



Title: International relations in the Czech Republic: Where have all the women gone?

Authors: Mgr. Blanka Nyklová, PhD¹; Mgr. Kateřina Cidlinská², Mgr. Nina Fárová³

Abstract: This article analyses the impact of critique and influence of gender studies and feminist perspectives on the discipline of international relations as it is taught and researched in the Czech Republic. In particular, we strive to explore what are some of the causes for the scarcity of women researchers in Czech international relations and whether and how this might be related to the (lack of) effect of feminist and gender studies perspectives on the discipline. The analysis of semi-structured interviews with international relations students, contents of PhD degree examinations and articles published in local international relations academic journals suggests that the lack of women researchers in the field parallels the situation in other social sciences and humanities disciplines but is further exacerbated by the circumstances of the foundation of the discipline, which shaped it as a predominantly masculine field. The prevailing type of funding in combination with the almost all-male make-up of international relations departments and a relatively conservative gender order in the Czech Republic makes stable access to the discipline limited for women researchers and scholars. The resulting environment stresses a specific gender-blind version of doing research that may prove demotivating or even toxic to specific groups of students. The lacking focus on gender seems to be reflected in dominant research topics as well as in the syllabi that do little to integrate gender as an analytical category and feminist perspectives as an integrated critical lens for the study of international relations. At the same time, the analysis of journal articles and student interviews suggests a theoretical openness to feminist perspectives. Since these are largely lacking from the field though, they have so far failed to truly affect the imaginations of the discipline as it is locally practiced.

Introduction

Where have all the women researchers in Czech international relations (IR) gone? How does their scarcity affect the content of local IR? Could the lack of women researchers be attributed to the presentation of the discipline and its academic output and vice versa? What does it mean and feel like to be an IR student and how is the experience gendered? And how have Czech universities and

¹ Blanka.nyklova@soc.cas.cz

² Katerina.cidlinska@soc.cas.cz

³ Nina.farova@soc.cas.cz



Evropská unie
Evropský sociální fond
Operační program Zaměstnanost

research centres responded to the on-going dialogue between feminist/gender studies and IR that has been developing since the 1980s at the latest (Hutchings 2008)? These are some of the questions behind our empirical research into the experience of IR students with gender as an analytical category and part of their discipline at an IR department of a major Czech public university.

International relations studies is part of the social sciences and humanities (SSH). As such, it reflects the patterns regarding the make-up of the student and faculty body present in other disciplines ((Kázmér 2018). Thus, even in IR studies we can find many more women among BA students than among PhD candidates. Similarly, women are underrepresented in the higher echelons of academic hierarchy and overrepresented in administrative positions. What seems to set this particular discipline apart from many other SSH, is the fact that these phenomena seem to be relatively universal as IR as a discipline is known to have started incorporating feminist perspectives and responding to critiques and suggestions coming from the field of feminist and gender studies relatively late (Hutchings 2008). This has, inevitably, also had a delaying effect on the entrance of women students and researchers into the field, an effect that may be relatively lasting. At the same time, the entrance has been easier in subdisciplines aligned with gendered expectations of women and femininity such as peace and conflict studies. As researchers in the field of feminist sociology and science and technology studies, our conceptual framework is informed by Sandra Harding's gendered universe (Harding 1986) which differentiates between the operation of gender on the individual, structural and symbolic level. Using semi-structured interviews we strive to access the structural and symbolic levels as they are reflected on the individual level. Our aim is to identify and analyse gendered barriers that might be blocking women researchers access to the field of IR studies, ponder their consequences and suggest possible remedy.

The article is structured as follows: after summarising theoretical inspirations of our study, we introduce the methodology of the research; next, we focus on the structural and disciplinary barriers that seem to dominate the discipline and against this backdrop, we present our analysis of the conducted interviews; the discussion focuses on the effects the identified problems may have on the numbers of women and researchers from disadvantaged groups and we therefore also include some recommendations as to what could be done to alleviate the negative impact of the present barriers; in the conclusion we ponder the wider implications of the present situation for the field of IR and we identify areas where future research is needed.

Theoretical inspirations: gendering the IR field



Mainstream international relations emerged as a research field at a time when feminist theories and gender studies managed to get a foothold in the academia, mainly in the USA and UK. This has, nevertheless, not led to systematic thematic and conceptual crossfertilization between the two disciplines, let alone a fully embraced integration of gender as a critical perspective and analytical category readily applied by IR researchers where appropriate. Rather, IR studies has only recently started to explore the terrain opened up by gender studies and feminist theory (Blanchard 2003). Similarly, the delayed introduction of both (critical) IR and feminist and gender studies to Czech universities only enabled by the change of political regime in 1989 did not lead to any crossfertilization and even an increased interest in the gender dimension of IR prevalent elsewhere (for an introductory overview see Narain 2014) did not manage to significantly affect the local IR research agenda.

