

The Brick Wall: Why so few women become senior academics

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Most people have heard of the 'glass ceiling' — that impenetrable barrier facing women who aspire to top management positions. There is another domain which has proved equally resistant to women's efforts to enter — the higher echelons of the academic hierarchy¹. Here women have encountered a brick wall. Despite the many attempts at reform in many countries, which we will look at below, the figures remain depressingly low and static. In fact, the pattern of women's employment in universities is remarkably consistent across grades and across countries.

To begin in Australia, between 1977 and 1987, the proportion of female Professors and Associate Professors increased by 2.8%, the proportion of female Senior Lecturers and Lecturers by 6.7%, and the proportion of female Senior Tutors and Tutors by 9.7%. With these increases, women constituted 5.2% of the top category of academics, 17.8% of Senior Lecturers and Lecturers, and 44.4% of the lowest category, who were generally untenured (Gale and Lindemann, 1989, p.4).

These figures reflect the situation before recent amalgamations and omit staff figures from former Institutes of Technology and Colleges of Advanced Education, where more female staff congregated. Hence it is not surprising that recent DEET (Department of Employment, Education, and Training) statistics indicate some changes, though the discrepancy between the proportions of senior male and senior female staff is still marked.²

The most common explanation offered for this dismal result is that we are suffering a time lag effect, that the boom days of university growth ended just when women were demanding entry. The presumption is that the situation will right itself when growth returns.

Felicity Allen challenges this interpretation. She shows that there was high turn-over in Australian universities throughout the 1980s and yet women's position has barely altered. She also indicates that there is wide variation across Australian universities in the proportions of senior academic females, undermining any simple, universalist explanation. She asks, 'In a relatively homogeneous society like Australia', what differences '... could account for the fact that the proportion of senior academic women at Macquarie University is three times greater than the proportion at the University of Tasmania?' (Allen, 1990a, p.25).

The seriousness of the situation is indicated at the prestigious Institute of Advanced Studies, where in 1991 there were only 6 tenured academic women among 241 tenured academics, three of these from one Research School, the John Curtin School of Medicine. Currently, there is not a single tenured female among forty tenured staff at the Research School of Social Sciences, where one might have expected better female representation (Prendergast, 1991, p.3).

The situation is similar elsewhere. In 1984/5 in the United Kingdom 2.4% of Professors and 6.9% of Readers and Senior Lecturers were women. A 1987 survey showed that fewer women occupied these top two grades than they had in 1980 (Association of University Teachers, 1987).

The United States has done somewhat better with 12.3% female Full Professors and 24.6% Associate Professors and Senior Lecturers in 1986. The same year West Germany had only 5.1% women in these top grades. A year later Norway had 6% female Full Professors and

18% Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, and Associate Professors. In 1988 the Netherlands registered 2.1% female Full Professors and 4.6% Associate Professors, and in 1990 Sweden had 5% female Full Professors and 20% female Senior Lecturers (Lie and O'Leary, 1990, p.24; Hagman, 1990).

These figures are surprising particularly since the countries listed have made concerted efforts over the past years to increase women's representation in top academic ranks. Or, at least, there has been formal policy directed towards this goal. The outcomes illustrate a gap between formal policy and implementation which will be examined below.

Readers will doubtless have noted that I have felt it unnecessary to defend the need for an increase of female senior academics. As the argument develops, it will become clear that, in my view, defensiveness is one of the chief problems which needs to be overcome.

Attempts at reform

Australia has had affirmative action legislation in place for some six years now. The Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act sets up a programme of eight steps which companies with over 100 employees and higher education institutions must follow. The eight steps include the obligation to collect statistics on labour force participation by gender, to appoint an equal opportunity officer, to set goals or targets, and objectives, and culminates in a directive to report annually on progress to the Affirmative Action Agency, a federally funded supervisory body. The penalty for noncompliance currently is being named in Parliament (Ronalds, 1987).

We clearly need close studies of the relative successes of various attempts to implement this programme. The Act is currently under review. The recent Lavarch Committee Enquiry into Equal Opportunity for Women concluded that the Agency was under-funded, that companies with forty employees or more ought to be covered, and that sanctions should be strengthened through the introduction of contract compliance ('... so that all corporations/organisations tendering for government contracts should be required to supply evidence that they practice equal employment opportunity') (House of Representatives Standing Committee, 1992, pp. 268-9).

