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Women in Academia and Equality Law
Aiming high – Falling short?

Gender Equality in French Academia

Anne-Marie Daune-Richard

Gender Equality in French Academia is difficult to analyse –and manage- for one main reason: Academia and academics belong to the Public Sector and the law which rules equality in employment (1983, updated in 2001) concerns only the private sector. In France common rules are not applying to the Public sector: it has its proper working rules and its proper courts (it does not come within industrial tribunals but within internal civil services ones), its proper career management (appointments and promotions are ruled by specific competitive examinations, the so called "*concours*").

Likewise, traditionally, the collection of data and statistics are not systematic in the public sector. For example, each big private enterprise has to present each year to its work's council a social assessment with data on employees, training, salaries etc...and since the 1983's law it must include gendered ones. But the public sector was not concerned with this legal obligation. It was only at the end of the 90's that governmental circulars and decrees ordered for such statistics. So it is only very recently that official and systematic analysis and statistics on Academia are gathered and published.

I- Women in French Academia

A 2002 report from the French Ministry of Research (Ministère de la recherche, 2002) gives a total figure of 66 000 academics -from which 49 500 are employed in the Universities- 30% being women.

I-1 French academic system is a two spheres organisation

On the one hand the **Higher Education Sector**, mostly Universities¹ which employ the so called "enseignants-chercheurs" *i.e* academics who are both teachers and researchers. These academics have rather heavy teaching duties: they do 192 hours of service the year.

On the other hand there are **Research Bodies** in which academics are exclusively dedicated to research: they are full time researchers and teaching is not a duty for them even if many are teaching. But when they do so it is on a voluntary basis and choosing where and how many hours they'll teach. The most important of these Research Bodies is the CNRS (*Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*/National Centre for Scientific Research) which employs more than 11 000 researchers (and even more engineers and technicians) in all scientific areas. The others are dedicated to specialized areas (for example: Health and Medical Research, Agricultural Research etc...).

The vast majority of these academics are civil servants. And so are the technicians and the administrative staffs employed in both sectors. Depending on governments, Universities and Research Bodies are attached either to a single Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research (the case in the present government) or to two ministries (Education on one hand, Research on the other). Some dedicated Schools and Research Bodies depend –partly or totally- on the corresponding Ministry (Agriculture, Health....).

I-2 Vertical and Horizontal Gender Segregation in Academia

In each of the two sectors they are two grades: A (Full Professor/Researcher) and B (Associate Professor/Researcher). Women are 30% of all French Academics but, as elsewhere, they are underrepresented in higher grades.

Table 1

% females and grade A among Academics; % grade A among males& females Academics and advantage for men. Universities & Research Bodies. France 2000

	Total (a)	% females (b)	% grade A (c)	% grade A among		Advantage for men (f)=(e)/(d)
				Women (d)	Men (e)	
Research Bodies	16 442	32%	39%	25%	45%	1,77
Universities	48 104	30%	36%	18%	43%	2,39
Total	64 534	30%	36%	20%	43%	2,18

Source : Observatoire des Sciences et Techniques, 2002.

The Universities look harder for women's promotion than Research Bodies.

If we consider the scientific fields, women are concentrated in Natural sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences. And they are few of them in Physics, Engineering, Computers and Mathematics. It fits with the figures of women PhD graduates. They are 40% of all PhD graduates but only 20% in Mathematics and Computers, 50% in Humanities, Natural Sciences and Medicine, and more or less 40% in Social Sciences, Chemistry and Earth & Space Sciences (Ministère de la recherche, 2002).

But it is not always the less feminised fields, which are the most difficult for women's promotion. Natural Sciences is a feminised field but the promotion is rather difficult for women. And the two fields that are the less hard for women's promotion are Humanities –very

¹ But not only: it also includes the so called "*Grandes Ecoles*", Schools dedicated to specialized training as engineers, and the Institutes which are training the teachers of compulsory schools ("*Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres*")

feminised- but also Mathematics and Earth & Space Sciences –where women are rare. (Table 2).

