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Gendering the Academy
and Research: combating
Career Instability and Asymmetries

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The careers of young researchers in Switzerland: between individual trajectories and (micro-) organizational policies

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Outline

- Theoretical framework and methodology

- Organizational environment

- Interview results:

  – professional well-being,

  – private-professional articulation,

  – future prospects

  – organizational culture,

- (Micro-)policies

II. Theoretical frame

- Organizational micro-policies (van den Brink, 2012; Fassa, 2015) are constitutive elements of gender relations in organizations.

- They can thereby participate in Doing gender (Fenstmaker & West, 2002) as in Undoing Gender (Deutsch, 2007).

- The involvement of university executives in equality policies, and their feminization, has a decisive influence on the transformations of scientific worlds towards equality (Doherty, L. & Manfredi, S., 2010, Woodward, 2013)

- Different gender regimes (Connell, 2006) can manifest themselves in professional organizations and may allow for overcoming gender (Lapeyre and Le Feuvre, 2004) from case to case.

Questions

- What are the effects of micro-policies of academic organizations on the careers of young researchers **(males and females)** in two faculties belonging to **different disciplinary worlds**?

- Do they create **tension with individual projects** or do they support them?

- Are the **equality policies meeting the needs for "participation parity" (Fraser)** ?

Methodology

40 interviews in two faculties

20 "leavers" – people who left the academic world or changed their position

20 persons currently in post-doc positions in two faculties: STEM (10) and SHS (10)

9 women and 11 men

Different positions - Tenure Tracks / Not Tenured

Temporary contract – longterm and stable contract (no permanent contract, max 6 years)

SHS

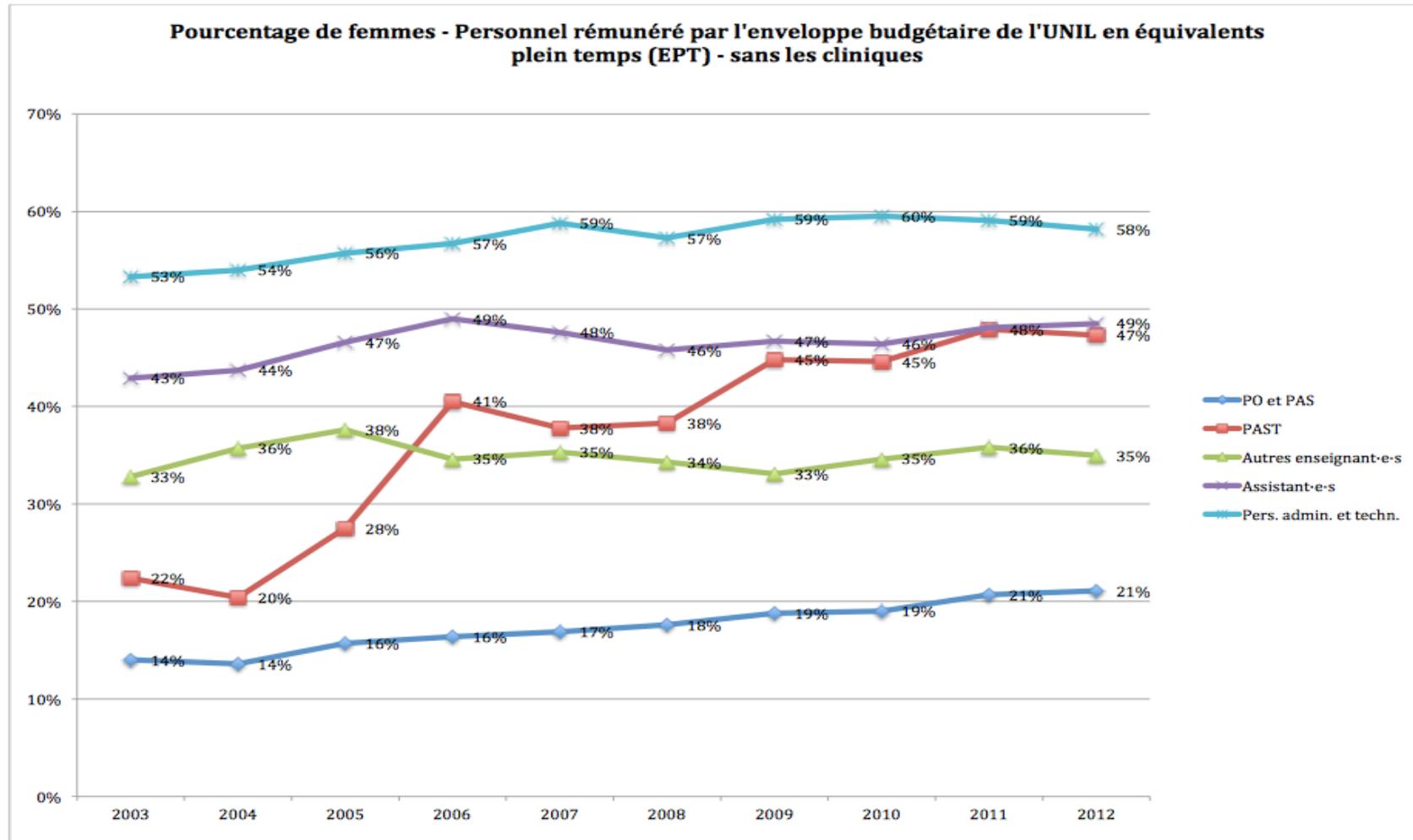| Variables	MALE	FEMALE
Nationality	3 Swiss (#3, #4, #5) and 3 European citizens (#1, #10, #22,)	1 Swiss (#2) and 3 French citizens (#15, #33, #40)
Tenure tracks	1 Prof. – PTC (#3) 2 MA (#4, #22)	1 Prof. – PTC (#33) 1 MA (#40)
Temporary	1 researcher/ first assistants (#10) 2 first assistants (#1, #5)	1 researcher (#2) 1 replacement (#15)
Permanent	0	0
Interruptions on the career paths (more than 3 months)	2 (#3 and #4)	4 (#2, #15, #33, #40) amongst 2 for maternity leave- #33, #40)
Previous working experience in the Department	4 (#3, #4, #5, #10)	3 (#2, #15, #33)
Total	6	4