Why should we care? This question seems to be all the more relevant at a time when gender studies as a discipline is under an unprecedented (as to its scale, less so as to its discursive landscape) attack (Hark 2016; Kováts 2017). While the whole questioning of a SSH discipline should not go without ardent attention of the whole SSH branch, the answer to the question may be relatively simple. The practice of IR affects and is affected by global political economy, which is fundamentally gendered and it is therefore not possible to omit gender as an analytical category from the analysis of IR (Anderson et al. 2014; Steans 2003). Yet the answer may go much further. GS is a discipline grounded in feminist theory (for an analysis of flaws in gender-focused research devoid of feminist theory see Sjoberg 2006, 2011). The epistemological implications of putting gender studies to use in IR can therefore not go unnoticed. They are, in fact, what promises to have the most transformative effect on IR studies as if taken seriously, as some feminist theorists allege and indeed demonstrate (Enloe 1989), feminist challenges to IR theory building should lead to redefining the very scope of the IR field, questions asked and actors acknowledged agency (Hutchings 2008; Tickner 2001). On a more practical level, taking gender studies and feminist theory seriously should result in an increased self-reflexivity of the field scrutinising, among other issues, who contributes to the discipline in what ways and what might the reasons for and implications of over and underrepresentation of specific groups (social, ethnic, demographic etc.). A related practical realm is represented by feminist pedagogy strategies and explorations of how to best introduce GS concepts when teaching IR (Mertus 2007; Parisi et al. 2013; Stienstra 2000).

Many of the mentioned studies are critical of the failures to transform feminist theory and GS from a marginal perspective into an actual stable part of IR. What seems to have been achieved is a compartmentalisation of the GS perspective, a phenomenon well documented for the field of social



movements where women when underrepresented are often put in charge of issues concerning gender misunderstood as gender; the most disadvantaged are thus put in charge of improving the situation with insufficient resources and very limited capacity to affect decision making within the movement (Roth 2004; Roth and Horan 2001). This phenomenon is not limited to the social movements and can be seen as an institutional strategy, too (Kuumba 2001; Roth 2004). If we look at the broad field of IR, we can see a similar situation with feminist scholarship and practice limited to specific subfields such as development studies and peace and conflict resolution studies. At the core of this compartmentalisation and why it is hardly questioned by other than feminist researchers seems to be the mistaken identification of gender issues with women and more specifically with characteristics and attributes stereotypically associated with femininity. Interest in why the promise of feminist theory and gender studies has not been embraced or at least substantively explored by local IR researchers and scholars in the Czech Republic is one of the inspirations behind the project that funded the present research.⁴

Feminist IR share an interest in the subjects that produce knowledge with feminist science and technology studies (STS), the field from where the authors of this article are based⁵. This interest stems from challenges to neo/positivist epistemological positions, which it challenges with the concept of standpoint and situated knowledges (Haraway 1988), which replaces objectivity with intersubjectivity and questions the hierarchies of knowledge in science and research theory and practice. This general theoretical framework gets translated into concepts used for analysing processes which lead to invisibilising knowledge of underprivileged groups and their challenging of and contribution to mainstream knowledge building (e.g. Rossiter 1993). In addition to its focus on epistemology, feminist STS also addresses ethical issues, which is put to practical use especially when considering the well-being of those invested in research or education. Thus, one of the aspects of IR studies highlighted by feminist STS is the actual situation of students, teachers, research participants and others where special attention is paid to effects of power.

Besides the theoretical input of feminist STS, our research is also informed by feminist sociology of gender. This broad field studies how gender gets constructed and reconstructed in everyday interactions of individuals, their self-concept and life trajectory, in institutions and the division of labour, and also on the symbolic level, best represented in language for Sandra Harding, the author of the presented analytical categorisation of levels on which gender operates and can be studied in

⁴ Project no. CZ.03.1.51/0.0/15_028/0006338 „Gender Equality in Czech Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation“ (Institute of International Relations Prague).

⁵ Feminist STS also investigate the impact of integrating feminist theory with the theory and practice of other disciplines, especially STEM, yet this is beyond the scope of the presented study.



society (1989, Šmídová 2007). Although the research at hand primarily engaged with the views of individual students and their sense making of their past and future educational and professional trajectories, our interpretation inexorably concerns all three layers of the gendered universe as outlined by Harding. The barriers we strived to identify affect individual life trajectories but are the result of interaction of the other layers and therefore cannot be conceived of – or successfully addressed – as affecting only e.g. the symbolic level of language without any consequences for the division of labour (meaning for instance the chances of acquiring a postdoctoral position for different groups of students) and individual experience.

Out of the three layers of the gendered universe, the symbolic layer is the one that is both the hardest to change and the one that most powerful in working to maintain the gendered social hierarchy (Harding 1986). As the university and science are defined as the sites of ultimate knowledge in modern societies, the ways in which they contribute to the maintenance of gendered hierarchies as the symbolic bastions of the least contested form of knowledge need to be scrutinised in detail. As Harding says: *“If we are not willing to try to see the favored intellectual structures and practices of science as cultural artifacts rather than as sacred commandments (...), then it will be hard to understand how gender symbolism, the gendered social structure of science, and the masculine identities and behaviors of individual scientists have left their marks on the problematics, concepts, theories, methods, interpretations, ethics, meanings, and goals of science.”* (Harding 1986, 39). It is for this reason that the make-up of who is acknowledged as producing knowledge and what that needs in terms of both division of labour and individual opportunities merits our attention.