Table 2

% females and grade A among Academics; % grade A among males & females Academics and advantage for men. By scientific fields. France 2000

Scientific fields	Total (a)	% females (b)	% grade A (c)	% grade A among		Advantage for men (f)=(e)/(d)
				Women (d)	Men (e)	
Mathematics	3 642	21%	35%	20%	39%	2,00
Physics	4 388	19%	39%	21%	44%	2,13
Chemistry	4 920	28%	36%	18%	43%	2,42
Engineering	3 448	16%	33%	14%	36%	2,53
Information & Communication	6 329	18%	29%	15%	32%	2,16
Earth & Space	2 736	21%	39%	22%	44%	1,99
Natural sciences	12 360	40%	34%	20%	44%	2,24
Medicine	6 179	23%	62%	27%	73%	2,69
Social sciences	8 505	31%	34%	19%	41%	2,14
Humanities	12 026	44%	30%	21%	38%	1,84
All fields	64 534	30%	36%	20%	43%	2,18

Source : Observatoire des Sciences et Techniques, 2002.

II- Public Policies

European Community's Directives and incentives enhanced gender equality in Higher Education and Academia in France. And particularly the Directive of 1976, February, 7, on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions. Since the 80's, EC programs tried to promote gender equality in national policies, but it was only from the mid 90's that monetary incitation were dedicated to carry on actions in this sense.

French politicians and people were long convinced that the academic world was not concerned with gender inequality. First because of the meritocratic references which govern this world; and second because academics being civil servants they are managed by the Public Sector's rules which are supposed to be strictly the same for everyone. And in fact they are.... formally!

During the preparation of the 4th World Conference on Women, which was held in Beijing in 1995, France was at the Presidency of the EU. As such, it was responsible for organizing the concertation between members states and bringing out a common position. So that French authorities have been concerned with gender equality and questioned about it: a national report was carried out and published (Aubin et Gisserot, 1994). A statement of gender statistics was ordered (*Les femmes*, 1995) and in 1995 was created an "Observatory for Parity between Women and Men" (*Observatoire pour la parité entre les femmes et les hommes*).

For our purpose, an international interdisciplinary conference was held in Paris in March 1995 to present and debate the scientific knowledge on women and gender in social sciences².

The Beijing Conference concluded with recommendations and asked each country to carry out a statement of the situation within five years *i.e.* in 2000. At that time, France was no longer at the EU presidency but was asked, as others members, to give results for the EU report. So that, at the end of the 90's, French socialist government ordered and published a set of reports concerned with gender equality in higher positions in public sector (Colmou, 1999), in work and occupations (Génisson, 1999), and another on the economic dimension of gender equality (Majnoni d'Intignano, 1999). These reports lead French Authorities to become aware that gender equality was not as achieved as expected. Programmes of action were defined and "boards of equality" were set up in different Ministries and Public Bodies to enhance and promote women's opportunities and careers.

As for the Public Sector, analyses and proposition were published (Le Pors, 2002) and in 2000, a circular from the Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, to all Ministries ordered for an adaptation of the public statistics so as to have a better knowledge of the respective situations of men and women. In 2002, a decree ordered that each board of examiners and recruitment in the State services will be composed of no less than one third of each sex.

In the scientific area, a "Mission for Parity" was created at the Ministry of Research in September 2001 and a "Mission on women's place at the CNRS" was set up at the National Centre for Scientific Research in July 2001.