STEM

Variables	MALE	FEMALE
Nationality	1 Swiss (#30) and 4 European citizens (#23, #31, #32, #38)	1 North-American (#29), 1 South-American (#28) and three European citizens (#16, #17, #35)
Tenure tracks	2 Prof. PTC (#23, #38,)	1 Prof. PTC (#16)
Temporary	1 Fellowship Professor (with the prospect of becoming Full Professor) (#30) 2 post-docs (31, 32)	4 post-docs /First Assistants (#29, #17, #28, #35)
Permanent	0	0
Interruptions on career paths (more than 3 months)	1 (#32)	2 (#17, #35)
Previous working experience in the Department	3 (#23, #30, #38)	2 (#29, #35)
Total	5	5

Organizational environment

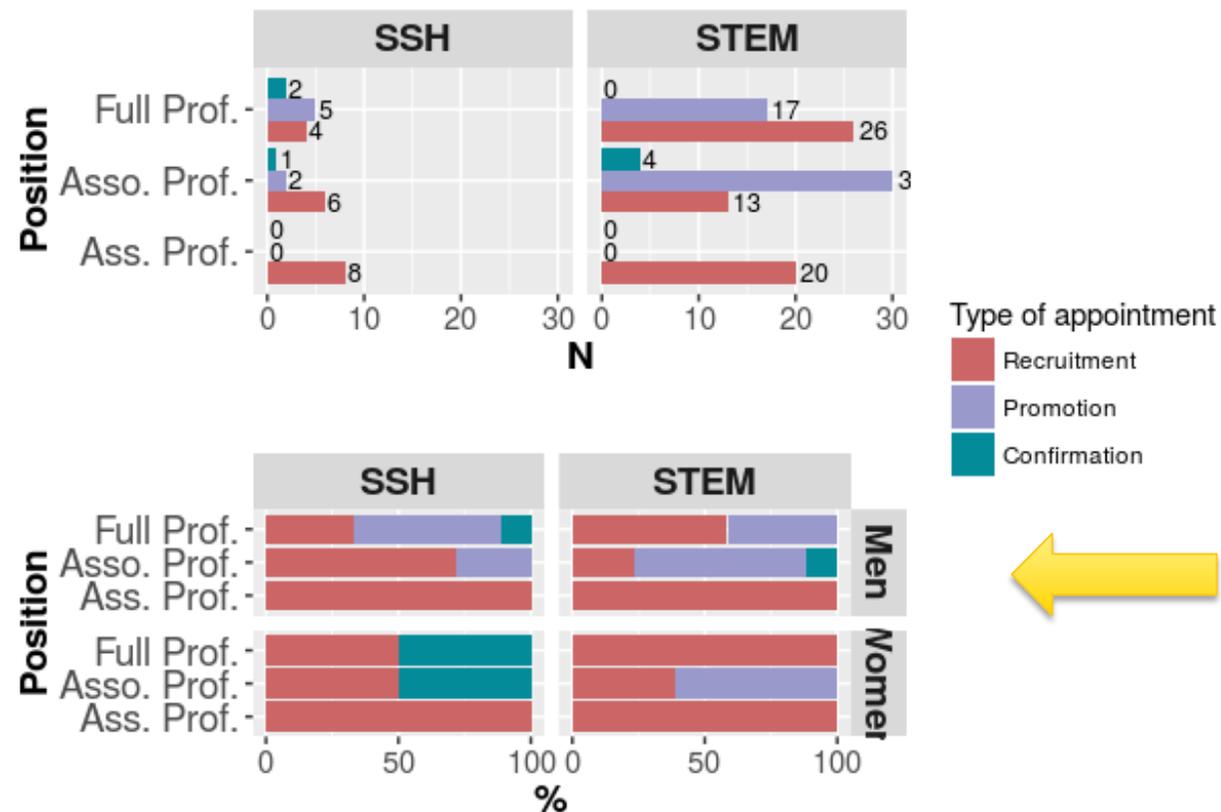Gendering the Academy and Research: combating Career Instability and Asymmetries

