

Gender Equality in Swedish Higher Education: Patterns and Shifts

Leif Lindberg , Ulla Riis & Charlotte Silander

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Abstract

In most European countries, more women than men attend undergraduate Higher Education and more women than men obtain degrees. In Sweden the proportion of female students has long been in the vicinity of 51–60 percent. The number of doctoral entrants and degrees meet a ‘balanced gender criterion’, defined as no sex constituting more than 60 percent of the population. Still the unequal gender structure of higher positions persists: Men tend to hold the top positions, especially as professors. Explaining this inertia is the main theme of this article. Differences between horizontal and vertical analyses are focused on, and changes in gender balance during 1999–2007 are shown. Variations in career patterns over research areas are highlighted. Finally, hypotheses are formulated and approaches for further studies on gender balance in Higher Education are discussed.

Keywords: academic career, equality in education, higher education, discrimination