As for the Education Sector, a "Convention to promote the equality between girls and boys, women and men in Education" was signed in February (the 25th) 2000 between different ministries: Employment; Education, Research and Technology; Women's Rights; Agriculture. This Convention was extended to three other ministries in 2002 : Culture, Justice, Equipment. This convention aims to set up a policy concerted between these ministries, with three main objectives: to improve the educational and vocational guidance for girls and boys; to promote an education based on mutual respect for both sexes; to strengthen tools for promoting equality and actor's training

How did this convention was implemented in the Higher Education Sector?³

A "Mission for Equal opportunities" was set up at the Ministry's "Department of Higher Education". This title points French authorities' position on reducing gender inequalities, which is means oriented rather than outcome oriented. Policies are supposed to promote gender equality rather than to favour or advantage women as a group. In that sense, the preferred tool is "*mixité*" (mixing of the sexes) *i.e.* the balanced representation of women and men everywhere.

Which were the Mission's actions?

- collecting gendered statistics on universities (students, teachers, technicians, administrative staffs, boards...) and put them on the website. Up to now, available data are not exhaustive because of the French system's complexity: they concern universities but the collection of data concerning the "*Grandes écoles*" is not yet available.
- launching an enquiry on research and teaching in gender studies: the final report is expected shortly.

These two actions needed collaborations between different institutions and ministries, in line with a "mainstreaming" framework.

Another important action was to put the question of equal opportunities on the agenda for the negotiations between the Ministry and the Universities. Since 1989, the relationship between

² A book was published. Cf : Ephesia (1995)

³ cf. Le bras-Chopart (2004)

the State and the Universities is contractual⁴: every four years each university defines a project which is covered by a contract with the Ministry when accepted. These projects have to fit with orientations given by the ministry, generally four or five lines. The last round of negotiations began in 2000 to elaborate contracts for 2001-2005. For this round a line "promotion of gender equality" was added to the others. A document was sent to the universities giving examples of steps, procedures and actions.

The Department of Higher Education has at its disposal funds from EU (*Fonds social européen*) dedicated to equal opportunities. It uses this possibility to give additional funds to universities setting up projects on equal opportunities. Five conventions were signed by the Department of Higher Education and Universities (or "*Grandes Ecoles*") in 2001 and eleven in 2002. But the management of these funds is highly complex for the users. The university has to pay first and be reimbursed at the end of the programs and, in the meanwhile, a lot of reports and assessments to deliver...

The actions initiated in this framework are very diversified: exhibitions, conferences, training... Positions of Representatives for Gender Equality was created and organised as a network. A documentary fund on women's history was built up.

Another example: the "Mission for women's place in the CNRS" (National Centre for Scientific Research). It was created in 2001 and placed directly under the authority of the Head of the CNRS. It is aimed to educating and raising awareness on issues related to gender parity. It carried out actions as exhibitions, films and workshops. Studies have been launched to identify and analyse the factors affecting women's careers in the CNRS. A book was published on "Women in CNRS'History" (CNRS, 2004).

The Mission is related to the Helsinki group on "Women and sciences, and to the EU unit on the same theme at DG V.

In March 2003, the 6th, a cooperative framework agreement for gender parity has been signed at CNRS headquarters by the Minister of Gender Equality, the Minister of Research and the General Director of the CNRS.

To conclude, French public policies on gender equality in Academia are focused on:

- Making the knowledge on gender inequalities progress and display. Information and education are the basis of this orientation.
- Incentives and actors' willingness much more than obligations
- Parity and "mixing the sexes" ("*mixité*") are targets preferred to equality and it is the only point including an obligation (1/3 of each sexes in the recruitments/promotion boards). Here, we come onto the belief that equal representation of females and males will produce gender equality: this belief is the background of the Law on Equal Representation of Men and Women among candidates for Political Election (passed in 2000, June 6).

III- Outcomes?

As we saw, the awareness of gender inequalities in Academia and the policies aimed to reduce them are both very recent so that an assessment of results is not done and reasonably not possible.

We'll only present some analyses and statistics showing the main trends of the recent evolution.

⁴ This contractual relationship has been updated and redefined in 1998

III-1 Share of women among academic grades: evolution 1998-2002

Table 3 shows that the total share of grade A among women and men enhanced between 1998 and 2002, but this is almost entirely due to the evolution in the Research Bodies, the figures remaining rather constant in the Universities.

