CHAPTER 2

Men, Masculinities and Professional Hierarchies

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Abstract: Men, Masculinities and Professional Hierarchies
Research on gender equality in academia addresses men's experiences to only a limited extent, and the significance of masculine norms is also poorly elucidated. In this chapter, we present our results on the effects of male dominance in the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences in the University of Oslo. We first discuss whether it is an advantage to be a man at the faculty. Our data mainly confirms this. The main career challenges and problems affect men as well as women, but less frequently. We were not able to identify a specific "male" pattern of problems. Instead, the most frequent problems among the men resemble the problems among the women, like unfair competition and devaluation. In the interviews, some men feel "as affected as women" and oppose specific measures for women. Yet the survey data shows that women are more affected, especially in some respects, like combining career and care leave, and unwanted sexual attention. There are also signs of informal comradeship among men, an inadequately examined majority position, the idea that an academic career is incompatible with family and caregiving – not just for women, but for men too – and tendencies towards a persistent connection between men, masculinity and professional hierarchies.

Keywords: men, masculinity, gender equality, academia, professional hierarchies

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Introduction

In Norway, as in other countries, the "problem" of boys in school, and boys' poorer results compared with girls, has been a matter of media attention and research (Vogt, 2018). Yet men in academia remain a grey area, which has received little attention and study. This is despite the fact that academia in the past century and a half has developed from being entirely male-dominated to becoming a more gender-balanced institution. As described in the introduction to the previous chapter, there is, in Norwegian universities, approximate gender balance among all academic employees. However, there is a major imbalance between different disciplines and position levels. Men are in the majority on all levels in the Norwegian faculties of natural sciences and technology. In almost all other areas females dominate the lower levels, while males remain in the majority on the highest levels.

That men and masculinities have received little attention in research on academia from a gender perspective has various implications. For instance, a frequently discussed topic here is that women are stopped by various barriers in their career development. However, that some men are also affected by the same barriers affecting women is not elucidated. Individuals experience obstacles across gender divisions, although women experience them more.

When research largely fails to address men, the chances of understanding what happens when women are pushed out or decide to withdraw towards the top levels are also reduced. For example, does this happen due to opposition from the men in the organization, or are there other primary factors at work? When men's perspectives and experiences are not addressed in research, the arguments are often characterized by an abstract model of competition between the genders, in which one gender loses and the other wins. Gender becomes like two "classes" with opposing interests. However, this is neither in line with gender equality research, nor recent gender research. Gender research emphasizes that we, both women and men, "do gender"[1] – at the same time as society and culture largely set the standards for acceptable ways of "doing". The rules for doing gender can be even more regulated for men than for women (see e.g., Brandth & Kvande, 2015; Connell, 1995; Ekenstam et al., 1998; Ø. Holter, 2007; Ø. Holter et al., 2009; Kimmel et al., 2004; Lorentzen, 1996; Lorentzen & Ekenstam, 2006; Messerschmidt, 2015).

We wish to bring men more clearly into the picture, and in this chapter we present the results of our studies on the possible implications of numerical male dominance at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (MN faculty) in the University of Oslo – for women and men. We begin by describing what it is like to be a man at the MN faculty. Is it still the case that top positions in the natural sciences are a "man-size" job? Or do men also encounter specific problems, precisely because they are men? We then discuss what it means to be in the majority. For example, does male dominance in higher positions have an impact on the work environment and career paths? Since the MN faculty consists of highly different disciplines, we have also explored whether there are connections between men and masculinity on the one hand, and academic prestige and professional hierarchies on the other. Our material consists of two surveys, one among students and one among employees, interviews with men and women, as well as participatory observation.[2]

What Is It Like to Be a Man at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences?

> It's not that I devalue women. But I have realized that I "speak highly" of men. I talk about their competence differently. I recommend them more often for things.
>
> (Aksel, male professor and leader)

Is being a man an advantage at the MN faculty? Based on our data, the simple answer is "yes". Considering that Norway is a relatively gender-equal country, this result is not quite what one would expect. The surveys, in particular, demonstrate a significant gender gap in men's favour, a plus for men statistically speaking. Our qualitative data, interviews and observations, confirm this. For instance, in the above quote Aksel describes how he has realized that he "makes" men competent by praising their competence and recommending them for various tasks – without promoting women to the same extent.

When asking master students, "Have you experienced negative social treatment from peers/fellow students in your master programme/group?", only 9 per cent of the men said yes compared with 28 per cent of the women. The corresponding figures for the same question on

negative academic treatment are 10 per cent for men and 16 per cent for women. The survey shows that negative experiences with the student environment are considerably less common among male students than female students.

