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Disagreement about Division of Household Labour and Experiences of Work-Family conflict in Different Gender Regimes.

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Disagreement about Division of Household Labour and Experiences of Work–Family Conflict in Different Gender Regimes

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Abstract

This article focuses on the level of disagreement about how to divide household labour as well as on the experience of work-family conflicts among cohabiting women and men living in different gender regimes. The German speaking countries Germany, Switzerland and Austria represent a typical conservative gender regime while the Scandinavian countries Sweden, Denmark and Norway are representatives of a typical egalitarian gender regime. The data used comes from the International Social Survey Program 2002. Results support the notion that people living in a context characterised by an egalitarian gender regime to a higher extent report disagreement about the division of household work and work-family conflict than people living in a context characterised by a more traditional gender regime. The results indicate that these differences can be explained by the fact that people in an egalitarian gender regime have a more egalitarian gender ideology than people in a more conservative context.

Keywords: disagreement, gender ideology, gender regime, household labour, work-family conflict

Desacuerdos sobre la División del Trabajo Doméstico y Experiencias de Conflictos Trabajo-Familia en Diferentes Regímenes de Género.

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Resumen

Este artículo se centra en el nivel de desacuerdo sobre cómo dividir el trabajo doméstico así como sobre la experiencia de conflictos familia-trabajo en la convivencia de mujeres y hombres en diferentes regímenes de género. Los países de habla alemana, Alemania, Suiza y Austria representan un típico régimen de género conservador, mientras que los países escandinavos, Suiza, Dinamarca y Noruega son representativos de un típico régimen de género igualitario. La información utilizada proviene de la International Social Survey Program 2002. Los resultados apoyan la noción de que las personas que viven en un contexto caracterizado por un régimen de género igualitario plantean un mayor desacuerdo sobre la división del trabajo doméstico y sobre los conflictos trabajo-familia que las personas viviendo en un contexto caracterizado por un régimen de género más tradicional. Los resultados indican que estas diferencias pueden ser explicadas por el hecho de que las personas en un régimen más igualitario tienen una ideología de género más igualitaria que las personas de un contexto más conservador.

Palabras clave: desacuerdo, ideología de género, régimen de género, trabajo doméstico, conflicto trabajo-familia

One of the most dramatic changes that has occurred in the European labour market during the twentieth century is the entry of women. This could be exemplified by the case of Sweden where the percentage of women between 16 and 64 years participating in the labour force increased from just above 50 percent in the middle of 1900 to around 75 percent at the beginning of the new millennium. During the same period the labour force participation among men dropped from above 90 percent to around 80 (Statistics Sweden, 2012). This “equalization” of the percentage of women and men being active on the labour market has generated new research areas as well new as political issues. One such issue is the question of how couples manage to divide responsibility for household work and balance work and family responsibilities in a situation where both are active on the labour market. Some of the research related to the division and balance of work and family issues has focused on the question of how the actual level of involvement in paid and unpaid work is perceived by men and women.

One such research area is perceived work-family conflicts. Most of this research has focused on how men and women experience the fact that they are involved in both working and family matters. Even though the division of work is still gender segregated there is a development over time showing that most men and women have one role as an employed and another as household worker and parent; they have what is often called multiple social roles (Nordenmark, 2004). A main question in this research field is whether multiple social roles in general are experienced as something beneficial for the individual or if the main characteristic of this situation is the experience of work-family conflicts and stress symptoms. Another research area connected to men’s and women’s involvement in labour is the level of satisfaction with the division of labour among couples. As a result of the development towards gender equality in paid and unpaid work researchers have developed an interest in analysing perceptions of unfairness and the level of disagreements between spouses. A central research question has been what the factors are that can explain the variation in the level of disagreement and quarrels about how to divide labour (Nordenmark, 2008).

Gender Ideology and Perceptions of Labour Involvement

Relatively few studies have explored dissatisfaction with the division of labour and work-family conflicts in different national and gender regimes (exceptions regarding work-family conflict are Cousins and Tang, 2004, Crompton and Lyonette, 2006, Edlund, 2007, Strandh and Nordenmark, 2006). Therefore a main aim of this article is to analyse the level of dissatisfaction with the division of household labour and work-family conflicts among couples who live in either an egalitarian or a traditional gender regime. Why are there reasons to assume that the perceptions of labour involvement differ depending on whether one lives in an egalitarian or a traditional context? A hypothesis is that the context associated with a certain gender regime will be reflected in the attitudes of individuals. This means that people living in an egalitarian regime are assumed to have a more egalitarian gender ideology than people living in a more conservative context. Gender ideology is defined as the beliefs or attitudes that a person holds about gender (Hochschild, 1997). From childhood and on, women and men acquire gender role attitudes through the socialisation process, including preferences of how women and men should behave. These attitudes, or this gender ideology, can be of importance for how women and men later in life perceive their own and their partner's level of involvement in paid and unpaid work.

The assumption has been supported in studies indicating that gender ideology plays an important role in forming perceptions of work-family conflicts and dissatisfaction with the division of labour within couples (Blair and Johnson, 1992, Greenstein, 1996, Hochschild, 1989). An individual's gender ideology then may influence how a certain division of labour is valued and what standards and references are used to judge outcomes. For instance, people with an egalitarian gender ideology might emphasise equality and independence, while people with a more traditional gender ideology might emphasise stability and harmony. This difference in gender ideology can mean that people from different gender regimes may evaluate the same division of labour in different ways.

Because labour to a large extent is still divided according to traditional patterns there exists a gap or tension between the actual division of labour and attitudes towards how work should be divided among people with egalitarian attitudes. A traditional division of labour, and the outcomes from a traditional division of labour, may not be in line with the expectations of those with an egalitarian gender ideology. Therefore, there is a high risk that they will look at the division as unfair and problematic. This means that people with an egalitarian gender ideology will express more dissatisfaction in a situation that is characterised by a traditional division of labour, compared to people with a more traditional gender ideology (Greenstein, 1996, Nordenmark and Nyman, 2003). Because women normally have the main responsibility for household work and children, though they are employed, the assumption is that especially *women* with an egalitarian gender ideology will perceive this situation as unfair, unequal and problematic (Greenstein, 1995, Strandh and Nordenmark, 2006).

Gender Regime and Perceptions of Work Involvement

A hypothesis based on the above theoretical discussion is that people, and especially women, in an egalitarian gender regime have an egalitarian gender ideology, and therefore will express more dissatisfaction and work-family conflict, compared to people living in a more conservative gender regime. To explore this hypothesis there is a need to identify a typical egalitarian gender regime and a typical traditional gender regime that can be compared with each other.

Research on social policy differences indicates that countries, and the welfare policy within countries, represent different gender regimes. States can be classified as representing varying beliefs about how to organize individual and family welfare. Esping-Andersen's (1990) now classic categorization of welfare states into welfare state types (further discussed and updated in Esping-Andersen 1999) illustrates that it is possible to classify countries in the north/west into three different welfare types: a social democratic welfare state type, a liberal welfare state type and a conservative welfare state type. However, feminist academics have pointed out that the social policy contexts are not gender-neutral and are embedded in systems of gender relations. Therefore the social policy contexts on a structural level

also represent different types of gender regimes (Duncan, 1996, Lewis, 1992, Walby, 1994).

A main aim of this study is to compare the levels of dissatisfaction with division of labour and work-family conflicts in a typical egalitarian national context with a typical conservative national context. Therefore the strategy is to choose countries that are as similar as possible regarding culture and living conditions, but opposites regarding policies and values in relation to gender relations. More concrete, a main goal is to discern national contexts that give extensive support to families with an aim to facilitate female employment and national contexts with a relatively passive social policy, resulting in the preservation of the male breadwinner family. The national contexts selected as representatives of a typical egalitarian gender regime are the Scandinavian countries Sweden, Denmark and Norway. The German speaking countries former West Germany (later referred to as Germany), Switzerland and Austria will represent a typical conservative gender regime. A further argument for including these states, apart from the fact that they represent different gender regimes, is that they are relatively similar regarding standard of living conditions.

Characteristics of the typical conservative or family-centred welfare states Germany, Switzerland and Austria are a relative passive social policy, values like minimisation of (labour) market distributed welfare and the preservation of traditional family ties and norms. Family policy consists mainly of support from the state for the male breadwinner family – meaning families consisting of a full time employed man and a woman who has the main responsibility for housework and childcare. There are few policy measures aimed at breaking up the traditional division of labour and at strengthening women's independence from men. The fact that the countries classified as conservative welfare states have in common a relative strong belief in upholding traditional family ties and norms means that they represent a relative conservative or traditional gender regime (Duncan, 1996, Esping-Andersen, 1999, Lewis, 1992, Walby, 1994).

The social democratic or state-centred welfare states Sweden, Denmark and Norway try to offer universal social rights and de-commodification of social rights, even to the new middle classes. Characteristics of these welfare states are encouragement for individual independence, mainly through paid labour in combination with universal schemes. In contrast to the conservative or family-oriented gender regime, the ideal is to maximize individual independence and to minimize family dependence. The state offers a good infrastructure of support services aimed at enhancing the individual's independence from the market and the family. Family policy is comprehensive and encourages female labour market participation and emphasises gender equality. The main aim of family policy is to enable the combination of paid work and parenthood. Because one main political goal is to support women's independence from men the social democratic or state-centred welfare state model can be described as representing an egalitarian gender regime (Duncan, 1996, Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006, Esping-Andersen, 1999, Lewis, 1992, Walby, 1994).

Other Factors of Importance

In addition to gender regime and individual gender ideology the study also includes variables that have been of relevance in earlier studies of experiences of work-family conflict and level of disagreement about how to divide work. One such factor is actual involvement in employment and household work. Most of the studies of conflicts and disagreements about labour involvement among couples stress the importance of the division of labour and time within the household. Spouses in couples who are characterised by a relatively equal distribution of paid work and household work report less disagreements and conflicts than spouses who do not share work to the same extent (Baxter, 2000, Blair and Johnsson, 1992, Dempsey, 1999, Lennon and Rosenfeld, 1994, Perry-Jenkins and Folk, 1994, Sanchez, 1994, Sanchez and Kane, 1996, Wilkie et al., 1998). On the other hand, there are also studies indicating that couples who experience the least conflicts are those who divide labor traditionally (Bahr et al., 1983, Moen and Yu, 1998, Scanzoni and Fox, 1980).

Also studies of work-family conflicts emphasise people's involvement in labour, but instead of pointing out the *division* of labour between partners as a major explanation these studies highlight the importance of *time* spent on paid and unpaid work. People who try to engage strongly in both employment and household work experience work-household conflict more often than others. The more working hours and responsibility in the household (for instance due to the presence of small children), the higher the risk for experiencing work-family conflicts (Bahr et al., 1983, Bolger et al., 1990, Cleary and Mechanic, 1983, Doyle and Hind, 1998, Glass and Fujimoto, 1994, Hall, 1992, Kinnunen and Mauno, 1998, Lundberg et al., 1994, Moen and Yu, 1998, Nordenmark, 2004, Strandh and Nordenmark, 2006, Ozer, 1995, Reifman et al., 1991, Scanzoni and Fox, 1980, Scharlach, 2001, Walters et al., 1998).

Hypotheses

On the basis of the above discussion three hypotheses concerning disagreement about division of household labour and experiences of work-family conflict among women and men in two different gender regimes will be formulated. Hypothesis one relates to the possible link between gender regime on a macro level and the level of dissatisfaction and work-family conflict among individuals.

Hypothesis 1. People, and especially women, living in an egalitarian gender regime (Scandinavia) more often report disagreement and work-family conflict than people living in a more conservative gender regime (Germany, Switzerland and Austria).

The second hypothesis relates to the relationship between gender ideology and disagreement about household work and work-family conflict on an individual level.

Hypothesis 2. People, and especially women, with an egalitarian gender ideology more often report disagreement about the division of household work and work-family conflict than people with a traditional gender ideology.

Hypothesis three tests whether possible relationships between gender regime on a macro level and level of dissatisfaction and work-family conflict among individuals can be explained by differences in gender ideology among individuals.

Hypothesis 3. Gender ideology among individuals can to some extent explain variations between gender regimes regarding the experience of disagreement about the division of household work and work-family conflict.

Data and Variables

The data used comes from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP). The aim of the ISSP is to create comparative statistics on attitudes and values in about 40 industrialized countries. Data consist of a representative sample of the adult population of each country (about 2000 individuals per country). The ISSP investigations are conducted annually and each investigation includes one in-depth theme that is replicated at 8-year intervals, allowing comparisons between nations as well as over time. The thematic section of ISSP used in this study is “Family and Changing Gender Roles III, 2002”. It contains questions on gender role attitudes, labor market participation, division of household work, disagreement about household work and perceived conflicts between working life and family life. For more information on data see <http://www.issp.org/homepage.htm>. Because the purpose of this article is to analyse the experience of disagreements about how to divide household work and work-family conflict in different gender regimes the analyses includes only six countries: Sweden, Denmark, Norway on the one hand and Germany, Austria and Switzerland on the other hand. Other restrictions are that the analyses include cohabiting people only and that the analyses of work-family conflicts include employed people only.

The dependent variable measuring disagreement about how to divide household labour is the question: *How often do you and your partner disagree about sharing of household work?* The response alternatives vary in five steps from never to several times a week. The measures of to what extent work conflicts with family life are the following two statements. *How often has each of the following happened to you during the past three months? In the three past months it has happened that: 1) I have come home from work too tired to do the chores which need to be done. 2) It has been difficult for me to fulfil my family responsibilities because of the amount of time I spent on my job.* The responses, that vary in four steps from never to several times a week, have been summarised into an index (Cronbach's alpha 0.72), which varies from 0 to 6; the higher the score the higher the level of work-family conflict.

The independent variables of most interest in this study are gender regime and gender ideology. Gender regime is, as mentioned, studied in terms of the dichotomy egalitarian and conservative; three countries represent an egalitarian gender regime (Sweden, Denmark, Norway) and three countries represent a conservative gender regime (Germany, Austria and Switzerland). Gender ideology is measured by an index constructed from the following six statements about attitudes towards gender roles. *1) A working mother can establish just as warm and secure relationship with her children as a mother who does not work (reverse). 2) A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works. 3) All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job. 4) A job is all right, but what a woman really wants is a home and children. 5) Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay. 6) A man's job is to earn money; a woman's is to look after the home and family.* The answers to the statements vary in five steps from strongly agree to strongly disagree. They are strongly correlated to each other (Cronbach's alpha 0.79) and are therefore summarised into a "gender ideology index" varying from 0 to 24; the higher the score, the more egalitarian the gender ideology.

The multivariate analyses also include other independent variables that have shown to be of importance in earlier studies of perceived disagreements

about household responsibilities and work-family conflict. Each respondent's and partner's number of working hours is measured by the question: *How many hours do you/your partner normally work a week in your/her/his main job, included any paid or unpaid overtime?* The level of involvement in household work is indicated by the question: *On average, how many hours a week do you/your partner personally spend on household work, not including childcare and leisure time activities?* The workload within the household is also measured by a question about children living at home (no children, children 0-6 years, children 7-17 years). Age indicates stage in life cycle. The highest level of education achieved measures educational level (0 No formal qualification, 1 Lowest formal qualification, 2 Above lowest qualification, incomplete secondary, 3 Higher secondary completed, 4 Above higher secondary level, below full university degree, 5 University degree completed).

It is of course not unproblematic to analyze statistics generated from comparative studies, which means that the results should be interpreted with some caution. There are at least two main limitations that are important to bear in mind when analyzing the material. First, the framing of questions and attitudes are context dependent, which means that certain questions may be understood and interpreted differently in different national contexts. One way to strengthen the validity of different measures is to put together items into indexes, which for instance is done in this study concerning gender ideology and the experience of work-family conflicts. Second, there are some differences between the studied countries regarding sampling, representativity and response rates. However, the respondents are weighted according to the principles described in the ISSP 2002 Codebook¹ in order to assure that the samples correspond to comparable sources of statistics in each country. This means that the samples should be fairly nationally representative.

Results

Table 1 gives a descriptive picture of household and employment characteristics among women and men in the studied countries. Means on

housework hours show that women in Germany, Switzerland and Austria dedicate more time to household work than women in Denmark, Sweden and Norway. This is a result that in some sense supports the notion that Denmark, Sweden and Norway represent a relative egalitarian gender regime while Germany, Switzerland and Austria represent a more conservative gender regime. On the other hand, women are notably more engaged than men in housework in all countries and there are small variations in men's level of housework involvement. These results support the view that responsibility for household work still is divided according to a traditional pattern in all the studied countries. Further, there are relatively small variations in mean age and the occurrence of children between the countries. There are somewhat higher percentages of cohabiting men and women in Norway who state that they have children.

The employment characteristics indicate that it is more common that both men and women are employed in Denmark, Sweden and Norway than in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, with the exception of Norwegian women who are employed to a same level as women in Switzerland. Seventy two percent of the women in Denmark and Sweden are employed which is substantially higher levels in comparison to the other countries, especially in relation to the employment levels among women in Germany and Austria. Mean number of working hours per week indicate that women are more engaged in paid work in Denmark, Sweden and Norway than in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. There is also more common that women in Denmark, Sweden and Norway have an educational degree above higher secondary than in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. All these results to some extent support the notion that these countries represent two different types of gender regimes.

