**Gender, Network Awareness and organisational change in Science and Engineering**

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**Abstract**

Networks and network awareness influence the success of leading women as well as men and their potential for organisational change. Gender awareness as a necessary factor for organisational change to gender equality is normally only relevant for women. The paper will analyse how gender is intertwined in leadership positions and options in different organisations for science and engineering.

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On basis of a qualitative design semi structured interviews and gender separate focus discussion groups with men and women in leadership positions were done and content analysed. The sample consists of different types of organisations: academic, research, political and industrial.

Results reflect overall a high networking awareness and practice among leading women and men. Women are no longer formally excluded from most networks, but, their participation in men’s networks is limited and their own networks are less powerful because of their minority role in SET. Gender awareness can be observed in a women’s network initiative, mentoring programs, equal opportunity measures, and in handling visibility and discrimination strategically.

Getting the right information in the right time at the right place is one of the main prerequisites of a leadership position. For women professors in science and technology strategic handling of information very important. So project ideas have to be communicated carefully taking into account cooperation and competition at the same time. Getting and giving information is connected to networking and being engaged in relevant networks is a prerequisite of a leadership position.

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