Methodology

In order to identify and analyse the barriers that might prevent women researchers from entering the field of IR we decided to carry out a study of a public university IR department. Over the course of several months in 2018, we conducted ten semi-structured interviews with students we managed to recruit for the research via several points of access. Although the sample is relatively small, the continuous team meetings over conducted interviews proved the sample was saturated as new interviews stopped providing new information (Guest, Bunce, and Johnson 2006).

The research process started with choosing a department that would be accessible and willing to take part in the project. The heads of departments we contacted agreed and we sent out an invitation for students to take part in a qualitative study with a brief description of the objectives of the study. This first recruitment attempt did not lead to recruiting any research participants. We therefore contacted a lecturer at the department interested in the project that shared her views on



the situation in the discipline and helped us organise a seminar for students interested in the topic. While the turnout was much lower than expected (only four students came) the debate at the seminar was the first research input. The lecturer urged the students again to get in touch with our team and as a result we were able to conduct ten interviews. Since the focus was on barriers, we also strived to find those who left the discipline given the limited resources, yet such a task proved to fit a follow-up study. The research participants were five men PhD candidates, one MA woman student and four women PhD candidates. Two of the women PhD candidates specialise in security studies just like one of the men. Based on a literature review into gender-related issues in IR studies as well as on the long term expertise of the research team's department, we constructed the interview guide that focused on the following main issues: study path and visions of future employment, work and internship experience, science (e.g. what it means to be a good researcher) and disciplinary characteristics (e.g. the percentage of men and women at the department and in the discipline), sexual harassment, bullying and gender sensitivity, and academic mobility. At the end of the interview, research participants were asked for a message to their teachers at the department. One of the limitations of the study can be seen in the fact that the students who granted us an interview were all at least partially interested in the issue of GS in their discipline as they were willing to give up about two hours of their free time to the interview.

As there were no funds for the transcription of the interviews, we coded the recordings by listening to them multiple times. Thematic analysis is used for identifying themes in data, a process that can, just like in our case, combine inductive and deductive coding (Braun and Clarke 2006). The findings presented below constitute the themes that seem to most directly speak to gender-relevant barriers in the IR field. As the research participants were students who could potentially be negatively affected by their participation in the research, the interviews were anonymised and so was the institution.

In order to contextualize the findings from qualitative study, we also conducted a literature review of three Czech journals dedicated to IR: the Czech Journal of International Relations⁶, Defence & Strategy⁷ and Global Politics⁸. We looked for articles on GS and feminism/feminist theory in order to establish how and whether these topics affect the recorded local academic debates. As there is a single comprehensive overview of the position and numbers of women in international politics as it is practiced and as a field (Borčany 2017) and it does not include information on the numbers of

⁶ <https://mv.iir.cz/index>

⁷ <https://www.obranaastrategie.cz/en/>

⁸ <http://www.globalpolitics.cz/en>



women in individual stages of HE, we listed the relevant departments in the Czech Republic and asked them for data regarding their student body. As the first round of requests was in vain, the Institute of International Relations Prague tasked an intern, Bc. Kristina Berdar⁹, with collecting the data from individual departments. Finally, we also looked into the literature and topics required for the final state exam at PhD level at the universities, where this information is available. This was done to see whether feminist/gender perspective is understood as marginal and therefore not a necessary part of the final exam or whether it is reflected in the questions as part and parcel of the discipline.

After coding the interviews we integrated the findings with the insights from the other sources to identify key themes and their framing. Based on these and expertise of the Gender and Research department of the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences where the research team is based, we propose a set of recommendations that can be implemented on the institutional level in order to contribute to greater gender equality not only on the institutional but in turn also the individual and symbolic levels.

We will now focus on some of the structural and disciplinary barriers that follow especially from two sets of data. First, we present an analysis of the broader SSH field conducted by the Gender and Research department¹⁰ as its findings are also applicable to the IR field. Second, we present the data we were able to gather on the numbers of students and researchers in the discipline.

International relations studies as part of social sciences and humanities

To get a better picture of the situation in the IR field, departments teaching IR and related disciplines¹¹ were contacted in several rounds. However, it soon transpired that that accessing this type of statistics would not be an easy task: out of the institutions we contacted, only Masaryk University in Brno, Charles University in Prague, and University of West Bohemia in Pilsen publish or were able to provide us with at least some of the required figures¹²; the other institutions included: the Metropolitan University in Prague; Cevro Institute; University of Economics, Prague; the College of International and Public Relations Prague; and Palacký University Olomouc. If we look at the student body where statistics is available, we can see that while women dominate on the BA level,

⁹ Here, we would like to thank Kristina Berdar for her relentless effort to collect and organise the data.

¹⁰ Vohlídalová 2018; Cidlinská, Fárová, Maříková, Szénássy 2018.

¹¹ Namely security studies, European studies, International area studies; where possible, we did not include Political science.

¹² For the University of West Bohemia's Department of Politics and International Relations, we only obtained summary figures stating that as of 2016 there were 236 women students and 177 men students and 64 women graduates as compared to 34 men graduates.



the women/men ratio starts to even out over the further stages of study. For instance, at Masaryk University, Table 1 below shows the student population distribution for the International Area programme in its three specialisations.