The differences continue among the PhD students. For instance, PhD students assess their supervision differently based on gender. Thus 9 per cent of the men and 13 per cent of the women say they were not encouraged by their PhD supervisor to continue to do a postdoctoral fellowship, and 12 per cent of the men, compared with 19 per cent of the women, were not introduced to international research networks by their supervisor. Self-esteem as researchers is also more visible among men. For example, 43 per cent of the men and 31 per cent of the women say that they think they have "talent" for research.

Also, among employees, men report career problems considerably less often compared with women. Only about half as many men as women respond "yes" to questions on whether they are negatively assessed or scrutinized in the workplace, or whether they have to work harder than their colleagues to be evaluated as legitimate researchers or employees. More men than women feel that there is a supportive culture in the workplace, and fewer men feel that professional isolation or colleagues' attitudes affect their careers negatively. If we look at all factors in the employee survey having negative effects on careers, it appears that men fare better (fewer problems) than women on two-thirds of the factors in question, whereas one-third of the factors are approximately equal for men and women.

Variations Among Men

As a tendency, being a man is a statistical plus in the faculty, but it does not mean that *all* men, or men in each and every situation, have better career experiences compared with women. Instead, the data show a more varied picture. Men and women report many of the same career challenges and obstacles, although women report these problems more frequently than men. Nevertheless a considerable proportion of men experience similar problems to women. For instance, two in three who

report problems with academic devaluation are women. But one in three are men. In other words, genders do not constitute "pure" classes or categories.

A number of the interviewees also believe that it is not gender alone that causes problems, but rather other conditions. For example, when difficulties combining a research career with starting a family is discussed, Stein, a male professor and leader, describes how "the men who settled down, and the women, were lagging behind." In his opinion, there is no difference between men and women who start a family. They will meet the same career obstacles. The difference lies in the fact that more men do not start a family during the critical period of qualifying for a permanent position – and they can therefore focus entirely on work. Martin, a male postdoctoral fellow, also emphasizes that it is not gender, but the amount of care work that negatively affects career opportunities. "Having children affects men's careers just as hard as women's," he says. "Just as hard" is not in line with our material, but there is a clear enough tendency that it *also* affects men.

Thus men also experience problems with the work environment and culture, and it is natural to ask whether men experience problems *specific* to them, or problems similar to those that women experience. In the surveys, men in "typically female" positions report more problems. Their problems might entail issues like combining caregiving responsibilities with work, or that their partner's career has priority at home. But is there also a problem factor "typical for men"?

Here, the material is surprisingly silent. In the surveys, men and women *either* come out approximately equal, *or* men come out better (fewer problems). There are probably also some additional burdens for men that women rarely experience, but they do not form any specific patterns in our data material (see Chapter 5, "Experiences in Academia: A New Survey Study").

Who Are the Majority?

Men are the majority on the professor level in all MN departments except one. Five departments are male-dominated on student and recruitment

levels, while there is approximate gender balance in two departments, and a female majority in two.

Some of the differences between women's and men's experiences and perceptions were most visible in the department having female dominance in recruitment positions and male dominance on higher levels. Even though this is not a common situation in the faculty, it is common when looking at the university as a whole. In this situation, men on the lower levels see a majority of women among their peer colleagues. However, higher up in the position hierarchy, men are in the majority, and the unit can therefore implement gender equality measures with affirmative action for women. Mads, a postdoctoral fellow, illustrates how some men find this unreasonable. "If you're getting as much help as the women do, it is no wonder that you succeed." Heidi, a female postdoctoral fellow, also describes how her male postdoctoral colleagues find the faculty's gender equality measures unfair.

> So I've also spoken about this a little with at least two entirely different postdocs who are both men. And I've received the exact same reaction, that they were, ah, a bit grumpy because they think that we [the women] get help while they don't. Because it is also very difficult for men to get a position, and they are in the minority in the department.

The female researchers in the same department also talk about minority situations. Hedda, a female associate professor, says she has "grown up" in the department. She has been a student, a PhD student, and a postdoctoral fellow there. During the entire period, she had many female colleagues, and did not think much about gender balance or gender equality measures. Now, when she has a permanent position as an associate professor, things look a bit different. "Now I suddenly find myself being the only woman in a room," she says. Siri, a female postdoctoral fellow in the same department, confirms Hedda's description. "So there are several female top researchers, but of course, there are more men. […] It doesn't really feel male-dominated. Not in a way that you think about. […] But on the other hand, most of the professors are men, so you can often end up in a situation where you are the only woman."

Neither men nor women say much about what it is like to be in the majority. When women achieve higher career positions, they suddenly realize that they are in the minority, as Hedda says. They have not reflected much upon the fact that they were in the majority group as students or doctoral candidates. Similarly, the male postdoctoral fellows describe belonging to the minority group, despite no longer being students with 70 per cent female peers. The group of postdoctoral fellows consists of an approximately equal proportion of men and women, and as male postdoctoral fellows, they ought to find themselves most often in situations, "spaces", with approximate gender balance or with a majority of senior male researchers.