Table 3

% females and grade A among Academics; % grade A among males & females Academics and advantage for men. Universities & Research Bodies. France: evolution 1998-2002

	1998				2002			
	% females	% grade A among		Advantage for men	% females	% grade A among		Advantage for men
	(b)	Women (d)	Men (e)	(f)=(e)/(d)	(b)	Women (d)	Men (e)	(f)=(e)/(d)
Research Bodies	31%	20,8%	43,7%	2,10%	32,6%	26,2%	44,8%	1,71
Universities	29%	18%	43%	2,42	31%	18%	43%	2,36
Total	30%	20%	44%	2,17%	31%	20%	43%	2,13%

Source: Observatoire des Sciences et Techniques, 2003. P. 16-18 (some of the 1998's figures have been added by the author of the report).

III-2 Share of women in academic boards: evolution

The share of women in the different Academic Boards rose seriously during the last decades, particularly in the strategic ones.

Table 4

Share of women in Academic Boards: evolution 1984-2002. Universities and Research Bodies.

	1984-1988	1989- 1993	1994-1998	1999-2002
Administrative boards				
Total	111	188	183	218
Females	7	33	34	47
% Females	6%	18%	19%	22%
Strategic boards				
Total	164	407	382	289
Females	7	47	54	80
% Females	4%	12%	14%	28%
Scientific evaluation boards: total				
1 343		1 692	2 189	2 235
Females	224	346	470	515
% Females	17%	20%	21%	23%

Source: Observatoire des Sciences et Techniques, 2002. P.15

We tried to find the share of women at the position of Director or President of Academic Institutions, but it has been rather difficult. First because the figures are not systematically gathered; and second because these Boards and Headquarters changed at the end of 2004, so very recently. I found the following figures:

- Among the 88 universities 7 had a woman as President in 2000 (Le Bras-Chopard 2004), 9 in 2004.

- Among the 74 "sections" of the "*Conseil National des Universités*" (which is the scientific committee for the whole University system): 4 was chaired by a woman in 2002, 10 in 2004.

- Among the 41 "sections" of the "*Comité national de la recherche scientifique*" (which is the scientific committee for the CNRS), 7 was chaired by a woman in 2002, 5 in 2004.

In the meanwhile, the Ministry of Research and the Director of the CNRS, who were women in the last few years, have recently changed for men, so that one can have the impression that the enhancement of "parity" in the scientific boards, which took place from the end of the 90's, is slowing down.

III-3 A focus on the CNRS⁵

At the CNRS the share of women among the researchers has been the same since 1946: 30-31% (Sgen-CFDT, 2004). And the figures below presenting the evolution since 1973 by grade (A/B) show that women have been getting fewer in grade A during the 80's and 90's, a slight upturn being noticed since 2000.

Table 5: % of women among researchers' grades at the CNRS: evolution

	Directeurs de Recherche* Grade A	Chargés de Recherche* Grade B
1973	23,1%	33,2%
1978	22,4%	31,6%
1989	20,8%	34,1%
1993	21,1%	35,8%
1999	20,4%	36,2%
2000	20,6%	36,6%
2001	20,7%	37%
2002	21,4%	37,3%
2003	21,7%	37,1%

* Present appellation

Source : Sgen-CFDT (2004) and Bilan social du CNRS (2003)

If we now look at the whole researchers' promotions in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002, we notice that the promotion of women from grade B2 to A1, which has been described as a "bottleneck" is widening and so is their promotion along the first steps of the A scale.

⁵ The figures presented here come from a study done by Sgen-CFDT (2004) in which I was involved. Some results were presented in Daune-Richard and Recotillet (2004). I updated the figures when it has been possible.

