



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO
DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE
SOCIALI E POLITICHE

Gender and Precarious Careers in Research

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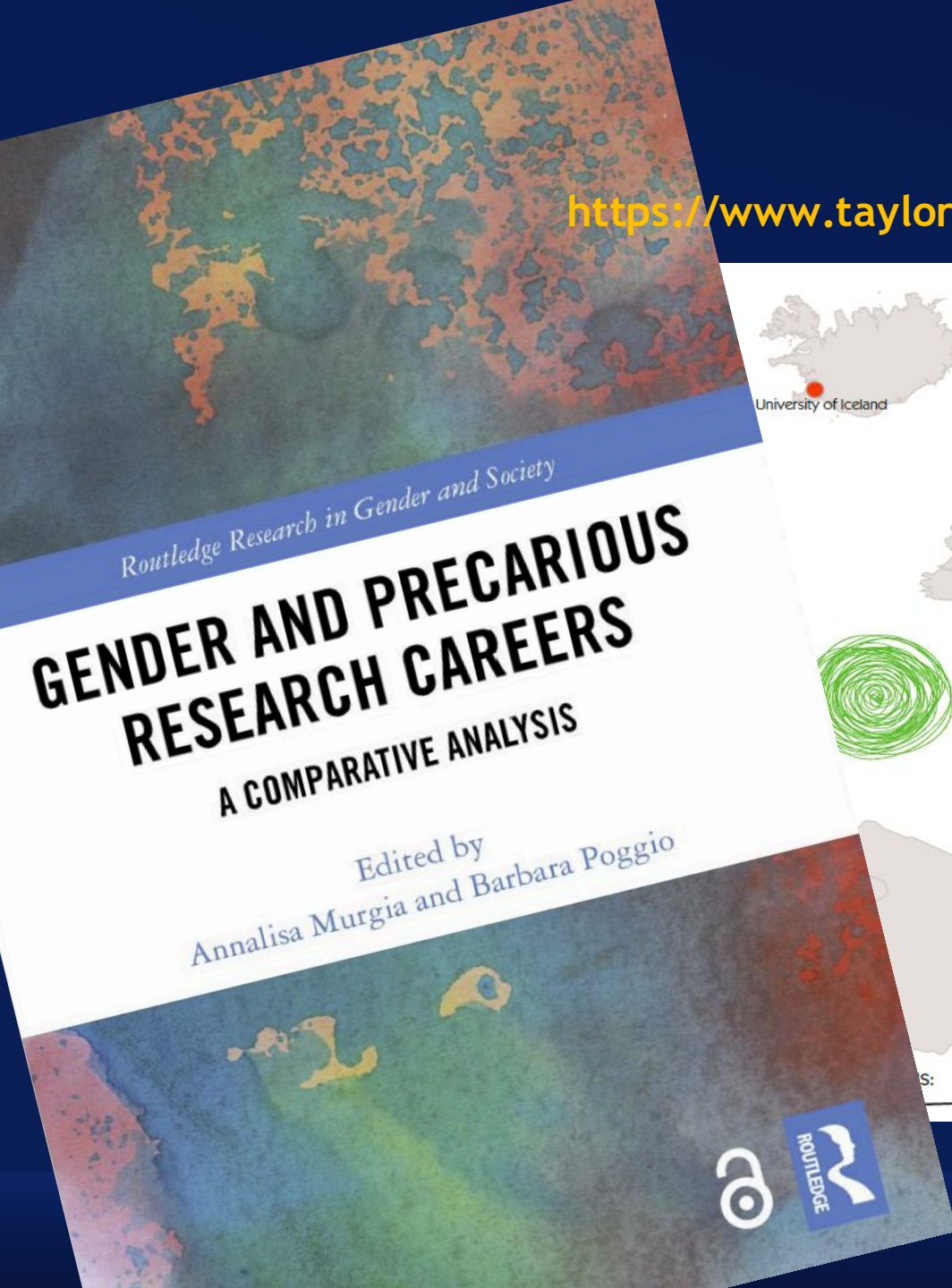
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Gendering the Academy
and Research: combating
Career Instability and Asymmetries



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO
Research Centre GENDERS



A focus on early stages of academic careers

- Studies on gender differences mainly focus on the limited number of women in STEM disciplines and on gender asymmetries in prestigious positions. My focus is rather on **early stages of academic careers**.
- Focus on on the three levels of analysis useful to discuss the **relation between gender and precariousness**:
 1. The academic labour market;
 2. The organisational contexts;
 3. The production of subjectivities.