Table 1

Household and employment characteristics among cohabiting women and men in the studied countries. Percent. Mean for housework hours, age and work hours.

	<i>Denmark</i>		<i>Sweden</i>		<i>Norway</i>		<i>Germany</i>		<i>Switzerland</i>		<i>Austria</i>	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<i>Household</i>												
Housework hours	8	13	8	14	5	12	7	21	7	21	8	23
Age	49	46	49	47	48	45	49	46	51	45	49	45
Children 0-6 years	20	21	18	16	22	25	16	21	17	22	21	21
Children 7-17 years	30	30	32	28	37	33	29	29	30	33	30	33
<i>Employment</i>												
Employed	71	72	78	72	77	63	68	46	73	64	61	50
Work hours	30	26	32	26	34	21	31	16	33	18	27	17
No qualification	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	1	0	0
Lowest qualification	4	6	21	15	7	10	39	32	7	9	15	25
Above lowest qualification	6	7	33	31	14	20	27	40	45	56	61	49
Higher secondary	46	35	17	16	34	33	6	8	6	11	10	10
Above higher secondary	25	41	9	8	15	10	11	4	22	12	5	8
University degree	18	11	21	30	30	28	16	13	20	12	11	8

Table 2 shows how gender ideology, disagreement about household work and perceived work-family conflict are related to different gender regimes. Mean values on the gender ideology index illustrate that women have more egalitarian attitudes than men in all countries. However, there are substantial differences between the two different types of gender regimes. Mean values on the gender ideology index are higher in the Scandinavian states, which are classified as representing an egalitarian regime, compared to mean values among individuals in countries classified as conservative regimes. The mean value is 15.8 for people living in the egalitarian states and 12.4 for the people in conservative states. The most egalitarian values are found in Denmark, and among Danish women in particular. People, and especially men, in Switzerland and Austria have the most conservative attitudes toward gender roles. These results support the notion that gender regime on a macro level, expressed by the social and family policy that each state represents, and gender role ideology on an individual level are embedded in each other. Also, ideology on a macro level seems to be reflected in people's attitudes toward gender roles. However the results also indicate that there is substantial variation within the two clusters of gender regimes. For instance, people in Germany, which is a country classified as a conservative gender regime, have relatively egalitarian attitudes in relation to Switzerland and Austria.

Looking at the level of disagreement about how to divide household labour there is a similar pattern among the countries. People in the egalitarian regimes report more disagreements than people living in conservative regimes. The mean value is 2.3 for the egalitarian regimes and 1.7 for the states classified as conservative regimes. Again, people in Switzerland and Austria distinguish themselves by having the lowest mean values, meaning that they report the lowest levels of disagreements about household work. Germans report more disagreements than people in Switzerland and Austria, but less than people in the egalitarian states. These results support the notion that people living in egalitarian regimes, and who therefore also have an egalitarian ideology, more often disagree about how to divide household work than people living in a more conservative context, and who therefore have relatively traditional gender role attitudes.

Table 2

Gender ideology, disagreement about housework and work-family conflict among cohabiting men and women in different gender regimes. Mean

	<i>Gender ideology</i>			<i>Disagree household work</i>			<i>Work-family conflict</i>		
	All	Men	Wom	All	Men	Wom	All	Men	Wom
<i>Egalitarian regimes</i>	15.76 ***	15.08 ***	16.38 ***	2.26 ***	2.24 ***	2.28 ***	2.39 ***	2.34 ***	2.45 ***
Denmark	16.60 ***	15.94 ***	17.21 ***	2.42 ***	2.39 ***	2.45 ***	2.33 ***	2.15 ***	2.50 ***
Sweden	15.45 ***	14.66 ***	16.17 ***	2.14 ***	2.13 ***	2.15 ***	2.46 ***	2.33 ***	2.58 ***
Norway	15.23 ***	14.60 ***	15.80 ***	2.19 ***	2.18 ***	2.20 ***	2.40 ***	2.50 ***	2.30 ***
<i>Conservative regimes</i>	12.44	11.69	13.27	1.71	1.70	1.72	1.81	1.81	1.81
Germany (West)	13.75 ***	12.84 ***	14.75 ***	1.95 ***	1.94 ***	1.97 ***	2.36 ***	2.58 ***	2.06
Switzerland	12.24	11.66	12.97	1.74 **	1.68	1.82 **	1.50	1.41	1.61
Austria	11.87	11.10	12.68	1.57	1.58	1.56	1.67	1.58	1.78
Total mean	14.29	13.45	15.03	2.01	1.98	2.04	2.16	2.11	2.22
N	4863	1295	2551	4768	1281	2481	3325	1022	1666

***=0.001 **=0.01 *=0.05. Significance in relation to *conservative regimes* and Austria.

Also the experience of work-family conflict differs, to some extent, between egalitarian and conservative regimes. The mean value is 2.4 for people living in the states categorised as egalitarian regimes and 1.8 for people in conservative regimes. Employed people in Switzerland and Austria express the lowest levels of work-family conflict. Women experience more work-family conflict than men in all countries apart from Norway and Germany. The real outliers are German men who express work-family conflict at the same high level as women in Sweden.

To sum up the results in table 2 there is some support for hypothesis 1 stating that people living in an egalitarian gender regime to a higher extent experience disagreements about household work and work-family conflicts, compared to people in a more traditional gender regime. The results also indicate that this, to some extent, can be explained by the fact that people in an egalitarian context have more egalitarian attitudes than people in a more conservative context. There are only marginal gender differences, with the exception of the more egalitarian attitudes among women. However, there is some notable variation within the two clusters of gender regimes. Germany was classified as a conservative regime but the attitudes among individuals are not as traditional as the attitudes among people in the other two conservative gender regimes Switzerland and Austria. This may be one explanation to why people in Germany express more disagreements about the division of household work and work-family conflict than people in Switzerland and Austria.

One requirement for the possibility that differences in gender ideology on an individual level can to some extent explain the general difference between the egalitarian and conservative regimes regarding disagreements about household labour and work-family conflict is that there in fact exists a significant relationship between gender ideology and the dependent variables. In table 3 correlations between gender ideology, disagreements about how to divide household labour and work-family conflict are studied among cohabiting men and women in the included countries. Coefficients are presented in normal style for men and in italics for women.

Table 3.
Bivariate correlations among cohabiting Men and Women. Pearson

	Gender ideology	Disagree household work	Work-family conflict
Gender ideology	-----	0.189***	0.080**
Disagree household work	0.227***	-----	0.262***
Work-family conflict	0.063**	0.226***	-----

***=0.001 **=0.01 *=0.05 (*)=0.1

Gender ideology is significantly positive related to disagreements about sharing of household tasks among both women and men, but the relationship is stronger among women. This means that the more egalitarian attitudes people have, the more often they report that they disagree with their partner about how to divide household work. There is a similar but weaker relationship between gender ideology and experiences of work-family conflict. The correlation coefficients illustrate that egalitarian attitudes are related to a higher risk for the experience that work conflicts with family life. Finally, the results also show that there is a strong and positive relationship between disagreements about division of household work and the experience of work-family conflicts among both men and women.

The final step is to do multivariate analyses of the relationships between the dependent variables and the independent variables gender regime and gender ideology among individuals, when controlling for age, the occurrence of children and respondent’s and partner’s working hours, hours in household work and educational level. The analysis strategy in table 4 is as follows. Model 1, 4, 7 and 10 show regression coefficients indicating the bivariate relationships between the two different types of gender regimes and disagreements about household work and work-family conflict. Models 2, 5, 8 and 11 control for gender ideology among individuals and models 3, 6, 9 and 12 also control for children, age and respondent’s and partner’s housework hours, work hours and education level.

Models 1 and 4 confirm the results in table 2 illustrating that men and women in an egalitarian gender regime experience disagreements to a significantly higher degree than people in a conservative gender regime. The difference is somewhat larger among women. Models 2 and 5 include individual gender ideology. Gender ideology is also significantly correlated with disagreements about distribution of housework in a multivariate analysis. The fact that the coefficient for the egalitarian regimes decreases when gender ideology is introduced into the model supports the notion that an individual's gender ideology to some extent explains the difference between egalitarian and conservative regimes regarding the level of disagreements about household work. In other words, when controlling for differences in gender ideology the egalitarian and the conservative regimes become more similar regarding the level of disagreements about division of household work. The decrease of the coefficients for the egalitarian regimes is more obvious for women, indicating that the explanatory power of gender ideology is stronger for women.

Table 4.

OLS-regression. Disagreement about household work and work-family conflict by gender regime, individual gender ideology and variables measuring occurrence of children, age and respondent's and partner's educational level and involvement in employment and household work. Cohabitants. B-coefficients

	<i>Disagreement about division of household work</i>							<i>Work-family conflict</i>				
	Men			Women				Men	Women			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Constant	1.751	1.440	2.114	1.737	1.260	1.629	1.926	1.819	1.392	1.823	1.654	1.601
Living in an egalitarian gender regime	0.519***	0.450***	0.488***	0.561***	0.442***	0.455***	0.439***	0.417***	0.562***	0.624***	0.597***	0.542***
Gender ideology		0.024***	0.013*		0.036***	0.022***		0.008	0.002		0.011	-0.008
Resp housework hours			0.001			0.010***			-0.020*			0.004
Partn housework hours			0.007**			-0.006			0.019***			0.013
Children 0-6 years			0.149*			0.249***			-0.003			-0.049
Children 7-17 years			0.155**			0.137**			0.104			-0.101
Resp age			-0.016***			-0.011***			-0.025***			-0.013**
Resp work hours			-0.002			0.001			0.019***			0.012***
Partn work hours			-0.001			-0.004			0.010*			0.003
Resp education			0.042			0.116***			0.067			0.136**
Partn education			0.002			-0.025			-0.000			-0.015
R ²	0.051	0.062	0.117	0.059	0.083	0.149	0.014	0.014	0.071	0.032	0.033	0.055

***=0.001 **=0.01 *=0.05

Models 3 and 6 control for children, age, and housework hours, working hours and education among respondents and partners. Respondents' number of housework hours is significantly and positively correlated for women. This means that the more time women spend on housework, the more often they report disagreements about how to divide household work. The importance of the woman's housework load is also reflected in men's answers. The more hours their partner spends doing housework, the more often they disagree about the division of household work. These results support the notion that the more traditional the division of household labour is (the more work done by the woman), the higher the risk for disagreements about how to divide household work. The presence of children, and especially preschool children among women, is significantly and positively correlated with disagreements about household work. Age is significantly and negatively related to disagreements about household work among both women and men; the higher age, the lower the risk for disagreements. Education level is significantly and positively related to disagreements about household work among women. This result implies that women with a high education report more disagreements. Because highly educated women in general have a more egalitarian gender ideology than those with a lower level of education, this result support the notion that women with an egalitarian gender ideology express more dissatisfaction with the division of household labour.

Models 7 to 12 in table 4 analyse how the independent variables are related to the experience of work-family conflict. The results in model 7 and 10 illustrate that the coefficients are higher, indicating a higher risk for experiencing work-family conflict in countries classified as egalitarian regimes in relation to conservative regimes. The gap is substantially larger among women. Gender ideology is introduced into the analyses in models 8 and 11. As the results of the multivariate regression show there is no significant relationship between gender ideology and the experience of work-family conflict. As a consequence, there is only a marginal decrease in the relationships between type of regime and work-family conflict when controlling for gender ideology. This indicates that differences in gender ideology among individuals are not a significant explanation for the

difference between egalitarian and conservative regimes regarding work-family conflict.

The relevance of number of hours in paid work and in household work, children, age and education is analysed in models 9 and 12. Housework hours are significantly related to work-family conflict among men. The more hours men spend on housework, the *lower* the risk for experiencing work-family conflict, and the more hours their partner spend on housework, the *higher* the risk for perceived work-family conflict. The occurrence of children is not significantly related to work-family conflict among either men or women. Age is significantly and negatively related for both men and women; the higher age, the lower the risk for experiencing work-family conflict. Both women and men experience more work-family conflict the more hours they work in a paid job. Also partner's number of working hours is significantly and positively related to experience of work-family conflicts among men. Education is significantly and positively correlated with the experience of work-family conflict among women, which means that the higher education women have, the more often they experience work-family conflict. There is a decrease of the coefficient for egalitarian regimes between model 11 and 12 implying that the difference between women in egalitarian regimes and women in conservative regimes partly can be explained by the fact that women in the egalitarian regimes in general work more hours and have more qualified jobs.

Conclusions

A main aim in this paper has been to analyse disagreement about division of household labour and experiences of work-family conflict among women and men living in different gender regimes. This has been done by analysing the following three hypotheses: 1) People, and especially women, living in an egalitarian gender regime (Scandinavia) more often report disagreements and work-family conflicts than people living in a more conservative gender regime (Germany, Switzerland and Austria). 2) People, and especially women, with an egalitarian gender ideology more often report disagreement about the division of household work and work-family conflict than people

with a traditional gender ideology. 3) Gender ideology among individuals can to some extent explain variations between gender regimes regarding the experience of disagreement about the division of household work and work-family conflict.

Hypothesis 1 gets some support. Results indicate that people who live in an egalitarian gender regime to a higher extent experience disagreement about household work and work-family conflict, compared to people in a more traditional gender regime. However, there are only marginal differences between the answers from women and men respectively. There is also some notable variation within the two clusters of gender regimes. Germany was classified as a conservative regime together with Switzerland and Austria, but people in Germany express more disagreements about the division of household work and work-family conflict than people in Switzerland and Austria. German men even report work-family conflict to the same degree as women in Sweden, who are in the top among the egalitarian regimes.

Hypothesis 2 gets some support. On a general level, people with an egalitarian gender ideology report a higher level of disagreement about division of household labour and work family conflict than people with a more traditional gender ideology. However, the relationship between gender ideology and experienced work-family conflict is significant only in a bivariate analysis. The relationship between gender ideology and disagreement about household work is stronger among women than among men, which supports the notion that gender ideology plays a more significant role among women than among men for the experience of work-family conflict.

Hypothesis 3 gets some support regarding disagreements about the division of household labour. When controlling for individual gender ideology the difference between egalitarian and conservative gender regimes regarding reported level of disagreement decreases. This result indicates that the difference between egalitarian and traditional gender regimes to some extent can be explained by the fact that people in an egalitarian context have more egalitarian attitudes than people in a more conservative context. The more prominent decrease of the coefficient for egalitarian regimes among

women indicates that the explanatory power of gender ideology is stronger among women than among men.

Although the results from this study indicate that type of gender ideology may be of some relevance for the understanding of how people perceive phenomenon such as level of disagreement about division of labour and experienced work-family conflict, and that this can explain some of the variance between countries regarding levels of disagreement and work-family conflict among individuals, the results must be interpreted with some caution. First, the hypotheses in this study were only partly supported. Second, the amount of variance explained is relative low, especially regarding work-family conflict, which suggests that there are other factors of importance which are not included in the analyses. Third, other studies that have included more countries than the present study, have shown that the variation between national and social policy contexts regarding level of disagreements about division of labour (Nordenmark, 2008) and experience of work-family conflict (Edlund, 2007) can not so easily be explained by the gender ideology that characterises each nation state. Results have indicated that it may be hard to find systematic differences between types of gender regimes and that the differences within clusters of regime types can be as prominent as the systematic differences between different welfare and gender regimes. Therefore there is a need for more research within this relatively new research area.

Notas

¹ http://www.gesis.org/en/data_service/issp/data/2002_Family_III.htm

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The Interracial Sublime: Gender and Race in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*

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The Interracial Sublime: Gender and Race in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*

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Abstract

This essay argues that Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806) presents an interracial sublime in the form of the dissolution of the European home/family. Dacre, I suggest, traces this dissolution to the European woman's assertion of agency by stepping outside spatial, familial, racial and sexual boundaries. In the first section it examines the crisis of European domesticity where the family and the parent/s fail in their responsibilities toward the children. In section two I suggest that within the dissolving home/family we see the European woman, Victoria, subverting further the dissolution. The arrival of the Moor within the house compounds the blurring of hierarchies and ordering. In the final section I trace the features of the interracial sublime. I conclude by proposing that Dacre's interracial sublime serves the purpose of demonstrating the permeability of European borders – a permeability that wreaks disaster. Dacre's tale therefore ultimately functions as a caution against the woman's emancipated and agential actions.

Keywords: Dacre, *Zofloya*, sublime, interracial, gender, agency, domesticity

La Sublime Interracial: Género y raza en *Zofloya* de Charlotte Dacre

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Resumen

Este ensayo argumenta que Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806) presenta una sublime interracial en forma de disolución de la casa / familia europea. Sugiero que Dacre traza esta disolución a la afirmación a la agencia de la mujer europea por salirse de los límites espaciales , familiar , racial y sexual. En la primera sección se analiza la crisis de la domesticidad Europea , donde la familia y el padre / s no cumplen con sus responsabilidades para con los niños. En la segunda sección sugiero que dentro de la disolución de la casa / familia vemos a la mujer europea, Victoria, subvertir aún más la disolución. La llegada de los moros dentro de la casa agrava la difuminación de las jerarquías y el orden. En la sección final trazo las características de lo sublime interracial . Concluyo proponiendo que la sublime interracial de Dacre sirve al propósito de demostrar la permeabilidad de las fronteras europeas - una permeabilidad que da rienda suelta al desastre. El cuento de Dacre, por lo tanto, en última instancia funciona como una advertencia contra las acciones emancipadoras y de agencia de la mujer.

