

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/women-professors-across-stemm-and-non-stemm-disciplines/>

This video discusses the progress and ongoing challenges faced by women in academia, particularly in achieving representation in senior academic roles and STEM disciplines. Despite improvements over the past few decades—for instance, the percentage of women vice chancellors in the top 200 UK universities has risen from 13% to 25%—gender segregation persists, especially at higher levels.

The study emphasizes that women, particularly from minority groups, remain underrepresented in professorial roles, with around 70% of full professors being white men. The research highlights the horizontal and vertical gender segregation within academia, with women dominating some STEM fields (like nursing) while being outnumbered in others (like economics and philosophy).

To deepen understanding, the researchers aimed to explore how women professors navigate their careers in various disciplines and the differences in their experiences based on gender dynamics in their fields. Despite recognizing the need for women to adapt to male-dominated environments, the research also critiques the notion that academia is inherently gender-neutral.

The study involved interviews with 31 women professors, revealing common strategies for career advancement: conforming to the role of ideal worker, building networks, and engaging in leadership. These strategies highlighted the competitive nature of academic careers, the pressure for publications, and the necessity of balancing professional and personal responsibilities, including motherhood.

The findings suggest that while the "rules of the game" may be similar across disciplines, subtle differences exist based on gendered spaces within academia. Challenges and experiences vary depending on whether fields are male-dominated, female-dominated, or balanced, emphasizing the need for a more nuanced understanding of gender dynamics.

Future research is encouraged to examine these issues across different institutions, consider intersectionality, and understand generational differences in navigating academic careers.