ABSTRACT

ORGANIZATIONAL RESISTANCE, HOMOSOCIALITY AND CULTURAL CLONING: NATIONAL ACADEMIA IN A EUROPEANIZING CONTEXT

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This paper examines the theme of homosocial reproduction through the complexities of resistance, especially organizational resistance. Indeed organizational resistance can at times be understood as a form of homosociality and homosocial reproduction. In such ways, resistance, like power, is dialectical and contradictory, material and discursive. This paper explores the processes of collective, institutional, organizational resistances to perceived external threats, as well as some personal resistance thereto. The former largely through distance, the latter resistance is largely resistance through persistence (Collinson, 1992). The setting for this examination of these general questions is academia itself.

Universities and academia are changing from an historical period of local, national disciplines to one characterized by greater diversity, and increased Europeanizing and transnationalizing influences upon disciplines and contexts. For example, much social science, both within and outside Europe, has historically developed primarily within a national context, effectively as, for example, ‘national sociology’ or ‘national economics’. There are contradictory forces in the reconstruction of disciplines: first, those that seek to embrace difference, diversity, ‘Europeanization’, comparative studies, postcolonialism and ‘internationalism’, as a sign of value, if only rhetorically; and second, resistance and reluctance in this often somewhat remote pressure to move from a relatively implicit nation(ism) to a relatively explicit transnationalism. These latter forces include the defence of local, national languages, national(istic) often male-dominated traditions, jobs for local nationals, and local educational practices, against international, often Anglophone forces.

These questions and contradictions are examined through extended case study material of university appointment processes in Finland, drawing on publicly available documentation. These have included a bizarre series of organizational events, including giving false information, invention of procedures and many exclusionary practices. They exemplify processes of organizational resistance to perceived external change and threat. In such situations homosocial reproduction and ‘cultural cloning’ are becoming more complex processes and practices.