Palabras clave: Dacre, *Zofloya*, sublime, interracial, género, agencia, domesticidad.

Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya, or the Moor* (1806) has seen a major revival within Gothic and gender studies. Distinguished critics such as Diane Hoeveler (1997), EJ Clery (2000), Anne Mellor (2002), among others, have examined the sexual, racial, gender and aesthetic politics of the novel and debated its feminist (or not) ideology. My own argument here is that, like other cases of the 'Empire Gothic' (Davison, 2003, 2009), Dacre's *Zofloya* is concerned with the permeability of the English/European home to the advent/invasion of the racial Other.

Zofloya instantiates the English Romantics' cosmopolitan and transnational interests and concerns (see Fay & Richardson, 1997), concerns that often manifest in the form of anxieties over influences, impacts and cultural encounters. This is not new to the Romantic age. James I in his *Counter blasted to Tobacco* (1604) had warned of the pernicious influence of the New World product to English bodies and minds. John Donne's 'Elegy 11: The Bracelet', argued a case against foreign coins and currency that, according to Donne, damage English economy and habits. Foreign products like tea are cause for concern over national character. William Congreve's *The Double Dealer* satirizes women who drink tea as the ladies retire to 'tea and scandal, according to their ancient custom'. This suggests that the entire ritual of women's tea-drinking and gossip marked a disruption of quiet, quiescent English domesticity (Kowaleski-Wallace, 1994, p. 132). John Gay's 'To a Lady on Her Passion for Old China' mocked the craze for chinoiserie and china among the English upper and even middle classes (Porter, 1999, 2002; Chang, 2010). While these instances precede Dacre's text, the tradition of the literature of anxiety over foreignness would gather strength with the Gothic, the adventure tale and the horror story. Thus in Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* revolves around the corruption and disaster that arrives in an English house as a result of the precious stone, whose origins are in India. We therefore need to see Dacre's novel as engaging with a national theme: of the invasion and slow erosion of Englishness through England's transnational exchanges and role in global trade.

However, it is not the nation qua nation— although it might be argued that the home or family serves as a metaphor or functional equivalent of the nation – but the domestic realm that is under immediate threat from the racial Other in the novel. Although Dacre presents, towards the end of the tale, the Moor as Satan in human form, the metaphysical dimension does

little to alter our interpretation of the black man's role in the ruination of the European home through the character of Victoria. The novel, I propose, moves outward from the home/family to interracial horror. The 'interracial sublime', as I see it, is the horror of a European family's dissolution due to an interracial sexual relation, invited and initiated by the European woman who asserts sexual agency, and which climaxes in the annihilation of the European woman. Thus Dacre's interracial sublime, in a truly Burke (1757) an sense, is beyond borders and boundaries, is about transgression and excess, and is ultimately a moral tale about the dangers of the European woman leaving home and family.

In order to examine the theme of transnational transgression in the novel I unravel three interrelated discourses, each being the subject of one section in the essay. The first discourse is of domesticity wherein Dacre presents the European home and family and its eventual collapse. This discourse is, I shall demonstrate, is intertwined with the discourse of intrusion and foreignness where the house/family is itself in the grip of a dynamic libidinal economy. The second discourse is of in-between zones and borders. This discourse, I argue, locates the protagonists on the margins – of home and family. As Dacre's discourse of spaces begins to present a borderlessness, it merges with the aesthetic discourse of the sublime, and this is the third major discourse of the novel. The aesthetics of terror, awe, borderlessness (of space but also of race and ethnicity) generate the novel's interracial sublime, I demonstrate in the third section.

The essay has three sections. In the first I examine the European domestic scene as Dacre presents it. Section Two examines the border zones wherein Dacre maps Victoria's movement toward the interracial relation that would eventually prove to be her nemesis. In the final section I turn to the interracial sublime in all its aspects.

The Crisis of European Domesticity

Set in fifteenth century Venice and its neighborhood, *Zofloya* is a novel about European domesticity and its slow erosion. I argue that Dacre is upholding a certain ideology of familial domesticity where particular virtues of fidelity, parenting and discipline are seen as constitutive of a 'good

home'. In the novel the tragic and evil events involving the interracial encounter are attributed to the collapse of the European home.

The novel opens with the house and family of Marchese di Loredani, married to Laurina who is initially described as 'a female of unexampled beauty' (p. 3), whose one 'foible' was a 'great ... thirst of admiration' (p. 3). But we are also told that the couple lived a near-perfect life. His 'ardent love appeared to suffer no diminution' and, since 'no temptations crossed her path – it required ... no effort to be virtuous' (p. 4). They have two children. The daughter, Victoria, is 'proud, haughty and self-sufficient ... wild, irrepressible ... indifferent to reproof, careless of censure ... of an implacable, revengeful, and cruel nature, and bent upon gaining the ascendancy in whatever she engaged' (p. 4). The son, Leonardo, is 'violent and revengeful'. Dacre points to faulty motherhood – and, by extension, the dysfunctional family – when she describes these as 'ill-regulated' (p. 4). It is the absence of a proper parenting and pedagogy, suggests Dacre, that results in such children:

Such were the children whom early education had tended equally to corrupt; and such were the children, whom to preserve from future depravity, required the most vigilant care, aided by such brilliant examples of virtue and decorum as should induce the desire of emulation. Thus would have been counteracted the evils engendered by the want of steady attention to the propensities of childhood. (p.5)

The grounds for the collapse of the European family/house are already prepared in this theme of inadequate education and parenting. Even though there is virtue and beauty in the house, Dacre suggests, these would not be 'emulated' by the offspring unless they are trained to do so. After Laurina's elopement scene Dacre would emphasize this theme vis á vis Victoria:

A firm and decided course of education would so far have changed her bent, that those propensities, which by neglect became vices, might have been ameliorated into virtues ... haughtiness might have been softened into noble pride, cruelty into courage, implacability into firmness... (p. 14)

Victoria and Leonardo are both clearly spoilt children growing up in the lap of luxury.

Later, a few pages into the tale, Dacre tells us of the seduction of the virtuous Laurina by the rake Count Ardolph. Ardolph, we are told, takes a ‘savage delight’ in ‘intercept[ing] the happiness of wedded love’ (p. 7). He likes to ‘wean from an adoring husband the regards of a pure and faithful wife – to blast with his baleful breath the happiness of a young and rising family – to seduce the best, and noblest affections of the heart’ (p. 7). It is important to note that this seduction is conducted within the confines of the Marchese’s home, and Ardolph abuses the fundamental laws of hospitality when he does so. The garden, the scene of domestic serenity where Laurina wanders, is also the place where, in Dacre’s words, she ‘advance[s] one step in the path of vice’ (p. 11). When Laurina ponders over what would happen to her children were she to succumb to Ardolph, he responds: ‘May those children witness – nay perpetrate my destruction, should ever my heart become cold towards thee!’ (p. 13). Ardolph here plays on Laurina’s feeble sense of dutiful motherhood itself as a mode of seduction. After Laurina elopes Leonardo rushes out of the house, and is never seen again (p. 13). Victoria turns into a tyrant with ‘unlimited scope for the growth of these dangerous propensities’ (p. 14), and becomes, soon, ‘obnoxious to the young nobility of Venice’ (p. 15). She of course attributes it to ‘the disgrace brought upon her by her mother’s conduct’ (p. 15).

Domesticity then, instead of rearing Victoria and Leonardo in a certain way, moulds them into vengeful, obnoxious creatures. Dacre attributes the flaws in the children’s character to the absence of appropriate education within the home. The theme of the pedagogic failure of parents, and especially the mother, is therefore the source of the novel’s main theme: the corruption of European womanhood. Thus, toward the end of the novel Victoria asks the Moor, Zofloya, to ‘teach’ her (p. 240). Dacre, I propose, traces all the evils of Victoria’s character – she is the main protagonist of the tale – to the erosion of values in the home: of parenting, values of virtue and fidelity. In what is a gendered theme, this erosion is always attributed to Laurina’s actions and flawed character, what Dacre would later describe as ‘the baleful effects of parental vice upon the mind of a daughter’ (p. 28). This discourse of domesticity and concomitant hospitality and guestification

(embodied in the Loredani-Berenza homes and Ardolph-Victoria respectively) is central to the horror of the tale.

This theme of the collapse of European domesticity is amplified with two other events. In the first, Laurina and Ardolph, along with Laurina, are living in Monte Bello. There Berenza sees and is attracted to Victoria. Laurina is appalled at the possible liaison and accuses him: ‘is it thus you recompense the hospitality of Count Ardolph...?’ (p. 30), to which of course Berenza responds with ‘you are indeed well qualified to arraign those who trample on the rights of hospitality!’ (p. 30). After this incident Laurina endorses, after some mild protest, Ardolph’s proposal to incarcerate Victoria at the house of Signora de Modena (pp. 40-42). We thus find that Victoria leaves behind one home – which had already been instrumental in shaping her character in particular ways – for another, in which she is a mere prisoner. Once again we witness the erosion of the space of the home: the daughter, driven into imprisonment by her mother’s lover.

Years later, the events of the Marchese’s house repeat. Victoria is living with Berenza and develops a strong passion for his brother Henriquez. It is within Berenza’s house that Victoria seeks to seduce Henriquez, aided in her efforts by the potions and unguents furnished by the Moor, Zofloya. Dacre writes of Victoria’s passion: ‘Henriquez was the subject of her thoughts by day; he employed her fancy by night; his form presented itself if she awoke; he figured in her dreams if she slumbered...’ (p. 133). In order to attain her goal, Victoria poisons Berenza. It is within the confines of his own home that Berenza wastes away due to the slow poisoning. Replicating, after a fashion, her mother’s ‘crimes’ – essentially sexual attraction to another man, who is a guest in her home – Victoria declares to Zofloya, ‘I desire, oh, ardently desire, the death – the annihilation of Berenza’ (p. 155). The discourse of the libidinal economy that undermines the domestic arrangements is woven into the discourse of hospitality and guestification: as hostess Victoria, suggests Dacre, violates the law of hospitality just as her mother did. Dacre therefore seems to indicate a certain inheritance of the transgressive habit when she presents this discourse of domesticity-libidinal economy.

Thus we can see how domesticity is in crisis in *Zofloya*. If in the first events the crisis is of parenting and infidelity, in the second it is of infidelity

combined with murder. It is this crisis of and in domesticity that leads naturally to the invasion by the Moor/Satan.

Toward the Sublime¹

The crisis of domesticity results in two significant actions on the part of the characters. With their mother's infidelity, Leonardo leaves home, and never returns. Years later we discover he has joined a group of bandits, roamed the countryside and eventually become their leader. His exile into the unfriendly, initially into the arms of a prostitute and later the group of bandits, Dacre traces to his mother's desertion from their home. It is in the presence of Leonardo that Victoria screams at her mother, who has been rescued, with no knowledge of her true identity, by Leonardo:

Why didst thou desert thy children? ... For these crimes ... arising out of thy example, I am now a despised exile in the midst of robbers – of robbers, of whom the noble son who support these in his arms is Chief!' (p. 250)

As the domestic space breaks down the unhappy inhabitants seem to seek solace and safety elsewhere. Border zones, as I see it, are spaces within the home, where pockets of subversion, resistance and intrigue exist. In Dacre's discourse of space and spatiality, these are spaces of potential, where the possibilities that would eventually flourish as the terrifying (interracial) sublime begin to first manifest.

First, Victoria herself does not fit in with conventional models of femininity. Berenza notes her 'wild imperious character', her 'strongly-marked character' (p. 27). She is 'above middle height' (p. 76), Dacre writes,

Hers was not the countenance of a Madona– it was not an angelic mould; yet, though there was a fierceness in it, it was not certainly a repelling, but a beautiful fierceness – dark, noble, strongly expressive, every lineament bespoke the mind which animated it. True, no mild, no gentle, no endearing virtues, were depicted there [. . .]; her air was dignified and commanding, yet free from

stiffness; she moved along with head erect, and with step firm and majestic. (pp. 76-77).

Henriquez sees her as ‘strong though noble features ... [with] an authoritative tone, her boldness, her insensibility, her violence’ (p. 194). Lilla is of course the contrast to Victoria’s awkward femininity:

Pure, innocent, free even from the smallest taint of a corrupt thought, was her mind; delicate, symmetrical and of a fairy-like beauty, her person so small, yet of so just proportion; sweet, expressing a seraphic serenity of soul, seemed her angelic countenance, slightly suffused with the palest hue of the virgin rose. Long flaxen hair floated over her shoulders: she might have personified (were the idea allowable) innocence in the days of her childhood. (p. 133)

Critics have noted the clear distinction that Dacre makes between these models of femininity – although, by killing off both Lilla and Victoria she does not leave much to choose from – in the novel (Mellor, 2002; Moreno, 2007). It is this ‘misfit’ between Victoria’s femininity and the requirements of the house/home/family that is at the heart of the novel, and which makes me interpret the text as one asserting the need for a return to a patriarchal model of the feminine in order to safeguard the safety of the European home.

A crucial border zone exists in the house of Berenza, and is the first space where we see Victoria being drawn to the Moor. Dacre prepares the ground for the Moor’s sublime by proposing that Victoria is beyond boundaries – of honor, codes of hospitality or virtue and even of reason. She writes: ‘transported nearly beyond the bounds of reason ... in the wildness of her distempered fancy’, Victoria fantasizes about Henriquez’ (p. 135). Transgression of borders begins within the space of the house and family, yet again. In the zone between dreams and reality, Victoria also perceives Zofloya for the first time: ‘he appears in her dream (137). As Dacre puts it: ‘his exact resemblance ... of polished and superior appearance, had figured chiefly in her troubled sight’ (p. 137). I propose the dream-waking state as a border zone because not only is Victoria’s *fantasy* of infidelity (with Henriquez) a violation, in Dacre’s anxious tale of eroded domesticity, of a moral border, it also signals the arrival of something that exists beyond the

racial-cultural border, namely, the Moor. It is a border zone because the Moor, whom Victoria identifies clearly as ‘the servant of Henriquez’, blurs categories. While only a servant he appears in the dream as ‘polished and superior’. Next day, at a meal, she pays closer attention to the Moor, and finds out that her dream of his appearance was not bizarre:

the first object that caught her attention was the tall, commanding figure of the Moor ... she almost started as she beheld him, and, the image in her dreams flashing upon her mind, she marked how exact was the similitude, in form, features, and in dress. (p. 137)

Upon seeing him, writes Dacre, ‘strange, incongruous ideas shot through her [Victoria’s] brain, ideas which, even to herself, were indefinable’ (p. 138). Border zones are spaces that approximate to Foucauldian heterotopias wherein the social order and hierarchy are inverted or at least called into question. Kim Michasiw points out that Zofloya’s actual social status and rank are never made clear: is he a free man acting as a servant? (2003, p. 49). The house or Berenza is such a border zone where Zofloya’s ‘indefinable’ social location troubles the hierarchy within the house. Dacre tells us: ‘Zofloya, though a Moor, and by a combination of events, and the chance of war ... reduced to a menial situation, was yet of noble birth’ (p. 141). It is precisely this ‘indefinable’ quality of his that enables Zofloya to at once claim to be Victoria’s slave and her equal.

In his opening exchanges with Victoria Zofloya pretends to be humble and lowly, always asking her for permission ‘May I then approach, Signora?’ (p. 148) But then, writes Dacre, ‘he presumed to take the hand of Victoria’ (p. 148), soon after showing obsequiousness. He is in turn ‘respectful’ (p. 150) but would also ‘bid her’ (p. 152). He declares he is ‘the lowest of [her] slaves’ (p. 153). These exchanges continue till the very end when Zofloya eventually takes full command of Victoria, and begins to command her.

The sublime is anticipated in the breakdown of borders in the spaces of the Berenza home and its environs. Victoria, lured out to meet Zofloya, herself transgresses the social and spatial borders of her home. Within the spaces of the home, she makes overtures and threats toward Henriquez and his betrothed Lilla. When Victoria sits down at the ‘innocent family circle’ (p. 157) she is already beyond the pale of guilt or shame: ‘eye unabashed by

the consciousness of guilt ... her eyes sparkled, but it was with fiend-like exultation' (p. 157). Dacre seems to suggest that what eventually follows by way of torture (of Lilla) and murder (of Berenza, Lilla and indirectly of Henriquez) may be attributed to the subversion of the space of the family.

