



Designing Equality of Opportunity in National Innovation Systems Canada and Sweden: A Comparative Perspective

Gender and the Innovation Agenda

Andrea Rowe, Ryerson University

In Canada and Sweden, more women now graduate from university than men, yet women are underrepresented in leadership positions in most areas of the economy associated with innovation. This paper explains how policy decisions at the national level shape women's participation in innovation in the public sector, private sector, and academia in Canada and Sweden. This qualitative case study includes 44 interviews with innovation leaders in the public sector, private sector, and academia in Canada and Sweden as well as policy experts at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris, France. The interview data is contrasted with formal document analysis to provide a holistic comparison of representation through the presence and absence of reference to gender and innovation policy across cases. The theoretical framework used in the study combines Feminist Institutionalism (FI) which emphasizes the formal and informal interactions that gender institutions with the Triple Helix Model an innovation theory popularized at Stanford University highlights the interactions between government, industry, and academia in the production of innovation. To advance gender equality within national innovation systems in Canada and Sweden, it is necessary to adopt a broader definition of innovation, one which recognizes innovations developed outside of commercial settings, is inclusive of social innovation, and occupations traditionally marginalized from innovation funding and research support.