Bozzon, R., Murgia, A., Poggio, B. (2018). Gender and precarious careers in academia and research: macro, meso and micro perspectives, in A. Murgia, B. Poggio (eds.) *Gender and Precarious Research Careers: A Comparative Analysis*, London, Routledge.



University Departments and Research Centres

- Adoption of managerial methods typical of the private and for-profit sector - entrepreneurship.
- ‘McUniversity’ (Parker and Jary, 1995): workers have to produce more, and more quickly.
- Recruitment and selection criteria designed for the ideal worker: an ‘ideal academic’ (Lund, 2020) expected to be completely devoted to work and hyper-productive (Davies and Bansel, 2005; Leeman, 2010).
- Relevant gender inequalities are produced in the construction of ‘excellence’ (Van den Brink and Benschop, 2012) as the standards used to measure excellence apply differently to men and women (i.e. citations, mobility, networks, internationalisation, etc.).



Gendered constructions of subjectivity in the neoliberal academic system

- Attention to the subjects that neoliberalism would like to produce - **academics who adhere to entrepreneurial logics** (Parker, Jary 1995; Thomas, Davies 2002).
- Structural, cultural, and gender constraints are represented as an individual choice (Gascoigne, Parry and Buchanan 2015) and **women can find themselves embracing the hegemonic masculine discourse** (Goode, Bagilhole 1998).
- Focus on **early-career researchers** (Archer 2008; Laudel, Gläser 2008), **emotional and affective demands** (Norkus, Besio, Baur 2016; Morgan, Wood 2017), **gender inequalities** (Bozzon, Murgia, Villa 2017; Thwaites, Pressland 2017).

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Experiencing precariousness

- Uncertainty, insecurity and stress are a transversal experience in the academic world. However, **early career researchers experience precariousness in different life domains.**
- Focus both on ‘employment precarity’ and ‘precariousness’ in order to understand how subjectivities of precarious researchers are constructed in neoliberal academia (Armano, Morini, Murgia, 2022).
- **Precarisation processes do not interact neutrally with regard to gender, but they reproduce old gender asymmetries and generate new ones.**

The ‘dispositif of shame’

- Subjectivity is constructed on the basis of a number of expectations that emerge from multiple sides: institutional level, field, organisational culture, colleagues.
- In this frame, the evaluation systems claim to apply the same standards to everyone, but the result is that **subjects are classified in a ‘productivity ranking’, which places them in academic hierarchies** (Coin 2017).
- These logics are difficult to be challenged because it is the subjects themselves who are afraid of not ‘being’ successful researchers - **mechanism of ‘toxic shame’** (Gill 2010), which mainly concerns women, migrants and people with a temporary or part-time position.

The ‘dispositif of passion’

- Especially in creative and knowledge work, ‘passion’ has become a **dispositif of self-exploitation and neoliberal government**. For precarious researchers, ‘academic love’ is composed of **both emotional investment and overwork**.
- Early-career researchers experience a ‘**passion trap**’ (Armano and Murgia 2013): they have jobs that are a source of passion and pleasure, but they also experience passion in the most literal sense of the term - pain, suffering, and fatigue caused by experiencing precariousness.
- Thanks to the ‘passion trap’, the academic system does not need to impose anything because **they** are the ones who **do it voluntarily** (Davies, Petersen 2005).

The ‘dispositif of promise’

- In academia, time and emotional investment not only tied to ‘passion’, but also to the belief that the **voluntary submission** to meet the requests may bring to a more stable future.
- ‘Dispositif of the promise’ (Bascetta 2015): “*rather than a real plan for the future, such promise feels as a soul-sourcing device, a hook meant to capture desire and transform it into a lever for exploitation*” Coin (2017: 713).
- **Mechanisms** not simply based on blackmail and hierarchy, but extending much further, **manipulating subjectivity**.