Table 1: Student population distribution at the International Area Studies programme of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Masaryk University in Brno; enrolled students as of 2016.

Specialisation	Women BA	Men BA	Women MA	Men MA	Women PhD	Men PhD
European Studies	140	72	38	6	6	4
International Relations	245	189	66	40	9	8
International Relations and Energy Security	-	-	24	18	-	-

The trend observed for the student population, i.e. the fact that there are fewer and fewer women among students as the stages of graduate HE study proceed, seems to not stop after a PhD candidate successfully finishes her studies. Based on openly accessible information on the faculty of the reviewed institutions, we learnt that out of all the 175 employees (both internal and contract) only 41% or 23% were women. All of the heads of the respective departments (100%) were men. In his study into the position of women in Czech international, European and security policy, Vít Borčany provides an overview of numbers of women at IR departments and think tanks. He states the “**any sociodemographic trends** [i.e. the high proportion of women among especially BA and MA students] **will probably only have an impact in the long term**”¹³ (bold in original Borčany 2017, 16). However, when it comes to the situation in research and faculty staff, this assumption seems to be incorrect as the statistics from the monitoring reports on the position of women in Czech science have shown (for the latest statistics in English see Kázmér 2018, 10–11).

¹³ Translated and commented on by Blanka Nyklová.



While the statistics may shed some light on the actual access of men and women to power and decision making in an institution, there is not a straightforward connection between such descriptive representation and content produced by an institution.¹⁴ It is therefore informative to look into the local academic production and its reflection of the salience of gender as an analytical category for the field of IR. As described in the previous Methodology section, we reviewed the three main local academic journal dedicated to IR. Using their search engines, we looked for the word “gender” and “feminis”/“feminis*”. We then focused only on original academic articles, i.e. we did not review book reviews (but it is remarkable that there are some book reviews on foreign books dealing with the issue of gender). Based on this search, the first article specifically outlining the relation between GS and IR was published already in 1998 in the Czech Journal of International Relations (Kodíčková 1998). The second article striving to provide its readers with introductory information on the link between feminism and IR was published in Global Politics (Kryštofík 2003). Finally, the journal Defence & Strategy featured an empirical study on the use of rape and sexual violence as weapon of war (Ptáčnicková 2013). All the three articles are of high academic quality and provide their readers with comprehensive accounts of the interplay between GS, feminist theory and IR. The latest text by Iveta Ptáčnicková was welcomed by the journal’s editor: “We may expect this contribution on an untraditional topic will raise a discussion and draw attention it deserves” (Frank 2013, 3). Unfortunately, the search suggests this has not been the case.¹⁵

As the conceptualisation of the operation of gender in society by Harding suggests, figures such as those presented in this section on the make-up of the student and faculty body can only suggest general trends regarding the division of labour: if we look beyond the research staff, faculty and students, we can see that unlike in the positions of heads of departments, the positions of secretaries and assistants are dominated by women.¹⁶ However, the link between the numbers of

¹⁴ This has been studied in detail for both the political realm and in media studies (Macharia et al. 2015; Vochocová 2008; Van Zoonen 2000).

¹⁵ The search is not exhaustive in terms of mentions of gender and feminist theory in relation with IR as e.g. Pavel Barša has dedicated a profound analysis to the challenges offered by feminist theory in his books (Barša 2002, 2011). Moreover, some IR authors have published on the topic elsewhere (Horký 2008) just like some feminist authors have written on the relation between GS/feminism and IR (Kolářová 2009, 2010). Nevertheless, the presented search comprises sources most readily accessible to those interested in IR, i.e. also students.

¹⁶ For instance, the Institute of Political Studies at Charles University has an all-women administrative staff: <https://ips.fsv.cuni.cz/IPSFSV-175.html> (site accessed on 28 October 2018). Although this sends a message regarding the gendered division of labour at the institution, the names of the positions indicate that the employees are women. This is not very common in the Czech environment as there is a preference for generic masculine despite the fact there is a difference in perceptions specifically of occupational prestige based on the gender of the noun used (Smetáčková 2016; Valdřová 2008). The cited authors view gender sensitivity in occupational labels as good practice.



men and women and actual gender sensitivity, equality and attention dedicated to these issues in a given realm of human activity is not a straightforward one. The basic comparative statistics looking into men/women ratios may serve as the first indicator of general equality as the access to especially leading positions should be equally distributed in a society with gender equality (Norris and Inglehart 2003). Yet, even when divisions and underrepresentation of certain groups are manifest as in the case of Czech IR, it is not possible to automatically assume gender as a category to be absent from syllabi and the departments to be gender-blind.

