New Wine in Old Wineskins
New career boundaries for women in old networks in academia

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• **Academic profession as a „role model“ for the boundaryless career** (Baruch & Hall 2004)

• **Gendered nature of academic careers:**
  – „Leaking Pipeline“: steady attrition of females along the career path
  – Science values: rationality, objectivity, non-affectivity (Laws 1975)
  – „Prototypical scientist“: masculine sex-typed, high mobility and full dedication to job (Döge 2006; Belcher 2000; Fawcett and Pringle 2000; Forster 2000)
  – Exclusion from male networks (Crampton and Mishra 1999; Thanacoody, Bartram et al. 2006)

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**How do women present their professional careers in academia?**

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- “Life story“ of female scientists including major events and decisions
- Biographical analysis on the gestalt of the narratives

2. Semi-structured interview

- Explicit questions deducted from literature on impact factors on female careers
- Qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2008)
Results: Story Telling Patterns

“I am different”  
“My Story is Quite Usual”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story pattern</th>
<th>„I am different“</th>
<th>„My story is quite usual“</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure of the narration</td>
<td>Comprehensive reflections and narrations, focus on emotional aspects and career obstacles</td>
<td>Focus on merit, milestones, neutral and linear career presentation, little affectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority status</td>
<td>Well aware of „difference“ and minority status, experience isolation</td>
<td>Ignore gender, wish to be perceived as scientists, not women scientists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping strategies</td>
<td>Address conflicts, resist, stay true to oneself</td>
<td>Assimilation, trivialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational commitment</td>
<td>High loyalty, opt-out due to conflicts</td>
<td>opt-out because of better options elsewhere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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1. Sponsored Careers

- **Informal selection process:** „discovery“ by (male) supervisor through exceptional performance

- Extensive **support after** excellent performance has been proved

“[…] and my supervisor at that time, um, **was over time more and more supportive**. So he-, - first not at all and then as he saw that the graduation went well, um, after the first publication then it became clear and then he, - then **he really supported me.**“ [S. Linger, p.14, 472-475]
2. Disrupted Careers

- Start like sponsored careers
- **Professional conflict** with sponsor arises
- **Withdrawal of all resources** and options force opt-out

3. Faded Careers

- **No support** throughout career
- Try, but cannot establish themselves in research community
- See themselves as outsiders

“**Well, and I have been trying since**, um, well I always wanted to write a dissertation, that was on my mind somehow. [...] But it’s not as simple as I imagine, because I- I mean, basically I have a topic, sort of a header, yes, but it is an interdisciplinary topic, well it is basically about [topic], yes, the superordinate term. Ahm, **and I have absolutely no support.**” [S. Borenich, p.4-5, 133-140]
Contribution to the boundaryless career concept

- No extensive establishment of personal contacts within and outside the organization, high moral judgements against networking (exception: sponsor)
- High dependence on existence and continuous support of a sponsor

boundary of the crucial „knowing whom“ competence in academia

„New wine in old wineskines“?

- Regardless of individual mindsets, institutional practices and cliques lead to dependencies on career sponsors for women
- Gender as a boundary
- Women as minority members face more and different challenges to gain access to powerful advocacy

Gender and minority boundaries need consideration in the boundaryless career concept
Thank you for your attention!

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