There are other indications that the legislation needs strengthening. A recent study conducted by the Victorian Trades Hall Council indicates that for most employers actions seldom match the company's rhetorical endorsement of equal opportunity objectives: '... although most employers were complying with the letter of the law, very few were actually doing anything to improve opportunities for women' (Victorian Trades Hall Council, 1992, p.1).

In universities the response has been mixed³. There is no doubt that all higher education institutions are fulfilling the letter of the law. But there are serious doubts about what this means in terms of concrete results. In many universities, there are now equal opportunity officers or units. These are often poorly funded and are sometimes asked to deal with the opportunities available to a range of designated groups, including the disabled, Aborigines, and ethnic minorities.

There is no doubt that these groups face problems which need to be

addressed. Here I am simply drawing attention to the way in which an initiative originally targeting women has been broadened, and suggesting that, without real commitment, indicated through adequate resource allocation, the results for everyone are bound to be disappointing. The other point to make is the way in which women, who constitute over 50% of the population, become subsumed within a collectivity of 'disadvantaged groups'.

The legislation is supposed to facilitate the discovery and removal of obstacles to the further advancement of women in academic employment. There is little indication, however, as to what this means or how it is to be achieved. A primary focus to date has been upon the structural impediments women encounter due to the fact that employment conditions generally have reflected a male biography. Hence there is attention to child care, maternity/parental leave, and permanent part-time employment.

These reforms, I would suggest, ought really to be considered part of an employee's normal work conditions. Designated 'affirmative action', the implication is that these are added bonuses for women. This is a useful rhetoric to minimize the importance of the reforms and coincidentally reinforces traditional assumptions about gender roles.

Another impetus has been to provide career enhancement for women, through additional in-service training or other courses. While these too are useful, they tend to suggest that the problem at universities is women's inadequacies and inability to compete.

What is lacking in the Australian programme is a firm commitment to affect appointments. Hence it is not surprising that appointment figures reflect little change. Some universities solicit applications from women. Others, such as the University of Adelaide, have a formal commitment to ensuring that each short list contains at least one woman. But the suggestion that appointment procedures ought to be altered to give women a better chance of appointment has, to date, been anathema. Any such suggestion is labelled the equivalent of a quota system which is roundly condemned as incompatible with the much-vaunted merit system.

Some countries have introduced initiatives which indicate a greater commitment to see change occur. These reforms ought to be scrutinized to assess their potential usefulness here. In each case, however, the reforms have failed to deliver on their promises, raising more challenging questions about the impediments to reform.

Sweden's equality legislation is unique in the way in which separate provisions were established from the outset to regulate discrimination and positive action (the phrase most commonly used overseas to refer to affirmative action). Under the latter, companies were enjoined to implement positive measures to increase women's participation and promotion. In universities this became translated into a provision that, when male and female candidates had qualifications which were almost equal, the woman ought to be appointed (Hagman, 1990).

As noted above, the figures for Sweden suggest that little has happened, at least in the higher level positions. The affirmative action officer at the University of Stockholm, Ninni Hagman, attributes the lack of change to complacency among male staff and administrators. When confronted with the slowness of change, the men produce some remarkably familiar arguments. One suggested that, when he thought about appointments, he tended not to think in terms of men or women. Another stressed that what was important in university appointments is 'ability, not gender' (Hagman, 1990).

Several Norwegian universities have a similar, 'everything else being equal' provision in their appointment procedures. However, according to several women academics, the provision is easily evaded. The men now simply make sure that women candidates are ranked so far below the men that an occasion for applying the rule seldom arises⁴.

At the University of Oslo, over a period of one and a half years, the clause was invoked only once. On that occasion the outcry was so great that an alternative position was found for the man who had been 'by-passed' (Hegna, 1991). According to a prominent feminist theorist, Hege Skjeie, the 'equal qualifications' guideline has proved of little use. All that has been accomplished, she argues, is that it is

now more difficult to ignore a woman candidate who cannot be shown to be clearly behind in qualifications (Skjeie in Halsaa, 1991, p.11).

