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Homeless in Academia:
Homesteading as a Strategy for Change in a World of Hegemonic Masculinity.[*]

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While conducting interviews for a project on women in the Swedish military, my colleague and I were often struck by the similarities in the way military women described their realities and the way we interpreted our own lived experiences as women in the university. I was further enticed to make that comparison after having come across Mary Fainsod Katzenstein's comparative work on feminist protest inside the church and military (1998). She skillfully draws attention to and explores the move of social protest and mobilization inside institutions. This is also what will be in focus in this article. Social movement research has over the years studied grassroots activism and mobilization around for example, women's issues and environmental concerns. Major attention has been paid to protest and articulation of critical and alternative politics outside institutions. As the values carried by such social movements are increasingly adopted by the public, put on institutional agendas and become legislative concerns there is an imminent need to more precisely study such phenomena. To simply conclude that the development reflects a process of institutional co-optation or alternatively, a paradigmatic shift, does not, I argue, pay sufficient attention to the complexities of institutions and social change. Focusing on Sweden for example, we note both a high political representation and an extensive participation of women in the workforce. Such observations could lead one to assume that ideas associated with the feminist or women's movement have been successful and furthermore, institutionalized in Sweden. However this seem only to be partially the case. If we turn to the military or academia, the figures look bleaker, 97 % of officers and soldiers are men and 85% of the full professors are men.

In an attempt to try to understand institutional change, in this article I focus on the changes that have come regarding gender and feminist issues in one important state institution, the university. Here, I do this by drawing attention to a particularly important location of the university–the seminar room– and to processes of 'homesteading' within the university. I point to a number of processes that have been important for the inclusion or exclusion, of feminist ideas into one particular institution. The major conclusions from this study is

that the changes had much to do with the rapidly increasing number of women entering the department over a short period of time. Despite sensations of 'homelessness' these women had ambitions to create a space for themselves within the department and did so through 'homesteading' practices. Somewhat surprisingly perhaps, the study shows that their relative unawareness of oppressive institutional structures facilitated their efforts. Furthermore, it will be suggested that aspects in the opportunity structure worked beneficially to support women's homesteading strategies and bring about institutional change.

While this article will study the specifics of one particular academic setting it will draw on studies in other fields in order to reflect on and more broadly contextualize the processes at hand. The focus will be on the academic environment but it can have broader relevance as I argue that the University institutions can very well be compared with the military and the Church, the institutions Mary Katzenstein compares in her work. A particular ceremony, important in the academic setting of Lund can demonstrate the connection between such institutions. It is the remarkable tradition of the Ph.D. commencement exercises of long tradition and high standing at the Lund University, one of the oldest Universities in the country. The connection between the church, the military and the academy, is succinctly expressed in this ceremony.

The commencement parade starts at the main University building. The participants are all dressed in black, women in long black dresses and men in tuxedos, there are no exceptions allowed. The parade includes various flag bearers representing different faculties and functions. The head of the University goes first, alongside the bishop (incidentally both were female the time I watched, which was also the first time in history) together with the governor of southern Sweden (landshövding). The procession is not long but proceeds very slowly. It passes through Lundagård, the ancient grove of trees in the center of Lund, to its destination, the magnificent, gothic cathedral built in the 12th century. The parade is watched and followed by a crowd of relatives and curious onlookers. When all have been seated in the cathedral, the ceremony starts. The tedious, three-hour ceremony is conducted in Latin. In the ceremony all the new doctors are called up to the center of the cathedral to receive a ring and a top hat or alternatively, a laurel wreath depending on the faculty to which they belong. Lastly, they are saluted faculty-wise by several canon shoots. As a result, on this Friday afternoon in late May all of Lund echoes of canon shots.

The ceremony is an impressive event with much symbolic content. Through the act of receiving the ring the new doctor is married to academia. It indicates where the doctor is to direct his/her main attention and loyal servitude. This marriage is blessed by the church. We may also note the exclusionary practice in the use of Latin, historically the language of the learned. Hence, it is not the church of the common people, but the church of the elite who blesses the new doctor in his/her marriage to academia. The whole ceremony is sealed by the sounds of canons. All is watched, awed and admired by the crowd. The military seal connects the academic ceremony not only with the military institution but also, albeit implicitly, with the project of nation-state building, affirming what interest the new doctors are to serve.

Although the importance attached to this ceremony might seem negligible in view of overall academic politics, to focus on such a ceremony can give us important clues about the norms and values that constitute institutions. Mats Alvesson (1993) suggests that ceremonies can point to what he refers to as 'culture' of institutions and argues that such cultures are important to study if we are to understand institutional processes. One of the important connections between the three institutions–the church, the military and the academy–is that they, of tradition have been exclusively male. Institutions, largely governed by men, have upheld and recreated norms associated with masculinity and heterosexuality. Unquestionably, such institutions presume the male as the norm. Thus, when someone mentions the professions associated with those institutions–an officer, a soldier, a priest, a professor, a researcher–to date, most people are likely to vision a male holding the profession. A woman occupying such a professional role is instead considered deviant. Although the gendered practices of these institutions have taken slightly different forms they have basically excluded women from its central activities. Women have nevertheless, been involved in auxiliary functions serving these institutions in different ways. In the university most notably in the role as secretaries or cleaning personnel.

