



Editorial



HeForShe

UN Women Solidarity Movement
for Gender Equality

Women have been in the forefront of research and activism around gender in STEM for many years. However, it is often argued that unless men are willing to make changes, gender equality will remain an elusive dream. [HeForShe](#), a recent campaign launched by the UN, stresses the importance of involving men as agents for change in the drive for gender equality and at the Open University UK we are delighted that our senior management have pledged to join this latest initiative.

Exploring this theme further, *Wendy M. DuBow and Catherine Ashcraft* explain the importance of studying male perspectives and advocacy in [Male Allies: Motivations and Barriers for Participating in Diversity Initiatives in the Technology Workplace](#). Their qualitative study of 47 corporate men explores how men think, talk about, and enact diversity reform in the technical workplace. Importantly the study aimed to identify what discourages or encourages men to become allies and advocates. The study identified personal and professional experiences that increased awareness and activism and could potentially help to improve diversity initiatives in the tech sector.

Another study, focused on the IT sector, looks at the attitude of teenage Spanish students to a range of jobs in computing fields. In their paper [Adolescents' Gendered Portrayals of Information and Communication Technologies Occupations](#) *Milagros Sainz, Julio Meneses, Sergi Fabregues and Beatriz Lopez* found gender differences in secondary school students' perceptions of ICT occupations. Interestingly the biggest gender differences occurred in jobs where they perceived ICT was used as a tool, compared to jobs involving the design and production of ICT products and services.



A similar concern with the entrenched gendering of participation in computing and among young people is the subject of [Gender and the emergence of the 'geek celebrity' in young people's celebrity talk in England](#) by *Heather Mendick, Kim Allen and Laura Harvey*. The authors argue that the 'geek celebrity' is an emerging figure in young people's imaginations, as an aspirational and inspirational 'role model' and a source of social innovation, impact and initiative. However, while these geeks are celebrated for their wealth and status, they are also noted for being highly intelligent and socially awkward, traits that are aligned with masculinity culturally and this impacts on how young men and women speak about them.

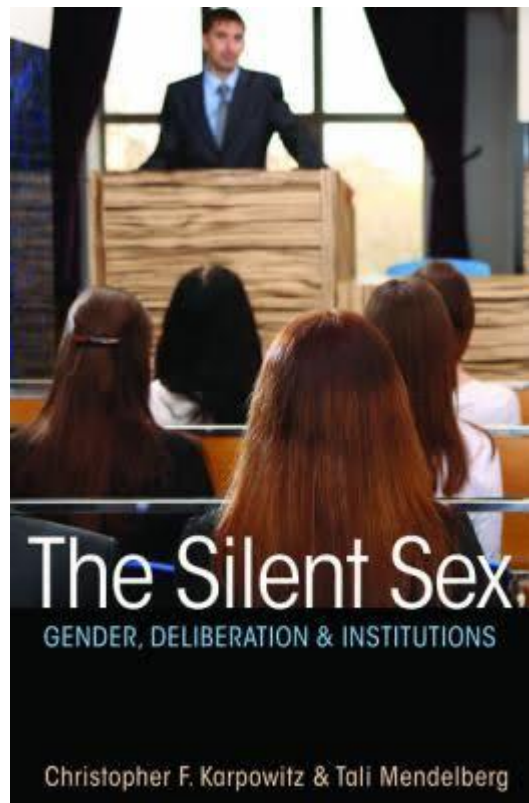
Danielle Lindemann, Dana Britton and Elaine Zundl examine institution-specific elements that impact on women's STEM participation. In ["I Don't Know Why They Make It So Hard Here": Institutional Factors and Undergraduate Women's STEM Participation](#) the authors highlight three types of institutional factors that played a role in women students' STEM participation: class size, course content, and resources designed to support women in STEM. However, one worrying finding is that these potentially reinforce inequalities related to other student characteristics, such as race. The paper [An Exploration of Women Academic Scientists' Experiences with Gender in North Africa and the United States](#) by *Jessica Greene and Geraldine Richmond* reports exploratory research conducted in conjunction with a research collaboration workshop in Morocco in March, 2013. They found that North African and American women scientists had very different experiences with gender in the workplace and at home. North African women reported better representation of women in their science departments and equity in terms of salary and resources, whereas most American women felt they had to "push" to get to equality in the workplace. Another difference was in the division of domestic labour and childcare, which was seen to impact on research career prospects.

In India over the past decade, a number of national policies and programmes have been implemented to promote and increase the participation of women in the fields of science and technology. In their paper [Perspectives, Policy and Programmes: An Empirical Analysis of 'Women in Science' in India](#) *Jyoti Sharma and Sunita Dhal* describe the Women Scientist Scheme (WoS), a fellowship scheme of the Government of India, which was designed to promote re-entry of women in the field of science, who had taken a break in their careers. The results indicate that the fellowship scheme was vital to building self-confidence and identity among women and in enabling them to get back into professional roles in science and research. Another commonly used intervention strategy for increasing retention and progression of women both in STEM education and employment is mentoring. In their case study, [Effects of an External Mentoring Program in a Department of Mathematics](#) *Edgar Fuller, Jessica Deshler and Marjorie Darrah* describe an external mentoring program that has helped women to achieve individual professional goals and build long-term collaborations.

Looking at the US context, *Kunsiri Chaw Grubbs and Samuel J. Grubbs* explore the evolution and development of policy to support women into STEM. Examining policies at institutional as well as national and international level, in their article [Increasing Female Academics in Science in the United States: An Examination of Policies](#), the authors argue that this issue continues to be an important part of the policy agenda in US science faculties.

Two book reviews complete this issue: Marie Larsson's review of [Gender in Science and Technology Interdisciplinary Approaches](#) edited by Waltraud Ernst & Ilona

Horwath gives a good overview of this collection, which has contributions to the growing field of feminist science and technology studies (FSTS) from many authors that GST readers will be familiar with. And finally, Carol Colatrella's review of [The Silent Sex: Gender, Deliberation, and Institutions](#) by Christopher F. Karpowitz and Tali Mendelberg, makes some timely observations on female political leadership in the US elections, resonating for those of us in the UK with the current political turmoil and the recent appointment of a woman as prime minister.



Finally, I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome two new members to our Editorial Executive– Gunjan Sondhi and Esther Ruiz-Ben -who have recently joined the Open University as Research Associates.

Clem Herman, on behalf of the editorial executive: Helen Donelan, Barbara Hodgson, Victoria Pearson, Elizabeth Whitelegg, Esther Ruiz-Ben and Gunjan Sondhi