The presented search for accessible articles on gender and feminism in IR has already hinted that the topic does not seem to be a popular one among the local IR community. Similarly, the fact that IR departments do not have sex segregated statistics for their student bodies does little to suggest the gendered division of labour and its reproduction are a concern for those running the departments. In society dominated by a hierarchy of the only two widely acknowledged genders (heterosexual feminine and heterosexual masculine - see Butler 1999), this situation supports the reading of underrepresentation of one of the genders as one that inevitably leads to the erasure or at least ignoring of issues and attributes associated with it. This pertains to the actual work environment as women face a double standard in men-dominated environments as they either fail to be perceived as feminine when they manifest the same characteristics as those identified with successful professional masculinity or they fail to be perceived as professional when they manifest characteristics associated with femininity (Kanter 1977; Křížková 2003). This phenomenon does not only affect work environments but also the environment of the classroom where women students are typically not assessed in a gender-neutral way (Mertus 2007; Parisi et al. 2013; Stienstra 2000), which may have effects on their self-perception, visions of their professional future and willingness to participate in their own learning. At the same time, the lack of women among the faculty and especially among those making the decisions may impact the content of knowledge seen as core to the given discipline.

In order to decide to what extent concerns of GS and feminist theory are seen as salient and engaged with at the graduate level, we also tried to investigate the requirements on PhD candidates regarding their state exams. While the information as to the actual questions/areas of inquiry is usually not readily accessible, we were e.g. able to look into the list of literature required at the two PhD specialisations at Masaryk University. Both include books with chapters that specifically focus on feminist approaches to the matters at hand. It does not seem, however, that gender relations and their impact on IR topics would be of special focus. The fact that many departments encourage PhD



candidates to also present literature or alternatively questions of their own choice suggests that at least some issues at the intersection of GS and IR might be present.

The structural barriers identified for the whole SSH field thus seem to meet with some disciplinary barriers identified in literature (such as a late introduction of feminist theories to the IR discipline Hutchings 2008) and clear dominance of men among the decision makers in the discipline. These barriers seem to be reflected both in the syllabi of the departments where classes specifically dedicated to GS and feminist theory are facultative if present at all and in the academic output as represented by local academic journals. There does seem to be, however, an open hostility to the topics, which we may encounter in some other SSH discipline. Rather, the relative neglect of the topics and perspectives might be connected with the lack of women, who tend to be the ones most frequently engaged in GS. In the following section, we turn to the results of the thematic analysis of the interviews conducted with students of an IR department.

The gendered universe of Czech international relations

How do graduate students reflect on the structural barriers and the hints at disciplinary and institutional barriers identified above? Are their perceptions of their discipline gendered? And if so, on what level/s? To answer these questions, we now turn to the three most salient themes that emerged from the interviews. We offer here their analysis and interpretation framed by the categorisation of functioning of gender penned by Harding (1986).

The “macho” rivalry culture

Interviews with students from the IR department show that there is a huge rivalry at the department. In academic environments, competition at some level can be useful but this is not the case. Students recounted that there are at least two separate and (unpleasantly) competing groups at the department that fight over power, influence and money. These groups are not ashamed to use practices like manipulation, denigration, cheating, or threats. Some students try to stay outside these groups although there is great pressure exerted especially on PhD students to join one of the “teams”. Because of this rivalry culture, some PhD students are actually ready to leave the department once they have finished degree. Some of them have even experienced burnout and a mental breakdown because of how stressful the environment is.

“Even the big package of money that came to the department did not help to calm the atmosphere down. There is still a lot of competition and quarrels about money. Maybe I could stay there, but I like to escape from this stressful environment. I stopped feeling like it.” (doctoral student, man)



Students also believe that this competing environment is a consequence of a “macho” culture that operates at the department. According to the students the “macho” culture is characterized by male-domination (and overrepresentation), hostile atmosphere, aggression and rivalry and fraternity at the same time. This type of networking is practically impenetrable for women as men who belong to them often support each other, build networks and make important decisions connected to the present and the future of the department on an invisible and informal level as the next citation shows:

“To get there (to the department) you need to know someone. From this perspective, this is like a tribal structure. The only thing that gets you in the right place is connections. It all comes from the fact that you've already grabbed some beer together or that you've made some important decision at lunch. It is a limited circle of people and you will not meet many women there.” (PhD student, man)

Personal relationships are crucial in this type of environment. If you are not able or you do not want to build these unhealthy relationships, it is very complicated to succeed in this place. As students claim, at the department there are also no vacancies because they are filled by older (male) generation or by male classmates from the time when the department was founded. And if there is an opening it is difficult to hire someone new because everyone in the IR field knows what the atmosphere at the department looks like.

Part of this “macho” culture is also omitting and devaluing gender and feminist topics and approaches. Students are aware of the fact that these topics are recognised internationally but not nationally. Especially security studies is described as *“a boys' club”* or as *“boys are playing soldiers”* (PhD student, woman) and are seen as a space where gender studies has no place. In combination with no interest in family or work-life balance policies that is also present, it is no exaggeration to claim that the culture described above is hostile to women researchers.

