ABSTRACT

THE REPRODUCTION AND CHANGE OF MALE DOMINANCE IN POSITIONS OF POWER

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In Sweden, as in many other countries, most managers are men. In 1993 the Swedish government commissioned an inquiry in order to find out to what extent men dominated management positions in Swedish business life at the time. The empirical material consisted of an extensive survey among organizations and interviews with people that worked with the issue of increasing women at executive levels (in the study referred to as change agents) (Höök 1995, Wahl 1995). Descriptions given by these agents supplemented the statistics from the survey and enhanced the picture of the work for change. Nine years later a follow up inquiry was commissioned in order to once again measure the distribution of women and men at different organizational levels and the existence of work for change (see Regnö 2003a, 2003b).

This paper is based on the findings from the 2003 inquiry “Male Dominance in Transition. On Management Teams and Boards” (SOU 2003:16). In the first section of the paper, the empirical findings from the survey (Regnö 2003a, 2003b) and interviews with change agents (Höök & Wahl 2003) will be presented. Then, the more theoretical discussions following the themes of women executives in a historical perspective (Svanström 2003), women and corporate boards (Karlsson Stider 2003), management and gender (Holgersson 2003a), young managers (Linghag 2003), and work for change (Höök 2003) will be summarized. The paper ends with a discussion drawing on the results of the different chapters.

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1 SOU 1994:3 “Mäns föreställningar om kvinnor och chefskap” (published in English with the title “Men’s perceptions of women and management” (Wahl 1995)) included contributions by Anna Wahl and Pia Höök.
2 SOU 2003:16 “Mansdominans i förändring” (Male dominance in transition)