The chief gain in senior female appointments occurred in Norway as a result of a cross-party coalition among women parliamentarians who demanded that something be done to redress the dramatic under-representation of women. Responding to this pressure, the government set aside funds to promote appropriately qualified female associate professors to the rank of full professor. This accounted for the jump in the proportion of female professors from 4% in 1985 to 6% in 1987. Since that time, equal funds have been allocated to male and female promotions (Lie and O'Leary, 1990, p.240).

A study by Elisabeth Fürst suggested that Norwegian appointment procedures were deeply 'gendered' in ways which worked against women. Fürst had access to all the documentation of University of Oslo appointment committees between 1980 and 1984. She found differences in the language used to assess female and male applicants. For example, women, it seems, were always either too young or too old. They were too young when compared to some senior male, or too old in comparison to some youthful male 'high flyer'. Regarding their field, women were often described as either too broad or too narrow, which could mean that they focussed on areas not generally of interest to male-dominated appointments committees (Fürst, 1991)⁵.

With such findings, it is not surprising that Fürst felt that in many cases it appeared as if an appointment decision had been reached before the appointments committee convened, and that what she observed was post facto justification. In her words, 'In praxis the process then becomes more of a defence or argumentation for the candidate already chosen' (Fürst, 1991).

Fürst also highlighted the continuation of a 'paternalist' tradition where men put forward protégés, most likely to be young men. She concludes that the fact that women are less integrated in the professional and social research networks is part of the explanation why women encounter barriers in the appointment process.

When Fürst's report was published, there was a furor. Her work was pilloried in the academic press. The articles were scathing and sarcastic⁶. She had clearly touched a sensitive nerve.

In the Netherlands academic grades were radically restructured in 1983. Until that time there had been automatic promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer after a designated period of service. This had resulted in a disproportion of senior lecturers, with disturbing cost implications. So it was decided to reorganize job categories and to make it more difficult to advance to the higher rank. This reorganization had disastrous consequences for the numbers of senior female academics with the result that '... women fill fewer senior university positions (in 1991) than they did ten or even twenty years ago' (Hawkins and Noordenbos, 1991, p.124.)

In this case a presumed gender-neutral approach worked to disadvantage women. Hawkins and Noordenbos point out that, as far as women were concerned, there was never a problem to begin with — that is, there were many fewer female senior lecturers than female lecturers. Nonetheless, the restructuring took place across the board. The result now is that there are very few women in the pool from which professors are drawn (Hawkins and Noordenbos, 1991, p.127).

As in Sweden and Norway, Dutch universities are permitted to implement an 'everything else being equal' rule to redress women's under-representation. The problem is that there is no one definition of 'equally suitable' and there are no sanctions. One study at the University of Leiden concluded that departments were either ignorant of the rule or ignored it. As a result, between 1970 and 1988, one woman was appointed for every six men. A disappointed observer concluded: 'At this point, we must conclude that you can put anything on paper; paper will not blush ...' (Grotenhuis, 1989, p.531).

The University of Amsterdam has gone beyond the 'equal qualifications' rule. There, the pool of qualified applicants for each discipline is calculated and, if a faculty falls short of its 'quota', it can be instructed to include a clause in the advertisement that, in the first round, only women's applications will be considered. The faculty could also choose to advertise for a woman but this is seldom done⁷.

The Positive Action Bureau at the University feels some progress has been made, but they doubt that the reform is achieving its purpose. Representatives noted that often the first round produces no likely candidates and the selection committee then proceeds to examine the men's applications. In fact, it seems that often the standards are falsely high at the outset and, once the women have been dismissed, the standards are lowered to fill the position. The Bureau wants to make it compulsory for the women to remain in contention until the standard of the applicant has been decided.

The 'first round' reform was extremely controversial when it was first proposed, and a good deal of opposition remains. In 1989 the Arts Faculty challenged the provision as contravening the Equal Treatment Act. The Faculty lost when the court decided that the measure was permitted within the exemption which allows positive actions to increase equal opportunity. The Positive Action Bureau remains reluctant, nonetheless, to impose the provision because they feel that nothing will be accomplished without goodwill.

Resistant paradigms

These disparate cases contain some common lessons. In each it is clear that any reform initiative can be evaded and hence it is most important to deal with the attitudes and practices which lie behind this evasion. It is also clear that in each country some common discourses are marshalled to maintain the sexual status quo. These include the language of equal opportunity, and a defence of gender-neutrality as a guiding precept, together with assumptions about the objectivity of appointments procedures and the measurement of ability or merit. Until these assumptions are challenged, little will change.