Conclusions

- Rethinking policies at different levels.
- What about us? *One wonders why, rather than wait for others to take action and for the university to harvest its theoretical fruits, why the university doesn't leap from its observational balcony and take action itself* (Prichard, Benschop 2018: 101).
- Hegemonic systems - including the academic one - are not simply the result of coercive relations of domination (Gramsci 1971). It is supported by academics who are part of it, but forms of resistance are possible (Mumby 1997).
- Countering the growing precarisation and the persistent gender inequalities is a priority for feminist scholars.

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All GARCIA materials and toolkits available here:
<https://zenodo.org/communities/garcia/>

Gender and Precarious Research Careers

THANKS!

Annalisa Murgia

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Research Centre Genders

University of Milan

<https://gender.unimi.it/>



Tackled key areas



- 1) Influence of welfare and gender regimes on academic careers;
- 2) Gender biases in management and decision-making processes;
- 3) Gender practices and stereotypes in universities and research institutions;
- 4) **Leaky Pipeline** phenomenon;
- 5) Gendered subtexts in recruiting criteria defining scientific “excellence”.

The results of the organisational diagnosis were then discussed in **workshops with management and academic staff** at different levels of the organisations in order to create self-tailored GEPs.



Influence of Welfare and Gender Regimes on Academic Careers



- In Italy postdocs are not entitled to unemployment benefits.
- The PAT - Autonomous Province of Trento (differently from other Italian regions) has a special mandate/autonomy for the management of the welfare and social benefits.

The GARCIA team worked with the UNITN Rector and other bodies:

1. A negotiation was opened among UNITN, APT, the Employment Agency of the APT and the local trade unions.
2. Approval of the **Agreement** on the **unemployment benefits for postdocs** from the APT (600 euros for a maximum of 6 months).
3. Definition of the measures, **involving directly postdocs**, needed to respect the principle of conditionality.



Gender biases in management and decision-making processes



RESEARCH:

Analysis of the **gender composition** and of the **logics followed by committee concerned by decision-making** – at the University and dept. level – in order to make explicit gender differences in the fields of management and finance.

ACTIONS:

- **Toolkit** to prevent gender discriminations in decision-making processes and to integrate Gender Budgeting.
- **Meeting with administrative staff** of the financial depts.



Gender Practices and Stereotypes in Organisations



RESEARCH:

- Development of **statistical indicators** and collection of data by sex for A, B, C, D grades, including “**temporary researchers**”.
- Mapping work-life balance policies, also by interviews.
- Mapping the (non) presence of gender in research and teaching.

ACTIONS:

- **Integrating postdocs in work-life balance policies** (e.g. UNITN: university nursery; involvement in Family Audit certification).
- **Toolkit** on how to integrate gender in research and teaching.
- **Training courses** on how to integrate gender in research and teaching.



Gender Practices and Stereotypes in Organisations – UNITN - STEM



Action 4a – Integrating a gender perspective in research at DISI

March 10

March 11

March 12



 Dipartimento di Ingegneria e Scienza dell'Informazione

Via Sommarive 5-9 - 38123 Povo - Trento

10.00 - 18.00

GARCIA Project - Workshop Yellow Window

Povo 1, Room Garda 



YELLOW WINDOW

This one-day interactive workshop will give the research community practical tools to integrate gender aspects into research projects, a topic which contributes to excellence in research and is highly valued in Horizon 2020 calls.

During the morning a general introduction to gender in research will be provided, while in the afternoon we will work on practical exercises focussing on ICT research. Lunch and coffee breaks will be provided.