Having said this, what difference can a minority of women possibly make within these institutions? One answer would be that they make little difference because a much larger number of women is required to produce change. Some feminist work points to the need for a critical mass of around a third women, to make an impact. In the absence of such a critical mass of women the inclusion of women remains symbolic and prospects for institutional change are meager (Kanter 1977). A different answer may be that the inclusion even of a small percentage of women makes all the difference in the world. This because it can completely alter the way institutions are perceived and understood. It is only when women step into the jobs, functions and roles traditionally associated with masculinity that such institutionally embedded norms become apparent and visible (Kronsell 2001; Kronsell & Svedberg 2001).

In order to arrive at a fuller understanding of how gender politics are played out in an institutional setting such as a Swedish university, I want to focus on micro-politics. According to Patricia Mann (1994:31) a micro-political analysis has the following purposes: For one, it points to the serious political implications of everyday life and decisions of individuals. Secondly, it can provide ground for understanding how political organizing and struggle takes form because it focuses on how individuals negotiate in the complexity of institutionalized relations of domination. In order to understand how feminist resistance is shaped within such institutions this approach can be valuable. The narratives offered here[1] are self-biographical generated from the experience I have had in making a profession for myself[2] in a University institution with a long tradition of male researchers, teachers and professors.

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[1] Here I have been inspired by Frigga Haug's (1992) and Karin Widerberg's (1995) approach of using memory work as a base for arriving at an understanding of gender politics.
[2] Although I rely mainly on my own interpretation of this process and my own experience of it, for the analysis I feel indebted to all who participated in the process because the insights have come over the years through our

Homeless in the Seminar room

Although 'the-male-as-norm' is an abstract notion, it becomes 'real' when everyday practices are carried out in different sites within institutions. One important location in the academic setting is the seminar room. In many ways the seminar room resembles the corporate boardroom or other familiar salons of power previously inaccessible to women. Women entering the territory of traditionally male institutions are repeatedly faced with the fact that they are different. A sensation of awkwardness or displacement may be associated with a woman's experience in previously exclusive male-territory. The sensation can be described as homelessness as suggested by Christine Sylvester (1994)[3]. Homelessness can describe the sensation felt by the female researchers in the seminar room. The narrative below describes such a seminar[4].

> The graduate students and professors met weekly around the large rectangular table, typically, to first listen to a presentation by a researcher or graduate student followed by a discussion. Certain fixed yet, informal seating arrangements were always observed. They were almost strictly hierarchical in order of seniority and academic status. The discussions more often than not were nothing like what I understood as discussions, i.e. an open exchange of thoughts and feelings on the topic at hand. Instead, it often resembled a challenging session, where the presenter was repeatedly challenged and everyone taking turns to position himself on the subject in focus. Sometimes jokingly we called it cock-fighting and at times, that was the best description, critical, sarcastic comments delivered in a snappy but yet abstract language. Surprising to me, it seemed a highly esteemed, and also an acceptable way of being in the seminar room. (memo)

Alvesson and Billing try to understand the complexities of gender and organizations and write that "/i/n organizations, meetings often function as rituals" (1997:109). They suggest that it is in meetings that norms and values of the organization are transmitted, to be learned by those new to the organization as well as confirmed and reproduced by those with a longer institutional affiliation. In Swedish social science, the seminar is one of the most important events or occasions when such norms can be transmitted in the organization. In this space the 'culture' of the organization can be reinforced and reproduced to newcomers. It is not surprising then, that the seminar felt like 'home' to some who seem to fit right in and feel at ease, yet, to others felt more uncomfortable and even hostile.

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many conversations where the issues raised in this chapter have been discussed extensively. Yet, I take full and sole responsibility for what is written here.

[3] The way we applied the concept of homelessness to our experience of the daily activities within the academic institution was not identical to the way the Sylvester uses the concept in the book on Feminist theory and International Relations. The concepts of homelessness and homesteading were used as metaphors, to name and describe the sensations we felt as women researchers and gave us tools to understand how to improve our situation, how to create a place for ourselves within such a setting.

[4] Obviously, seminars can be very different. The characterization of the seminar chosen in this analysis is associated with the-male-as-norm and isolates practices related to those norms and values.

> In the space of the seminar room, my sense of being lost was acute. I felt a knot in my stomach and a panicky feeling, and with desperation thought: –I will never be able to say things like that – talk about matters in such confident terms. The result was that I remained mute with a de-creasing sense of security, rather than what would be assumed, a sense of security growing, as I became more familiar with the setting. I noted that the few other women present also were quiet and stayed silent (memo).

The description refers to my initial experiences as a graduate student. What was striking to me in my observation of this seminar setting over some time was that women remained silent for a long period of time. Their insecurity seemed to be accentuated in the seminar setting while many of the young men[5] on the other hand, seemed to rather quickly grow and gain confidence. At every new seminar they seemed to grow into their role as researchers. They got better at taking up space, asking long elaborate questions and position themselves in relationship to the others. They did not seem afraid and even had the confidence to be openly critical a times. It was notable that they seemed to develop these skills quickly and it did not take long before they were engaging in long monologues of complexities. They could often sit with their legs spread wide apart, arms crossed behind their heads, even rocking back and forth on the chair, as if trying to fill more and more of that space of the seminar room.