I therefore disagree with the reading of the radicalized evil in the novel (Michasiw, 2003; Schotland, 2009; and others) because I see the radicalized evil as a general outcome of the collapse of the European home and family. What Dacre foregrounds is not, I suggest, the threat of invasion by the racial Other but the erosion, from *within*, of the European 'family values' of fidelity that leads to the invasion. In other words, the blurring of social boundaries, the collapse of familial relations and parenting norms are Dacre's focus. It must be noted that Zofloya – who, incidentally, first appears on page 137 of the novel – does not initiate the collapse of the Berenza home. He does not, in my view, constitute the threat. Rather, he helps an already collapsing structure to its full and total ruin. Zofloya makes use of the opportunity presented by Victoria's temperament and desires in order to wreck the Berenza home. In this, of course, Zofloya reverses the master-slave dialectic, as Diane Hoeveler notes (1997, p. 188), but this reversal follows (but does not initiate) a process well underway much *before* he arrives at the house of Berenza. The full terror of the collapse of Berenza's home and Victoria's final annihilation is without doubt engineered by Zofloya but this has nothing to do with the collapse of the ideal European family – a collapse which, in my opinion, is the focus of the tale.

Further, by suggesting that the collapse of the two houses (of the Marchese, and later of Berenza) is entirely due to their women, Dacre is pointing to the woman as place-holder and 'boundary-marker' (Anne McClintock's term, 1994). In this, of course, Dacre's novel continues the theme of English femininity under threat from the African, Arab or Asian male. The novel, ultimately, calls for a reassertion of the gender roles in the upholding of the home and family – race, as far as I can see, is only a threat when the European woman goes 'loose', so to speak. It is when the woman seeks pleasure and agency outside the boundaries of her home, relations and race that true horror begins.

The Interracial Sublime

Edmund Burke (1757) writing his famous tract on the beautiful and the sublime half a century before Dacre's text identified darkness with the sublime. In a notorious analogy Burke defined terror as the condition of the blind boy who regains sight after a cataract operation and sees, for the first time in his life, a black woman.² Zofloya who, as already noted, blurs the boundaries of black slave and white gentleman by possessing an admirable appearance and extraordinary skills in science and the arts, embodies the interracial sublime and its terror and annihilator powers. Victoria dreams of walking with Zofloya over 'beds of flowers, sometimes over craggy rocks, sometimes in fields of the brightest verdure, sometimes over burning sands, tottering on the edge of some huge precipice, while the angry waters waved in the abyss below' (p. 143). In contrast with the traditional black slave's body, Dacre gives us Zofloya's:

a form ... most attractive and symmetrical ... of superior height ... the graceful costume of dress ... a countenance ... endowed with the finest possible expression ... his eyes ... sparkled with inexpressible fire; his nose and mouth were elegantly formed, and when he smiled, the assemblage of his features displayed a beauty that delighted and surprised. (p. 145)

The interracial sublime has its origins, besides the inverted spaces of the home and gender roles, in this mix of terror and beauty, of 'indefinable' features in a black body. The 'interracial' here therefore is not only about the mixing of races in terms of sexual relations but also in the mix of racial features within the black body. Zofloya is unlike a black body, combining within himself the qualities of the black skin and white man's poise, education and wisdom. In the course of a conversation he asks Victoria: 'does the Signora believe, then, that the Moor Zofloya hath a heart dark as his countenance? Ah! Signora, judge ye not by appearances!' (p. 151). This is a particularly illuminating line. Zofloya simultaneously asserts and denies his lineage: he claims his blackness and yet calls attention to the inappropriateness in judging him by his skin color. If blurred borders and indistinct boundaries are a marker of the sublime (Weiskel, 1986) then Zofloya embodies such a condition.

There is a further point with regard to racial identity. Kim Michasiw points out in the introduction to the Oxford World Classics edition of *Zofloya* that the Moors occupied an ‘ambiguous position in the European imaginary’. They were ‘Africans who had ruled in Europe, who had created a vastly civilized and sophisticated society’ (2000, p.xxi). The Moor is a ‘figure for the displaced aristocracy of the global aristocracy’ (p. xxii) and a ‘transracial aristocracy’ (xxiii). Elsewhere Michasiw claims that by ‘insisting on Zofloya’s racial difference, on his blackness, and on the cultivation of his cultural heritage, Dacre’s text wrests Africans out of the primitive realm’ (2003, p. 49). Michasiw goes on to note that Moorish culture in the novel is predicated upon science and art, and not, by implication, on savagery and animism (p. 49). Zofloya is indeed such an ambiguous figure – part servant and part master. He represents what Felicity Nussbaum has perspicuously identified as the ‘portability’ of race in eighteenth century England.³ The blurring and indistinctness of Zofloya is central to the imagining of an invasion of the European home, family and perhaps country itself, I argue.

The interracial sublime has a topographical aspect as well. Victoria, writes Beatriz Moreno, ‘feels more at ease in sublime landscapes than in beautiful, harmonic ones’ (2007, p. 423). Having determined to kill Berenza with Zofloya’s help, she persuades Berenza to move to the Castella di Torre Alto, nestled in the Apennines. When she sets her eyes on the location she realizes that it was appropriate as a setting for what she wanted to do. This is the first description of the Castella where Berenza would die:

Victoria observed herself, with a gloomy and secret delight, enclosed within the profoundest solitudes, for no town, no hamlet was even near the Castella ... which was situated in a deep valley, on the borders of a forest. On either side huge rocks towered above its loftiest spires, and half embosomed it in terrible but majestic sublimity, while no sound disturbed the solemn silence of the scene but the fall of the impetuous cataract, as it stumbled from the stupendous acclivity into the depths below, or the distant sound of the vesper-bell tolling solemn from the nearest convent, with, at times, when the wind blew towards the castle, the murmuring peal of the lofty-sounding organ... seeming more like the mysterious

music of the spirits of the air, than sounds from mortal haunts...
(p. 165)

She regards the scene as ‘beautifully terrific’ (p. 165) and hails them ‘since they perhaps may first witness the rich harvest of my persevering love; and for such a love, perish – perish, all that may oppose it’ (p. 165). Exploring the sublime in person, Victoria is far from being awed:

She bent her steps towards the thickest of the forest; where the gloomy cypress, tall pine, and lofty poplar, mingled in solemn umbrage. Beyond, steep rocks, seeming piled on one another, inaccessible mountains, with here and there a blasted oak upon its summit, resembling rather, from the distant point at which it was beheld, a stunted shrub; huge precipices, down which the torrent dashed, and foaming in the viewless abyss with mighty rage, filled the most distant parts of the surrounding solitude with a mysterious murmuring, produced by the multiplied reverberations of sound. (p. 177)

Dacre writes: ‘the wild gloom seemed to suit the dark and ferocious passions of her soul’ (p. 177), thus suggesting that for Victoria the landscape’s terrifying sublimity is home. It is in such settings that she conspires with Zofloya (of which we have examples elsewhere in the novel, p. 213, p. 216, pp. 233-5). The above scene is of course vintage sublime: mountains piled on mountains, overflowing rivers and spillage are markers of the sublime’s excess (on spillage and overrunning as sublime see [Weiskel, 1986, p. 26](#); [Mishra, 1994, p. 22](#)).

Later the setting becomes the space of torture for the ultra-feminine Lilla. Dacre writes of the second murder in the sublime settings:

She [Victoria] proceeded a considerable way up the rock, when the loud solemn roar of the foaming cataract, dashing from a fissure on the opposite side into the precipice beneath, broke upon her ear. She fearlessly advanced, however, till she gained the summit, while louder and more stunning become the angry sound of waters ... Hastening onwards with rapid strides along the winding paths

she had so lately traversed, she beheld the gigantic figure of the Moor, gigantic even from the diminishing points of height and distance... (pp. 202-203)

The Moor is carrying on his shoulder, Lilla, drugged and vulnerable, the second victim of their interracial conspiracy:

Her fragile form lay nerveless, her snow-white arms, bare nearly to the shoulder ... hung down over the back of the Moor; her feet and legs resembling sculptured alabaster ... her languid head drooped insensible, while the long flaxen tresses; escaping from the net which had enveloped them, now partly shaded her ashy cheek, and now streamed in disheveled luxuriance on the breeze. (p. 203)

While Victoria thrives in the sublime setting, Lilla's femininity is destroyed. Victoria's triumph is partly due to her own near-masculine features and characters, as we have already seen. But is also partly due to the interracial conspiracy – and sexual relationship – she forges with Zofloya in the mountains. In other words, I am proposing that while the sublime seems to be a fit setting for Victoria's mind and character, the sublime is rendered interracial because it at once façade and an act ant in the liaison between the Moor and the European woman. One cannot, I propose, see the Apennine's sublime in Dacre as mere setting. It possesses its own topographical character that is then rendered more horrific because of the actions performed by the Moor and Victoria: the incarceration of the delicately feminine Lilla. Later, it is in the midst of such a sublime that Victoria stabs Lilla to death, a scene frightening in its violence:

With her poniard she stabbed her in the bosom ... Victoria pursued her blows –she covered her fair body with innumerable wounds, then dashed her headlong over the edge of the steep. Her fairy form bounded as it fell against the projecting crags of the mountain, diminishing to the sight of her cruel enemy, who followed it far as her eye could reach... (p. 226)

Here, in such terrifying solitudes, Zofloya asks her: ‘Is not that heart mine, Victoria?’ Her response, ‘It is indeed, gratefully bound to you, Zofloya’ is not adequate and he insists: ‘I say it is *mine*, Victoria’ (p. 181, emphasis in original). Later he would state unambiguously that she was in his power: ‘remember poor Victoria, that independently of me, thou canst not even breathe’ (p. 227). He often displays ‘an ineffable grace’ and a ‘native grandeur’ (p. 233) in such a horrifying setting. The ‘native grandeur’ is that of his race, and it is precisely what attracts Victoria.

The interracial sublime is the combined effect of the Moor’s obvious physical charms and his manipulative charisma. It is also the shifting boundaries in the Moor himself: now slave, now master, now servant to Victoria, now her owner. The interracial sublime climaxes, in my view, not in the conclusion where Zofloya reveals himself as the Devil, and then flings Victoria into the falls. Rather, the interracial sublime’s climax is the revelation that he controls Victoria’s mind, her imagination and even her emotions.

Have my faculties been so long suspended? ... and it is to you alone that I am now indebted to their restoration? ... I perceive too clearly, how much, how completely I am in your power! (pp. 233-234)

And it is at this very moment that thunderclaps sound in the mountains.

Victoria’s firm bosom felt appalled, for never before had she witnessed the terrible phenomena of nature, in a storm among the Alps. She drew closer to the proud unshrinking figure of the Moor ... (p. 234)

It is in the awe-inspiring sublime of the mountains that Victoria discovers the true nature of the interracial sublime:

Never, till this moment, had she been so near the person of the Moor – such powerful fascination dwelt around him, that she felt incapable of withdrawing from his arms; yet ashamed ... when she remembered that Zofloya, however he appeared, was but a menial

slave, and as such alone had become known to her – she sought, but sought vainly, to repress them; for no sooner (enveloped in the lightning’s flash as he seemed, when it gleamed around him without touching his person), did she behold that beautiful and majestic visage, that towering and graceful form, than all thought of his inferiority vanished, and the ravished sense, spurning at the calumnious idea, confessed him a being of superior order. (p. 234)

Victoria’s recognition of her dependency and Zofloya’s complete control here is in keeping with the sublime’s effect on women, an effect not seen in Victoria’s case *before* this moment.

This is the point at which the critique of the woman’s sexual agency that Dacre wishes to foreground comes alive. Adriana Craciun (1995) reading the poetry of Charlotte Dacre has suggested that the possession of the English woman by the demon lover disturbs the corporeal integrity of the woman’s body (eventually leading her to her death), and this is central to the Gothic. In the poetry, says Craciun, we can see an ‘unnatural mingling of the living and the undead’ which is also – and this is crucial for Victoria as well – a ‘coded version of female sexual pleasure and agency, for the Mistress herself conjures the object of her affection, the demonic lover, and urges him to pursue her’ (p. 86). It is Victoria who ‘conjures’ up Zofloya: he first appears, as noted earlier, in her dream. Diane Hoeveler notes that ‘the character we recognize as “Zofloya” is actually less a real personage than the dark and demonic forces within Victoria’s own psyche’ (p. 189). I propose that even if we were to see Zofloya as the conjuration of Victoria’s diseased mind, the racial identity of what she conjures up suggests an interracial sublime.

The European woman who ‘wavers’ and loses her way morally and sexually is likely to conjure up a threat. That Victoria conjures up a black man as seductive lover and eventual threat suggests that when Victoria (like her mother whom we meet again, bruised and abused in the same mountains, [chapter XXX](#)) subverts the space of the family and home she *invites* the interracial sublime into her life. She abandons the safety of the Berenza home for the pleasures of the Apennine castle and Zofloya’s company. Thus it would be wholly inadequate to say Victoria is simply seduced by the Moor. What Dacre seems to do is to demonstrate the woman’s quest for

sexual agency even at enormous costs to herself. She abandons the safety and security of her home, husband and family and pursues her desires.

The interracial sublime here is therefore a *feminine sublime* in Barbara Freeman's 1997 sense of the term where, while Victoria is acted upon as a passive subject, she is also presented by Dacre as a subject who asserts agency even at the cost of self-annihilation. Freeman writes:

What is specifically feminine about the feminine sublime is not an assertion of innate sexual difference, but a radical rearticulation of the role gender plays in producing the history of discourse on the sublime and the formulation of an alternative position with respect to excess and the possibilities of its figuration. (p. 10)

As noted earlier, Victoria is presented to us not as a weak and vulnerable woman but as near-masculine, of strong will and a tyrannical disposition. She thus overturns the feminine ideal (represented in the novel in Lilla). Setting herself on the path of seduction, murder and ultimately self-annihilation, Victoria is the very embodiment of the feminine sublime where the woman's agency is to be asserted at all costs. Dacre remains, however, anxious about such assertions of agency.

Anne Mellor (2006) postulates an 'embodied cosmopolitanism' of the Romantic woman writer where a 'cultural harmony' might be attained through romance (Mellor adapts the phrase 'cultural harmony through romance' from Peter Hulme). I propose that it is precisely such a harmony that Dacre is anxious about, *if* it gives considerable agency to the English/European *woman*. In other words, embodied cosmopolitanism when gendered in favor of the woman might pose a certain risk. Dacre's is ultimately a defense of the European family and the rigid codes of female sexuality when she underscores the threat of the interracial sublime as wreaking havoc in the European home – not because the sublime (even the embodied sublime of the Moor) is inherently invasive but because it is invited in when the European woman asserts sexual agency.

Victoria's death at the hands of the lover she 'conjured' seems, therefore, a moral lesson. Dacre desists from blaming Victoria entirely. She has Zofloya admit to his agency: 'I it was [who] appeared to thee first in thy dreams, luring you to attempt the completion of thy wildest wishes' (p. 267).

In the note appended to the end of the tale, Dacre warns us of the ‘love of evil ... born with us’ or to the evil that comes due to ‘infernal influence’ (p. 268). By making Victoria the vehicle of the devil’s actions, she suggests that it is the woman who needs to guard against either the evil within her or the evil that comes in from outside influences. Once again this is a cautionary tale, for women: against giving in to their wishes and desires. Thus, one can see considerable ambivalence in Dacre about female agency. On the one hand there is the value of Victoria’s feminine sublime that asserts sexual agency at the cost of self-annihilation, and on the other there is the destruction of the woman as a result of asserting this agency. Dacre, I propose, is unclear about her loyalty to the question of woman’s agency.

The interracial sublime’s horror is of the ambiguity and possible racial masquerades of black men. If racial identity were indistinct across various categories of ‘blacks’, as Nussbaum (2009) has argued when identifying the ‘portability’ of race, then all origins, ethnic or class, are indeterminate. Blacks masquerading as knowledgeable aristocrats, savants dressed as servants or slaves who become masters pose a threat because they do not fit into categories. Dacre’s novel deploys the interracial sublime to capture the horror of such a portability and fungibility of racial types and class affiliations. (It is also possible that Dacre wants to demonstrate the vulnerability of the black race to the devil: the devil takes possession of those races and individuals who are most ‘open’ to such a possession (Schotland 2009, p. 130). The European woman needs to stay within the confines of her home and family and not be taken in by the black man who claims science or distinguished ancestry, as Zofloya does. She has to assume that the black man cannot possess such advanced knowledge of medicines and chemicals nor possess such a noble visage. The interracial sublime is the horror of unlimited desires, especially sexual, of the attempt to break free of the ‘secure’ confines of family and home, especially by women. It is the horror of interracial liaisons of European women and black men, but more importantly it is the horror of such liaisons being invited and desired by the women themselves. The interracial sublime encodes, to conclude, a fear of the transnational in English Romantic-Gothic writing.

Notes

¹ Feminist critics have noted how for male writers the sublime is ‘an allegory of the construction of the patriarchal (but not necessarily male) subject, a self that maintains its borders by subordinating difference and by appropriating rather than identifying with that which presents itself as other’ (Freeman, 1997, p. 4). Barbara Freeman sees the feminine sublime of Mary Shelley, Toni Morrison and others as depicting women ‘as subjects who exert will, even at the cost of self-destruction, and thus not merely as victims who are acted upon’ (p. 6).

² Burke would speak of how ‘darkness is terrible in its own nature’.

³ Felicity Nussbaum writes:

representations of people of colour in the eighteenth century mutate through the spectrum of tawny, sallow, olive, mulatto, sooty, and ebony of East Indian, West Indian, American Indian, Pacific Islander, and North and sub Saharan African, all of whom are at times designated in British (if not American) parlance as ‘black’. In some cases we can assign the muddles to historical accident, and in others to geographical confusion ... In the imaginative geography of the eighteenth century, Ethiopia (often a synonym for Africa) seems to migrate from Africa to Arabia and back again.

