**Academic Women Leaders and their Potentials as Gendered Organisational Change Agents**

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In this paper the change potential of women in management positions in organisations of higher education focussing on science and technology will be investigated. Two aspects will be the focus, leadership style and organisational cultures measured by division of labour, communication, conflict management, competition and handling of gender issues as well as networks.

Background of the paper is a German research project, lasting from April 2009 to March 2012, financed by the Ministry of Education and Research and the European Social Fonds, combining the expertise of two institutions, the University of Wuppertal and the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy. Change potentials of organisational culture in technical organisations have been the theme of part of the project of the University of Wuppertal under the leadership of the author.

A qualitative methodology has been taken for answering research questions. Eight case studies have been done in companies, governmental research organisations, political institutions and universities. Methodological instruments were website analysis, focus discussion groups and guided interviews. In each selected organisation three guided expert interviews were done with women in leadership positions and two interviews were done with men in leadership positions. Two further guided interviews were done with key personal from human resources and equal opportunity office. In each investigated organisation two gender separated focus discussion groups with women and men in leadership positions were done.

Research questions have been besides others: Which role do structural changes in the knowledge production mode play, especially the observed intensified importance of university-industry-government relations and the commercialization of science. What is the impact on leadership styles and change potentials of asked female professors in comparison to male professors? What are the differences in comparison to other types of organisations which have been investigated too? Are there any gendered styles? Which role do gender stereotypes still play? How is gender sensibility connected with making decisions, do women focus more on gender mainstreaming?

Getting the right information in the right time at the right place is one of the main issues of being in a leadership position. For women professors in science and technology strategic handling of information is one of the most important prerequisites. So project ideas have to be communicated carefully taking into account cooperation and competition at the same time. On the other hand to change organizational culture transparency is a focus especially of women. Getting and giving of information is connected to networking and being engaged in relevant networks and a prerequisite of a leadership positions. Are there any differences between men and women? What about to overcome the engineering departments as men’s domain? How do women leader in the academy use existing men’s networks and create their own ones? Which strategies do they use to overcome barriers they are confronted with?

The results will be interpreted with theoretical perspectives taken from gender and organisation, feminist technology studies, critical men’s studies as well as gender studies. Analysis of results is still on going, but will be finished at the conference time.