The female researchers in departments with male dominance from student to professor levels also talk about their minority situations. For instance, Kathrine, a female associate professor, says she feels lonely. "I feel quite lonely right now, without any female role models. I am in a field in which I am often the only woman in a group of 20 to 25 men. Yes, so I would like to see more women." She describes what she misses. "It is more that men are usually more, they talk more easily with men, they find it less embarrassing, I think […] so in a way, there is comradeship among men that they don't have with a woman. And since there are not enough women, we don't have the same [situation]. […] I have no friendships with women."

Neither men nor women reflect upon their situations when they are the majority. For both men and women, it is the minority position that is experienced negatively, and thus is also commented upon.

Men, Women and Networks

Although men, as well as women, describe gender balance at work mainly as an ideal, they also report difficulties with cross-gender cooperation. Erik, a male professor in one of the departments where men are in the majority, from student to professor levels, describes, for example, how he is happy to meet with his PhD students off campus: "If we need to talk about something more complicated, I think we have better discussions if we go for a walk together." According to Erik, working like this is

more complicated with female PhD students than with males. He mentions episodes in which he has been with his male PhD students, where women might feel uncomfortable. In general, he is worried that women might often feel awkward in more informal environments.

None of the men mention problems with the work itself: that women might perform worse than men; have a different idea about how research should be done; be less adequate writers, and so on. It is working with women outside the university's office premises and laboratories that many men find difficult. They describe a concern that the women might feel uncomfortable, or think that the men want something more than just being colleagues. For instance, some like to go to a cottage to concentrate on their writing for a few days. Doing this in a research group with only men is fine, but it becomes difficult if there are women in the group. In the same way, going to conferences with female colleagues or PhD students is described as more awkward. The formal part of the conference is no problem, but problems arise in the more informal parts, such as the journey itself, having beer in the bar with colleagues from another university, or dinner and socializing in the evening.

It is not only in departments where women are in the minority that men feel more comfortable with other men than with women. Svein, a professor and leader of a research group in one of the departments with more female than male students and PhD students, says: "I have more female PhD students than males in my group. But the men are much more active. They invited us seniors to play football […], and we went for a beer afterwards. So I … the situation now is that I know them better. But I can't say no just because the women don't ask."

Women also describe difficulties with cross-gender cooperation. Mostly the informal situations become problematic in terms of working with men, although there is less emphasis on the informal parts of professional activities. Instead they often mention purely social situations. Marianne, a female postdoctoral fellow in a male-dominated research group, says, "There is nothing wrong with the other members of the group […] but all the things we do together revolve around sports or alcohol. I am not interested in that, and I feel uncomfortable and excluded." In a workshop discussion about how important the informal parts of, say,

a conference are for networking, men and women had different opinions. For the men, beer in the bar after the conference dinner was important for making contacts that might lead to various types of research collaboration. For the women, it was the formal conference activities that culminated in networking, such as presentations and the following discussions.

Do the difficulties with cross-gender cooperation described by both women and men have an impact on the researchers' professional work? Since men are in the majority on the professor level in all MN departments except one, and five out of nine departments are male-dominated on student and recruitment levels too, do men thus have better access to networks and support from colleagues than women? When we asked about access to networks in the employee survey, there was no gender difference in the responses on networks within Norway. But the men reported, somewhat more than the women, that they have secured access to international networks through their supervisor. Compared with 19 per cent of the women, 12 per cent of the men said they had no such access. There was also a clear gender difference in responses when we asked about which factors they considered crucial for becoming successful in academia. The greatest difference related to factors that men emphasize less than women. For instance men, to a lesser degree than women, think that good support from a senior/mentor, a network and mobility are crucial for success. They are also less concerned with role models. One possible interpretation is that men place less emphasis on things in which they already feel included. They are surrounded by male mentors and role models, and do not need to emphasize this. It is natural for them to belong to networks and get support from senior researchers. Therefore, they do not take notice of this the same way that women, who feel more excluded, do.[3]

In the interviews, however, both women and men describe networks and support from colleagues in higher positions as highly important for one's opportunities to build a career in academia. Differences in answers between the quantitative and the qualitative material may be because "network" was not defined in the employee survey. The question may therefore have been interpreted narrowly, that it related primarily to formal networks. The interviews describe mostly the importance of

informal networks and mentorships. For example, a male professor Jan, says, "International collaboration has always been there, and it is crucial. When you're new, international collaboration, particularly with established researchers, is important to build a network, an international network, and to be invited to conferences and get access to a bigger network." Bjørn, a male professor, also emphasizes how vital networks have been for his career:

> My boss at the time, my professor, invited this guy to come to us. I was a new PhD student, and we met the first day he came here and we started talking about what we had done, what we wanted to do, and he said, "Hey, I have something, maybe this might interest you." And I said, "Wow, this looks exciting. Perhaps we could do something together here?" And that's how it all began to roll, you know.

