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Editorial

The question of identity is central to our understanding of women's under-representation in STEM. In particular, identity formation during teenage years can be a crucial time at which opportunities are opened up or closed down. This is particularly so in education systems where subject choices occur at this age. In *Unpacking Secondary School Students' Identity Negotiations Regarding Science and Engineering: A Case Study in the United States* , Roxanne Hughes discusses an informal summer education programme for 14-16 year olds and how this impacts on identity formation among young people. In particular, she highlights how social and individual interactions occur on a personal level and how identities can shift due to small interventions.

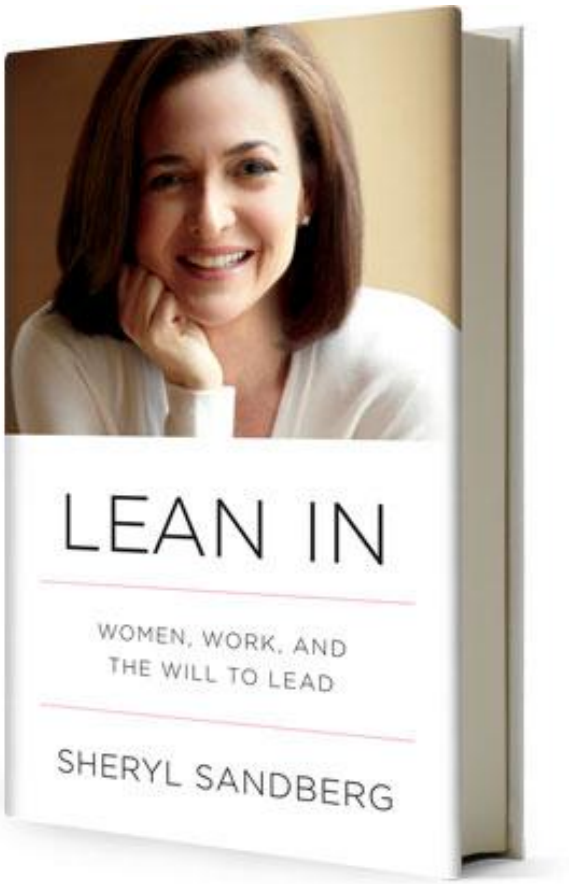
This theme is also picked up in a recent UK report *Not for People Like Me,* which suggests that future policy around STEM interventions should be focused on the importance of self-identity (MacDonald, 2014). The aim of this journal has been to build bridges between research and policy in the area of gender and STEM, and we very much hope that such findings and recommendations will stimulate new thinking among policy makers and practitioners.

The next paper in this issue also builds connections between research and policy. In March 2014 in the UK, the Marriage (Same Sex) Act 2013 came into force finally giving lesbian and gay couples the right to marry. During the many years of debates leading up to this becoming law, politicians and media have used a wide range of arguments to justify their opposition to this legal entitlement. While much of this came from religious groups and drew on theological arguments, this was often couched in assertions about 'nature' and what should be considered to be 'natural' human behaviour.

Jonathan Drury reveals similar patterns in his article *Nature on trial in California's legal battle for same-sex marriage*. Drury deconstructs the argumentation used in legal debates by those seeking to oppose similar legislation (known as Proposition 8) in California, illustrating how pseudo-scientific constructions of sex and gender difference have been used within the US legal trials.

In our third paper, *Technoscience and Affected Bodies*, Andrea Quinlan explores some of the implications of being a researcher engaged in the study of technoscientific objects. Quinlan reflects on a feminist technoscience study on the Canadian Sexual Assault Evidence Kit (SAEK), a forensic tool used to document survivors' physical injuries and identify perpetrators of sexual assault. It is through the process of researching the SAEK's forty-year history that the author considers how 'empirical objects can get under researchers' skin and be felt through and in their bodies'.

Finally two reviews complete this issue – the first is a review of the highly influential book *Lean In: Women Work and the Will to Lead by Sheryl Sandberg* which is reviewed here by Kate Broadley. Despite the undoubted global impact of the book, as Broadley comments, the book is hardly the feminist manifesto that some have claimed, focusing as it does on high achieving corporate American women.



In contrast, our second review focuses on a policy meeting about the opportunities for young women who are in less affluent circumstances. In *The influence of education funding policies on vocational STEM choices*, Gill Kirkup reviews the meeting held by the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Sex Equality on training opportunities for young women, and provides some disturbing evidence about the lack of options available for young women in the UK who are not in employment, education or training (so called NEET).

Once again we see how government policy directly or indirectly impacts on women and STEM - in this case on the continued under-representation of young women in STEM vocational education. Kirkup notes that a major structural obstacle occurs in the

way schools are funded. Schools need financial incentives to offer students those STEM related courses in areas where there are jobs, as well as financial incentives to channel students onto apprenticeships. This surely is something for policy makers to focus on.

Clem Herman

on behalf of the editorial executive: Helen Donelan, Barbara Hodgson, Gill Kirkup, Victoria Pearson, Elizabeth Whitelegg

REFERENCES

MacDonald, A. (2014). *"Not for people like me?" Under-represented groups in science, technology and engineering. A summary of the evidence: the facts, the fiction and what we should do next*. Bradford: The WISE Campaign. Accessed 07 Feb 2015 from http://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/files/useruploads/files/news/not_for_people_like_me.pdf