

Introduction – Gender and Science Policy

Gender and Science (G&S) policy making has focused predominantly on the individual level (e.g. mentoring schemes, skills training) and the organizational level (e.g. Gender Equality Plans for structural change). It thus fails to consider one of the most consistent trends in science, namely the fact that research is done in teams. This is problematic since many of the processes that cause and sustain existing gender inequalities within academia are linked to group processes and cannot as such be addressed on an individual or structural level. Teams in academia are a neglected but all important level for G&S policy making.

Why are teams important for Gender & Science policy making?

Gender equal- and well-functioning teams are not determined by a specific proportion of women and men team members. Inequalities are the sum of many small events played out on a daily basis rather than being the cause of static predispositions. Examining collaboration in teams puts the spotlight on the conscious and unconscious reproduction of gender hierarchies and stereotypes in academia. The team is the arena where individual researchers may – or may not – be able to fulfill their aspirations and potentials and hence stay in science or leave. G&S policy for teams is challenging because team (boundaries) can be fuzzy and range from informal exchanges across institutions to more formal arrangements of organizational work groups.

Key points and recommendations

The results from the GEDII project indicate dual gains to be obtained from addressing gender diversity on a team level both in terms of ensuring quality and effectiveness in the research process itself and in terms of addressing and advancing gender equality within academia.

- Making teams more inclusive promotes gender equality in academia at large. Both the GEDII project and earlier studies have demonstrated how content wise factors related to caring responsibilities, access to resources and decision making as well as the intricate web of daily personal contacts and communication patterns affect the outcome of team work both on an overarching and a more individual level.
- For gender diversity to have a positive impact on research performance it needs to be embedded in inclusive teams. Inclusiveness creates the foundation for individuals to take part in and contribute to research on equal terms; it is the catalyst that makes gender diversity function as a tool for better research processes.

Organizational policies and individual support measures establish the overall gender equality and diversity context for research teams. Team leaders, human resource management are key for the promotion of gender equality. More specific measures targeting the team level directly are needed.

- First, there is a need to analyze how existing G&S policy are adopted and operationalised on the team level. Institutional Gender Equality Plans should spell out how certain measures such as anti-bias training can become more effective when targeting the working environment of teams rather than isolated individuals. The transfer to real working context is key for effective diversity training.
- More explicit and transparent mechanisms that regulate the allocation of credit for collective work are needed. The [CRediT taxonomy](#) for example lists 14 categories to attribute contributing roles to authors on publications.
- A “code of conduct” including a policy on harassment can be part of the joint agreements made within the team. On a more general level team policies can include objectives and strategies regarding the distribution of work-tasks and resources (including mobility) or how care responsibilities should be handled.
- The GEDII project has developed the Gender Diversity Index, a monitoring and assessment tool targeting specifically the team level. It is a composite indicator to measures the participation of women and men in teams in a more elaborate way across 7 pillars including age, education, care responsibilities, marital status, type of contract, seniority and team tenure.

Five Must Reads

Garforth, Lisa, and Anne Kerr. 2009. “Women and Science. What’s the Problem?” *Social Politics*, 379–403. → How policy reinscribes & frames the “women in science” problem.

Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. Edited by Paula A. Johnson, Sheila E. Widnall, and Frazier F. Benya. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24994>. → Documents systematic and widespread occurrence of sexual harassment in academia, detrimental to individuals and team efforts.

Brink, Marieke van den, and Yvonne Benschop. 2012. “Slaying the Seven-Headed Dragon: The Quest for Gender Change in Academia.” *Gender, Work and Organization* 19 (1): 71–92.

Ahmed, Sara. 2007. “‘You End up Doing the Document Rather than Doing the Doing’: Diversity, Race Equality and the Politics of Documentation.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30 (4): 590–609. → Don't reduce equality work to paper-work

Haas, Hartmut. 2010. “How Can We Explain Mixed Effects of Diversity on Team Performance? A Review with Emphasis on Context.” *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 29 (5): 458–90. → Critical examination of diversity effects