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SIG_Gender&Geopolitics (GG) 😊

➤ Title:

- Old title: *Academics' identities & the NPM ideology: intersecting gender and national origins across Europe*
- New suggestions: *Are young reserachers eqally captured by „everyday neoliberalism”?*

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Structure of the paper

- Introduction
- Theoretical framework
- Method
- Findings
- Conclusion

Goal of the paper

- The intersection of the geopolitical and gender differences in academic discourses of ECI's with regard to the neoliberalism in academia: Focusing on the narratives of young academicians when talking about their career choices, career advancement, publication strategies and grant funding possibilities, while struggling to remain on the highly demanding scientific track.

Theoretical framework: Everyday neoliberalism in academia

- (1) Foucault: neoliberalism governance is consistent with the line of thought of „governmentality“.
- (2) managerialism is not only a set of policies and instruments but also an “identity project” (Du Gay 1996)
- (3) the everyday neoliberalism in higher education implies that academics should endorse an entrepreneurial spirit in their day-to-day activities as well in the development of their careers.

Theoretical framework: Neoliberalism in academia as a gender issue

- ➔ (1) Bensimon (1995) warned that the managerial university would create an insitutional climate that affects women adversely
- ➔ (2) managerialism introduced a “discursive masculinity” (Martinez-Aleman 2014) into universities.

Method(1)

- Seventeen European countries: *Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and Malta*
- For the purposes of the article in question, the total of 48 interviews was analysed

	Eastern Europe	Western Europe	Total
Female	19	8	27
Male	15	5	20
Total	31	16	47

Method (2)

- Bottom-up coding
- During the coding, special attention was paid to gender and geopolitical differences that were to be found in the research.
- Analysis: highlighting the relevant parts, and coding them according to the proposed themes
- The themes of interest were the interviewees' experiences and opinions concerning their:
 - **PhD decision**, PhD completion, PhD achievement, PhD supervision, career planning, **career achievement**, academic recruitment, publication achievement, **publication strategy**, peer review, evaluation, research activity, national system of science, **grant funding**, and teaching activity.

Findings



PhD decision - women

- **PhD as intrinsic motivation for women:** “curious personality” (18FI-F), “personal interest in research work” (41ME-F), “for herself” (63RS-F), “research as personal motivation, interest, stimulation” (5BE-F), “PhD not part of a strategy but personal strategy, but interest” (9CH-F).
- Some **women** also point out the: “**luck**” factor (21FR-F) or a “flowing process / never thought I would do a PhD” (9CH-F)
- There were some **slight differences in Southern countries, namely Portugal and Cyprus** where women highlight more their involvement in a PhD in a career perspective, however, these women all pointed specific external support to carry on a PhD (either from the institution or family): “continuation of my previous work in the university /staying in the university” (57PT-F), “a compulsory step to pursue an academic career (but also an intellectual challenge)” (58PT-F), “major point in her career, but also I was given the opportunity, my parents supported” (13CY-F)

PhD Decision- men

- ➔ **PhD as a means to start an academic career for men and there were no significant geopolitical differences:** “doctoral studies as logical consequence to remain at university” (4BA-M), “wanting to teach at the university (and have a better knowledge than student)” (35LT-M), “during undergraduate studies, wanted to teach at the university” (15CY-M), “desire to start an academic career” (64RS-M), “always knew I wanted to become a researcher” (19FI-M), “Knew from the start that was the road to take” (51NL-M), “postgraduate studies as the only way to develop a career in this field of studies” (72SL-M)
- ➔ there were no significant geopolitical differences

Academic career - women

- **Women emphasize nepotism or local networks as levers for obtaining a position:** “unfair, lack of transparency, political” (38LV-F), “non transparent, the field of study is important, unfair” (18FI-F), “pre arranged, only a formality, not transparent” (65SK-F), “lobbying versus best candidates” (2BA-F), “personal networking” (14CY-F), “no clear criteria” (17FI-F), “difficult to enter the system as people already in the system are recruited” (63RS-F)
- Complain a lot about not transparent criteria or political struggles at play in recruitment decisions
- **Only women who have multiple personal advantages, positive view on academic recruitment:** 37LV-F (good CV, local contacts, family support).
- There were no specific geopolitical differences

