



MCFA Careers Workshop

"Family life" and "Research career" - a contradiction in terms?

Date: 2004-08-28

Time: 14:45-16:15

Venue: Folkets Hus, 2nd floor, room 204

Synopsis:

How can research careers become more 'family compatible'? What is the responsibility of the employers in this respect? Would scientific careers become more attractive if they left more room for family and personal life? These and related questions will be treated by our two speakers, one of whom is coming from the world of academia, the other from an industrial environment. The discussion will be enriched by the personal experiences of our discussants who have either done substantial research on the topic or have particularly relevant personal experiences to contribute.

Coordinators:

Maresi Nerad
CIRGE
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Dagmar M. Meyer
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Speakers:

Louise Ackers (Centre for the Study of Law and Policy in Europe, Leeds University, UK)
"Living with Science; Reconciling work and Family life in Science Careers"

Ragnhild Sohlberg (Vice President, Norsk Hydro ASA, Norway, and
Joint Chair of the EU High Level Expert Group on Women in Industrial Research (WIR)
"Family life or research career? 'Both, thank you!'"

Discussants:

Christine Heller del Riego (Euroscience Governing Board, coordinator of the
Euroscience workgroup "The Future of Young Scientists)

Bryony Gill (Centre for the Study of Law and Policy in Europe, Leeds University, UK)

Francesco Pavani (Dipartimento di Scienze della Cognizione e della Formazione,
Università degli Studi di Trento)

Rapporteur:

Nikolina Sretenova (Department for Philosophy of Science, Institute for Philosophical Research,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)

ABSTRACTS

LOUISE ACKERS

Centre for the Study of Law and Policy in Europe, Leeds University, UK

Living with Science; Reconciling work and Family life in Science Careers

This presentation presents an overview of the issues which emerge in the course of interviews with scientists as important in the context of their ability to combine career progression with the demands and pleasures of personal and family life.

The presentation will map out the range of issues and illustrate these by reference to our empirical work with scientists. Key issues include: working hours; concepts of excellence; contractual status and pay; the mobility expectation; the challenges of dual careers; the gendered use of personal time/unpaid work (and the extent to which this is shaped by formal welfare provision and childcare) and the influence of role models and critical mass.

Following a short discussion of each of these issues the presentation will focus on the issue of working hours in science before turning to the issue of policy response. It will then raise some questions for group discussion.

RAGNHILD SOHLBERG

Vice President, Norsk Hydro ASA, Norway, and
Joint Chair of the EU High Level Expert Group on Women in Industrial Research (WIR)

Family life or Research career? Both, thank you!

Over the last decades, concepts related to the workforce have moved from "manpower or personnel" to the use of accounting terms like "human resources, human assets, and human capital". The dramatic increase in women's education and participation in paid work, has contributed to some unintended challenges: Dual careers or careers in conflict, time-squeeze, early burnouts, and dramatically falling fertility rates. Therefore, new concepts like "work-family balance, work flexibility, etc" have come into focus. These challenges are obviously not limited to researchers or scientists. Nor is it apparent that today's workplace, which is based on partly outdated organizational models and cultures, is either efficient or effective. Win-win solutions that may benefit the workplace as well as families, individuals and the community do exist.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

LOUISE ACKERS

Centre for the Study of Law and Policy in Europe, Leeds University, UK

Professor Ackers is Director of the Centre for the study of law and policy at the University of Leeds, UK. Her current and recent work focuses on the human capital dimensions of science policy in the European Union. In particular, work has considered two related dimensions of balanced growth namely the progression of women in science careers (and issues of work-life balance) and the regional/distributional aspects of scientific mobility (issues of brain drain and technology transfer in an enlarged EU).

Details of these projects can be found on the Centre web-pages at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/law/cslepe>.

RAGNHILD SOHLBERG

Vice President, Norsk Hydro ASA, Norway, and
Joint Chair of the EU High Level Expert Group on Women in Industrial Research (WIR)

On behalf of Norsk Hydro and industry in general, as well as in a personal capacity, Ragnhild Sohlberg serves on several boards, commissions, committees etc. currently mainly related to higher education and research. She is a frequently used lecturer, incl. the Norwegian School of Management and the Norwegian Military Staff Colleges.

Current appointments include The European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) where she serves as Scientific Secretary and was Chair of a Working Group on "The European Research Area and the Social Sciences and Humanities". During 2002 she served as Joint Chair of the European Commission' s High Level Expert Group on Women in Industrial Research (WIR).