*The training will be delivered in English by **Yellow Window** on invitation by **GARCIA Project**.*

In order to find more information and to register please follow the link <http://bit.ly/1UtPhdT>



Gender Practices and Stereotypes in Organisations – UNITN - SSH



Action 4b – Integrating a gender perspective into teaching at DSRS

135373 - Il genere nella società contemporanea

Academic Year 2015/2016

Professor	<u>FRANCESCA SARTORI</u> <u>ANNALISA MURGIA</u>
Period	Second semester
Teaching style	Front learning

More Information

In parallel to the course, for attending students, a supplementary (optional) teaching activity is planned, conducted in form of research laboratory. The laboratory is titled “Gender differences in students’ experiences” and its duration is of 24 hours. In particular, a case study will be conducted, with students attending both SSH (Social Sciences and Humanities) and STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) faculties. A practical training on the construction of a research design will be offered, together with competences in data collection and in the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The activities will be focused on methodological issues related to: a) elaborating an interview guide and conducting qualitative interviews; b) elaborating, administering and analysing a survey. At the end of the course a presentation of the research works carried out by students is foreseen.





UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI
DI TRENTO

Dipartimento di Sociologia e Ricerca Sociale
Corsi in Gestione delle Organizzazioni e del Territorio

2016



RESEARCH & REVOLUTION?

UNA RASSEGNA
CINEMATOGRAFICA
SUL LAVORO SCIENTIFICO

DIPARTIMENTO DI SOCIOLOGIA
E RICERCA SOCIALE
VIA VERDI 26, AULA KESSLER



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7 marzo, ore 21

**Elogio
dell'imperfezione.
Incontro con Rita
Levi-Montalcini**

Regia di Virgilio Tosi
Italia, 2000

4 aprile, ore 21

**The Imitation
Game**

Regia di Morten Tyldum
Gran Bretagna, USA, 2014

14 marzo, ore 21

Hannah Arendt

Regia di Margarethe von Trotta
Germania, Lussemburgo, Francia,
2012

11 aprile, ore 21

**I ragazzi di via
Panisperna**

Regia di Gianni Amelio
Italia, 1988

21 marzo, ore 21

Kinsey

Regia di Bill Condon
USA, Germania, 2004

18 aprile, ore 21

Madame Curie

Regia di Mervyn LeRoy
USA, 1943

Undicesima edizione della
RASSEGNA CINEMATOGRAFICA

a cura del corso di Laurea Magistrale in
Gestione dell'Organizzazione e del Territorio

RESEARCH & REVOLUTION?

La preparazione di un elaborato sul ciclo di film, previa iscrizione al relativo seminario di credito, permetterà di ottenere 1 CFU tra quelli a scelta dell'alta studentesco. Per informazioni sulla struttura dell'elaborato prendere contatti con: annalisa.margarethe@univr.it

Le proiezioni sono aperte solo alle studentesse e agli studenti dell'Arena trentina e al personale interno. L'ingresso è gratuito.

Con la collaborazione del Centro Audiovisivi della Provincia autonoma di Trento, dell'Associazione Levi-Montalcini e del progetto europeo GARCIA - Gendering the Academy and Research: combating Career Instability and Asymmetries

Associazione Levi-Montalcini



www.garciaproject.eu



Supported by
the 7th Framework Programme
of the European Union



Leaky Pipeline phenomenon



RESEARCH:

- **Web-survey** to: (i) PhD holders who worked in the past in the involved departments; (ii) researchers in the early stages of career who are working in the involved departments (30% response rate).
- **40 interviews with postdocs** who are currently working (10 STEM + 10 SSH) or who worked in the past (10 STEM + 10 SSH) in the two selected departments = totally 240 interview.

ACTIONS:

- **Mentoring activities** – vis-à-vis and online – for researchers at the early stage of their academic career (UNITN: dedicated office).
- **Toolkit** on how to implement a mentoring program.



Online Mentoring



- Unitn Homepage at January 2016.

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PhD - ResearchFellow Portal

MENTORING NETWORKING CHI SEI ?

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Il nostro Ateneo ha tra i propri principi di riferimento l'equità e la valorizzazione di tutte le diversità presenti

SEI UN/UNA PHD STUDENTE?

Sei un/una PhD?

Clicca qui per maggiori informazioni

SEI UN/UNA ASSEGNISTA DI RICERCA?