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Organizational environment

Pourcentage de femmes - Personnel rémunéré par l'enveloppe budgétaire de l'UNIL en équivalents plein temps (EPT) - sans les cliniques

III. Two faculties

Proportion des femmes dans les deux facultés étudiées

			Etudiantes en MA	CI inférieur	doctorantes	Ci supérieur	Prof PAST	Prof PAS/ PO
Faculté SHS			68.50%	57.10%	58.60%	38.70%	31.30%	35.50%
FACULTé STEM			61%	49.40%	52%	24.50%	31.57%	9.20%

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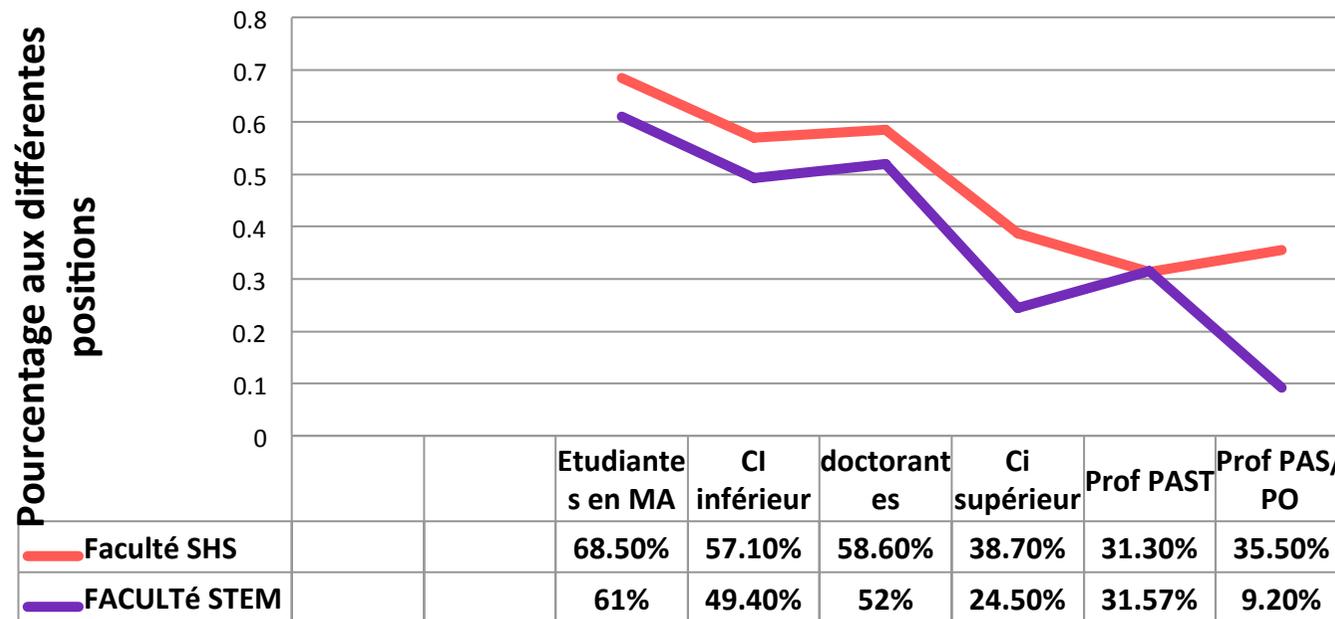
Two faculties