It is sometimes contiguous to Egypt and sometimes depicted on the western side of the continent, though Ethiopia eventually comes to represent a lost and unrecoverable premodern glory in the later Ethiopianism movement. (2009, pp. 143-149)

This ‘portability’ (as Nussbaum calls it) of the category ‘black’ through continents and cultures means that we can treat English literature’s representation of numerous racial and ethnic Others as resulting from a category confusion, but also an immanent feature of the concept of ‘race’.

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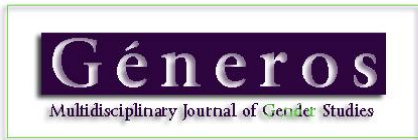
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Equality of Opportunities at Spanish Universities?: Learning from the Experience

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Equality of Opportunities at Spanish Universities?: Learning from the Experience

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Abstract

The relationship between women and universities began in Spain little more than a century ago, the moment in which the first female students enrolled on university courses- women who decided to break with the taboos of their era and to accede to this education level. From that moment onward, the incorporation of women in the university sphere has been a continual process that has been accompanied, in the last few decades, by measures based on the principle of equal opportunities between men and women. In this article we present a historical review of the presence of women in the Spanish university sphere, and the case of the measures taken by one specific university (the University of Cantabria) in the wake of this principle. We consider that in order to recognize the wide- reaching effect of the arrival of these kinds of actions, it is necessary to know the important process of change undergone in the higher education of women in the last one hundred years.

Keywords: history of women's education, universities, equal opportunities, gender studies, Spain, equality plans

¿Igualdad de Oportunidades en las Universidades Españolas?: Aprendiendo de la Experiencia

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Resumen

La relación entre las mujeres y las universidades se inició en España hace poco más de un siglo, el momento en que las primeras mujeres estudiantes se matricularon en cursos universitarios -mujeres que decidieron romper con los tabúes de su época y acceder a este nivel de educación. Desde ese momento en adelante, la incorporación de la mujer en el ámbito universitario ha sido un proceso continuo que ha ido acompañado, en las últimas décadas, por medidas basadas en el principio de la igualdad de oportunidades entre hombres y mujeres. En este artículo se presenta una revisión histórica de la presencia de las mujeres en el ámbito universitario español, y el caso de las medidas adoptadas por una universidad específica (la Universidad de Cantabria) como consecuencia de este principio. Consideramos que con la finalidad de reconocer el efecto de gran alcance de la llegada de este tipo de acciones, es necesario conocer el importante proceso de cambio experimentado en la educación superior de las mujeres en los últimos cien años.

Palabras clave: historia de la educación de las mujeres, universidades, igualdad de oportunidades, estudios de género, España, planes de igualdad

A century has passed since women's access to Universities in Spain was legally recognized for the first time¹. Throughout these hundred years, universities, places created, maintained and secularly frequented by men, have seen changes to some of the arenas where men shaped the established status quo, yet in reality we still see how in universities there are still behavioral models, patterns and forms that take us to a world tainted by relationships of unequal power, explicit and implicit sexism, and in short, the invisibilization of part of our society. This is a situation that, although we focus in our article on how this is applied to the case of Spain, can be extended to all western societies, including those where gender equality is a reality in other spheres. Let us take Finland as an example, an archetypical society in this field, where no more than 18% of its university professors are women (Ion, 2011).

Although the most advanced countries in Europe with gender action plans, which are present at almost all universities, are Denmark and Finland, women are not sufficiently represented in research and science while the majority of university students since late 1990ies are women (Langberg, 2006; Helsinki Group on Women and Science, 2000).

Universities can be defined as a place for equal opportunities based on a meritocratic system of operation. This concept of equality, converts them, in principle, into a more democratic space than other social institutions, and hence women have made great tremendous efforts to invert educational trends, at this and at other levels of education, as a means by which they may increase their possibilities of social and professional success. However, under the apparent notion of universities as an equal space, therein lies a reality, in some latent cases and in other more obvious ones, which is still discriminating against women (Currie, Harris & Thiele, 2000). In this sense, research such as that carried out in different contexts by Currie, Thiele & Harris (2002); Chanana (2004), Leathwood and Read (2009), or Tomàs i Folch; Castro, Bernabeu Tamayo, Feixas & Ion (2011), among others, shows us how in universities there are situations that continue "supporting" the invisibilization of women: the different use of images of men and women on websites when it comes to presenting aspects such as governing bodies, research or students; the time dedicated to establishing informal contacts (networking) between teaching staff or the valuing of ways of acting (individualistically, competitively, etc) more present in the male socializing

process than the female one, and much is made of the so called new *managerialism* that dominates organizational culture of higher education.

Women's access to university is now a confirmed fact in many parts of the world, with this being one of the most important changes experienced in higher education institutions. However, with the first phase of access achieved, and even en masse, just as has occurred in recent decades, it is now worth questioning the situation of women in these institutions: have women been able to come into power in universities, are they powerful in these institutions? Just as Quinn (2003) states, it all depends on how we interpret this power: therefore, if we conceive power as being the capacity to think for ourselves, to transform, to deconstruct what has been established, then this has certainly been achieved by women. Witnesses to this change have been the creation of Women and Gender Studies, facilitators of a new way of looking at the world and scientific construction, as well as revealers of the social construction of knowledge; or the changes observed in the way of carrying out management, research and teaching, where women have incorporated a different approach or way of tackling such areas: greater teamwork, less individualism, more collaborative leadership (Tomàs & Folch, 2011). Nevertheless, if by power we understand control and status, women have hardly achieved this. We need only consider one piece of data to back this statement up: women receive 45% of all doctorates in the EU but represent only 30% of researchers, and only 16% lead research projects (European Commission, 2009).

In an attempt to combat this situation, higher education institutions have seen how the principle of equality between men and women has become part of the way they function (García Lastra & Díaz Díaz, 2011). Actions of differing bearing have been undertaken for its development, affecting both legislation as well as aspects linked to teaching or research. Although authors such as Brooks (1997) have noted the limited effectiveness of these types of measures, we consider that setting up these kinds of strategies is most certainly a cornerstone in constructing the path to achieve more egalitarian and, in short, fairer universities.

Thus, to understand the extent of the effect that the establishment of these types of measures has had, it is necessary to cast our eyes back. Hence, we will use a general historical background, that is to say, the Spanish historical context, to then move on to focusing on a much more specific environment,

that of the University of Cantabria (UC), a university that in recent years has set in motion a number of measures such as the Equality Plan for Men and Women.

This way, the article will be structured in two parts: in a first part we will look back in time at the evolution of women in university in Spain which we will divide in three periods, and a second part that, linked to the last of the three periods described, will set out the application of the principle of equality of opportunities in the UC.

The historical review of women in universities

The little more than a hundred years that have passed since the first Spanish women enrolled on university courses, to the present day, can be divided into three periods, marked by different laws, historical situations or changes in the social attitude towards women. Nevertheless, the three periods are linked by one idea: the linearity of a process (yet unfinished) that starts off in a hostile environment to women and which places us today in a context in which “the female revolution of the 20th century has brought about a radical change in the university of today: the majority of students are female, and there are more and more women lecturers and researchers who work at universities” (Arnaus & Piusi, 2009, p.131).

First stage: from the 18th century to the 1910 Law

The presence of the first women in university lecture halls in Spain can date back to the last quarter of the 19th century, specifically to the 1870s, thirty years after North American women, pioneers of this process, did the same in their universities (Flecha, 1996). This way, the passing of the 1910 Law did no more than legalize the way forward shown by those women who decided to break with the model secularly maintained for them and to which they were unavoidably destined, in other words, the role of wives and mothers. In fact, women who decided to break with the taboos of the period and to reach university did so for a combination of interrelated reasons (intellectual curiosity, the desire for professional training, preparation for a future profession, and so on) and with an ultimate goal: to distance themselves from a situation that was beginning to suffocate some of them. Thus, the

decision to prove their independence as opposed to the dependence on and subordination to men, and for once and for all, to promote a change in the patriarchal order that accompanied societies, became the *leit motiv* behind this “daring” decision.

Something that was in fact changing on the education stage of the country would result in a revolution in power relations, a fact that caused alarm bells to go off with the authorities faced with the possibility of the subversion of the secularly established order. Reaction moved from one of surprise and resentment to one of prohibition and regulation. Thus, after the first enrolments (and with the subsequent debate that set in throughout the country), university education for women was prohibited between 1882-3 and 1888-9, the moment when, for the first time, women’s access to the university world began to be regulated. Specifically, the Royal Order (11 June 1888) was passed recognizing the right to study at university, albeit with restrictions or constraints such as the need to seek permission from a superior so that this person would be who decided whether, in terms of the circumstances of the interested party, the enrolment on a university course could take place (Flecha, 1996)². As we may venture, the fact that a law should lay down for the first time the conditions of enrolment for women on university courses highlighted the idea that this was starting to be seen as a *problem* in the eyes of society, and as a consequence, certain authorities, armed with the image of the female linked to the codes of conduct of the period where subordination to man and the lack of economic independence were the basis of a discriminatory situation (Calvo, Susinos & García Lastra, 2008). In previous periods of history the prohibition of their presence in university lecture rooms was not even contemplated as a possibility, given the fact that women worked and were instructed in what Pilar Ballarín (2006) has defined as education “appropriate to their sex”: *to obey, to sew and shut up*. It is at the moment when women decide to gain access to this education level, when measures are put in place to first forbid and then later regulate the new situation.

We must not forget that the Spanish feminist movement, without the magnitude of other European feminisms, started to grow in this country from the last decades of the 19th century (Cabrera Bosch, 2007). Despite the fact that the *feminine question* which the first feminism tackled, continued to be impregnated with the idea of women’s subordination to man, women’s

education was placed as one of their fundamental demands (Arce Pinedo, 2008). Therefore, during the last third of the 19th century, and at the same time that the debate on the right of women's education was high on the agenda, certain actions were set in motion (associations, conference cycles specially aimed at women, and so on), that even though they sought to increase the education level of women, they did not, at any time, question the role women played in society (García Lastra, 2010b).

Second stage: the first decades of the 20th century to the 1970s

From this moment onwards, the presence of women in the university world has been characterized by continuing growth. Nevertheless, just as in the case of any other process of social change, the different social and political situations which were present in the country, were determinant factors in the pace and cadences of the development of such changes. Thus, this progressive “normalization” of female presence in the higher education sphere was aided by the arrival of the Second Republic 1931-1936), a period which was especially fructiferous for the situation of women which made their presence in the education world and labour market, albeit incomparable with the situation in other countries, increase on a significant scale (the presence of women in the labour market was a trend that began to be felt from the first decades of the 20th century due to the industrializing process implanted in Spain and the demands of countries involved in World War I.)

In the university sphere the rate of female enrolment continued upwards, representing 9% of students in the 1935-6 academic year, a figure that compared with the 0.1% at the time the 1910 Law was passed (Ballarín, 2001). Their presence was concentrated in specific areas of study: Pharmacy, Sciences, Philosophy and Arts or Medicine, although the fundamental milestone of this period would not be preservation of the rates of female students but rather the final acceptance of the relationship between the title conferred and professional development (Del Amo, 2009). Elsewhere, it is necessary to consider that it was in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and as a consequence of the process started from the beginnings of the century, when the presence of women in the university sphere is not only noticeable in terms of students but also in teaching staff (Capel, 1999). Thus, by the 1928-

9 academic year seven female professors were teaching in Spanish universities, with Barcelona being the first centre to offer women this possibility (Vazquez Ramil, 1989).

All these circumstances produced the development of new roles more in line with the situation than this period in history demanded, which were, however, soon suffocated by the triumph of the Franco regime, set on the idea of reviving the figure of a traditional woman more reminiscent of the decimononic situation where the university experience did not enter her life plans. However, despite the fact that the dictatorial regime explicitly vetoed the presence of women in certain jobs and returned to present the ideal woman, stuck in her role as wife and mother, female presence in higher education centers continued to rise during the first decades of the regime; in fact, by the mid 1950s 18% of university students were women.

University thus became a different option to that which the Franco regime, in an unavoidable way, had envisaged for women, where their role as “the angel at home³” took them back to bygone eras. This group of women, who would exercise their profession once they had finished their studies, would be the one which demonstrated, despite the attempts of the regime, that paid female work was an irreversible phenomenon that would do no more than follow the trends observed in western society reborn after World War II (Capel, 1999).

Third stage. From the 1970s to the present

Despite the fact that the Franco regime would extend into the mid 1970s, a decade before, an important social change began to be detected which would bring about significant changes in the mindset of the Spanish population. It is in this context in which a new presence was noted of the conception of women’s role in society, so much so that even though some years were to pass for women to secure basic rights, their social situation would start to be perceived in a different light from how it had been considered till then (Calvo et al. 2008). Thus, progressively, women were to obtain basic rights removed by the Franco regime and to accede to positions previously vetoed.

It is precisely from that moment when the number of women enrolled at Spanish universities started to become significant. If in the first decades of the 20th century women represented no more than 5% of university students,

in the 1970s this number had already reached 20% (García de León, 1994; Ballarín, 2001; Del Amo, 2009). From that moment on, an intensive process of incorporation began, so that in just two decades the registration of women would pass from mere representation to meaning more than half the student body, a situation that appeared in the mid 1980s. Currently, there are more women than men at university: specifically, fifty-five of every one hundred students are women⁴.

However, despite the gains made by women in universities, a double process would take place that can be considered as horizontal and vertical segregation (Author, 2010b), a situation that with more or less similar characteristics to that found in other contexts (Leathwood & Read, 2009; Wagner, Acker & Mayuzumi, 2008; Wilson, Marks, Noone & Hamilton-Mackenzie, 2010). Thus, the first of these dynamics attends the unequal presence of women on degree courses or areas of knowledge (both in the case of students as well as teachers) and the vertical to the scarce representation of women in positions of responsibility, a reality that reinforces what is happening in lower levels of education.

On the one hand the *horizontal segregation*, that is to say, the unequal presence of men and women in different academic specialized areas, demonstrates the conditioning that gender, even today, imposes on individuals when it comes to choosing their studies. The reflection of university centers shows the image of a heterogeneous reality where women represent the majority in Health Science studies or in Social Sciences and Legal studies (74% and 63% respectively over the total student body), but they represent barely 30% in architecture studies or the different areas of engineering. This is a situation that, lest we forget, entails an unequal starting point when it comes to entering the labour market, where studies in which the number of women is the highest, are those of less symbolic and market value, and as a consequence, women will have fewer possibilities of employment, will be worse valued socially, and furthermore will receive lower salaries (García Lastra, 2010b).

On the other hand, *vertical segregation* demonstrates how despite the increase in the number of women among university teaching staff, they continue to hold posts of a lower academic level: professorships continue to be held by men (only 15 of every hundred teachers of this category are women), whilst the presence of women increases as the professional

category falls⁵. However, these data must also be considered in the light of the situation of the new teaching figures that have appeared in the last years, fruit of the latest education laws that maintain a balanced situation between man and women that will decisively influence the change in university teaching bodies. Elsewhere, and still with the hope placed on this new perspective, currently the infra-representation of women in positions of responsibility at universities is clear: only 6% of Spanish universities are actually governed by a woman and the average presence of women on the governing boards of these centres is in the region of 29% ([Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 2008](#)). This situation, we must not forget, apart from depriving society in general of the vision and contribution of a part of it, also sets a pattern that does little more than impede girls and young women from constructing a female model linked to these positions (Author, 2005).

The application of the principle of the equality of opportunities between men and women in university: the experience of the University of Cantabria

The historical review explained in the previous pages can be used as a general framework within which we can understand the relevance that the application of the principle of equality of opportunities has had in University in Spain. The fact that in little more than a century we have passed from what we could well term “the silenced voice” to “the respected voice” when we refer to the relationship between women and the university environment ([García Lastra, 2010a](#)), demonstrates the speed of the social change undergone in university. In order to understand this change we will analyze the specific scenario offered by the University of Cantabria (UC)⁶, a university which in the last few years has seen how the principle of equality between men and women has impregnated its structures and basic documents.

As is well-known, equality between men and women is a fundamental and universal legal principle, which is laid down in the most relevant international texts on human rights. In Spain, the *Organic Law 3/2007, 22 March, for the effective Equality of Men and Women* establishes the regulatory framework for the development of initiatives with this goal.

In particular, article 45.2 of the said Law establishes the obligation for companies of more than 250 workers, to create and apply an Equality Plan. In turn, article 46.1 defines the Equality Plans as an ordered set of measures, adopted after carrying out a diagnosis of the situation, and with the aim to reach equality of treatment and opportunities between men and women. These plans will fix the objectives of equality to be reached, the strategies and practices to be adopted for their achievement, as well as the establishment of efficient follow-up and evaluation of the objectives laid down. In order to achieve these objectives, the Equality Plans could contemplate, among others, the themes of access to employment, professional classification, promotion and training, retributions, organization of working time to benefit, in terms of equality between men and women, the reconciliation of work with personal and family life, and the prevention of sexual harassment and harassment for reasons of gender.