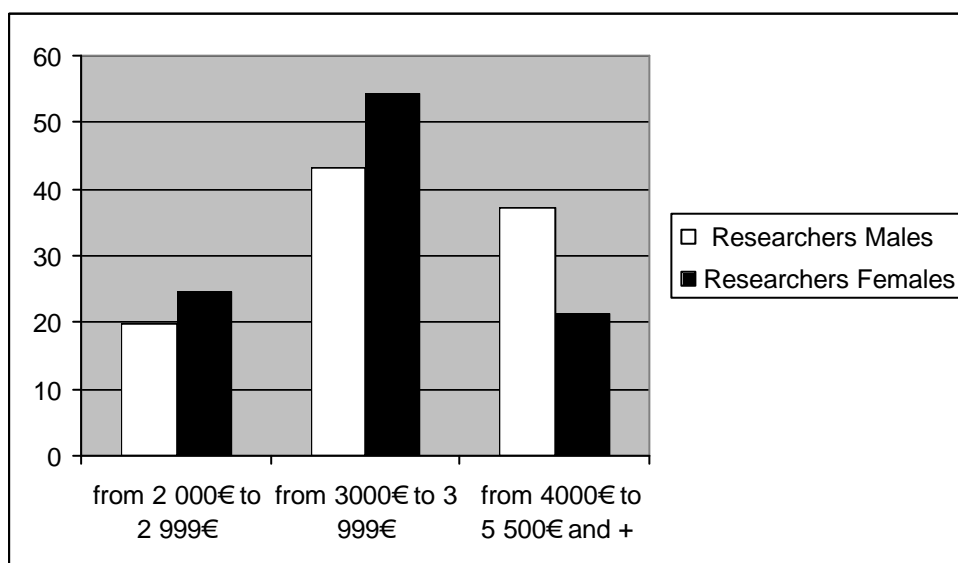
Table 6: % of women within the promotion of researchers. CNRS

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Grade A3-->grade A4	0	0	8,3% (1 woman)	0
Grade A2-->Grade A3	6,2% (1 woman)	20,8% (5 women)	4% (1 woman)	37,5% (6 women)
Grade A1-->Grade A2	11% (7 women)	18% (14 women)	11,1% (12 women)	14,6% (18 women)
Grade B2-->grade A1	20,4%	26,5%	28,6%	32,9%
Grade B1 -->Grade B2	34,9%	30,3%	31,3%	31,6%

Source: CNRS, Bilan social 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and Sgen-Cfdt (2004).

We now present the distribution of salaries between men and women, researchers at the CNRS in 2002. Without surprise it shows that women are concentrated at the bottom and in the middle of the distribution, and rare at the top.

Table 7: Researchers at CNRS: distribution of salaries between men and women. 2002



source: CNRS, Bilan social 2002 (p. 44-46).

Conclusion

In France, the share of women among Academics is not so small: 30%. But as elsewhere in the labour market they are underrepresented in the higher positions.

Academia and Academics belong mainly to the Public sector and it was not before the end of the 90's that the governments actually started to deal with gender inequalities in this sector. Academia has been included in this concern and measures and Boards aimed to enhance gender equality were set up in the Higher Education and Research area. Since the beginning of this decade, actions are undertaken in this framework which are dedicated to information education and raising awareness of gender inequalities. They rely on the belief that equal representation of females and males in the different academic boards will come to gender equality. And actually, while the share of women among academics remained almost stable during the 90's, it enhanced in the academic boards. And at the same time, the men's advantage in the highest grades has been reducing.

But we showed that this improvement of gender equality in French Academia leaves some figures in the dark. On the one hand it is in the scientific evaluation boards that the feminisation is growing the slowest. On the other hand, the better share of women in grade A is observed in the Research Bodies, but not at the University.

So that if the whole share of women among Academics looks better in France than in other European countries, gender inequalities are significant. And in the competition for promotion men are much more likely to win than women. Policies aimed to promote women's orientation towards academia and to reduce gender inequalities in academic careers are very recent and one can observe some outcomes. But these outcomes and trends need to be strengthened within the coming decade to succeed in getting deeply rooted in practices.

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