ABSTRACT

GENDER, GATE-KEEPING AND RESEARCH FUNDING: ORGANIZATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

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Gender and gate-keeping in academia are explored in this paper in relation to one key academic arena: research funding. This is analysed by studying both organizational and individual gate-keepers of research funding, their policies and practices. The dynamics of gate-keeping are analysed as processes, policies and practices which, on the one hand, exclude and control, but, on the other hand, also facilitate and provide resources and opportunities. Research funding is of growing importance in academic life. This is because of both trends towards increasing competitive and external funding of university research and greater use of the level and source of research funding as a measure of evaluation of academic activity, sometimes even quality. Women are particularly under-represented among the academic gate-keepers, and in leading positions in science and science policy organisations. According to the EU ETAN report on women in science (2000), gate-keepers of research funding in Europe consist to a large extent of middle-age male academics. In EU science policy, mainstreaming gender equality in scientific organisations is currently seen both as an important goal in itself and a way to promote excellence in scientific research. A critical analysis of the dynamics of gate-keeping in research funding and its gendered aspects is important in order to increase understanding of gendered practices in science. This kind of analysis can also inform science policy in general and policies and practices of funding organisations towards greater gender awareness and fairness. As one of the top countries in gender equality development globally and also a country with very high R&D intensity and relatively high proportion of female researchers, Finland offers an internationally interesting setting for exploring the topic. The paper presents work in progress by a 3-year research project started in 2002.