Gender blind, gender sensitive: Roots of gender inequality

Another key theme we would like to address here is that of gender inequality as it is understood and perceived by the research participants (RPs), especially in relation to their imaginations that should ideally be developed through their graduate studies to their fullest potential. In the Czech environment, especially postgraduate study is geared towards two unequally treated objectives. First and foremost, the goal of postgraduate study is to master the capacity to identify gaps in existing knowledge, design research that promises to fill these, conduct the research, analyse and interpret the data and independently publish the results. This is clear especially from the duties of



postdoctoral students presented on websites of the respective programmes. The second – and arguably secondary – objective is to verse the postgraduate students in teaching. As both these agendas should reflect the perspectives and critiques offered by feminist theory and GS, we directly asked about gender and gender inequalities in our interview guide in several instances.

Given the bias in our sample as only people willing to share their views of gender and inequalities in general agreed to talk to us we expected the RPs to have some basic academic knowledge about gender. The RPs were indeed very open and willing to discuss gender-related issues with us. This was most importantly manifested when discussing the roots of inequalities the RPs perceived in their discipline as well as in their respective specialisation. Our discussions of the topic of socialisation raised by many of the RPs at least partially confirmed the assumption of our RPs knowledge of GS. Socialisation was indeed the most frequently named root cause of gender inequality as it gets expressed in the classroom and later (although for many of the RPs less clearly) in the discipline itself. As a man PhD student put it: *“There are cultural issues...the way women are brought up here”* later adding: *“It’s really important to establish relations with one’s supervisors and [because of socialisation] this may be more difficult for women fellow students to be active...even from my own classes I rather remember the active students ... It’s more difficult for my women colleagues.”* While there is a clear belief in the link between social conditioning and one’s gendered subjectivity, there seems to be much less agreement on the link between the symbolic realm represented by the university as the site of knowledge and the reiteration and inscription of the hierarchical nature of the gender dichotomy. Thus, most RPs agreed there is little, besides putting up a crèche or a kindergarten, the institution could do.

The theme emerging from how the RPs approached and enacted gender in their accounts is remarkable not just for the relative openness the students manifested towards issues of gender and how they more or less acknowledged there is gender inequality in their field. In the light of these concessions, perhaps the most interesting feature is that the RPs did not reflect on the symbolic functioning of gender. Specifically, the role of language and symbolism of the functioning, staffing and areas researched and theoretically engaged with by university faculty was not acknowledged much importance in the overall social functioning of gender. To illustrate this, we may look into how the RPs talk about divisions within their discipline. The most widely used dichotomy deployed is that of soft and hard topics. Some RPs are aware of the fact the dichotomy is gendered, yet only acknowledge this when denying there is any essential core to this division and that it does not seem to them women would be rather associated with soft topics and men with the hard ones. The readily



discerned gendered nature of the dichotomy does not lead to acknowledging the symbolic work it does to maintain the gender divide on the other levels, where the RPs identify the sources of the perceived inequalities. This works to also invisibilise the actual work that needs to be done in order to challenge the clearly present gendered perceptions of the field's divisions. It seems the concept of complementarity frequently used to account for the gender binary itself can be deployed also here to lessen the hierarchy between the individual approaches to IR, which transpires from the fact little attention is paid to gender and feminism both in the curriculum, research and the very operation of the local IR academic community.

This observation is further strengthened by the fact that while the students are open to the concept of gender they have a very vague or none idea as to how it could broaden/change/challenge the academic work they are engaged in and specifically their research. The interviews strongly suggest there is no pressure exerted on the students from their senior colleagues and supervisors to consider how these perspectives could improve their work. The very fact some view the position of women as strong through relying on horizontal segregation of the subdisciplines and topics within the broader IR field suggests more attention to the power aspect of hierarchies should be paid. Some RPs actually saw compartmentalisation as a positive feature of the IR field as it in their view guarantees some attention is paid to issues most widely associated with critical IR. The problem with compartmentalisation, i.e. the fact it works to effectively maintain extant power hierarchies by keeping the core of the given activity/field intact and immune from the critique offered (Roth 2004), is not considered. As a woman PhD student put it: *"Critical [IR] women researchers focus on security studies issues associated with gender such as women in war because they feel such topics are underrepresented but as a result they are not exactly because the women researchers take them up."*

This theme shows the interviewed students are gender sensitive on a pragmatic level but they lack insights into the symbolic functioning of gender that follows from critically engaging with feminist theory (in general or in feminist IR). The current situation thus may contribute to the perpetuation of the present gendered hierarchies precisely because the gender perspective is not really engaged with in the parts of study that have to do with theory and methodology.

Recommendations

The presented study together with findings regarding the academic environment in the Czech Republic and the long-term expertise of the Gender and Science department led to a formulation of several recommendations that might help improve the at present largely absent gender equality in



the discipline. This is crucial especially because the departments are in charge of educating future generations of both IR researchers and practitioners.