It is interesting to note the resemblance between this description of the men in the seminar room, and some of the narratives in Blackmore's work on women in educational leadership. In organizations, the body itself is a site of domination as well as a site of resistance, she argues. She continues with an example: "/w/omen generally do not sit in meetings with legs splayed widely and hands clasped behind head, arms openly outstretched to embrace the world." She explains that this is because women's bodies are subject to the male gaze, institutionalized into a set of repressive practices (Blackmore 1999:173). This then, disciplines the female body in certain acceptable ways of moving, sitting and acting. While the categories male and researcher or professor collapses and becomes one and the same, i.e. the disciplinary institutional practices that affect male bodies also discipline the body of the researcher or professor. For researchers in women's bodies such disciplinary acts work differently. They are first and foremost women and only secondly researchers.[6] It is demonstrated by the fact that in the seminar room their bodily movements are subjected to disciplinary practices[7] related to their female bodies.

Women's silence in the seminar should not come as a surprise if we put it into a larger perspective. Rather, it is what we would expect by looking at studies of girls and women in the classroom. From early years through college education women take up much less space, listen and are silent to a greater extent than boys and men are (Martin 2000:85-90). It is likely that the women in the

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[5] I like to point out that many men in this particular academic setting also felt uncomfortable and have pointed out that they did not like the 'cock fighting' atmosphere.
[6] Another practice, which underscores this claim, is the persistent practice of seating arrangement at institutional festive gatherings. Clearly, the main and overriding principle for seating arrangements is the heterosexual couple. Why heterosexuality should be such an important principle for every festive occasion is part of the complex puzzle of body politics and gendered institutional practices.
[7] Disciplinary practices are understood here along the line of Sandra Bartky's (1990) work.

seminar room had been subject to similar experiences before and probably fell into a pattern of 'ordinary' behavior under such circumstances. Nor does the experience seem limited to this particular university. Morley (1999:83) in her study of feminist academics in three countries, found that many women experienced a sense of insecurity in their organizational environment. They struggled with how to appropriately and effectively express themselves. There seem to be something more general about these experiences as noted when comparing the similarities in experience from the seminar room with that of women in management positions, which Sue Maddock (1999) has interviewed. She says that:

> The most quoted compliant was that in meetings women managers were bypassed or just ignored. The overwhelming majority of middle managers complained that their managers did not listen to their comments about their work. The impact of such daily negative and denying reactions left them feeling undermined, marginalized and underconfident. The consensus was that this occurred because men thought that women had little to say or wondered what on earth they were talking about. (Maddock 1999:167)

In a traditionally male organization they way women act and talk, can appear ambiguous to the long-established group of men and hence, be difficult for them to read and understand. This may set women apart unfavorably (Alvesson and Billing 1997:108). Difficulties in communication between men and women may contribute to the way they perform and feel about engaging in the activities of the seminar. However, misunderstandings do not fully account for the power asymmetries of the gender relations played out there. When we are dealing with traditionally all-male or dominantly male institutions, as women engage in the organization they also trespass male boundaries (Gherardi 1995). In doing so, they compete with men over resources, like jobs and research grants, which in the previous absence of women were in practice reserved exclusively for men. The seminar room is an important place for academia and as we have seen, a place where women and men feel differently at ease.

> Christine Sylvester's concept 'homeless' was extremely helpful and became a useful metaphor to describe the sensation we had in the seminar room. The concept homeless made us aware that the feeling we had as individuals, described something more than our personal fears and insecurities (memo).

In thinking about homelessness, the gender dynamics of the seminar room became clearer. Many women and a few men did not feel that they belonged and therefore could not function well in a place, by tradition infused by norms of hegemonic masculinity.[8] The recognition of homelessness placed personal, individual insecurities and disappointment in an institutional context of gender relations. It was partly triggered by the increase in the number of female graduate students in the department during the 1990s which seemed to have

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[8] Rather than simply rely on a gender category man/woman it is useful to talk about masculinity particularly, as some men were also expressing discomfort with the setting and its practices. Hegemonic masculinity in Connell's terms implies the dominant model of masculinity, hence suggesting that other types of masculinities can be discussed within the broad category of male/man/masculine. This also suggests there being various forms of femininities within the broad category of woman. I don't make the distinction here but assume that some women might be very comfortable in the seminar room described and that the degree of discomfort may have varied among the women.

caused an unexpected institutional chock and exposed various forms of gender biases embedded in the institution. This development was crucial and the background for the 'homesteading' process which begun to take shape.