Fig. 3. Type of recruitment according to the position in 2013 and gender

Interviews results

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III. Young academics and professional well-being

SHS + STEM

Freedom, flexibility and passion

- Freedom as a positive norm

- Flexibility as a consequence

- Overwork as a translation of passion

III. Young academics and professional well-being

SHS

- *"There's a **certain flexibility in this job, right, so that's also something which is good**, that's to say I can for example, when in the morning I can, I can arrive later, right, **so twice a week either I arrive... I arrive later [at work] because I... I take them to the crèche [ahum] or I leave here, say, at 5 [ahum] to collect them** [...]» (#3, M, T).*

- *"All the **same it's a rather extraordinary freedom to be able to organise your work as you want**. Personally it's not a burden to me because I prefer that, nor do I have external constraints on the work I do so to that extent it's OK it's... [...] , **yes, my seminars, I prepare them at night**" (#4, M, T)*

Young academics and professional well-being

STEM

*"I **mean you are always on the pressure and I work, I really work a lot [yeah] and, but, I'm only doing this because I love, to do it and** [ahum] hum**, I know that I work much more than other people** hum, working on uh company for example [yeah yeah] **so I definitely don't have a, 9 to 5, job or anything, and I, but you know if the work atmosphere is... is great [ahum] hum, there's nothing, to complai**n."* (#38, M, T)

*"**The problem now is I can't work**. When I was doing my thesis... if I got back at 8 then I got back at 8, **now I have to be at the crèche at 6 to pick up the baby**, otherwise [ahum] they won't leave him outside, it doesn't seem right... [yeah]" – (#17, F, N/T)*

Young academics and work-life balance

SHS + STEM:

– The management of the self, of one's time and the planning of life

– Individuals are living amongst tension

SHS:

– Parenthood explicitly accepted but not always easy to manage

– Having children means forgetting having leisure activities

STEM:

– For some men, WLB is sometimes a couple affair

– For all the women, it is impossible to reconcile parenthood and an academic career at Lausanne University

Young academics and work-life balance

SHS + STEM:

*"Then **I specialised in family and work [both laugh] I don't and I've also kind of I dunno I don't go the cinema any more so I've greatly reduced leisure activities**, going out that kind of thing right so [ahum] and it may be... **hum but it's not, yeah it's OK, you have to feel at ease with that kind of...of priorities right [ahum] but well it's OK yeah**." (SHS**, #3, M, T)*

*« yeah **it's it's crazy**! and so, but at the same time I mean it's uh, enough work that's necessary, **so my work-life is really bad right now yeah, yeah I go home and I I sleep** (...**) if I was to have children it would really be unsus-unsustainable**, I would have to, either find a job which was more (?) or, stop doing the thing I care about »* (**STEM,** #29, F, N/T)

Young academics and their future

SHS + STEM:

Anxiety due to the acceptance of precariousness in order to stay in the academic career

(**STEM**:

Working in private enterprises as a possible perspective)

Young academics and their future

STEM:

*"No, there I've reached the point where**… where I wonder whether the practical family sacrifice is worth** it [ahum] but at the same time I know very well that if I give up now… it's final, right, because it's more or less certain that it's final so… **so I carry on but I don't believe in it too much [yeah] but I carry on all the same and then, well…**." (#17, Female N/T)*

Young academics and organizational culture

SHS + STEM:

- **Strategies and policies in the choice of subjects and mentors / mentas**
- **Precariousness as a normal expectation**

SHS: an ambivalent look at the "performance" – realms of reference in tension: global and local

- Teaching: a way to enter the career
- Writing books, a lost way to communicate knowledge
- Atypical Careers for Women

STEM: Performance as a shared norm - a local science integrated into a global competition

- Mobility, a absolute requirement
- Publish faster than other labs and in international journals
- "Being on time": careers become very quickly obsolete

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Young academics and organizational culture

SHS:

- *"It's... it's something that is rather counterproductive... in in terms even, even of production, let's say, anyway, useful production, well, production that will be of use to other people because the articles I've published are the same things you see in all journals, that interest no one and don't interest me either [...] All I would like to do now is to be to devote a year to writing a book and that's in terms of tenure, that's suicidal" (#4, M, T)*