There is strong agreement that in order to succeed, you need to have an extensive and strong international network. Certain names within one's field "open doors", and it is in one's interest to be close to these people. The interviewees describe how they became members of such networks by being introduced through colleagues or supervisors. Having access to a network means, for instance, better opportunities for appointments, particularly to lower positions as PhD students or postdoctoral fellows. The person appointed to the post does not necessarily have to be part of the network. It is enough to be recommended by a network member.

However, some of our qualitative data show a clear gender pattern, in which men network with men and support other men to a greater extent than they network with women or support women. The interviewees are very aware of this. The underlying understanding is that people want to surround themselves with others like themselves, since this makes them more "comfortable". This thus has different consequences for women and men. Henry, a male professor, says, for instance:

> Maybe, maybe there is some bias. Sometimes it is easy to put your finger on it. I have definitely heard opinions from male, let me say, older male professors who don't expect enough from their female students, don't expect the same. […] In figures, it is an environment dominated by men and where I'm guessing that men feel comfortable, perhaps more than women. Because I mean,

> just look at the figures. […] When it comes to hiring, in relation to my own postdocs, if everything else is the same, I would choose the person with whom I think I have the best chemistry on a personal level. Because you collaborate all the time, you want to have a person you can work well with. And if other people encounter the same selection criteria, then there is a lot of room for bias here.

Marit, a female associate professor, describes the same thing, but from an "outsider perspective": "They think they are "pro" gender equality, but they behave as if […] they unconsciously favour, perhaps, a man – without being aware of it themselves. Not because they do it on purpose, but perhaps it is just because you are not entirely aware of what you do or say."

The interviewees, both women and men, describe how the networks that are decisive for a career in academia are often formed in informal settings and built on "chemistry", in other words, that people enjoy and are comfortable in each other's company. At the same time, both men and women describe problems with cross-gender cooperation. Male PhD supervisors explain that they feel more comfortable in their relations with male PhD students than with females, and female researchers describe how they feel left out in male-dominated work environments. As men are in the majority, both in the faculty and in higher education as a whole, these findings indicate that men have better access to informal networks, and thus career opportunities, than women.

Gender and Professional Hierarchies

> But I am in a group that doesn't have very high status. My discipline is considered a little softer. We work very interdisciplinary.
>
> (Grete, a female postdoctoral fellow)

As we have already pointed out, the MN faculty is gender divided. Five of nine departments are numerically dominated by men on all levels, whereas the four remaining departments are gender balanced or have female dominance on the student level, and only one has gender balance on higher levels also. Gender division is also visible within the

departments. In the Department of Mathematics, for instance, almost all the female academic employees work in the field of statistics, and there are virtually none in pure mathematics.

For a long time, gender equality research has emphasized the importance of divisions of labour in society (women in "soft" jobs, men in "hard" jobs), and how the unequal rewarding of these areas contributes to goals of gender equality not being achieved (e.g., Ellingsæter & Solheim, 2002). The "hard" areas are associated with masculinity, whereas the "soft" are associated with femininity.[4] This is still relevant with regard to gendered work distribution in academia.

Our qualitative material clearly shows that some research areas and groups have higher status than others. When Grete, in the above quote, described her field of research to a seminar group, and how being "interdisciplinary" was a minus, the participants clearly understood what she meant. Many of them referred to Grete's description in their own presentations. Jorunn, also a female postdoctoral fellow, said for instance, "My field of research is also considered soft. It does not have high status either. I think it is because my group consists of researchers from two different departments." Marit, a female postdoctoral fellow, also describes how her group is considered "soft". Despite the fact that she is working in a group with low status, she nevertheless feels that she, as an individual, is regarded as competent, even outside the group. She believes this is due to her educational background being within the discipline's core. It is "very technical theoretical":

> I think that this particular goodwill reaches outside the group too. Because I have a very technical theoretical background. But our group is considered soft, as a soft approach within the discipline. I am well aware that many of those who consider themselves at the core of the discipline, which is heavily technical or highly mathematically technical, they think perhaps that what we're doing is a little soft and maybe not an actual part of the discipline.

The surveys confirm the qualitative material at this point, showing a minus factor for interdisciplinary and "soft" subjects (see Chapter 5). According to our data, these are not the easiest paths to a successful career at the faculty.

Previous studies have demonstrated a correlation between gender balance and professional hierarchy: the higher up in the hierarchy a discipline is placed, the lower the proportion of women. For example, Henningsen and Liestøl (2013) show that women as a group make professional priorities, implying that they will enter in the lower part of what may be referred to as academia's value and prestige hierarchies. Academic disciplines that are traditionally considered "hard" and placed at the top of the hierarchy have the lowest proportion of women, whereas disciplines traditionally regarded as "soft" have the highest proportion. This association is very strong. Furthermore, professional hierarchy and the division into "hard" and "soft" academic disciplines are connected with cultural prestige, reward and status (Henningsen & Liestøl, 2013).