The elimination of inequalities between both sexes is an objective that must be pursued from all areas of society, and especially from those, that owing to their influence and social impact must be used as an example for others, as is University.

Specifically, in the university environment the *Organic Law 4/2007, 12 de April, modifying the Organic Law 6/2001, 21 December, on Universities* incorporates equality in a various number of its articles. The Law promotes the balanced presence of men and women in the different organs of the university, signals student rights including non-sexist treatment and the equality of opportunities and establishes the creation of equality units in the organizational structures of universities. Likewise, in the teaching sphere, the *Organic Law 2/2006, 3 May, on Education* contemplates equality training. In this context, almost all the universities in Spain have approved an Equality Plan or have established an Equality Unit or an equivalent organism (Fundación Isonomía, 2010).

Background and calendar of action for the elaboration of the University of Cantabria Equality Plan

The University of Cantabria (UC) is one of the first Spanish Universities to undertake and implant an Equality Plan. In fact, understanding that one of the ways to be able to implant effective equality of opportunities between

men and women in the working sphere, is through the implantation of measures that can reconcile working life with family life, since 2004, various initiatives have been developed in this sense, that have been widely valued by the university community and which have served as an example for other Universities and businesses⁷.

With the desire to develop and broaden the measures mentioned, as well as to implant other more novel lines of action to reach the objective of effective equality between men and women both within the university as well as in the relationships between the university and the society, the Equality Plan was started in 2008.

Thus, in March 2008 the Transversal Equality Committee (CTI) was created, as an organ with a consultative, participative and assessorial nature, with representation from all areas of the university, and which was charged with drawing up, approving, and implanting the Equality Plan.

The Commission is made up of thirteen members representing teaching staff, students, administration personnel, management, unions, and political organs⁸ of the University. The first action of the Committee consisted of publicly accepting a set of commitments, which are to:

- ✓ Integrate the equality of opportunities between men and women in the University of Cantabria as a basic and transversal principle;
- ✓ Include this principle in the political objectives of the University and particularly, in the human resources management policy;
- ✓ Promote teaching and research on the significance and reach of equality between men and women;
- ✓ Facilitate the necessary material, as well as human, resources, for the creation of the diagnosis, definition and implementation of the Equality Plan and the inclusion of equality in collective negotiation.

Seeing that the objective was to have an Equality Plan with specific measures, which would encompass the different areas of university life and which would be applicable, a diagnosis of the situation was carried out in terms of equality, which covered a year (from March 2008 to March 2009). The diagnosis represented a quantitative analysis of data and the regulations in force, as well as a qualitative analysis through group dynamics, in depth interviews and visits to the centres.

The stages of the Equality Plan are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Stages of the Equality Plan



Diagnosis

The diagnosis of the situation demonstrates the need to develop an Equality Plan having revealed the presence of inequalities between men and women, both in terms of the representation level of women in higher ranking positions and in the decision-making organs, as well as in terms of retribution, without excluding the problem of gender violence in the university area.

Some of the results obtained were as follows:

- The University of Cantabria has 1772 employees, where 1188 persons are Teaching and Research Staff and 584 are Administration and Services Personnel (ASP). Only 30.72% of the Teaching and Research staff are women while in the case of ASP the presence of women is higher (56.68%).
- With regard to the Teaching and Research Staff, Spanish Universities in general, and the UC in particular, are characterized by a “scissors model” in terms of the evolution of its students towards higher-ranking positions in teaching and research. Figure 2 shows how despite the fact that the percentage of women enrolled in the UC is the same as that of men, the higher ranking positions in teaching and research (professorships) are occupied by men (89.7%). These differences are accentuated even more so, depending on the teaching disciplines, where we see the greatest inequalities in the case of technical teaching areas. Figure 3 shows how the level of women’s representation in the organs of government and management of the University is still very limited.

Figure 2

Academic and Research evolution in The University of Cantabria: scissors model

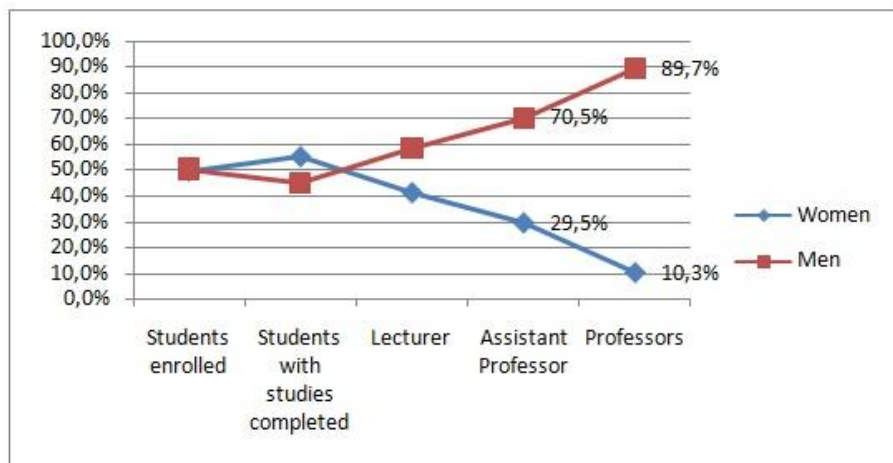
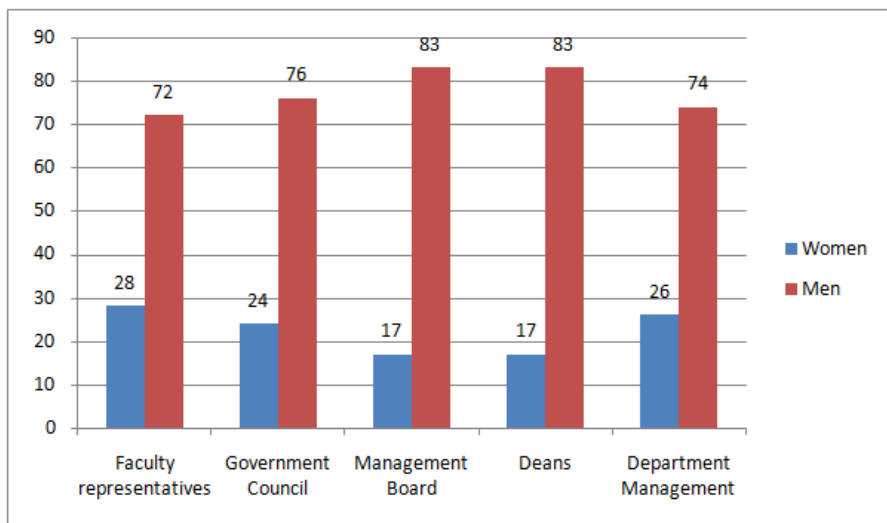


Figure 3.

Representation level of women and men in the government and management organs of the University of Cantabria (%).



- In terms of Administration and Services personnel (ASP) we see clear differences in the level of representation of women, according to the functions they carry out, noting a clear concentration of women in administrative areas and library services and men in information technology and maintenance and construction, as can be seen in table 1.

Table 1.

Distribution of men and women in different functions (only public employees that represent 62% of the total ASP)

Category	Women	%	Men	%
Administration Personnel	181	74.18%	63	25.82%
Library staff	44	70.97%	18	29.03%
Information Technology Staff	9	18.75%	39	81.25%
Maintenance and Construction Personnel	1	14.29%	6	85.71%

- However, the problem is not only one of level of representation but also there is a difference in financial remuneration between men and women in the same work post, which reaches 19% in favor of men in teaching and research posts. The reasons which justify this difference in financial remuneration are related to the number of years' service in the job, which is much less in the women's case. This has implications on other factors that reduce the obtaining of financial complements such as:
 - The obtaining of three year and five year bonuses
 - Occupation of management posts
 - Participation in research projects
 - Six year bonuses for research projects

- Participation on courses as speakers

Finally, the UC is not detached from the results found in certain research work that has explored the presence of gender violence in the university context. On an international level, the data obtained shows figures that between 13% -30% are victims of some kind of aggression or undesired sexual situation in the university period of their lives.

This context firmly suggests the need to implant an Equality Plan with the objective that the principle of equality between men and women becomes a reality and that it makes better use of human resources possible, by not excluding 50% of the population.

Areas of action of the Equality Plan

The Equality Plan developed in the UC compiles 53 specific actions framed within ten areas of activity and which attempt to resolve the problems detected in the diagnosis, and to advance towards shaking up the so-called social “masking” of women, encompassing not only actions that reconcile working life with family life but also other actions such as language and conditions of the job position:

1. Equal Opportunities policy
2. Equality as an element of social responsibility and the measurement of its impact on society
3. Communication, image and language
4. Representation of women
5. Access, selection, promotion and development
6. Financial retribution
7. Harassment, sexist attitudes, and the perception of discrimination
8. Work conditions
9. Reconciliation of work with family life
10. Physical conditions of the work environment

Without wishing to enumerate all 53 areas of action, it is felt necessary to highlight the most relevant, which areas follows:

1. Visibilisation
 - Creation of the Equality Unit in order to comply with the reform of the Law and to generate a stable structure in the time imposed to

evaluate the compliance of the Equality Plan and to enhance this as the context changes.

- Actions tending towards the visibilisation of gender studies and aid for research into these areas.
- Recognition for those who stand out for defending women's rights (both on a regional level as well as within the university sphere).

2. Training

- Actions related with training which includes training in equality, the use of neutral language, reinforcing the role of leadership, management and decision-making or the elimination of sex stereotypes and roles.

This training is aimed at all groups in the university sphere. In the case of teaching staff and administration staff this training is included in their annual training program. For the student body, the UC has set in motion the Training in Values, Competences and Personal Skills Program that represents 6 compulsory ECTS within all degrees awarded and within which courses related to equality are run.

It is worthy to highlight that the general guidelines for the elaboration of the new grade programs in the UC in the framework of the European Credit Transfer System, most of which began in the course 2010/11, consider a series of recommendations in equality matters proposed by the Transversal Equality Committee. These recommendations include: the promotion in all grades of the knowledge of the Equality Law and its implications; the inclusion, if it is possible, of aspects related with gender perspective in the course syllabus; the introduction, if it is possible, of the gender variable in statistics or other material used in class; the show of the contribution to knowledge made by women in each discipline; the introduction of mechanism to guarantee the fulfillment of this guidelines in Grade Programs.

3. Language

- Since 2009 the UC has a Guide for the use of non-sexist Language, which it is hoped will be broadened and disseminated in all its areas of action.

4. Representation of women

- With the aim of achieving equality in the government organs, balanced presence in the freely designated positions will be guaranteed.
- Selection committees are requested to have a balanced number of men and women represented⁹.
- A quality indicator is perceived in the constitution of balanced team soft men and women in research projects or the organization of postgraduate courses.

5. Gender violence

- With regard to gender violence, the following actions are set down :
 - a) The creation of a procedure of action for the prevention, detection and action against gender violence and also in the face of situations of sexual harassment, harassment for reasons of sex and work harassment.
 - b) Boosting the mobility of workers who have been victims of gender violence or sexual harassment within the university or towards other universities.
 - c) The exemption from paying tuition fees for victims of gender violence and their descendants.

6. Reconciliation

On the subject of reconciliation, the UC has been working since 2004 implanting certain innovatory measures which it is hoped will be enhanced with the Equality Plan and that have proved to be crucial in improving working conditions of the University workers (mainly the female workers).

Some of the actions that have taken place are:

- a) Playschool for children between 0 and 3 years old: despite the fact that the idea was fundamentally based on the setting up of a childcare as a service for the university community, the project was enriched by placing it in the hands of a work-team belonging to the Department of Education which ran it from a broader perspective: ranking higher than the right of mothers and fathers to the Reconciliation of work with family life, is the right of children of both sexes to quality education. Many achievements have been made by the Playschool in these years, but in brief the highlighted successes have been:

- The possibility to reconcile work with family life
 - The offer of quality education from 0 to 3 years
 - A commitment to students with special education needs
 - The creation of jobs mainly for women
 - Training of students of both sexes from the Faculty of Education
 - A reference model in Spanish Universities and in the Region
- b) Children's Campuses: these are run during periods of school holidays in conjunction with the Physical and Sports Activities Service of the UC. This activity is aimed at boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 12 and consists of a complete training program that includes recreational and sports activities, as well as excursions to different places of interest in the region. Since 2004, the demand of 1984 applications for places on the campuses has been satisfied.
- c) Along with these initiatives, in the last few years two new projects have been set up with the aim to help reconcile work and family life. These are: the Summer Camp (aimed at children between 7 and 14 years old), which has been enjoyed by 90 persons; and the Skating school with the participation of more than 150 users.

The actions of reconciliation and the development of an Equality Plan would not be possible without the permanent support of the University financial department, which has made it possible to allocate resources for these initiatives, in such a way that the users pay only 30% of the real cost. Within the total budget of the University, which amounts to 75 million Euros, these initiatives represent an annual net cost of 0.24%.

The Equality Plan, maintains these actions and contemplates, among others, activities relate with the flexibilisation of timetables, the reduction of the working day and the granting of leaves for reasons of birth or adoption of children, which as well as complying with the regulations established in the Public Administration Reconciliation Plan or the Law on Equality, it actually goes beyond it in certain aspects, as Table 2 shows. Among other activities, timetable flexibility is increased by two hours, paternity leave has

now been increased to 30 days since the passing of the Equality Plan (in Spain, the paternity leave was increased to 15 days by *Law 9/2009*, which came into force the 1st of January of 2011) and there is the proposed objective to design, construct and set in motion a Day Care Centre which will permit personnel with elderly persons under their responsibility to reconcile their work with this responsibility¹⁰. Other important actions are the adjustment of meeting timetables to avoid damaging conciliation, the creation of mechanisms that ease personnel substitutions or the implementation of a grant program for personnel who has child under 12 years or elderly or disabled person under their charge.

Table 2.

Activities contemplated in the UC Reconciliation Plan and the Equality Plan, that improve those included in national legislation.

	National Law on Equality and National Reconciliation Plan	Improvements made by the UC Reconciliation Plan (2007)	Improvements made by the UC Equality Plan (2009)
Working day and flexibility of timetable			
- Flexibility of timetables for the Administration Staff.	Yes		
- Reduction of working day for personal reasons (from 9.00-14.00, Monday –Friday, earning 75% of salary).	Yes		
Childbirth or Adoption			
- Paternity leave 15 days	Yes		Extended to 30 days
- Substitution of breastfeeding leave for leave which transforms the corresponding time into working days.	Yes		
Child under 12 months old –4 weeks			
- Accumulation of paternity leave/maternity leave with holidays even after the natural year has finished.	Yes		

Table 2.

Activities contemplated in the UC Reconciliation Plan and the Equality Plan, that improve those included in national legislation.

	National Law on Equality and National Reconciliation Plan	Improvements made by the UC Reconciliation Plan (2007)	Improvements made by the UC Equality Plan (2009)
Childbirth or Adoption			
- Premature birth of children or who must remain hospitalized: father's right to be absent from work for 2 hours/per day.	Yes		
Lengthening of maternity leave to a maximum of 13 weeks.			
- Artificial insemination: right to be absent from work for treatment.	Yes		
- International adoption: up to two months leave receiving basic salary.	Yes		
Care of children and dependent persons			
- Reduction of working day as legal guardian: from 1/3 to 1/2, receiving 80% to 60% of salary respectively.	Yes	Improves salary received	
- Reduction of working day first degree care of first degree next of kin family member due to serious illness: 50% reduction in working day, and salary maximum one month.	Yes		
- Medical appointments of children and first degree next of kin family member: right to absence.		Yes	
- Flexibility of 1 hour per day to attend to dependent persons	Yes		
- Flexibility of 2 hours per day for disabled children. Right to be absent.	Yes		Flexibility of 2 hours in all cases with defined action protocol
- Flexibility of 2 hours for the Reconciliation of single parent families (exceptional).	Yes		
- Sabbatical absence for care of children and dependent persons: up to 3 years.			

Table 2.

Activities contemplated in the UC Reconciliation Plan and the Equality Plan, that improve those included in national legislation.

	National Law on Equality and National Reconciliation Plan	Improvements made by the UC Reconciliation Plan (2007)	Improvements made by the UC Equality Plan (2009)
Care of children and dependent persons			
- For the first 2 years with the right to return to the same job. Later, the reservation of a position with similar level and salary. Computable period to three year bonuses and promotion.	Yes		
Right to on-going training			
- Right to attend training courses during leaves or sabbatical periods. Preference during 1 year for those who have returned following maternity/paternity leave or a sabbatical period.	Yes	Preference awarded	
- Leave for sitting final exams or other evaluation tests in official centers		Yes	
Protection against gender violence			
- Absence from the work post.	Yes		
- Reduction of working day with proportional reduction in salary.	Yes		
- Sabbatical period: for 6 months right to the reservation of the working position (computable for 3 year bonuses).	Yes		
For 2 months full salary is received.			

Thus, the objective of the University must not merely be of adapting to a binding Law but more of going beyond it, prioritizing social policy measures that some years ago lacked any relevance in the activities developed by the University, but which are crucial when inequalities continue to exist. The University, as a social reference point, requires clear and efficient policies

that bring about the closing of the gap for reasons of gender in the working environment and hence requires strong support at an institutional level. The presentation of the UC Equality Plan brought two of the main ministers involved, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Equality, and which established a milestone in the creation and passing of Equality Plans in the Spanish University sphere.