It is time to consider the way in which pressures for reform have been absorbed in a rhetoric of equal opportunity. It was noted above that affirmative action for women is often replaced by a general commitment to 'equal opportunity'. In South Australia and Victoria, we have general acts to deal with 'Equal Opportunity'. Even Australia's federal legislation contains a double message — Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act.

Some recent studies applaud the shift to equal opportunity as a less aggressive and more easily accepted statement of reform objectives (Jones, 1991, p.160). In some cases even this has been called too confrontationalist and other labels, such as 'managing diversity', are being considered.

To stay for the moment with equal opportunity, what are the implications of the phrase? It is clear that the notion fits comfortably within liberal ideas of competition and success. America, after all, has long claimed itself to be the land of 'equal opportunity'. So, the impression here is that there may be a few obstacles which need to be removed before the competition is really 'equal', and any good democrat would want this⁸.

In the process, of course, the degree to which the system works for some groups and against others is disguised. Further, those who are to be 'assisted' become labelled as 'needy' or 'wanting' in some way. They become the problem in more than one sense. For, as the 'disadvantaged', it is assumed that they have indeed absorbed some traits which now work against them. So, their 'disadvantage' becomes understandable, even, dare one say it, acceptable.

Once a group is targetted as a recipient of 'equal opportunity' efforts, all its members become stigmatized by this label. When any single member succeeds, their success is thus diminished. It is assumed that they were 'helped' along in some way.

Margaret Radin tells the story about how, in a recent promotion application, two blacks were promoted instead of her. The committee let it be known informally that they believed this was 'affirmative action enough'. Here oppressed groups are set in competition with each other and are seen only in terms of the very characteristic which causes their oppression. Radin was angry that the committee looked only at her gender and not at her 'merits' (Radin, 1991, p.137).

In this way equal opportunity policy strengthens an existing pattern in the social understanding of gender. Borrowing from linguistics, Nancy Armstrong explains that to refer to 'gender' is '... to invoke an

opposition in which "female" is the marked term or category', and 'male' the unmarked term. The 'marked' term is the term which is noticed, specified, seen to be exceptional. It is also '... generally subordinated to the unmarked term of which it is understood to be a subcategory'. So, women's gender is always deemed to be significant; men's is invisible (Armstrong, 1988, p.2).

Some women understandably wish to avoid reforms which draw additional attention to their being women. They want to avoid having their well-earned success labelled a 'hand-out'. Murray Edelman notes that antidiscrimination laws contribute '... to a low sense of self-worth in victims of discrimination and to the public impression of them as inferior' (Edelman, 1988, p.26)⁹.

The same is equally if not more true, of course, of affirmative action which, in the 'dominant ordinary-language view', means that people who are less deserving or less qualified are given benefits. Hence, a large number of men now insist that women are the 'advantaged' class, that they have received 'assistance' far beyond genuine 'need'¹⁰.

Given these observations, there might be good grounds for finding a term which does not single out any group as 'needy'. 'Managing diversity' would certainly accomplish this goal, hence its attractiveness. However, we must consider what is lost in this rhetorical shift. As will be emphasized below, it remains crucial to keep an awareness of the power dimension of discrimination. It is also vital not to lose sight of the political struggle which is going on in attempts to reallocate some of that power. What is important here is to recognize that the dominant group in society - white middle-class males — created the categories of subordination in the first place, shaping the discourse in ways which set limits on the reform process (Radin, 1991, p.120).

Paradoxically, apparent gender-neutrality is equally disempowering and diverts attention from the kinds of changes which are needed. Women logically demanded the replacement of so-called generic masculine terminology by language which could include women. The problem is that this language now frequently covers over existent unequal sexual relations, hence my reference to *apparent* gender-neutrality.

The case in the Netherlands, quoted above, provides a nice example. Here, it was decided to restructure all academic positions to remedy an oversupply of senior lecturers without acknowledging that, as far as women were concerned, there was no over-supply to begin with.