- *"I would like to publish differently yeah in the sense that there are things I've been wanting to do for a long time and haven't had the time to do, publishing books that I know are not always highly valued..." (#1, M, T)*

Young academics and organizational culture

STEM:

- *"The **pressure is not internal**, right, there's **no one saying I want to see you working at weekends, on the contrary, they couldn't care less** [laughter] (laughter)**, all that counts is the results [ah yes], no its more of an international pressure on [mm mm] grant applications, the publication of your articles, etc. and yes it's the amount of work there is to do***" (#16, F, T)

- *"**"I guess we have to adapt to that and (laughs) [laughs]… to continue in the system you have to publish and it's that, as the more you publish and in their journals the better you are**, it's like that [quiet laughs] […] I see I know people that deserve positions, **they are really good researchers but they don't publish 20 papers a year** [ahum] **so they don't get positions**, but they are really good and, it's a pity that, because of that, they quit academia"* (# 35, F, N/T)

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(Micro-)Policies

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Micro-politics

For both sexes

- Professional requirements (organizational and from hierarchical supervisors) place individuals in position to cope with extreme tensions

- Overwork creates sometimes health problems

For women:

- Difficult parenthood (impossible in STEM) before the access to a stable position

- Exacerbation of life choices

Micro-politics

SHS:

- *"you get [yeah] the impression you must always be doing everything so... you... you get into committee work there, yeah"* (#3, M, T)

- *"I **passed out in a supermarket would you believe it** [ah yeah, laughter] I think if you ask the people who saw me a fortnight ago, I was finishing my evaluation report [yeah] I had spent fifteen hours working on Saturday, fifteen hours on Sunday, and I finished at two or three a.m. Monday morning to hand it in on the Tuesday with flu because otherwise it was no joke and then all the people who worked with me were sick in bed [ahum] ... It was, yeah**, it was hard [yeah yeah] really hard, I think they were I think the three years that most marked me professionally speaking** [ah yeah yeah yeah] ah yeah I really think [...]".* (#22, M, T)

Micro-politics

STEM

*"**I don't suffer but sometimes I think, ok, you know it's normal that you're sometimes stressed and, hum, and that you can't sleep**. I talk to other people here and they sometimes have the same [ahum ahum] same problems that you just have lot of responsibilities and (takes deep breath) a lot of work from different sides."* (#38, M, T)

*"**[My supervisor] is extremely nice, he is really very, very nice** [right] a bit crazy [yeah] [laughter…] **Then you're pregnant**, you're exhausted and then you've just given birth and you're exhausted [laughter] [yes] so… well, so yeah**, so he expected me to work during my maternity leave. I… I… I… wanted to be able to and it wasn't for lack of goodwill but it's… it's impossible**, right [mm mm], and moreover I think I've produced a particularly demanding baby [laughter] (laughter) "* – (#17, F, N/T)

Equality policies

University as an organization

- Plan of the university towards the parity: 50/50
- Attempt to adapt policies to disciplinarian traditions : bottom up strategies

-> Each Faculty should draw its own plan to increase the number of female professors

Two faculty plans:

- Conciliation and Excellence
- Gender and careers

III. Equality plans– different framings

	Stem	Shs
Target	Women with high potential	Women and men
What's the problem represented to be	Improving work-life balance for women Excellence is measurable . Women's careers should follow the pattern of those men	Improving WLB for women and men The measure of excellence is not as obvious as it seems The same demands do not have the same effect on all social groups
Responsibility of careers management	Individuals (> organization)	Organization and individuals

The use of equality policies by young academics

SHS :

- Well informed, knowledgeable of equality policies
- Do support equality policies

Stem :

- Due to lack of time, no one attended workshops organized by Equality office
- Gender equality is not the main problem, policies should turn to diversity

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Wishes

SHS:

- More horizontal hierarchy
- Change of scientific culture : performance is presented as increase of workload that mainly affect women, due to the very traditional gender regime

Stem:

- More workshops to prepare life after the academic experience
- Paternity leave to be introduced
- More stable positions to be created

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Conclusion

- **Different cultures regarding the ways science is produced and its producer in SHS and STEM**, but people in both departments tend to prioritise work over all other spheres of life and to accept precariousness as the prize of an academic career.

- **SHS** : critical points of views and and description of the "rationalization" of science production as being counterproductive in terms of producing innovative knowledge **-> importance given to teaching**.

- **STEM** : the production of new knowledge is described as highly competitive **-> priority to work efficiency in research.**

Thank you for your attention ... ☺

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