Homesteading as an Act of Resistance

> We gathered over coffee in our offices to talk about our impressions. We had lunches, and organized some just for the women in the department – graduate students and staff. We got together a lot, just to talk. We started talking to each other about the way we felt in the seminar room and as women working in the department. This was important because we came to understand over time, that the feeling was not only our own, but felt among other women as well. Although we had different interests, experiences and personalities, this understanding helped us build confidence and a sense of security. We became more and more convinced that there was nothing wrong with us, but the reason was elsewhere, somewhere in the walls of the department, traded down through practices in the seminar room and other spaces. (memo)

The narrative gives weight to Kanter's (1977) argument that a critical mass is needed in order to bring about organizational change because the possibility to engage with other women (and some men) who felt like strangers in the organization was essential. The process of lifting the personal to conceive it as political was facilitated by the turn to feminist literature. However, it needs to be pointed out that "female cannot be unilaterally equated with feminism, nor are all feminists reflexive about their location in organizational power relations" (Morley 1999:75). As the homesteading process took form and progressed, the engagement with feminism also become uncomfortable to some. In a way, and particularly over time, it tended to divide women from feminists. Due mainly to the stigmatization often associated with feminism, some graduate students seemed to have felt forced into an inopportune position. They had to make a choice of whether they wanted to be feminists (and perceived as hostile to men) or women researchers (i.e. not create trouble around current gender relations).

Christine Sylvester's writings (1994) seem to suggest that the only cure for homelessness is to find a home. Thus, homesteading is the strategy we employed. It meant making and shaping a political space for ourselves in order to go beyond and surpass the life of contradictions and anxieties of homelessness. In practice, homesteading was about trying to intervene in the dominant discourse. Homesteading aimed to change the dominant discourses on the role of the researcher, on methodology, teaching, learning and on the proper subject of political science. Homesteading, became something similar to what Mary Katzenstein has described as change through discursive politics. Discursive politics is "the politics of meaning making" and is about "the efforts to reinterpret, reformulate, rethink and rewrite the norms and practices of society and the state." (1998:17) Our ambitions were limited to try to rethink and reformulate the norms and practices of the seminar room. That, we felt was a difficult enough task.

Our initial approach was to try to influence the seminar agenda by suggesting subjects and books that we thought interesting. This way we hoped to guide the seminar discussions in the direction of issues we cared about. One of the very first such seminars discussed Rebecca Grant's and Kathleen Newland's anthology: Feminism and International Relations. Two graduate students, male and female, took responsibility for the presentation and discussion. It turned into a lively and extremely engaging debate which gradually grew more hostile and personal than anticipated. Faces turned brightly red of excitement and some took, it seemed, personal offense to suggestions made in the book that international-relations researchers and their theories had gender biases. Some were eager to dismiss such accusation by calling them ridiculous or unfair yet, others questioned whether gender had anything at all to do with political science. (memo)

We can note that while the first institutional chock came with the acceptance of an increasing amount of female graduate students in the department, the second chock came with the introduction of gender on the seminar agenda. By introducing gender as a subject, the gendered norms of political science research were challenged. There was a clear hostility as some researchers, exhibiting irrational gut reactions, attempted to police the borders of International Relations and political science from feminist interventions. Perplexed, we took part in this exciting event, joyed at the attention that indicated interest in the topic but, at the same time, shocked by these emotional outbursts in this otherwise very disciplined seminar space.

Surprisingly, we found ourselves in the position of defending and explaining feminist theory although most of us were novices. As researchers in women's bodies we were somehow assumed to represent and speak for feminist authors. We quickly realize that this was both an unfair expectation and a very difficult task. Although we praised the success of the seminar, since it was very engaging and moved far from the usual proceedings, we were not satisfied because we did not think we had successfully defended the contributions of feminism and international relations. We were afraid that our performance had only led to an easy dismissal of the subject for political science at our own department and took the responsibility for this upon ourselves.

The experience taught us two important lessons: For one, the reactions and the discussions in the seminar exposed and made the gendered nature of both our subject and some of the institutional practices, much more clearly visible. Although we had a notion of this before, now it was beyond doubt that the research field as well as the daily practices of the department were infused with male biased norms. Secondly, we came to realize that homesteading meant so much more than just introducing a few new issues on the seminar agenda. Homesteading seemed to require much more work and dedication on our part, more than some of us were perhaps willing to invest.

Radicalization and Successful Homesteading

> Although some of the women researchers were and had been involved in the women's movement and were clearly feminists, from the start I was not. I have always been a critical thinker questioning discrimination and injustices in general, but had not been a feminist. I even had shunned the word before, as I was afraid to be associated with a stigmatized feminist label. (memo)

As a result of these experiences many of the graduate students in the department became radicalized. While they had not earlier been particularly concerned about gender or feminist issues, they were now seeing things in a different light. Mary Katzenstein makes a similar observation as she argues that women in the military were radicalized when confronted with the practices of the institutions. She says: "/a/ctivists in the military came to their feminism from within the institution and were not co-opted from the outside. …/m/ost activists in the military environment developed their views of gender issues in the institution itself" (1998: 70). In other words, by living the gendered relations of the everyday practices of, in this case the military, gender relations become visible. The female officer takes those insights seriously and tries to understand them. Radicalization does *not* imply that we can expect radical or paradigmatic change within institutions, it only connotes the process that the individual woman is faced with. Radicalization within institutions, according to Katzenstein and I follow her definition, does not mean that radical politics are adopted. Rather, it names the process whereby the individual in her work becomes aware of the gendered norms that infuse the institution and takes action accordingly to this insight. If it will make an impact on the institution depends on whether a more permanent political space for feminist politics is created as a result of it. Obviously, it is possible for the radicalized individual to leave the institution and to decide to have nothing to do with it. The option of exit (Hirschman 1970) has certainly been the choice of many women in the military and is also frequent in the academic setting.