Another example is the way in which sex discrimination legislation makes it unlawful to treat a person differently or 'unfavourably' on the grounds of sex, whereas the original United Nations Convention (1979) called for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.¹¹ The result has been that men have been able to attack attempts to redress women's inequality as forms of discrimination against men.¹² The same problem with using abstract categories instead of recognizing the power exercised by some groups over others is clear in the charge that affirmative action for blacks discriminates against whites.¹³

We are faced here with a version of what Martha Minow calls the 'difference dilemma'. If a group is singled out as 'different' or 'disadvantaged', it is stigmatized. Yet, if a group's particular problems are ignored, they remain unaddressed (Minow, 1990).

Gender-neutrality forms part of a broader discourse of 'objectivity'. It poses as 'fairness' by suggesting that it is appropriate to ignore people's particular circumstances and treat them all the 'same'. Justice in this understanding is truly blind.

It is this very standard which male academics maintain is applied in judging applicants for jobs and promotions. The claim is that there is such a thing as 'ability' or 'merit' which is easily measured and indisputable.

There are at least two levels at which this claim is open to challenge. First, it can be illustrated that 'objective criteria' only appear to be applied and in fact disguise a manipulation of details and language to achieve a desired outcome. Elisabeth Fürst's work above illustrates the ways in which this can happen. And, while there might be

academics here who insist that our appointments committees do not fall into these sloppy habits, anyone who has served on such a committee would have reservations about the so-called merit principle. It is clear that in many cases publications are counted, not scrutinized. And, some abilities, such as teaching, are poorly assessed. In many cases, applicants are not even interviewed (Allen, 1990a, pp. 13-14).

More broadly, it is important to question the nature of the abilities deemed to constitute 'merit' and who has defined them.¹⁴ There is talk of 'ability' and 'excellence', but how are these terms given content and by whom? To what extent are particular areas of research deemed irrelevant by those holding the power to appoint? To what extent do gender stereotypes inadvertently inform decisions about who is indeed a desirable appointment?¹⁵

We need to recognize here the way in which the current understanding of merit serves ideological functions, sustaining the status quo and hypostatizing '... the point of view of privileged groups into universal positions' (Young, 1990, p.158). As Clare Burton insists, the concept is dynamic and those '... who have defined it have also sought to insulate it from social transformational processes so that competencies and qualities not traditionally regarded highly remain marginal to the understanding of what is "meritorious"' (Burton, 1991, p.46; see also Martin, 1987).

It is difficult for those outside of positions of power to challenge dominant understandings of 'ability'. It is even difficult for them to realize that these understandings need to be challenged, given the degree to which they are entrenched in the institutions which regulate our lives. We need to become more aware of the way in which what Albertine Veldman calls 'informal cultural values' conceal contradictory interests and preserve existing unequal power relations (Veldman, 1991, p. 78).

The existence of formal equal opportunity rules serves a similar function. They convince many, particularly those who themselves do not face discrimination, that all that needs to be done is being done. At the same time the laws '... induce victims of discrimination to accept their lot' (Edelman, 1988, p.26).

An end to defensiveness

None of this should be taken to imply a wish to remove existing equal opportunity laws. Rather the purpose here is to contest and resignify the interpretations and conceptualizations which surround these laws. The kind of resignification which is needed emerges from the analysis above which illustrates that existing understandings disguise the operation of power in social relations. Hence, ways must be found to draw attention to that factor.

One way may be to shift the focus from the recipients of 'assistance', the targets of 'equal opportunity', to the beneficiaries of existing social arrangements, white middle-class males. The tone of our analysis must change from defensiveness to challenge. It is time, as Joan Eveline has recently argued, to shift strategically from the language of women's 'disadvantage' to men's 'advantage', where it is appropriate (Eveline, 1992).¹⁶

Eveline reminds us that, as long ago as 1983, Daphne Patai drew attention to the 'problem of the defensive posture', the way in which '... women are eternally on the defensive, eternally the ones to be explained and justified'. She pointed out how, in much academic literature, women are seen as exceptional, as adding something to an already established compendium of knowledge. It is seldom admitted, particularly by men, that this compendium is equally gendered, that it is in fact male. This is because men have held the position of dominance for so long that their gender, as mentioned above, has become invisible. It is considered irrelevant. The male is '... presumed to be the norm, the authentic human being, against which the female is set as other'.