In the survey among master students, we asked whether they believe that their master programme is considered to be feminine or masculine. Of those responding 10 per cent said "yes" feminine, 18 per cent responded "yes" masculine, and 69 per cent responded "neither". On questions about which disciplines have the highest status, feminine or masculine, 11 per cent responded masculine, and 1 per cent feminine. However, most responded that the disciplines had equal status (30 per cent) or refrained from responding. The results can be interpreted to suggest that many of the master students believe that gender equality is already established – gender *should* not matter.[5]

Men in Male-Dominated Disciplines

How do professional hierarchies affect the men's situation in the faculty? Do men perform better within male-dominated disciplines? On account of anonymity, the variable "department/unit" was omitted from the database containing the results of the employee survey. In order to still be able to investigate the effect of professional hierarchies, the variable "professional hierarchy" was created, in which the units at the faculty were merged into the following three professional hierarchical levels:

- The high level corresponds to the "hardest" disciplines (mathematics, physics, astrophysics)
- The middle level corresponds to disciplines in the middle (informatics, geosciences, chemistry)
- The low level corresponds to the "softest" disciplines (biology, pharmacy)

The levels were partly inspired by the classical positivist professional hierarchy formulated by Auguste Comte nearly 200 years ago, although the categorization is obviously quite rough, with major variations within categories.

The professional hierarchy shows the anticipated connection to gender in our data. The high level is numerically male-dominated, with approximately two of three researchers being men, whereas the low level is female-dominated, with two of three being women, when all position levels are taken into account. Gender balance influences the work environment and culture. Yet some of the main problems, such as negative professional attention and unwanted sexual attention, are distributed somewhat similarly. The data suggest that gender balance plays an important role, especially when connected to other factors, like the "soft/hard" hierarchy.

Professional hierarchy, alone, does not have much impact on the important variables in the study, including environmental ones, such as negative professional attention and unwanted sexual attention, and cultural variables, such as the unit being non-sexist. This also holds true when controlled for gender. The pattern emerging from separate analyses of men and women is approximately the same. The differences are small and insignificant.

The most important reason why professional hierarchies do not play a much more explicit role here may be that the variable is too general, in addition to potential local variations. The tripartite hierarchy variable does not include gendered division of labour, and the prestige hierarchy within each discipline. The situation at the Department of Informatics illustrates this numerically. In the department's six largest master programmes, the proportion of women varied in 2020 between 14 and

59 per cent, with parallel differences among the teaching staff. Another possible interpretation is that the disciplinary orientation (hard, middle, soft) does not matter much in itself, but is a structural background factor that matters more when combined with other factors – for example a fluctuating transition between "prestige" and "masculinity".

The survey nevertheless indicates clear gender differences at one crucial point in relation to the significance of the professional hierarchy variable. This is the question of whether one feels that one's career ambitions have been fulfilled in one's current position, as shown in Figure 2.1.

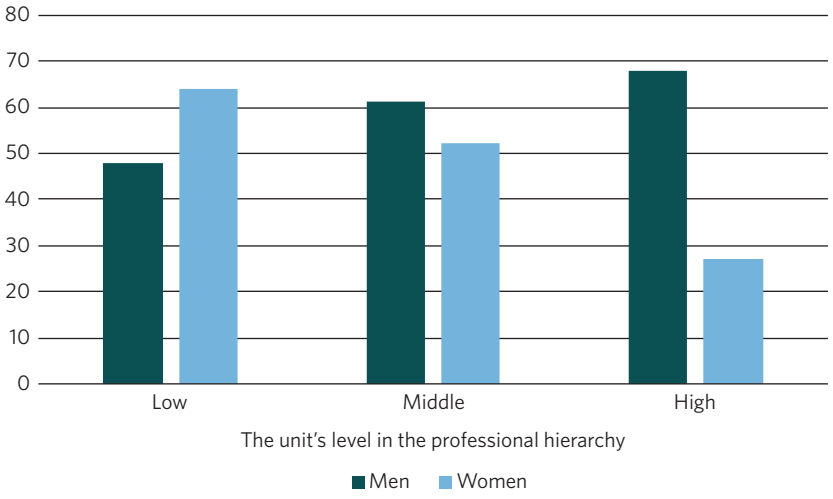

Figure 2.1. The Proportion Having Fulfilled Their Career Ambitions in Their Current Position, by Gender and Professional Hierarchy. The figures are shown as percentages.
Source: The FRONT employee survey (N = 409 academic employees).

Here the difference between men's and women's experiences is very clear. In lower prestige levels/areas with many women, women are more often satisfied (ambition fulfilled) than men. In the high level/male-dominated disciplines, men are satisfied more than twice as often as women. These differences are not due to different position levels, since control for position levels shows that this plays a minor role.