Our concern here is however, processes of institutional change so we will turn to look at homesteading practices and give some examples of its success.

> After the experience of the seminar room we begun to realize that real homesteading would required more of us than simply applying feminist theory as an extracurricular activity, in the after hours when 'real' work was completed. We felt the need to probe deeper, to read, discuss and learn. One graduate student, well read in feminist literature, organized a reading course which was outside our curriculum. We read literature that we then later hoped to include in our dissertation work. (memo)

Homesteading is about making a home, finding a place of refuge, tranquility and security. After the first seminar on gender issues we came to realize that we needed a space of our own where we could meet and discuss topics of interest, a space free from the practices of the seminar room. The various women scholars in Morley's study also accentuated the importance of space both in terms of having a proper office and a particular space for women (1999:94). It seems to be necessary at least in two ways: the recognition of agency associated with having 'a room of ones own' as Virginia Woolf puts it, and as a sanctuary, an

alternative space to freely develop thoughts and try new ideas in a comfortable ambience.

The women academics from Greece, Sweden and Great Britain discussed in Morley's study were overwhelmed by the burden of having to be bi-textual, i.e. they were required to know the mainstream texts well and on top of that be well-versed in critical feminist thought. This was necessary while at the same time mainstream academics could proceed successfully in their career without ever read, reference or acknowledge feminist scholarship (Morley 1999: 162). In many ways this was also true in our case, we were expected to defend feminist theory in some logical, simple way, making very complex issues simple enough to grasp for those who had never acquainted themselves with women's studies or feminist theory. At the same time it was assumed that we were familiar with most mainstream work.[9] While this was certainly burdensome it was also very engaging.

> Through critical feminist thought, political science and IR suddenly became much more interesting. Personally, for the first time I got really excited and could not let go of reading the literature, thinking about it and discussing its contents. (memo)

The women in Morley's study also feel exhilaration when they work with feminist studies. Morley is doubtful whether this excitement turns in to energy which can lead to social change (1999: 164). While assessing social change is an extremely difficult task it is nevertheless, questionable if one can introduce new meanings, practices and thinking in a traditional organizational context, without a great deal of work. I would consider the development in our case as something more than individual satisfaction but have more difficulty in assessing how it has contributed to great institutional change. Some change was put in force and I would not hesitate to claim that. It opened up and in some ways secured a space for feminist research and teaching, in ways which were not possible ten years earlier. The first Ph.D. completed by a woman in the department came in 1987. It was followed by a second one, six years later. It is only after 1993 that women start getting Ph.D. degrees regularly at the department. It is thus a considerable feat that out of the total number of dissertations since 1987, 15 have been written by women and 33 by men.

Because the seminar room had been such a traumatic experience for many we developed an explicit strategy from the very beginning. Initially, it consisted of a kind of support group for all the women at the department. Later, the strategy developed into ways to gain knowledge and confidence through readings and discussions in a smaller setting. The ambition was to bring this into the larger seminar and engage the discussion there. The idea was that this would supercede silence since we would be more prepared to speak among familiar faces. The atmosphere would be more supportive due to our previous experience which, then could somehow spill over into the larger seminar.

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[9] This is likely a much more general problem, i.e. any researcher interested in a 'new' field or perspective may be expected to be 'bi-textual'.

Subsequently we organized the course on feminist theory which gave us the tools and concepts to understand more clearly both our feelings of homelessness and suggest homesteading strategies. As a follow up, we arranged a number of monthly seminars discussing various issues of concern, such as representation, power, science and teaching. All was discussed from a feminist or women's studies perspectives. We took responsibility for the seminars in turns and advertised across the whole university because we wanted to engage with people outside our department as well. These seminars were successful and many interesting people attended. In this stage we begun to connect with feminist thinkers outside the academic setting and we also met and got to know some of the women working with women's studies at various other departments of the University.

Looking back, it seems as if this strategy was rather successful but it also depended on what constellation of people were present. Thus, we made this effort to change the seminar room atmosphere more befitting to our interests and needs. Indeed, our own seminars were strengthening and encouraging because we placed our own concerns and interests firmly into political science. We managed to articulate a political science discourse including feminist theories and methods rather than dismissing them to the after-hours or margins.

Initially, I argued that the organizational culture of the department was infused with male-norms due to its historic tradition of being an all-male profession. It was also the gendered character of the institution that made the resistance politics–homesteading– carried out by women and feminists to expand the discourse on political science, both necessary and possible. Although, I would be inclined to attribute the success to those who actively participated in the process, there were certain factors which may have enhanced and facilitated the process, I will turn to that opportunity structure in the following.

The opportunity structure

In this section I will outline factors in the broader societal and institutional setting that I argue, influenced the development on gender and feminist issues and the shape it took in this specific department of the University. They are the gender equity norms in society, the particular governance structure of the department and the role of mentors and outside support.