Patai suggests a pair of reversal strategies to undermine this habitual perception. First, she wishes to posit the female as the 'generally human'. So, in book titles, it would no longer be necessary to specify 'women' writers. At the same time, she feels it is time to

show the gendered nature of texts, labelling them appropriately as 'Women in Western Political (Male) Thought', for example (Patai, 1983).¹⁷

It is time, I would suggest, to apply similar reversals to the demand for more female senior academics. Let us interrogate appointments procedures, instead of accepting the current designation of merit. It is time to direct attention to the standards by which men have been assessed, rather than continuing to try to win some 'concession' for women. When two of three positions go to men, this is not a victory for equal opportunity, but a continuation of a system in which men have felt no need to justify their selection.¹⁸

Instead of women explaining what attributes they can be expected to bring to the job, let us ask male academics to demonstrate their 'merit', to justify their over-representation. Instead of arguing the need for women as role-models, let us ask what kind of role-models male academics make.

Some research suggests that male academics tend to be more conservative on a range of issues than female academics.¹⁹ It is also claimed that middle-class white males, who dominate academia, tend to be more attracted to a '... preferred cognitive style of detachment and objectivity', providing a nice closed circle in the perpetuation of standards which will see them selected for jobs.²⁰

The way in which male staff interact with female staff and students also requires closer scrutiny. A study at the University of Adelaide recorded the alienation of some women staff due to sexist harassment by colleagues. Women staff and students often experience behaviour which is either dismissive or intimidating.²¹ The fact that many male academics feel that it is quite permissible to seek out students for romantic affairs also raises questions about the nature of 'professional' behaviour.²²

While remaining sensitive to the very real structural obstacles which hinder women's participation in academia, such as inadequate child care, let us not hesitate to talk about men's overt resistance to women's entry (Cockburn, 1991), and the ways in which they maintain their domination. In short, it is time to say that gender matters for men, that they are not the neutral arbiters of standards and knowledge which they claim to be.

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Endnotes

1. I cannot within the constraints of this paper examine the equally important issue of the gendered divide between male academic staff and female 'support' staff. On this subject, see Lyn Shoemark, 'Amalgamation, Restructuring, and Devolution at the University of Technology, Sydney', an affirmative action case study for the Women, Management and Industrial Relations Conference, Macquarie University and Affirmative Action Agency, August, 1992.

2. 1991 DEET figures show that the chief gain has been in the overall female participation rate, from 19.9% in 1987 to 30.8% in 1991. These are distributed such that women now constitute 9.7% of those above senior lecturer rank, 17.7% of senior lecturers, 38.5% of lecturers, and 50.7% of those below lecturer. It is interesting to note that in the immediate post-amalgamation year (1988) women constituted 13% of those above senior lecturer and that this has dropped to 9.7% in 1991. The 3.3% discrepancy explains the rise in the proportion of female senior lecturers from 14% in 1988 to 17.7% in 1991. Since 1988 then there has been little shift between the grades of lecturer and below, and senior lecturer and above. DEET statistics provided by the Affirmative Action Agency. On the lack of progress in Australia, see Gretchen Poiner, 'Women and the Academic Procession: Questions of Equality and Opportunity', Working Paper No.1, Women's Research Centre, University of Western Sydney, Nepean, 1988.

3. Lyn Shoemark, Director of the Equal Opportunity Unit at the University of Technology in Sydney, attributes that institution's 'modest gains' largely to the 'good intentions' of many of the members of the senior management and to adequate resourcing of the EO Unit. Shoemark, *op. cit.*, p.5.

4. Interviews with Hanne Haavind, Professor of Psychology, University of Oslo, Berit Aas, Professor of Psychology, University of Oslo, Live Hov, Equal Opportunity Representative, University of Oslo, Fride Eeg-Heuriksen, Director, Centre for Women's Research, University of Oslo, all conducted in June, 1992.

5. Fürst found that in the period she studied (1980-1984) 87% of evaluating committees were composed solely of men.

6. Interviews with Elisabeth Fürst, Karin Widerberg, Professor of Sociology, University of Oslo, Fride Eeg-Heuriksen, Director, Centre for Women's Research, University of Oslo, June, 1992.

7. Interview with representatives of the Positive Action Bureau, University of Amsterdam, May, 1992.

8. On the ambiguity and limitations of equal opportunity rhetoric, see Nicola Lacey, 'Legislation Against Sex Discrimination: Questions from a Feminist Perspective', *Journal of Law and Society*, Vol.14, No.4, 1987, pp. 414-415.