The graphs for the two genders draw a relatively convincing picture of professional hierarchy's – or gender distribution in the work environment – implications for the experience of satisfaction with one's

career ambitions. For men, it is conceivable that there is an added benefit to having succeeded in a subject at the top of a hierarchy, created primarily by men. For women, the "male generated" hierarchy may have less importance, and it is possibly easier to succeed – and to perceive oneself as successful – within a discipline that attracts many women. Also both genders possibly find it easier working within fields dominated by their own gender, as we have seen exemplified in the interviews referred to above (see also Holter & Rogg, 2010).

Discussion

The empirical material in this chapter reveals a clear tendency: Men experience fewer problems related to the work environment than women. We see signs of informal communities among men, a majority position that is inadequately reflected upon, and the idea that an academic career is incompatible with family and caregiving – not just for women, but also for men. There are also indications that professional hierarchies – gender distribution in the academic community – are significant in terms of experiencing satisfaction related to one's career ambitions.

That men experience fewer problems related to the work environment and academic culture than women is not a result specific to our material. On the contrary, these results are in accordance with results from other studies, carried out in similar academic institutions and organizations, in countries such as Ireland and the United Kingdom. The FRONT questionnaire survey for employees is based on the questionnaire forms from the Irish survey Integer, and the survey Asset from the United Kingdom (Aldercotte et al., 2017; Drew, 2013), which means that results can be compared more precisely. Integer and FRONT provide an almost surprisingly identical picture of women's and men's perceptions of the work environment. In the Irish survey, as in our project, the researchers found that women, less often than men, felt that colleagues asked for their views, and they more often than men experienced negative academic attention ("scrutiny") from colleagues. Considerably fewer women than men thought that the culture in their unit was non-sexist or respectful, and male respondents

felt evaluated more positively than their female counterparts, both with regard to teaching and research (Drew, 2013). The results from the Asset survey also correspond to ours. Here, the researchers found that women received less positive feedback, less recognition, and had fewer resources and less support than men (Aldercotte et al., 2017).[6]

The material in this chapter must be seen in light of the "gender gap" in experiences described more extensively in Chapter 5 "Experiences in Academia: A New Survey Study". The effect of women's substantial problems with the work environment and academic culture was formulated back in the 1990s in the hypothesis "accumulation of disadvantage". The hypothesis, which is based on studies from the U.S. and other countries, claims that there is not *one* individual factor that squeezes women out as they climb the career ladder, but rather that it is a complex process with many components consisting of various causes and effects (see e.g., Blue et al., 2018; Husu, 2005; Ivle, 2012; Pollack, 2013). This hypothesis is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

Comradeship Among Men

Could tendencies towards informal fellowship among men found in the empirical material be one of the reasons why men report fewer problems with the work environment and academic culture? What does it mean to other men that a number of male researchers say they feel more comfortable including men than women in informal settings and networks? Informal comradeship among men is an element described in many theoretical traditions, and is often referred to as *homosociality* (see e.g., Holgersson, 2006, 2013; Lindgren, 1996).

Homosocial means male-oriented – not necessarily gender-unequal. Yet it is associated with gender inequality in historical as well as modern research. Homosociality has been connected with domination or "master suppression" techniques in Nordic research (Holter, 1976; Ås, 1981). The theory includes subtle and partly informal forms of gender discrimination (that historically have replaced more direct and violent forms of oppression), including ascription of guilt and shame, social isolation, body language and other mechanisms.

In organizations dominated by men in the highest positions, as in academia, this often means that men identify with, want to work with, and also understand their position in relation to other men. Women are excluded because they disrupt the dominating culture, and because they do not possess the power resources that would make it worthwhile to include them (Lindgren, 1996). Specifically, the way in which homosocial structures function is that men in higher positions help men in lower positions, for example by inviting them into various networks. It is expected that those invited "repay" by showing loyalty and providing the same type of help when they come into positions of power themselves (see e.g., Hamrén, 2007; Snickare, 2012). Husu (2005) maintains that it is difficult for those not involved in the homosocial structures to see what is going on, since they appear as non-events for those on the outside:

> What happens [for those outside the homosocial structures, our comment] could, in fact, be that "nothing happens", or that something that should happen in one's career does not – you are not seen, heard, read, referred to or quoted, invited, encouraged. You are not supported, valued and confirmed. (Husu, 2005, p. 25, translated from the Swedish)

According to Brandser and Sümer (2017), homosocial structures appear not only as non-events to those not included, but on higher position levels, they also appear as active opposition.