Equity Norms in Society
The Swedish academic setting of the early and mid 1990s was subject to broader societal norms, at the time highly concerned with gender issues and the unequal distribution of men and women in different careers and positions.
Mary Katzenstein (1998) stresses the importance of having a legislative framework to lean back on for the women that she studies, to survive in and change the discourse of the military and church institutions somewhat in their favor. Similarly, in the Swedish context, laws of equal opportunity, and laws against sexual harassment have been important to guarantee women the right to a fair and safe working environment. In addition, particular policies and programs aiming at encouraging women's careers in the University have been launched. While the strategy of creating thirty special professors' chairs for

gender studies related to different academic disciplines stirred up a controversy, other 'affirmative action' policies are accepted without much criticism. Examples of such activities are: to prioritizing a women applicant for a position in an academic environment dominated by men or special research grants and scholarships awarded exclusively to women. The political support for gender equality in general, I surmise, has also played a significant role for the feminists homesteading in the department. This is because general equity norms in the broader societal context are momentous to the possibility of changing gender relations within institutions where women are a minority and also late comers. Without such gender equity norms, change would be most likely much slower.

Homosociability and the Paternal Organization
Men, in male-dominated organizations have an interest in supporting the status quo because it is advantageous for them to do so. By keeping women out they also eliminate 50% of a possible competition over jobs and resources. Although these are undeniably some of the material factors making gendered practices within organization enduring, it is a macropolitical approach which can not sufficiently account for the mechanics in institutional practice that seem to perpetuate a gendered order. To understand this, it may be more useful to focus on processes of homosocial reproduction as ways in which gendered organizations are reproduced. These are subtle processes and advanced for example by Alvesson and Billing in their work on gender in organizations who argue that in male-dominated power structures there is a tendency to homosocial reproduction which means that men seek, enjoy and prefer the company of their own sex. Accordingly, disadvantages for women in the institutional setting are reproduced because those in central positions will "advance attitudes and values which make it easier for the people holding them to move upwards in the hierarchy." In male dominated institutions these values and attitudes reflect the male-as-norm. This reproduction of values contributes to the gendered division of labor (Alvesson and Billing 1997:71). So while men might not consciously or overtly exclude women, they may have a tendency to favor connections with other men in work, research and leisure time, hence reproducing the homosocial environment in which they are a part and making it difficult for women to engage in it. Furthermore, it may be one explanation why men's wages in the Lund University remain higher than women despite them being in identical jobs. At least that is what the President of the University Faculty Union, Karin Warfvinge, argued in a recent study on wages and gender differences: "I think men choose other men for positions because they understand each other more easily" (quoted in SDS July 9. 2001 *my translation*). Thus, the need for various broader societal measures to encourage women to pursue a research career may be essential in order to break such homosocial patterns. Such homosocial relations, I will argue in the following, fit well with an organizational model that would consider governance structures in the organization as modeled on paternal family relations.

Individuals, new to organizations, normally try to figure out how the institution works and what the informal rules and unwritten norms are. In the case of the department it was difficult to do. In one way it seemed very loose and open and indeed, there was a lot of talk about tolerance and pluralism. Yet, there seemed to be an authoritative element to it as well. In one way, the 'not seeing' how the

governance structure worked, meant you were oblivious to it. This, then, seemed to leave openings and opportunities that we took advantage of as female graduate students. Much later when I came across Sattler's study I found it striking that one of the informants in the study, Sheila, "sees the larger university as a hierarchy based on a father model." She is quoted as saying: "I think the whole university is set up in a patriarchal fashion with daddy at the top, and you know and on down (1997:117)." Such a paternalistic model may very well also explain the governance structure of our specific academic department and the norms according to which it was run. I came to realize a bit later as I had familiarized myself with the work place and the space of the seminar room that it resembled a traditional paternal family. Relationships modeled on those between fathers and sons, i.e. a homosocial pattern, seem to have historically formed the organization. Gareth Morgan too, in his well-known work *Images of Organization* (1986) argues the relevance of the paternal model to the corporate world.

> "In viewing organizations as unconscious extensions of family relations we thus have a powerful means of understanding key features of the corporate world. We are also given a clue as to how organizations are likely to change along with contemporary changes in family structure and parenting relations. And we see the major role that women and gender-related values can play in transforming the corporate world" (Morgan 1986:212)

Although Morgan discusses the corporate world the paternal organizational model can be relevant for organizations more broadly. According to this paternal model, in organizations "..one person defers to the authority of another exactly as the child defers to parental rule" (Morgan 1986:211). In can be expected then, that in the department the model sons are picked, groomed and raised by the fathers. Starting from such a view of the organization we may explore the role of the daughters.

The paternal authority structure was at first, completely invisible and hence, we may conjecture that the daughters were either oblivious to it or alternatively, they sensed it as paternal. What appeared most salient was the relationship between fathers and sons and hence, the daughters fit into a different role. The role we can ascribe to them is as the rambunctious daughters. Following this line of analysis, somewhat to the envy of the sons, the rambunctious daughter often get what she asks for. So did we, for example, we would not hesitate to suggest a topic for discussion, invite a guest speaker of our choice, and ask to have some refreshments after a seminar. We learned later, that this was a novel way of doing things. Although we liked to attribute it to our own cleverness and the way we convincingly argued the value and importance of our requests, perhaps it reflected the relationship between fathers and their daughters. The daughters often are, at least in the eyes of the fathers, charming, clever and perhaps a little manipulative. Consequently, the fathers spoil their daughters and give them everything they ask for. Yet, all the while they know that the daughter will marry and be gone soon enough. In the end, it is the son that follows the father's footsteps, takes over and honors his legacy.