However, although all the way run, there is still aversion to the inclusion of positive measures in favor of women in Equality Plans with the aim to reduce the inequality in the representation in the higher categories. The internal promotion from assistant professor to professor at the University of Cantabria is based on a scale that considers as a merit the number of years the person has been working at the University, although during these years his/her productivity has been low. As has been shown in this paper, women has arrived later to the University than men, and in particular at the University of Cantabria more than 28% of men has been working at the UC for 25 years or more while only 15% of women has this merit. Trying to correct this bias, the Equality Plan suggested to value the women's representation in the organs of government and management more than men's representation, but the Government Council didn't passed this suggestion. Therefore, it will take time to achieve equality although all the measures adopted by the Equality Plan.

Conclusions

The last century has seen a spectacular advance in the incorporation of women to teaching and research in universities. Nevertheless, horizontal segregation (differences according to areas of knowledge) and vertical segregation (access to positions of responsibility) continue to exist. Thus, the legislation that has been developed in recent years in Spain, as well as the obligation to create Equality Plans, makes it necessary, on the one hand, to demonstrate and unmask the possible differences between women and men in the workplace, and on the other hand, take steps for reducing it.

In a global and competitive world such as the one we live in, special emphasis must be given to innovatory business management practices that produce an appropriate working environment and which ensure that professional development is not hindered for reasons of gender. Indeed, the

businesses that are implanting these practices are in general valued greater both by their workers and their clients and society. Universities must not be detached from social and business evolution. Universities are important institutions for not only production of knowledge but for establishing education and creating socio-cultural values for future generations as well, and therefore are obliged with social responsibilities to demonstrate that they are organizations which recognize specificities of each gender, make efforts to close the gap between men and women, and where every member is allowed to make the most of its individuality and abilities.

The first step has been taken with the creation of Equality Plans by some Spanish Universities, but the coming years will be vital in order to assess the true commitment of institutions to equality, as we will be able to verify the extent of fulfillment of the actions contemplated by the Plan. Spanish Universities, and in particular de University of Cantabria, should not make the same mistake that Italian ones, where the scarcity of control and sanctions has caused the inefficacy of gender action plans. Since the legislative decree n° 198/11.04.2006, all the public and private companies in Italy, including universities and research institutions, which employ more than one hundred persons are obliged to draw up a report at least every two years, about the situation of male and female employees and aspects such as professional promotion, category changes or actual pay. However, the gender action plans adopted by Italian Universities are just a list of objectives to be achieved.

The current economic context, marked by the crisis, does not appear to be the most appropriate to promote equality actions that require important financial investment, but not all actions of the Equality Plan, and more specifically that of the UC, require economic expenditure, but a change in philosophy in business management.

Notes

¹ Feminist 8 March 2010 marked the centenary of the Royal Order dictated by the Ministry of Public Instruction which authorized women access to higher education in Spain without the need for special permission.

² Thus, along with the more tangible limitations represented in the legal stipulations, women had to overcome other, no less difficult barriers, such as the opposition of families, reactions of professors and fellow students, or the difficulties to exercise their profession (Del Amo 2009).

³ An extended explication of the concept of “angel at home” can be found in Arce Pinedo (2008).

⁴ Source: Fuente: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (2010): Data and statistics of the university system Academic year 2009/10. <http://www.educacion.es/dctm/ministerio/educacion/universidades/estadisticas-informes/datos-cifras/2009-datos-y-cifras-09-10.pdf?documentId=0901e72b8009f6bb>

⁵ Source Ministry of Science and Education (2010): *Statistics of personnel at the service of Universities: University teaching and research staff* Available at: <http://www.educacion.es/dctm/ministerio/educacion/universidades/estadisticas-informes/estadisticas/curso-08-09/2010-pdi-08-09.pdf?documentId=0901e72b8020fd15>

⁶ The University of Cantabria was founded in 1972. It currently has 12,000 students, more than 1200 lecturers and almost 600 persons working in administration and services. It offers 27 officially recognized degree titles and 31 master degrees (www.unican.es).

⁷ Among others, the *Reconciliation Plan*, passed in 2007 compiles a set of measures related with the flexibilisation of timetables, the working day, caring for families and protection against gender violence.

⁸ The Equality Plan was started, promoted and developed from the Vice-Chancellor Department for Campus and Social Development of the UC under the Vice-Chancellorship of D. Jorge Tomillo Urbina and the Directorship of Dña. Belén Díaz Díaz.

⁹ In Denmark, since 2000, gender action plans in Universities go beyond this measure and establish that selection committees just determine if applicants are qualified for a position or not, but they do not give a priority. This permits the management of the research institutions to actively employ the candidate that fits into their actual needs. This includes a more equal balance of men and women.

¹⁰ All these measures made the UC one of the first academic institutions in Spain to receive the *Alares National Prize for Reconciliation*, in 2009.

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New Forms of Exploitation: The Synthesis of Mis-Recognition and Mal-Distribution

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New Forms of Exploitation: The Synthesis of Mis- Recognition and Mal- Distribution

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Abstract

Diversity and inclusion have become major topics in current political and economic thinking. While some practical progress has been made in combating the stigmatization and marginalization of historically discriminated groups, mal-distribution of economic resources persists. In order to devise a conceptual framework which incorporates dimensions of diversity (with respect to social categories) and equality (in terms of economically justifiable distribution of income and wealth), the paper will review the current debate on diversity and its role with respect to exploitation. It will be examined how the economic logic of Western capitalist systems is re-established in diversity studies, and suggestions for (from a feminist point of view) politically more astute economic approaches are proposed.

Keywords: diversity studies, discrimination, mis-recognition, mal-distribution, strategic essentialism, anti-categorical approach

Nuevas Formas de Explotación: La Síntesis del No-Reconocimiento y la Injusta Distribución

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Resumen

La diversidad y la inclusión han pasado a ser temas centrales en el actual pensamiento político y económico. Mientras algún progreso práctico ha conseguido combatir la estigmatización y la marginalización de grupos históricamente discriminados, la injusta distribución de los recursos económicos persisten. Con la intención de trazar un marco conceptual que incorpore las dimensiones de diversidad (con respeto a las categorías sociales) y la igualdad (en términos de una distribución justificable de salarios y bienes), este artículo revisa los actuales debates sobre diversidad y su papel en relación a la explotación. Se examinará cómo la lógica económica del sistema capitalista occidental se ha restablecido en los estudios de diversidad, y se propondrán sugerencias (desde un punto de vista feminista) para enfoques económicos políticamente más astutos.

Palabras clave: estudios de diversidad, discriminación, no-reconocimiento, injusta distribución, esencialismo estratégico, planteamiento anticategórico.

There is no doubt that scholars of feminist economics have contributed substantially to a better understanding of the logic of capitalist exploitation and the gender biases inherent to mainstream economics (Folbre, 1991; Nelson, 1995; England, 2002; Ferber & Nelson, 2003; Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2003; Nelson, 2006; Hanappi-Egger, 2011). Nevertheless, questions have been raised regarding certain feminist approaches which seem to focus directly, or by assumption, on white women while simultaneously neglecting any diversity *among* women with respect to colour, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation and other socially relevant distinctive categories. Furthermore there is also an ongoing self-reflection on the hidden assumptions and unintended impacts of feminism with respect to the positioning of women in society. Eisenstein (2005) e.g. points to the problem that specific feminist streams were contributing to the dissemination of capitalist models: After the Second World War the slowing down of economic growth in the USA (in the face of strong economic growth in Europe and Japan) lead to radical political measures and budget cuts. After 1980 expenditures for public services were dramatically reduced, and production processes were outsourced to developing countries. In particular the latter was pushed by utilizing the female work force in the developing countries, offering the women micro-credits (see also Hanappi-Egger, Hermann, & Hofmann, 2010 for a detailed discussion on the role of micro-credits for changes in gender relations). Additionally the service sector was expanding. All these changes were seen as supporting the feminist project of empowerment of women, since women tended to work in the service sector, and income for women in developing countries were seen as promoting their autonomy and power.

Nevertheless as a matter of fact these trends contributed to the spreading of capitalism, the de-industrialization of the industrialized world resulted in a shift of investments from the industry sector to financial markets – the starting point for global strategies of profit making by focusing on short run manipulation in financial markets (compare Hanappi, 2013).

The current economic and political crises demand again a critical reflection on the achievements of the feminist ideas of eliminating gender hierarchies and fostering social and economic justice. With respect to this Elson and Warnecke (2012, p.110) propose three possible ways of bringing

the gender discourse into the economic discourse: 1) gender-specific impact analyses can investigate the consequences of specific economic and political measures for the lives of women and of men. 2) Gender analyses of financial markets can reveal the impacts of the reduction of public expenditures on gendered social spheres (such as the reproduction field) and their repercussion effects. 3) The investigation of hidden gendered orders in politics can identify subtle a-priori assumptions concerning gender relations and their contribution to the maintenance of given power structures (see also [Hanappi-Egger, 2011](#)).

This article can be positioned within the third group of gender discourse and will ask how the current scholarly work on identity constructions (diversity) contributes to the capitalist exploitation logic and its ideological basis of anti-solidarity. Thereby gender is considered as a primary diversity category and thus as a primary ordering element of societies.

There is no doubt that discrimination is based on structural power systems, maintained by institutionalized social injustice and on the symbolic level by norm systems leading to the exclusion of certain groups of people. Diversity studies highlight the marginalization and stigmatization of certain social groups while questioning the status of established norm groups (see also [Taylor, Hines, & Casey, 2011](#)). This awareness-raising is expected to lead to a lowering of discrimination and hinder the reproduction of stereotypes by emphasizing the uniqueness of people and the importance of diversity for economic performance. Discrimination based on the mentioned social categories is seen as counter-productive from an economic perspective. Hence, diversity studies claim to implement empowerment for so far oppressed groups by respecting the diverse background of humans in terms of age, religion, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity and disability. Since these social categories are also protected by the European Antidiscrimination guideline, one might believe that equality is achieved or at least successes are made.

And indeed, some remarkable progress has been made: Today there is legal backing for the equal treatment of same-sex partnerships; attention is paid to politically correct wording; and e.g. diversity-sensitive marketing

aims to attract new target groups such as the elderly, homosexuals and individuals with a cultural background different to the ‘norm’.

At the same time the gap between rich and poor is widening dramatically – a disturbing phenomenon which is generally overlooked in diversity studies. It is thus essential that we re-explore the question of mal-distribution. The narrow focus on social categories and its relevance for identity building seems to promote the exploitative power of modern societies by simply ignoring the economic situation of people. This paper will therefore deal with the question of how diversity promotes anti-solidarity and contributes to the capitalist logic, and how this trend can be countered by bringing questions of mal-distribution into the picture once again. Based on the concept of “social groups” of Bourdieu, the article will devise a new conceptual framing of diversity. The paper is structured as follows: First, diversity studies will be presented with respect to its role for the capitalist discriminatory potential from a feminist perspective. In the second section we explore the recognition-distribution dilemma, discussed in the light of new forms of exploitation. The chapter will close with highlighting an anti-categorical approach to foster solidarity and re-distribution.

Diversity studies, discrimination and anti-solidarity

Mainstream economic theories are rather bad at explaining the widening gap between rich and poor, and how this development is interwoven with social identities. Charles and Guryan (2011) have pointed out the severe limitations of the two main approaches in neo-classical economics to the study of labour market discrimination: The *prejudice model* emphasizes the racial biases of human beings, in particular human resource managers, while leaving it up to economists to apply social categories (black and white as racial categories), which are necessarily specified rather ambiguously. The *statistical discrimination model* focuses on the effect of limited information in labour market transactions, and posits that, for example, an expected level of skills is frequently attributed to white and black workers based on racial characteristics. However, neither of these models are sufficient to explain

sources of prejudice, and thus Charles and Guryan conclude: “As all these examples show, despite the difficulty of establishing definitive evidence about whether discrimination exists at all, there are many avenues for creative work in future” (Charles & Guryan, 2011, p. 33).

Other attempts to formally introduce the issue of identity into economics (e.g. by Akerlof & Kranton, 2000) have been heavily criticized for their simplistic assumption of identity building as a strictly psychologically-based individualized feature (see Davis, 2007) and, in so doing, merely contributing to neo-classical economic ideology (see Fine, 2009).

In contrast to the neo-classical approach, Bowles et al. (2009) focus explicitly on the interdependence of social categories (such as race¹) and economic equality. Their work follows a long-standing programme of research aimed at reconciling economic theory with other findings in the social sciences (see Weisskopf, Bowles, & Gordon, 1983).

In particular, Bowles and Gintis (1977) have criticized Marxism for its narrow focus on *class* as the main social category, thereby neglecting other valid forms of categorization. Arguing that social categories such as sex, race, nationality and ethnicity should be recognized in economic theory, Bowles et al. (2009) have proposed a model that emphasizes the link between social segregation and the dynamics of inequality. They point out that the “combined effect of interpersonal spillovers in human capital accumulation and own-group bias in the formation of social networks may be the persistence across generations of group inequalities.”

Baldwin and Johnson (2006) add to the problems of studying discrimination that it is rather difficult to define exactly what and who is meant by “discrimination”. The authors exemplify their critique with the topic of disability: While we might share an understanding of who is meant by the social category of “women”, it is by far more difficult to define “disabled” or “minorities”. Furthermore the meaning of e.g. disabled people is biased in terms of the a-priori assumptions: limitation of capacity is often assigned to disabled people only and refers to a standardized understanding of “productivity”, which is a specific relation of physical and psychological capability and performance without taking the working conditions into consideration. Hence, capability is a rather unspecified but prejudged concept.

What is remarkable in the various approaches to the issue of identity in economics – and in even more radical alternatives – is the unquestioned assumption of the validity of such social categorization, referring in particular to the Social Identity Theory (SIT) of [Tajfel and Turner \(1986\)](#). This basic assumption is also highly influential within the discourse on *diversity*, and thus is certainly in need of critical examination. In fact, we can detect a trend amongst economists away from investigating the material circumstances of living and economic inequality towards the study of psycho-social identity constructions and the role of diversity.

The Social Identity Theory (SIT) – often linked to social categorization theory – assumes that human beings tend to discriminate against out-group members who display characteristics which differ from their own. Back in the 1980s a new concept based on SIT was devised in regard to economic performance, namely ‘diversity’ and (in a business context) ‘diversity management’. Arising out of the human rights movement in the USA, which fought for equal opportunities in the labour market and against discrimination in terms of gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, affirmative action programmes were introduced to guarantee the ‘positive discrimination’ of minorities. These political achievements were devalued during the conservative economic era of Ronald Reagan. Ignoring the aim of the political and economic empowerment of historically disadvantaged groups, diversity at that time focused on the economic success of firms, and the contribution which *individuals* could make through their diverse social backgrounds. Hence the role of group differences was downplayed and the role of individuals emphasized (see [Kelly & Dobbin, 1998](#)). The notion of diversity (referring to differences between individuals in terms of a variety of social categories such as gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, religion, ...) and that of diversity management was to utilize a more diverse workforce to increase productivity (for a general discussion see [Prasad, Mills, Elmes, & Prasad, 1997](#); [Kersten, 2000](#)).

In the meantime the concept of diversity and diversity management has come under attack from many sides: By adopting a disjunctive set of social categories to ‘describe’ human beings, we ignore the fact that many discriminatory practices cannot be assigned to any one of these categories. Instead they are intersectional and overlapping (see also [Crenshaw, 1989](#);

McCall, 2005). Furthermore, the mentioned classification systems only refer to certain aspects of individuality while ignoring others. The questions to be answered here are: How are these aspects chosen? Why do some groups get a social or economic voice, and others not?²

A completely different and wider-ranging critique has come from post-modern scholars, suspicious of the validity of any ‘grand narrative’ (see also Rosenau, 1992). In regard to diversity and social categorization, they argue that identities are fluid and shaped by specific contexts, so that identities are continuously and dynamically created at each moment. Hence they conclude that any ‘difference-oriented’ approach to determining internal group homogeneity ignores the complexity and relativity of individual perceptions of the self and the world, and thus ends up reproducing stigmatization. As a consequence even the naming (understood as ‘labeling’) of groups is decried, as is the attempt to identify any other points of fixation. Distinction is seen as a purely linguistic construction, and therefore disadvantaged groups cannot – and should not – be addressed.

The political implication of this standpoint is clear: The notion of groups dissolves along with the shared and inter-subjective understanding of group identity, so that political and economic intervention to reduce discrimination is rendered pointless (for further discussion of post modernism see also Giddens, 1987; Fraser & Nicholson, 1989; Fraser, 2000).