Networks are undoubtedly important for work and careers in academia (see e.g., van Balen et al., 2012; Caplan, 1995; Pourciau, 2006). Criteria for academic success and distinction are created and defined in networks of researchers – researchers who are in turn involved in other networks, such as universities, research centres, scientific journals, and research councils. The gatekeepers to these arenas – who have the power to define scientific quality and recognition – are still primarily men (Nielsen, 2015; Osborn et al., 2000). Recruitment to such gatekeeper positions is also largely informal, and often occurs through invitations based on one's position within a network (van den Brink, 2010).

At the beginning of a career as a researcher, long-term, temporary positions are common. For younger researchers to remain in academia, they need to be seen and employed by more experienced researchers in

higher positions. Nielsen (2016) demonstrates how homosocial structures affect recruitment in academia. Men in leading positions contribute to recreating male dominance in the organization by "seeing" and assessing other men's competence. In this way, an informal group is created for those who have been "approved" and are intended for various career opportunities. According to Nielsen (2017), a consequence of this can be that women realize they are not included in these homosocial structures that may provide career success, and therefore choose to leave academia, or refrain from investing in the battle for the absolute top positions.

Our study confirms and elaborates the results from the other studies referred to. That men are more comfortable with other men and, therefore, to a greater extent build networks with men rather than with women, is reported by both men and women at the faculty. At the same time, there is another conflicting tendency in our material. As described in Chapter 1 "Gender-Equal Imbalance?", both women and men state that they want gender equality, and above all on the student level, gender balance as well. There is thus also a preference for *heterosociality*, collaboration across genders, at least in terms of attitudes and ideals. Although the interviewees are aware of the homosocial structures that exist, they rarely have a similar awareness of what consequences these structures have for women and men in an academic organization, in which a predominant portion of the highest positions – formal as well as informal – are held by men. Our interpretation of this is that the desire for gender equality and gender balance is more an expression of an ideal, than an awareness of unfair conditions.

Men and Caregiving Responsibilities

In Chapter 1 "Gender-Equal Imbalance?", we described a perception in the organization that women leave academia because it is difficult to combine an academic career with parenthood. The notion of the ideal academic worker (see Lund, 2012) as a "phantom" who works 24 hours a day is strong, and is seen as conflicting with caregiving responsibilities. In this chapter, we show a tendency for caregiving work to be seen as a career obstacle, not just for women but also for men.

In the interviews, men – as well as women – talk about how the line between those who can and those who cannot live up to the requirements of the ideal academic worker is drawn between those who have and those who do not have caregiving responsibilities and children. The interview study does not support the notion that women and men are equal in this area, but it is definitively a strong idea among some men that they are equally exposed.

These findings are strengthened by European organizational studies, which reveal new characteristics of men compared with more traditional masculinity (Puchert et al., 2009; Scambor et al., 2013). Scambor et al. (2013) show that younger men, in particular, emphasize personal relations and caregiving. Men's caregiving is an essential part of the research in this field, including fathers' care for their children (Ø. Holter, 2007). Brandth and Kvande (2015) maintain that if conditions are adjusted for such new trends, it may lead to major changes among men. In a study from a Finnish university, Lund et al. (2019) apply the term *new masculinities* to describe the emergence of a more relationally tuned masculinity. Other recent research uses terms like "relational" and "caregiving" masculinity. New trends emerge, challenging traditional and hegemonic masculinity. However, this does not mean that the "old order" has lost relevance in academia.

Professional Hierarchies

The theory of hegemonic masculinity may help to explain the association between academic prestige and masculinity in the empirical material. The theory describes a social-psychological level of a partly hidden and partly unconscious interaction among men resulting in an unofficial ranking – which is not necessarily in accordance with the formal organizational structure. Men in "hegemonic" positions are not necessarily leaders or superiors.

Several features of academia make this theoretical perspective relevant. The system is hierarchical, with researchers on lower levels depending greatly on those working on higher levels. The work day is characterized by informal relationships, which are clearly visible in our data, for

instance regarding networking and support, related to career development. Another factor is the high degree of uncertainty, including temporary positions, on lower levels, and strong competition. These are all characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity in international research (see also Kimmel et al., 2004).

The classical theory of hegemonic masculinity assumed a relatively *open* demonstration of masculinity. In other words, it was a game of power, in which the winner was "more of a man" or "more of a boy", than the loser. The theory has its main origin in school studies, also supported by Norwegian research on power among boys, during a period in which physical strength is decisive (Ø. Holter, 1989). Here, masculinity is directly at stake. But even the classical theory of hegemonic masculinity, with its main emphasis on men's power, soon pushed this "direct" type of power towards "indirect". Fights among boys are explicit, they demonstrate a masculine ranking. Among adults, hegemonic masculinity does the same thing, but more implicitly. The men play roles, even though they do not fight. This is not explicitly stated, but it functions in practice, for example through semi-conscious gender bias, "tacit knowledge", and body language – you turn to the dominating man, push others aside, and follow in his footsteps (Messerschmidt, 2015). Hegemonic masculinity is also about *translation*. A gendered word (such as masculine, feminine) is replaced by gender-related words, but not directly meaning gender (such as strong, weak). Some researchers refer to this as "symbolic translation" of gender (Solheim, 2002).