Being largely based on relational psychology this model is difficult to verify but serves as a heuristic tool to help us understand institutional dynamics. One indication that may nevertheless empirically support it, is the fact that it is exclusively young male researchers who to date are participating as research fellows in projects initiated by the tenured senior academics in the department. All the women who have stayed with the department after their Ph.D. have either been financed though university grants through teaching and/or by generating their own individual projects. It should be noted that getting external funding on ones own in an extremely competitive environment is no easy task.[10] Being a young woman with only limited publications but favored by gender equity norms, may not be as beneficial for research funding as being under the wings of an established senior male scholar.

If we continue for a moment to expand on the paternal family as an institutional model, we might consider the mothers. Where there not any mothers who could perhaps support or mentor these daughters? Feminist work has often pointed to the need for role models, to set examples to mobilize women. In the early 1990s there were certainly some mother figures in the department. One particularly woman had worked there for over 35 years and she was, no doubt, very motherly in her duties. She was the head administrative secretary and as such performed tasks associated with work that women traditionally have been expected to do, work of service and support. While the mothers were certainly supportive of the daughters, the relationship was somewhat tenuous. The mother may be simultaneously proud, yet, envious of the fact that the daughter ventured further than she ever did or dreamed of doing. The daughters too, had an ambivalent relationship towards the mothers. They needed to distance and differentiate themselves of being associated with typical female roles and needed to affirm that they were researchers and *not* secretaries.

The Importance of Mentors
In Sattler's study the university teachers talk in detail about how they mentor younger students and make them aware of gender structures in the classroom and in the college environment. Sattler concludes that "/t/hese women's mentoring activity functions both to assist junior faculty in subverting the system and to perpetuate the structure of the university.." (1997:125). In our case there was no feminist or female professor in the department and it was obvious that the 'mothers' described above could not fulfill that function. However, one senior female lecturer was generally supportive and did much to encourage gender issues on the teaching curriculum and include textbooks authored by women. Somewhat controversially I will suggest that the lack of a mentor who could set the agenda for feminist issues may have been, in this case, actually beneficial. Due to this lack we had to find our own way. There was no one telling us about the structure of the department or how bad things were. As a result, we were particularly ignorant about hierarchies in the paternal organization, and felt as graduate students we had the right, the knowledge and the energy to challenge some of these gendered practices. Mentors may be very important in raising feminist consciousness and provide general support. This

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[10] Some recent studies in the field of medical research have shown that women who receive research funding have to show far more publications and merits when applying for and receiving the same research funding that men do (SDS 20010425).

notwithstanding, it can also be discouraging to have it all told to you, i.e. that you are a victim of oppressing gender relations. In teaching I have experienced these drawbacks right in the classroom. When confronted with feminist ideas, theories and literature, young women can be fiercely critical reaching almost to a point of denial. It is possible that the process of becoming aware of gender structures puts a damper on their dreams of future possibilities. There is therefore a risky moment of victimizing in becoming acquainted with feminist literature. Since much feminist work point to the structural components of gender systems for the individual woman, it may portray women more as victims rather than as agents actively in charge of their lives.

Pluralist Norms
Opportunities also arose somewhat paradoxically out of the combination of formal often articulated pluralism of the academic environment and the very informal nature of the paternal organizational structure. The freedom for graduate students to pursue their own subjects of interest when writing a dissertation and freedom of choice of theoretical framework is something which was repeatedly evoked within the department and by its leadership. The praise of pluralism and freedom of choice as the key to building a strong academic discipline and a good institution was one of the norms of the department articulated in the seminar room. It did not particularly state that feminism was desirable, but with such a strong pluralist norm it would be difficult to exclude it openly. Cheryl Sattler's 1997 study of feminists and feminist teaching is a qualitative study that compares teachers in the public schools with teachers in the universities. One of the most striking differences between the two groups of teachers is the freedom that university teachers have to influence their own curriculum and pedagogic as well as their choice of topics. It seems then, that in the university setting there is academic freedom and more tolerance relative to other societal institutions. This also means tolerance and openness to feminist concerns. This freedom was crucial for our possibilities to influence the department's agenda. For example, there were no strict guidelines about required readings. Although some of the classic political science texts were considered mandatory there was some room to exchange and add texts to the reading list and it became a way to introduce for example, feminist theory. Furthermore, since the norm was that the choice of dissertation topic, methods and theoretical framework was entirely up to the gradate student, it opened up for the use of feminist theory in our dissertations as well.

From the experiences drawn on in this article it can be concluded that it is not always necessary to have a mentor and that the lack of one may even open up possibilities. What seems to have been crucial in this case however, was the fact that there was a sufficient number of women sharing an experience and being interested in making some changes. Out of this, a small group pushing for gender awareness was created. Being part of a group in an otherwise individualistic environment gave the necessary strength to our cause. At the same time, the creation of this visible group of mainly women was obviously perceived as threatening. We received hate mail and tension arose in sporadic conflict, mainly as a result of the perception of a feminist fraction within the department. Finally, seeking support from outside compensated for the lack of feminist mentors and scholars within the department.