A particularly strong critique on diversity studies stem from scholars working on classism (see also Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2013; Hanappi-Egger & Ortlieb, forthcoming): Class is simply ignored in diversity studies and thus the main focus on discrimination and exclusion is on social identity building level – on “recognition”, while the level of “distribution” is sorted out (see also Wrench, 2005; Hanappi-Egger & Hanappi, 2011; Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop, & Nkomo, 2010). Wilson (2000) shows that since the 18th century the meaning of “diversity” and “inclusion” has changed a lot. The strong focus on social identity led to the ignorance of issues of social distribution justice. Hence, the euphemisms at the rhetoric level do not lead to de-facto changes of oppressing and dominating practices (see also Shereen, 2002; Wetterer, 2002; Noon, 2007). Diversity studies do not necessarily question the material injustice – but might lead to more anti-solidarity.

The tendency to split groups in various distinctive sub-groups and to focus on differences rather than on similarities is fostering anti-solidarity and is contributing to the capitalistic logic of exploitation. This phenomenon has been widely discussed with respect to the welfare state. [Banting and Kymlicka \(2006\)](#) argue – based on the theory of group conflicts ([Sherif & Sherif, 1969](#)) - that the competition for scarce resources leads to antagonist group behavior and fosters conflict and anti-solidarity. E.g. the public discourse on multi-cultural co-existence mostly excludes issues of just distribution but stays on the social identity level – the ethnic belonging to. Therefore competition and mistrust of disadvantaged groups are fostered – whilst they also could form pro-redistribution lobbies and fighting together for fair shares (see also [Malik, 2001](#)).

In many other cases similar effects can be observed – the diversity discourse focusses on differences in social categories and by shifting the discussion of “equality” merely to the recognition level people are divided in inner-and outer groups,- competitiveness, anti-solidarity and conflicts are the consequences.

[Sedgwick \(1997\)](#) argues that the concept of diversity and the related euphoric view (“celebrate differences”) is contrary to the idea of special needs, and furthermore only very specific differences are accepted while others are ignored (see also [Wetterer, 2002](#)). Or as [Magala \(2009, p. 30\)](#) describes it: “[...] we realize that ‘diversity management’ has also been turned into a managerialist ideology of the second half of the first decade of the 21st century. [...] This ideological turn also followed growing awareness of diversity’s entanglement with ideologically obscured (but very sensitive) links to inequalities. *Celebrating differences, we are legitimising the inequalities inherent, implicitly included in ‘otherness’ and ‘difference’*. Inequalities, which emerge as the raw energy resource of social dynamics and change (because they give rise to the powerful forces of upward social mobility reinventing and transforming societies), have to be managed and legitimised (so that the sans-culottes or anarchists or hippies or terrorists do not blow everything up). The socially acceptable price for managing and legitimizing them fluctuates as much as the price of a barrel of oil on stock exchanges.”

From a feminist point of view the inner distinction of groups in a milieu of competition is bearing the risk of losing political power – thus this tendency has to be urgently questioned.

There are mainly two streams of reacting to the growing anti-solidarity which will be discussed in the following sections.

Reacting to Diversification and Anti-solidarity: Strategic Essentialism and Anti-categorical Approaches

Strategic Essentialism

Facing the tendency of growing inner distinction and anti-solidarity caused by the focus on “diversity“ and therefore on “differences“ Gayatri Spivak has brought up the concept of “strategic essentialism“. The idea is that in certain situations it is more advantageous to form strategic coalitions at the cost of celebrating the complexity of deconstructive approaches but for the sake of gaining power and being able to push the group’s interests (Spivak, 1995). Thus it is proposed to embrace internally heterogeneous groups under a shared header (such e.g. as “women”, “blacks”) in order to form a critical mass and to have a strong voice. Also Azoulay (1997) emphasizes the importance of strategic essentialism with respect to subtle forms of racism hidden in diversity concepts (see also Sasson-Levy (2013) for discussing “whiteness” of the diversity debate). Thereby strategic essentialism is understood as political strategy accepting in specific situations the commitment of giving up complex cultural identities (see Erel, 2004) and to agree on rather simplistic but socially accepted concepts of “culture” (e.g. being a Muslim). Azoulay (1977) points to the fact that along these simplified social categories exclusion and discrimination take place – but strategic essentialism is understood clearly as a counter concept challenging the biological approach of culture linking specific human characteristics to biological traits. Eide (2010, p. 76) also highlights the strength of strategic essentialism leading to group forming of individuals sharing specific characteristics. This allows minority groups to get influence on the majority and to push their interests. The prize for this is to conform to a standardized

public image of the group under consideration. In particular in the women's movement this form of strategic essentialism has been and still is seen as important feature in the fight for equal rights (see also [Razack, 1998](#)).

Nevertheless strategic essentialism is criticized for reproducing the concept of social categorization on the identity building level and thereby contributing to the hierarchization of social categories. Specific groups get a voice, others don't.

Furthermore stereotypical attributions of the group under consideration are reproduced. [Hajdukowski-Ahmed \(2008\)](#) e.g. illustrates the problem of female asylum seekers: As they are engaged in strategic essentialism, they risk to be disempowered since it "silences narratives of strength and resilience" ([Hajdukowski-Ahmed](#), p. 40) by fostering the stigmatizing identity of being victims.

However, since strategic essentialism ignores differences within the group, in particular with respect to access to resources and welfare, it also promotes the perspective that certain needs are uniquely bound to certain social categories – which might be true with respect to the historically grown inequalities, but definitely has to be updated.

Reacting to Diversification and Anti-solidarity: Anti-categorical Approaches

Bringing "Class" Back into Diversity Studies

[Hanappi-Egger and Hanappi \(2011\)](#) highlight the problematic impact on welfare when a neo-liberal course is followed. Shifting the discussion on factual economic inequality merely to the identity building level leads to strong anti-solidarity dynamics, thereby furthering the exploitation logic of finance capitalism in forms of a 'divide and conquer' ideology. Thus it is argued that the notion of diversity in relation to social categories has to be investigated in more detail in order to elaborate its interplay with the traditional concept of 'working class', as well as that of exploitation. [Nancy Fraser \(1995\)](#) has made an important contribution to the discussion of social

differentiation by outlining the distinction between the injustice of distribution and the injustice of recognition: “Here, then, is a difficult dilemma. I shall henceforth call it the redistribution–recognition dilemma. People who are subject to both cultural injustice and economic injustice need both recognition and redistribution. They need both to claim and to deny their specificity. How, if at all, is this possible?” (Fraser, 1995, p. 77) (for further discussion see also Fraser, 2000; Fraser & Honneth, 2003).

To overcome the specious duality of *either* diversity *or* economic equality, as well as to criticize neo-liberalistic notions of individualism, it is necessary to review the concept of *exploitation*. To this end Hanappi and Hanappi-Egger (2013) have proposed an updated concept of working class based on the position in the production process (i.e. power) while additionally taking account of the living circumstances expressed by indices such as income, education, consumption and leisure time. The authors point out that popular slogans such as “we all are middle class now” as well as negative campaigns against working class people (see also Owen, 2011; Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2012) serve to produce and reproduce a systematic devaluation of working class consciousness. This makes the shift to the level of recognition and identity easy while at the same time creating a situation of competition and anti-solidarity between different social groups. In other words, in order to avoid anti-solidarity and competition, the narrow focus on social categories and recognition has to be substituted by an *anti-categorical approach*.

Solving the Recognition-Distribution Problem

Pierre Bourdieu (1990) emphasizes the need to investigate the regulating principles of social spaces. In his approach this principle of differentiation is the structure of the distribution of power, or the distribution of economic capital (i.e. income, wealth and material resources), cultural capital (i.e. skills, knowledge, education), social capital (number and power of people in one’s social network) and symbolic capital. As the involved actors are rivals who either contribute to the maintenance of the status quo or act to change the field, there is always a certain potential for change. Hence any group mobilized by the interests of their members can vote for change, particularly if the members of the group hold a similar position in the social field. This

means that ‘groups’ are not merely specified by social identities, but by their similar stock of various capitals (see also Bourdieu, 1985). In Bourdieu’s social theory, groups are merely a way of artificially bracketing together individuals of similar position in the social field, who can then be mobilized for change – in our case for less stigmatization and marginalization (i.e. greater recognition) and for economic equality (i.e. fairer economic distribution). To address these groups defined by similar positions (Hanappi & Hanappi-Egger, 2013 call them the ‘new revolutionary class’) an anti-categorical approach is proposed. This means that as a first order distinction the distribution level is made and as a next step the recognition level in terms of social categories is investigated. Table 1 sketches the differences:

Table 1.
Recognition-distribution combinations

	Categorical Approach	Anti-categorical Approach
<i>First order distinction</i>	Recognition: Social categories (terms such as ‘women’)	Distribution: living contexts (education, income, ...)
<i>Second order distinction</i>	Distribution: living contexts (education, income, ...)	Recognition: Social categories (e.g. ‘women’)
<i>Result</i>	Exclusion along ‘non-term’	Inclusion

Source: own presentation

Let us demonstrate the concept by giving an example: The current economic crisis has forced severe budgetary cuts of social transfer programs in countries all over the world. Impact analyses to investigate which groups are affected by these policies can approach the topic from two perspectives: Following the categorical concept we would ask: Who is most disadvantaged? To which most likely the answer would be: women – more specifically women who are single mothers, jobless and with low-level

education. The first order distinction would therefore exclude, in this case, men in similar living contexts, and thus foster competition and anti-solidarity. If the ‘distribution’ level is taken as the first order distinction, the question is: Which living contexts are most disadvantaged? Here the answer would be: unemployed singles with low educational levels and who have caring responsibilities. This includes, for example, women as well as men with similar ‘positions’ in the social space and consequently solidarity and coalition-building would thereby be promoted, even if the analysis of the recognition level shows that women are more likely to be exposed to risk of poverty than men. This means that discrimination based on certain social categories (such as on gender) is made visible in the second step – namely after identifying the positioning of disadvantaged groups.

Clearly the anti-categorical approach opens up a range of further questions, such as how social justice is defined, how new ‘class consciousness’ can be fostered and how political movements can evolve. Therefore, this concept is a promising approach to help combat subtle new forms of exploitation.

Conclusion: Arguing for anti-categorical approaches

The paper is strongly arguing that the growing interest in diversity leads to a tendency focusing on differences rather than similarities of people. Hence, individualization is fostered, which under the pressure of scarce resources leads to competition and anti-solidarity. Furthermore diversity studies usually focus on the recognition level – meaning that specific social categories on the identity building level are addressed while the economic back up of people is ignored. In other words, class is left out. Thus, the distribution level, economic distribution and fair shares of welfare are not on the agenda of diversity studies (see [Hanappi-Egger & Ortlieb, forthcoming](#) for an overview). On the other side, scholarly work on classes respectively classism often sticks to the traditional concept of working class people without taking the identity building level (social categories) into considerations. This leads to a rather unspecified generalization (“we all are middle class”) – or what [Skeggs \(1997\)](#) labels as a trend of

“disidentification” stemming from a negative connotation of belonging to the working class (see also [Anthias, 2013](#)).

Facing the world-wide crises and the growing divide between rich and poor, it is - from a feminist point of view - urgently necessary to critically reflect on the trend of diversification and difference-oriented approaches on the social identity level and their impact on solidarity and the promotion of further exploitation in capitalism. As discussed in the paper, strategic essentialism might be one answer to the proceeding fragmentation of disadvantaged groups, such as women. Subordinating inner distinctions for the sake of getting a powerful voice and being a critical mass might be in some context an advisable reaction to political streams trying to play a group off against another. However, this article argues strongly for an alternative approach, the anti-categorical view: As a first order distinction not the social identity category but the living contexts in terms of Bourdieu’s capitals are considered as being most relevant. This allows for addressing people in similar disadvantaged situations, i.e. inclusion of people with similar positioning in societies – in other words, the distribution level is analyzed in a first step. In cases, where more specific actions are necessary, of course as a next step the social composition of this group has to be studied. Hence, the first pro-argument is that the anti-categorical approach is based on inclusion rather than exclusion of those who do not share the same social category.

Another argument for the anti-categorical perspective is the fact that socio-demographics have changed and consequently it seems not to be adequate anymore, to stick strictly to a view that specific needs always come along with specific social identity categories. E.g. although statistically far from being balanced, but incidentally existing already we do have higher educational levels of women and consequently female breadwinners, just as we observe already single father households.

This requires an approach focusing less on sex than on gender. Hence, gender as socially constructed order system results in gendered spheres (such as the distinction between production and reproduction field and its hierarchization). Very often female coded living contexts, gendered spheres, are disadvantaged – and consequently ALL people characterized by those living circumstances are disadvantaged, no matter if they are women, men or

transgender people. The presented anti-categorical approach does not neglect the recognition level, - thus it sticks to the idea of intersectionality as defined by Winker and Degele (2011, p. 54): “as a system of interactions between inequality-creating social structures (i.e. of power relations), symbolic representations and identity constructions that are context-specific, topic-orientated and inextricably linked to social praxis”. But as argued in this article, the first labeling in the political debate on mal-distribution should start from the materially weakest group – and not from social identity categorization.

Since the article is a conceptual paper, presenting basic ideas and approaches to the question how to react to the political tendency of fragmentation and discrimination, it of course opens up a new space for further discussions. There is demand for further research concerning the formation of the disadvantaged groups, their shared group identity and consciousness and how they can be activated for fighting against mal-distribution. Furthermore this research clearly has to be linked to the topic of social categorization in terms of gender, sexuality, race, disability and age.

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Notes

¹ Note that the social category “race” is avoided in German due to negative associations from its use in the Nazi era. Instead ethnicity/skin colour is adopted, while of course being aware of the impossibility of assigning any skills or aptitudes to these biological traits.

²Hanappi-Egger and Ukur (2011) have looked at diversity in Kenya, showing the irrelevance of certain social categories such as sexual orientation, a topic which is strictly taboo. On the other hand, the notion of “tribes” – irrelevant in “First World” societies – is highly influential in Kenyan social life.

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Review of Eve Shapiro's Gender Circuits: Bodies and Identities in a Technological Age

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Review

Shapiro, E. (2010). *Gender Circuits: Bodies and Identities in a Technological Age*. New York: Routledge.
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Eve Shapiro's *Gender Circuits* provides a concise survey of the complexities of gender and sexuality in relation to technological progress, weaving an exacting narrative of the ways in which our technologies reflect our cultural norms and vice-versa. Shapiro explores several subjects, encompassing a brief historical survey of gendered terminology employed in Western culture, as well as gender expression and presentation in the social sphere. Also included are several case studies pertaining to the gender-specific cultural implications of body art and modification, gendered performance groups, attire and cosmetic presentation regarding gender, scientific progress in gender-affirmative medical treatments, and digital activism and advocacy. Throughout her work, Shapiro implores her audience to consider the means by which technology is moulded and adapted to suit our experiences and behavioural expectations in society, and also the means by which this endless feedback loop of sociocultural revision - to which Shapiro refers as "identity work" - is influenced by our technologies.

Shapiro begins by providing historical context for the post-Enlightenment emergence of individualism and widespread Western prioritization of self-cultivation, particularly with regard to social constructions and terminology defining gender. Harkening back to Judith Butler's performativity doctrine of gender as the effect of reiterated social performance (Butler, 1990), Shapiro crafts an accessible introduction to the concept of gender as a social construct, apart from the Western preconception of gender as being inherently tied to reproductive anatomy, and makes a compelling argument to discard false dichotomy of binary gender. Also introduced is the spectrum of social 'scripts' and terminology employed to describe normative and non-

normative gender identities (e.g. cisgender, transgender, gender queer, and non-binary individuals), terminology used in description of physical states (e.g. intersexed and transsexual bodies), and the social juxtapositions introduced by cultural memes such as masculinity, femininity, androgyny, and gendered pronouns in relation to gender identity and anatomical states.

Continuing in this vein, Shapiro presents a case study which focuses on the practice of tattooing and the ways in which such body modification is received socially, especially in the context of tattooed persons perceived as male compared with persons perceived as female and the respective social reception of each. Following this, Shapiro presents another case study regarding the nineteenth century emergence of bloomers - long, loose-fitting pants worn beneath skirts which allowed greater freedom of movement than the long skirts of Victorian fashion - and the political feminist controversy surrounding their popularity, as women were discouraged from wearing trousers at the time. Further, Shapiro explores Donna Haraway's theoretical framework of the interactions between emergent technologies and gendered bodies (Haraway, 1991), using the Second Life social networking site as an ethnographic model. Shapiro's subsequent analysis of such online communication demonstrates her findings that even anonymous communication can embody the same gendered, sexual, racial, and classist inequities as society at large. In this respect, Shapiro's analysis discourages overly optimistic impressions of technological progress, instead cautioning that, while emergent technologies often challenge gender and anatomical binarism, technological progress - especially the potential for anonymous digital communication - is not inherently free of such prejudices. Rather, technological progress is shown to have equal potential for reinforced prejudice as well as social liberation.

Shapiro's prose is accessible to casual readers and her approach is vast in scope, informative for even the seasoned academic, and encompassing a body of literature spanning the past three decades concerning studies of gender and sexuality, culture, sociology, and scientific and technological advances. Her criticisms pertaining to technology and its impact on cultural expectations and gender identity are ultimately constructive, and her resistance to any oversimplified optimism regarding technological progress is equally refreshing. *Gender Circuits* would serve as an excellent introductory text for any curriculum in Gender Studies, Digital Anthropology, Computer Mediated Communications, or the sociocultural implications of science and technology, and is also highly recommended for readers new to the study of gender in culture.

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