Since Ragnhild Sohlberg returned from the USA to Norway in the 1980s, she has also been engaged in several programs where the objectives have been to increase the number of women in leadership positions, to increase the visibility of women professionals through an innovative mentor program, to establish "win-win" flexible work arrangements (for men and women) through systematic pilot studies, etc. She is also very much involved in improving the recruitment to science and technology, with special emphasis on the updating of science teachers.

She received her Ph.D. and M.Phil. in Policy Sciences from The Rand Graduate School of Policy Sciences in Santa Monica, Calif., and has Masters and Bachelor Degrees in Economics from the University of Wisconsin. For three years she was an Assistant Professor of Policy Sciences at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif.

CHRISTINE HELLER DEL RIEGO

Euroscience Governing Board

Christine Heller del Riego is of Spanish/US origin and has been living in Europe for the last 24 years. Having pursued her studies in four different academic systems she obtained a degree in Electrical Engineering from the Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingeniería (ICAI) of the Universidad Pontificia Comillas (UPCO) in Madrid, where she is a professor of Electric Machines since 1997. Recipient of a Human Capital and Mobility Grant of the European Commission in 1993, she did her Ph.D. research work at SUPELEC in Paris and obtained her Doctorate from the Université Pierre et Marie Curie (Paris VI). On returning to Madrid in 1996, she initiated the Spanish Group of the MCFA and from 1998-2000 she was the MCFA Board Member responsible for Scientific Excellence.

She participated in the UNESCO/ICSU World Conference on Science in 1999 and was active in the establishment of the "International Forum of Young Scientists" - a permanent platform to allow for input on Science Policy from the younger generation - that has since been renamed "World Academy of Young Scientists" - WAYS. Since 2001, Christine is a member of the Governing Board of Euroscience and in 2002 she initiated a working group for representatives from MCFA, EURODOC and PI-Net to collaborate in activities towards fulfilling their shared objectives. Finally, Christine is a member of the ESOF2004 Steering and Programme Committee and is the coordinator of activities related to young researchers.

BRYONY GILL

Centre for the Study of Law and Policy in Europe, Leeds University, UK

Bryony Gill is a Research Officer at Leeds University and is currently working on research projects related to science migration within the European Union. Her background is in Social Policy and the Politics of International Development and previously she worked as a research assistant in the area of Family Law.

FRANCESCO PAVANI

Dipartimento di Scienze della Cognizione e della Formazione,
Università degli Studi di Trento

Dr Pavani formerly was a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience (University College London, UK), supported by a Marie Curie Individual Fellowship (2000-2002). Following this Dr Pavani returned to Italy as a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Università degli Studi di Trento, and most recently became a Lecturer in Psychology at the Università degli Studi di Trento.

NIKOLINA SRETENOVA

Department for Philosophy of Science, Institute for Philosophical Research,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Nikolina Sretenova is a Senior Researcher at the Department for Philosophy of Science, Institute for Philosophical Research, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Her area of scientific research is the Philosophy and History of Science, Science Studies, Gender Studies, Science Policy, Scientific mobility and brain drain issues.

Dr. Sretenova was an External Expert Evaluator to the Panel "Economic, Social and Human Sciences" of the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Community for Research, Technological Development, and Demonstration Activities for 1999, 2000 and 2001, as well as of the current Sixth Framework Programme of EU.

She is a member of the European Commission's STRATA/ETAN Expert Group on Women Scientists in the Central and Eastern European Countries & the Baltic States and a member of the National Steering Committee on Women and Science at the Ministry of Education and Science.

DAGMAR M. MEYER

Marie Curie Fellowship Association, Bruxelles

Dagmar M. Meyer studied mathematics at the Universities of Heidelberg and Cambridge. The work for her doctoral dissertation on a problem in Algebraic Topology was done mostly at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the Max-Planck Institute for Mathematics in Bonn. After her PhD she spent two and a half years at the University of Paris 13, first with a fellowship from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then with a Community funded Marie Curie fellowship. In 2001 she returned to her native Germany where she currently holds a temporary position as Assistant Professor at the University of Göttingen. Since her time in Paris she has been actively involved in the Marie Curie Fellowship Association, first as one of the French national co-ordinators, then at European level holding various positions within the Administrative Board. She is currently the Chair of the association.

Dagmar is particularly interested in issues related to the career development of young researchers and how to improve the framework conditions in this respect at a national and European level.