9. See also Kristin Bumiller, *The Civil Rights Society: The Social Construction of Victims*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press.

10. A 1988 study at the University of Leiden showed that one third of the men surveyed felt that women were favoured by appointments procedures. My own survey of attitudes to affirmative action at the University of Adelaide found that 41.7% of male staff and 39.3% of male students believed that women received 'discrimination in their favour'. Lie and O'Leary, 1990, p.53. C. Bacchi, 'Discrimination and Justice', *Lumen*, Vol. 20, No. 5, 1991.

11. The apparent sex-neutrality is patently clear in sex discrimination law which requires an exemption for policies and services for 'pregnant persons' (Section 33 of the *Federal Sex Discrimination Act, 1984*, in Ronalds, 1987). If the law were truly sex-neutral, surely it would be unnecessary to have a separate provision to cover women's physiological needs.

12. In a recent case in the Australian Capital Territory, a member of the Health Board charged that women's health services discriminated against men. See *Women in Australia, Australia's Second Progress Report on Implementing the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, Commonwealth of Australia, 1992, p.38.

13. For a defence of the need to replace abstract categories with the specific groups discriminated against, see Tom Campbell, 'Unlawful Discrimination', in W. Sadurski, ed., *Ethical Dimensions of Legal Theory*, Rodopi, 1992.

14. On this issue, see Clare Burton, *Redefining Merit*, Monograph No. 2, Affirmative Action Agency, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1988.

15. Elisabeth Fürst discovered in her research that women were often attributed characteristics that were not considered valuable in the hard sciences, such as emotionality rather than rationality. Attribution studies also show that academic articles are judged to be less professional, less original and interesting, when those who referee them think that the author is a woman. Fürst, *op. cit.*, p.4.

16. The argument is a major theme in her Ph. D. research currently in progress.

17. The reluctance of male academics to recognize the gendered character of the material they teach became clear in my recent survey at the University of

Adelaide, where only 21.3% of male staff felt that the content on women in the curriculum ought to be increased.

18. We need more research like that conducted by Felicity Allen which illustrates that male academics do not always live up to the high standards they demand of women. Despite similar qualifications, she found that women clustered in the lower of the three top academic ranks, senior lecturer. She also noted the number of male professors appointed without holding a Ph.D. F. C. L. Allen, 'Indicators of Academic Excellence: Is there a Link between Merit and Reward?' *Australian Journal of Education*, Vol.34 No.1, 1990b, pp.87-98. See also the work by Hawkins and Noordenbos which reports that in the Netherlands, all the female full professors had Ph.Ds but 6% of the male professors did not. Hawkins and Noordenbos, *op. cit.*, p.129.

19. Cass et al. commenting on the 1977 FAUSA survey of academic attitudes, in B. Cass et al. *Why So Few? Women Academics in Australian Universities*, Sydney, Sydney University Press, 1983, p.193. My own recent survey of staff and student attitudes at the University of Adelaide showed that there were always more male than female staff who believed that groups like Aborigines, the disabled, and women faced little or no discrimination. Bacchi, *op. cit.*

20. The social psychologists, Roberta Unger, Richard Draper, and Michael Prendergrass have found evidence that those who experience '... a relatively

problem-free relationship with society would be more likely to hold the logical positivist position' because they are likely to see causality running largely in one direction, '... responses to past and present stimuli direct present and future actions'. In contrast, members of groups '... who have encountered problems with society would be more likely to hold a social constructionist point of view'. R. Unger et al., 'Personal Epistemology and Personal Experience', *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 42, No.2, 1986.

21. Reported in *The Australian*, May 22, 1991. Jones and Lovejoy note the 'entrenched negative views of most academic men towards academic women' revealed in their survey. My survey at the University of Adelaide attracted a large number of hostile comments. J. M. Jones and F. H. Lovejoy, 'The Perceived Role of Australian Female Academics', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 16, No.2, 1980. Bacchi, *op. cit.* See also R. Hall and B. Sandler, *The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?* Washington, D.C., American Association of Colleges, 1982.

22. In a recent paper I have called for the introduction of a code of ethics for teaching professionals which would impose severe restrictions on staff-student sexual relationships. C. Bacchi, 'Sex on Campus: where does 'consent' end and harassment begin?', *The Australian Universities' Review*, Vol. 35, No.1, 1992.