- Feminist approaches to teaching IR should be explored. There is ample research on both how to teach GS to IR students and how to employ feminist pedagogical approaches in practice. One of the key reasons for this recommendation is that it follows from the interviews as well as from the presented analysis of syllabi that gender is not paid substantive attention. The faculty are also not seen as paying attention to the topic, which clearly severely limits the imagination of the students regarding the applicability of gender as an analytical category in IR. Gender sensitisation also concerns pedagogical styles and teachers' capacity to reflect on how gender might interfere with their particular teaching style.
- A related issue is a review of current syllabi. At present, GS perspectives, insights as well challenges offered by feminist theory seem to be largely absent from the core of the discipline as it is locally presented and done. Keeping classes on gender as facultative does little to challenge the perspective shared by our research participants that feminist perspectives are locally marginal and not really engaged with. Instead, classes that specifically focus on GS and feminist theory should become a stable part of the syllabi.
- Efforts should be made to increase the number of women students who opt for an academic career. Both men and women students are more likely to seek a career in research when they are involved in research projects from the beginning of their PhD studies (at the latest; introducing talented students to research projects should also be considered). Given the overrepresentation of men faculty, which has been proven to facilitate informal mentoring and inclusion in research for men students, women students should be actively sought out and supported to counter the effects of both a masculine environment and of gendered socialisation in the relatively gender conservative Czech environment.
- Specifically at the researched department, the interaction, both formal and informal, between PhD candidates and faculty needs to increase in order to better motivate the students for future development. One way to do this might be reconsidering and co-building a new way of teaching methodology as methodology training was deemed insufficient by almost all the research participants. Part of the problems also seems to be lack of emphasis on research ethics and discussions of what research ethics means in the field. Given the type of issues students are likely to research topics and areas that may be relatively dangerous. Safety training should therefore be a stable part of the syllabi, which is not the case at present.



- Another recommendation for the department at hand is to start considering the gender make-up of the faculty as the department is petrified in a form dominated by men. Given the structural conditions the department needs to operate in, it is imperative to start considering measures to be taken to improve the situation as chances of a “natural” progress are severely limited.
- Finally, the department should introduce a simple and reliable means for settling disagreements and possible acts of bullying or other such behaviour. At present, the means in place do not seem to meet their objectives. The management of the programme would in general benefit from greater transparency and accessibility to all the students.

Conclusion: Ways forward?

The present study has first identified several possibly problematic areas in local IR as a research discipline. Some are linked to the structural issues stemming from the position of the discipline within the Czech academic setting. As an SSH discipline, the IR field suffers from petrification of the departments. It is extremely difficult for PhD graduates to find openings that would lead to having a career in research. This becomes a highly gendered problem and a problem for achieving a semblance of gender equality at the department once we consider the fact the founders of the researched department were all men and the second “generation” was recruited from their students/informal mentees, i.e. also mostly men. This situation seems to be replicated in most other IR departments as the percentages of women among faculty and specifically in the university hierarchy seem to suggest.

We strived to interpret the interview data with the operation of the gendered universe in mind. Investigating the individual themes identifies throughout our analysis made it clear the symbolic level of the functioning of gender at the given institution, which is closely linked to the university's standing in social hierarchies, is mostly ignored by the research participants. Given the absence of substantive attention paid to the insights from feminist IR at the very least and GS as such, it is not surprising. On the contrary, the presence of so many students who seem to endorse most of the ideals of gender equality is remarkable given the amount of attention GS is paid in the curriculum.

In order to establish the overall situation in Czech IR, the present mini case study would need to be expanded to more departments. In addition to the methods used, a thorough analysis of the output of the local IR academic community from a critical perspective focused on the category of gender should be conducted. This might help shed some light on what – other than women - is missing from Czech IR.



Bibliography

- Anderson, Shelley et al. 2014. "Gender and Militarism Analyzing the Links to Strategize for Peace."
- Barša, Pavel. 2002. *Panství Člověka a Touha Ženy: Feminismus Mezi Psychoanalýzou a Poststrukturalismem*. Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství.
- . 2011. *Orientálcova Vzpoura (a Další Texty z Let 2008–2011)*. Praha: Dokořán.
- Blanchard, Eric M. 2003. "Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28(4): 1289–1312.
- Borčany, Vít. 2017. *Ženy v České Zahraniční a Bezpečnostní Politice*. Praha. https://www.amo.cz/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/AMO_zeny-v-ceske-evropske-zahranicni-a-bezpecnostni-politice.pdf.
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2006. "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology." *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3(2): 77–101. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>.
- Butler, Judith. 1999. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Enloe, Cynthia. 1989. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. London: Pandora.
- Frank, Libor. 2013. "Úvodní Slovo." *Obrana a strategie* 13(2): 3–4.
- Guest, Greg, Arwen Bunce, and Laura Johnson. 2006. "How Many Interviews Are Enough?: An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability." *Field Methods* 18(1): 59–82.
- Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Scientific Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14(3): 575–99.
- Harding, Sandra. 1986. *The Science Question in Feminism*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press.
- Hark, Sabine. 2016. "Contending Directions. Gender Studies in the Entrepreneurial University." *Women's Studies International Forum* 54: 84–90. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2015.06.009>.
- Horký, Ondřej. 2008. "Gender a Rozvoj. Co Nás Rozděluje, Co Nás Spojuje." *Gender, rovné příležitosti, výzkum* 9(2): 10–21.
- Hutchings, Kimberly. 2008. "1988 and 1998: Contrast and Continuity in Feminist International Relations." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 37(1): 97–105.