Sei un/una Assegnista?

Clicca qui per maggiori informazioni

garcia
Gendering the Academy
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ABOUT UNITN

- The university
- Equality&Diversity
- Research areas
- Committee of PhD students and grant holders



DOING RESEARCH

- Research support
- Technology transfer
- IRIS - Research registry
- Open Access
- Organization of safety measures



RESEARCH FELLOW CAREER

- Personnel services
- Rights and duties
- Research fellowship
- Research collaborations
- Teaching collaborations
- Job vacancies - UNITN
- Job vacancies - MIUR
- Job vacancies - EURAXESS
- + Research calls
- Unemployment benefits



SERVICES

- UNITN library system
- + Welfare
- + ICT services
- UNITrento MAG
- Press review
- Language courses
- Canteens
- + Sport and leisure
- + Transport



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Gendered subtexts in recruiting criteria defining scientific “excellence”.



RESEARCH:

Analysis of the formal criteria: National legislation and vacancies from 2010 to 2014 in the selected SSH and STEM departments.

Analysis of the actual criteria: Minutes + Interviews and focus groups with members of the evaluation committees.

ACTIONS *(selected among those suggested by the postdocs):*

Reflexive working groups with committees members in order to show the actual criteria used for evaluation and propose alternative criteria.

Workshops and individual meetings with postdocs in order to boost the preparation for selection procedures and for writing successful research proposals (eg. ERC Starting Grant).





<https://zenodo.org/communities/garcia/>

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PROJECT

CONSORTIUM

PUBLICATIONS

EVENTS

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PROJECT STRUCTURE

- MANAGEMENT
- DISSEMINATION
- MAPPING CONTEXTS
- ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES
- GENDER BUDGETING
- LEAKY PIPELINE
- DECONSTRUCTING EXCELLENCE
- ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

RELATED PROJECTS

- EGERA
- FESTA
- GENDER-NET
- GENDER TIME
- GENIS LAB
- GENOVATE
- INTEGER
- STAGES
- TRIGGER

Publications

GARCIA working papers

- Le Feuvre, Nicky (ed.) Contextualizing Women's Academic Careers: Comparative Perspectives on Gender, Care and Employment Regimes in Seven European Countries, *GARCIA working papers*, n. 1, University of Trento (ISBN 978-88-8443-609-2);
- Herschberg, Channah, Yvonne Benschop and Marieke van den Brink (eds.) Constructing excellence: the gap between formal and actual selection criteria for early career academics, *GARCIA working papers*, n. 2, University of Trento (ISBN 978-88-8443-610-8);
- Le Feuvre, Nicky (2015) Contextualizing Women's Academic Careers in Cross-National Perspective, *GARCIA working papers* n. 3, University of Trento (ISBN 978-88-8443-610-8);
- Sanja Cukut Krilić and Elisa Rapetti (eds.) (2015) Mapping organisational work-life policies and practices, *GARCIA working papers* n. 4, University of Trento (ISBN 978-88-8443-610-8);
- Farah Dubois-Shaik and Bernard Fusulier (eds.) (2015) Academic Careers and Gender Inequality: Leaky Pipeline and Interrelated Phenomena in Seven European Countries, *GARCIA working papers* n. 5, University of Trento (ISBN 978-88-8443-641-2);
- Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc and Ana Hofman (2015) Toolkit for Integrating Gender-Sensitive Approach into Research and Teaching, *GARCIA working papers* n. 6, University of Trento (ISBN 978-88-8443-645-0);
- Ana Hofman and Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc (eds.) (2015) Gender Dimension in Research and Curriculum: 12 SSH and STEM test institutions, *GARCIA working papers* n. 7, University of Trento (ISBN 978-88-8443-647-4);
- Finnborg S. Steinthorsdottir, Thamar M. Heijstra, Thorgerdur Einarisdottir and Gyda M. Petursdottir (eds.) (2016) Gender budgeting in academia, *GARCIA working papers* n. 8, University of Trento (ISBN 978-88-8443-675-7);

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