We can thus understand how hegemonic masculinity theory may lead to the "missing link" in the relationship between men and professional prestige in academia. We are dealing with an underlying mechanism that translates real power relations into other, gender-neutral terms. On the surface, nothing is being said about masculinity when there is talk about who will become the new academic "shooting star". Gender-neutral norms prevail. At the same time, the hegemonic masculine power system can play a role in relation to neutral valuation.

The FRONT material provides a good deal of support for the hypothesis of a modified form of hegemonic masculinity. Interviews provide evidence that men, particularly on higher levels, take masculine advantages

and privileges for granted. The questionnaire surveys reveal continuous differential treatment and discrimination, although it is most often not considered a problem in the interviews with men. At the same time, the interviewed men are also, to some extent, aware that a "moderate" positive discrimination happens for the benefit of men, or at least that a certain amount of discrimination has been part of tradition.

The questionnaire surveys show that each gender feels most at home, and their ambition level is best looked after, in disciplines where their own gender is well represented (not in the minority). Men are much less inclined to think that the culture in their department could be sexist than women, and they are also less critical of the academic community in general. Hegemonic masculinity theory assumes that the formal meritocratic model "cracks", and does not function as intended in crucial phases and contexts. It implies that there are essential factors at work for this to happen, including traditional gender roles, competition, anxiety, and power. Much of this is in operation along a career path towards the top in academia.

In phases of reorganization and threats of shutdown, work organizations can resort to more traditional gender power (Ø. Holter et al., 1998). Cutbacks and reorganization are not necessarily what characterizes a university. But elements of threats, potential danger, and constant cutbacks in a career path can be quite similar – from the individual's point of view. From the individual candidate's perspective and experience, both reorganization and threatening cutbacks in one's career are often relevant, with ever stronger and new demands on each individual. Research shows that all this can increase the tendency to "fall back" to relatively traditional perceptions of gender, unless specifically counteracted (Dockweiler et al., 2018; see further Chapter 9).

Conclusion

As a group, men experience fewer problems with the work environment than women do as a group. The gender gap in men's favour, revealed in the questionnaire surveys (elaborated in Chapter 5), is confirmed by qualitative data from interviews and observations. Both among students and

employees, men report problems considerably less often compared with women.

This does *not* mean that no men have problems. One in three who say they experience problems of professional devaluation are men. However, when considered as groups, men and women either appear to be approximately equal, or men do better (fewer problems). There is no clear pattern of additional burdens for men, which women rarely experience.

For both women and men, an academic career is seen in contrast to family and caregiving. Men can experience gender equality initiatives at the faculty as unfair, since they believe the initiatives partially favour women. This is often because they consider themselves equally burdened by family responsibilities and housework, and thus are basically in a woman's traditional position.

Men's dominance in higher positions affects both the work environment and their career paths. Both men and women maintain that being in the majority, as opposed to the minority, has an impact on their work. In our data, the majority usually benefits – one feels more "at home". Men say it is easier to work with other men, whereas women often express their minority position as feeling lonely or excluded. Both genders claim that informal situations in connection with work are the most difficult for those in the minority. They also report how networks that are decisive for building a career in academia are formed in these informal situations, and that being comfortable in each other's company is vital for this type of networking. Despite clear descriptions of being in the majority as opposed to the minority, the significance of being in the majority is not reflected upon very much by the majority group.

The faculty is not only gender-divided across departments, gender division is also obvious within departments. It often becomes even more visible, the more detailed the statistics – on the "micro level".

Moreover, the qualitative material clearly shows that specific research areas and groups have higher status than others, and the quantitative material points in the same direction. Disciplines and groups highest up in the hierarchy often have a low proportion of women. Professional hierarchies – or gender distribution in the work environment – influence the experience of satisfaction with one's career ambitions. Women are

more satisfied in disciplines on lower levels of the hierarchies – where they are not in the minority – whereas men experience higher satisfaction on higher levels – where they are in the majority.

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Notes

1 See the introduction to part three for a description of the theory "doing gender".

2 The material and how it has been collected is further described in the book's appendix "Method".

3 Also referred to as "scarcity value" in survey research.

4 This hard/soft division is also called production/reproduction, human-oriented/technically-oriented work, and horizontal division of labour, in research. Historical research has emphasized how this division between "hard" masculinity and "soft" femininity became more prominent and systemized in modern times and through industrialization, although it existed to some degree in earlier periods too (Holter, 1997).

5 A more detailed list of subjects within each programme might have given more visible gender connections, but this was not within the scope of our study.

6 Data from Integer and Asset are described in more detail in Chapter 7.