Networks for Inspiration and Support

> I attended my first International Studies Association conference in
> Washington D.C. in 1994. There were many panels and many papers on
> thousands of topics. Since it was my first time there and I wanted to be an
> ambitious graduate student, I attend panel after panel. I listened to good
> paper presentations and worse ones. The panels that got me really excited
> were the ones within the section on feminist theory and gender studies
> (FTGS). I found myself going to more of their panels every day and it was
> both refreshing and inspiring. I liked the subject, the researchers and the
> way they presented their material. In the evenings we went to dinner and
> socialized. I was so full of new ideas and energy when I came home
> (memo).

I went back to these panels year after year, for inspiration, and so did some of
the other women at the department. They also had similar experiences in other
conferences and workshops, often outside Sweden. These conferences played a
significant role for our further achievements at home since they provided
examples for what could possibly be done within the field. Furthermore, it
provided inspiration and guidance encouraging us to go on with our ambitions,
hence, in a way substituted for a mentor inside the department. If we ever had
any doubts whether feminism and international relations was a field with
research relevance, the FTGS eliminated any such doubts. We were convinced
that this was not only an exciting field, full of research opportunities but it was
highly relevant and in desperate need to be investigated.

Although not actually involving themselves with our daily struggles, various
feminists outside our department contributed support and inspiration to carry on
with our work. As part of our effort to change the experience in the seminar
room, we invited different scholars to hold lectures in seminar form always with
the support of the department. After the formal lecture we would arrange an
informal gathering. Through such encounters we were able to gain insight into
our own situation, as we compared our experience to stories lived in other
institutional settings. As stories were conveyed to us by the invited scholars we
also gained knowledge about the broader university and research context.
Sometimes we would even get advice regarding strategies. Susan Gibson, then
at Oxford University, came up with the idea to organize a conference. A
conference–she said– would make a long lasting impact both inside and outside
our department and thereby place our efforts on the academic map.

We decided to organize a conference and called it A World in Transition:
Feminist Perspectives on International Relations. It was a broader initiative but
in the end five graduate students carefully and meticulously planned it and
searched for funding. We spent much effort in creating a good proposal and to
our great surprise managed to secure funding for the entire project. It was a large
conference and we financed both participants from Russia, the eastern part of
Europe, graduate students and lecturers. The first day was open to the public and
hosted in the Main University aula, an important venue for events of this
dignitude. There were keynote speeches by prominent scholars: Galia Golan,

Israel, Christine Sylvester, Australia, Hanne Petersen, Greenland and Hilary Rose from Great Britain. The following two days engaged 59 scholars, all with paper contributions, in five parallel workshops. The event was acknowledged by the head of the University, Boel Flodgren–a woman for the first time in Swedish academic history– who told the audience her personal story of becoming, first, professor then, University chancellor. We were ecstatic over the success of the conference. It raised our self-esteem and gave us enough support and courage to feel we have a place in international relations and political science. The enormous support we got from those who attended affirmed this. At the same time it seemed to be the culmination of the collective activities on our part, many had to turn to individual dissertation work. We published a summary of the proceedings and selected papers in a special issue of the Swedish journal of political science (Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift). It felt like a great acknowledgement.

Concluding reflections

Through the analysis of institutional practices in this chapter by the way of my own experiences we can conclude that institutional change is a problematic and complicated process. Agents are both enabled and restricted by the embedded institutional norms handed down and reproduced in the organization over time. It was argued that a focus on micro-political processes is one approach to try to understand the complexities of institutions and it was done by first focusing on the seminar room as an important site where institutional practices are reproduced. Although the institutional norms were based on male-as-norm and resulted in the sensation of homelessness among the women there were simultaneously certain elements in the opportunity structure, which worked to benefit women's agency. These elements were the particular position of daughters in a paternal organization, equity norms in society, and pluralist norms in academia. The major conclusions was no doubt, that the rapidly increasing number of women entering the department over a short period of time beginning in the early 1990s was a crucial element. So was these particular women's ambitions at shaping the discourse on political science and desires to create a space for themselves through homesteading practices. I argued that it was clearly facilitated by the fact that these young women were initially relatively unaware of the oppressive institutional structures. However, in attempts to change the institutional setting the women's own agency partly based on the study of feminist theory and practice was essential.

We may ask ourselves, beyond the conference, what lasting impact did homesteading have? Do feminist now have a home in the department? There seems to be a space for feminism and gender studies. Feminist topics have become acceptable in the seminar room and they are no longer seen as controversial or irrelevant but appears to be part of the agenda. Gender issues have been put on reading lists of courses both at the introductory and more advanced level courses. A number of the scholars originally engaged in the feminist homesteading process are working on research projects and are teaching in the department. A number of graduate students have decided to make gender or feminist issues part of their thesis work. These tendencies

notwithstanding, it might be still to early to assess whether the home is permanent or still to be considered temporary.

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