, and cannot easily find role models; *Allmendinger et al. (2000)* highlight the importance of mentoring, pointing out that few female academics have the continuous natural informal mentoring relationships enjoyed by males. The European 6th Framework Programme aims to promote the advancement of women's careers by developing a European network of mentoring programmes *(Füger et al, 2008)*.[17] "TANDEMplusIDEA" is the first mentoring programme between leading technical universities in Europe, and is funded by the 6th Framework. It involves cooperation between Imperial College London, the ETH Zürich, the Technical University of Delft and the RWTH Aachen *(Leicht-Scholten, 2008)*. It works best in association with training and networking, and is particularly appreciated by academics in the Social Sciences.

The women in our study thought that they were not very good at networking, though this may be a powerful strategy to improve their career prospects. It has been defined by *Forret and Dougherty (2004, p. 420)* as "individuals' attempts to develop and maintain relationships with others who have the potential to assist them in their work or careers". These authors see networking as a way for women to break through the glass ceiling and as a proactive behaviour that helps to develop one's relationships and build social capital with an eye to career benefits. In an empirical study of management and professional people, they aimed to discover whether the relationships between networking behaviours and career success differed for men and women. In general terms, they found that networking did more good to men than to women. However, one important result was that increasing internal visibility was significantly related to career success for women (but not for men). They deduced that women should strive consciously to enhance their visibility in organisations, and that the increased awareness of their efforts may contribute to their career success. They consider it vital for women to build contacts with important people who can influence their career outcomes, and feel that females ought not to be too inhibited about asking their contacts for career assistance. It would be useful to have some further research on the utility of networking for both men and women, specifically in academe, because it helps to ensure inclusion and to embed academics fully in their communities. Otherwise their integration may be precarious.

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[17] http://www.eument-net.eu/default.aspx European Network of Mentoring Programmes, accessed 18.8.2009.

Just as inequality between male and female academics derives from many causes, so there needs to be recourse to many remedies.[18] In the present study, almost 80 % of the respondents disagreed that "Everything that it is possible to do about the inequalities arising from maternity leave and child bearing has now been done." *Van Anders (2004)* in an empirical study entitled "Why the Academic Pipeline Leaks" concludes that the lack of quality childcare, unequal/ uncertain access to paid parental leaves and geographical "hypermobility" are the major institutional barriers specific to women; but are *remediable*. The problem is being tackled from many different angles. Nationally and internationally, there is well developed awareness of what structures and programmes are most effective. These efforts are bearing fruit, and must be maintained.

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[18] http://www.gla.ac.uk/rg/egende09.htm Bimrose, J. Career Theory for Women: an integrated approach, accessed 18.8.2009.

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