Academic career- men

- **Men also point nepotism and local network but academic excellence as well and are overall less critical than women on these issues**
- **Most of men point out their ability to build local networks, willingness to take on administrative responsibilities that gave them the opportunity to get a job in academia:** "appropriate connections" (4BA-M), "proposal of post-doc by project leader" (8BE-M), "extend presence in the university" (7BE-M), "engaged in administration" (7BE-M), "chosen by supervisor" (72SL-M).
- **The other part of male interviewees point out their accomplishments in research and/or their international experience:** "did not have to look for a job, post doc abroad" (35LT-M), "fair teaching and research, award for research" (15CY-M), "good mix of networking and articles" (43ME-M), "PhD supervisor helped + Fullbright fellowship" (19FI-M).
- **There were no specific geopolitical differences**

Publication strategy -women

- **Women are less strategic, however eastern women are more strategic than their western counterparts**
- Many of them point the inexistence of a strategy, but opportunities that arise: “no strategy, books” (5BE-F), “no strategy, opportunity driven” (21FR-F, 38LV-F, 58PT-F, 61RS-F, 63RS-F, 65RS-F), “research, not quantity is the goal” (9CH-F), “Impact factor is less important than ‘right’ audience” (54PL-F), “topics in connection, novelty” (17FI-F)
- A number of interviewees insist **on the quantity of articles published rather than the quality** of the journals, in order to match their institutions’ requests (33LT-F, 37LV-F)
- Some mention **to give priority to outlets where it is easy to publish**, most of the times the **national journals** (66 SK-F, 69SL-F, 33LT-F, 37LV-F, 18FI-F, 62RS-F)
- Other drivers for academic publication: **The only women who endorse a masculine attitude towards publishing are from Eastern countries:** “based on indicators” (1BA-F), “from domestic to regional to international” (2BA-F), “Check I-Index” (13CY-F).
- One woman from West points the needs to publish in excellent journals (Portugal - where NPM has deeply permeated the HE sector); however she adds that she plays the game to match the targets set by her institution: “Scopus first, because required by the institution” (57PT-F)

Publication strategy - men

- Some men target high quality journals, either or international/A-journals: “English, A-journals” (55PL-M), “International first, very good journals” (36LT-M), “high impact factor” (64RS-M), “A-journals at the beginning of the career, now he has a permanent job, A-journals less important” (51NL-M), “target international journals” (72SL-M), “co-authorship to publish in best journals” (4BA-M)
- Some who have not yet published in the best journals, aim to publish more in international journals in the future. Others simply try to stick on the national quantitative criteria: “aspires to write more” (16CY-M), “mostly national, aspires to write more in international” (68SK-M), “stick to the quantitative criteria in LT” (35LT-M)
- A minority of men highlight different motives, more in line with the traditional academic ethos of their field: “Empirical articles as the priority” (3BA-M), “Being convincing, original” (15CY-M), “the field first” (43ME-M)
- There were no specific geopolitical differences

Grant funding application - women

- ➔ Eastern women: Overall, not much experience due to the lack of opportunities, information or support, duration of the entire process, or presupposed failure because of politics or nepotism. These countries are of rather small size, hence the shortage in strong partnership and better opportunities: „not much time spent preparing the proposals, high costs, demotivated reserchers” (14CY_F), „the system is not functioning well in Slovakia, no good/sufficient opportunities” (65SK_F), „Ministry of Science, more opportunities now, than before, but candidates are not well informed” (42ME_F).
- ➔ Western women: Neither much experience, nor success. It seems that they are not self-confident enough, which has roots in their gender or unfairness and opacity of the process: „applied as a post-doc reseracher, but did not win any” (17FI_F

Grant funding application - men

- **Eastern men:** It seems that men are more courageous, therefore more experienced than women. They, however, agree on the fact that it is a time-consuming process, that is not transparent enough, not always fair, the success of which is highly dependent on good connections.
- „applied to the Ministry of Science, the only experience I have, there could be more opportunities”(43ME_M), „small amount of money, also as a co-applicant, administrative demanding, (un)fair allocation”(68SK_M).
- **Western men:** Men came into contact with the process and are relatively successful. The success lies in being well informed and widely experienced, or just lucky (privileged?)
- „depends on the reviewers as well, applied for individual grants I was successful because of the CV” (51NL_M).

Conclusions

- Strategy of career building – men more than women (PhD, publication, grants), but women in eastern countries are more strategic in their publication strategies especially
- Success in academic career – men highlight merit and capacity of networking more than women
- Male-dominated ideals of meritocratic academic careers are more prominent in eastern countries than western countries
- PhD decision and Academic career are specified by gender differences, while Publication strategy and Grand funding are featured by a gender and geopolitics as well