Evropská unie
Evropský sociální fond
Operační program Zaměstnanost

- Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. 1977. *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York: Basicbooks.
- Kážmér, Ladislav. 2018. *Postavení Žen v České Vědě. Monitorovací Zpráva Za Rok 2016*. Praha. <http://genderaveda.cz/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Postaveni-zen-v-ceske-vede-2016.pdf>.
- Kodíčková, Tereza. 1998. "Gender a Mezinárodní Vztahy." *Mezinárodní vztahy* 33(3): 74–83.
- Kolářová, Marta. 2009. *Protest Proti Globalizaci: Gender a Feministická Kritika*. Prague: SLON.
- . 2010. *Od Globálního Sesterství k Transnacionálnímu Feminismu: Výzvy Ženskému Hnutí ve Formě Kulturních Odlišností a Nerovností Mezi Ženami*. Praha.
- Kováts, Eszter. 2017. "The Emergence of Powerful Anti-Gender Movements in Europe and the Crisis of Liberal Democracy." In *Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe*, eds. Michaela Köttig, Renate Bitzan, and Andrea Pető. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 175–89.
- Křížková, Alena. 2003. "Kariérní Vzorce Žen v Managementu . Strategie Žen v Rámci Genderového Režimu Organizace *." *Sociologický Časopis / Czech Sociological Review* 39(4): 447–67.
- Kryštofík, Matúš. 2003. "Feminizmus v Medzinárodných Vzťahoch." *Global politics. Časopis pro politiku a mezinárodní vztahy* 2003. <http://www.globalpolitics.cz/studie/feminizmus>.
- Kuumba, M. Bahati. 2001. *Gender and Social Movements*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Macharia, Sarah et al. 2015. *Who Makes the News? Global Media Monitoring Project 2015*. London, Toronto: WACC.
- Mertus, Julie. 2007. "Teaching Gender in International Relations." *International Studies Perspectives* 8(3): 323–25.
- Narain, Seema. 2014. "Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives of J. Ann Tickner." *Indian journal of Gender Studies* 21(2): 179–97.
- Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. 2003. *Rising Tide: Gender Equality & Cultural Change around the World*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Parisi, Laura et al. 2013. "Innovating International Relations Pedagogy. Critical Feminist Engagements." *International feminist journal of politics* 15(3): 412–25.
- Ptáčnicková, Iveta. 2013. "Bezpečnost Žen z Perspektivy Teorie Feminismu v Mezinárodních Vztazích : Sexuální Násilí Jako Účinná Zbraň Války (Safety of Women from the Perspective of Feminist Theory in International Relations : Sexual Violence as an Effective Weapon of War)." *Obrana a strategie* 13(2): 41–52.



Evropská unie
Evropský sociální fond
Operační program Zaměstnanost

- Rossiter, Margaret W. 1993. "The Matthew Matilda Effect in Science." *Social Studies of Science* 23(2): 325–41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/030631293023002004>.
- Roth, Benita. 2004. "Thinking about Challenges to Feminist Activism in Extra-Feminist Settings." *Social Movement Studies* 3(2): 147–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1474283042000266100>.
- Roth, Benita, and Marian Horan. 2001. *What Are Social Movements and What Is Gendered About Women's Participation in Social Movements? A Sociological Perspective*. Binghamton, NY: State University of New York. <http://womhist.binghamton.edu/socm/intro.htm>.
- Sjoberg, Laura. 2006. "Gendered Realities of the Immunity Principle: Why Gender Analysis Needs Feminism." *International Studies Quarterly* 50(4): 889–910.
- . 2011. "Gender, the State, and War Redux: Feminist International Relations across the 'Levels of Analysis'." *International Relations* 25(1): 108–34. <http://10.0.4.153/0047117810396990>.
- Smetáčková, Irena. 2016. "Femininní a Maskulinní Označení: Vliv Na Hodnocení Prestiže." *Gender, rovné příležitosti, výzkum* 17(2): 81–92. <http://genderaveda.cz/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Postaveni-zen-v-ceske-vede-2016.pdf>.
- Šmídová, Iva. 2007. "Fatherhood as a Social Construction: Mapping the Challenges to Promoting Good Fatherhood." *January 17, 2007*. <http://www.european-fatherhood.com/knowledge.php?id=70&mode=view> (October 26, 2018).
- Steans, Jill. 2003. "Engaging from the Margins: Feminist Encounters with the 'mainstream' of International Relations." *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 5(3): 428–54. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-856X.00114/full>.
- Stienstra, Deborah. 2000. "Cutting to Gender: Teaching Gender in International Relations." *International Studies Perspectives* 1(3): 233–44.
- Tickner, J. Ann. 2001. *Gendering World Politics. Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Valdrová, Jana. 2008. "„Žena a Vědec? To Mi Nejde Dohromady." Testy Generického Maskulina v Českém Jazyce." *Naše řeč* 91(1): 26–38.
- Vochocová, Lenka. 2008. "Ženy ve Zpravodajských Redakcích: Falešné Naděje Na Dobyetí Maskulinní Pevnosti." *Mediální studia* (2): 130–53.
- Van Zoonen, Liesbet. 2000. *Feminist Media Studies*. London, Thousand Oaks, New York: SAGE



Evropská unie
Evropský sociální fond
Operační program Zaměstnanost

Publications.