Gender policies for Italian academia from a life-cycle perspective
Familiar disadvantages: leaky pipelines in Italy and Europe

Courtesy of Donà, Dordoni, Poggio, Segnana and Villa, 2020 (WP1, Prin Project ‘Gendering Academia’)

Data sources: She Figures 2018 (2019: 116); Miur (2019:7)
Familiar disadvantages: Stereotypes and the STEM issue

- The share of graduates holding a STEM degree (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics): 37.3% among men, 16.2 among women (ISTAT, 2020).

- The STEM gender gap is larger in Italy than elsewhere in Europe and has not changed much in the past decades.

- STEM graduates enjoy significantly higher occupational and earning prospects.
Cumulative disadvantages over the life cycle
Some policies worth exploring

1. Stereotypes & STEM underrepresentation (early education) : Teaching the teachers gender competence
2. The precarity issue (when career starts) : Expand academic jobs openings
3. The mobility issue (at child rearing age) : Couples hiring
4. The productivity puzzle (when careers are made) : Rewarding accuracy at evaluation stage
5. The unequal service load (mid to late career) : Rewarding ‘service’ at promotion stage
6. Partisan recognition (following retirement) : Updating the rules for post-retirement ‘honours’
Teach the teachers gender competence

• Angela Paseka (2009) evaluated 20 years of gender mainstreaming and targeted projects in Austria (curricula were reformulated; school books and classroom materials changed; initiatives like special “boys’ days” and “girls’ days implemented at all school levels; etc.).

• She found that gender competent teaching was still very scarce: it could be found in one third of Austrian schools, at best (Paseka 2015: 92).

• Ensuring gender competent teaching is largely a matter for educational specialists (‘critical learning’ example) but economists, can contribute (Di Tommaso et al., this conference). This is especially valuable where competent design and implementation of policy goals is lacking (this country).
Turn precarity into flexibility by expanding academic job openings

- **Italian female, early career, researchers tend to hold more unstable positions**
  - In 2014, and six years after obtaining a Ph.D. in STEM disciplines, 69% of women against 49.4% of men held atypical positions within universities (training contracts, research grants, co.co. pro etc. (Bozzon, Murgia and Villa 2017: Tab. 3).
  - Currently (2019) women are also disproportionately represented among the more ‘precarious’ Ricercatori (RTDa), though the gender gap is contained (MIUR-ISTAT 2019).

- Precarity is less of an issue if future (academic) job prospects are good.

- When future prospects are poor, women are further penalized by lower propensity to move within and outside the country.
Ease mobility constraints by joint hiring academic couples

• Constraints on mobility during child rearing age have traditionally penalized female researchers more than men.

• Schiebinger co-authored the famous *Clayman report (2008)* encouraging academic institutions to jointly hire dual career couples. According to her research over a third of academic professionals (in the US) are married to another academic professional, and finding suitable employment for a spouse is likely to especially benefit women.

• ‘Couples hiring’ need not require major/legal changes in Italy.

• In order to be effective, couples hiring should not, however, be confined to faculty members of great renown.

• Collateral benefits:
  • reinforces the notion that reconciliation policies should increasingly target couples (or men) rather than just women.
  • Effective tool to attract back the young scholars of recent waves of brain migration.
Hengel’s sophisticated contribution (2019) analyzed English articles published in AER, ECA, JPE and QJE between 1950 and 2015, and found that (i) female-authored papers are 1-6% better written than equivalent papers by men; (ii) this gap is two times higher in published articles than in the corresponding draft versions; (iii) female-authored papers spend six months longer in peer review.

Tougher standards for female autore article or greater willingness to trade accuracy for number of publications?

Casual empiricism suggests that similar findings may apply to disciplines other than economics

Another good reason to reconsider the dominance of mere bibliometric evaluation.
Measure and reward the ‘service’ load when choosing whom to promote

• **Guarino and Borden (2017)**, found that the ‘internal’ service load is significantly higher for women among US-Based Faculty (‘service’ includes faculty governance, faculty recruitment, evaluation, and promotion, student admissions and scholarships, program supervision, development and marketing, internal awards, etc.)

• This is in broad agreement with the findings of **Casarico, De Paola, Nattichioni and Sylos Labini (2019)** on the gendered dimensions of Italian University governance

• In principle, the Italian two-steps promotion system allows for service to be rewarded in terms of career advancement. But is service adequately or systematically rewarded?
Count the ‘Emeritae’ and change the rules!

- Granting ‘emeritus’ status ought to crown a successful career. It brings material as well as immaterial advantages to the title holder.

- Still largely regulated by a 1933 law. Law 240/2010 subsequently allowed universities to exercise more discretion. So called ‘objective requirements are nationally binding and include 20 years as full-professor. So called subjective requirements can be University-specific.

- Nomination is by peers (faculty), but the local University Senate cannot object.

- I am not aware of a national data base, even a simple count of the Italian ‘emeriti’. But perhaps the following is more than a casual finding:
  - 3 women out of 37 are listed by the Università Statale di Milano
  - 2 women (one passed away) out of 28 are listed by the Associazione Prof. Emeriti dell’ Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia

- Women are not alone in asking for change in post-retirement titles and affiliation rules within the Italian Universities......but they ought to be in the fore-front!
For discussion: tackle sexual harassment within Academia

The excellent 2018 report of the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine can be found at think link: https://www.nap.edu/read/24994/chapter/1

….food for thought for our country!