

Special Issue Call for Papers  
**Sexism and Gender-Washing in Academia and Beyond**

**Guest Editors**

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Frequently normalized, collectively vicious, and yet camouflaged in our close and working relationships, sexism is experienced at institutional, organizational, and personal levels. Recent studies of sexism in the workplace (Yarrow & Davies, 2022; Liu, 2023; Das et al., 2023; Gothreau, et al. 2022; Alonso & O'Neill 2022) have concluded that institutional inaction serves as a force for the legitimation and perpetuation of sexism. Gendered institutional structures enact systemic barriers to professional advancement that disproportionately disadvantage women (van den Brink & Stobbe, 2009; Bird, 2011; Vershinina et al., 2020). These barriers are maintained as paid work in bureaucratic, market-driven organizations assumes the body and life of a man (Acker, 1990). Notwithstanding the legal frameworks to prevent discrimination and promote equality in the workplace, women are still underrepresented in decision-making roles, remain primarily responsible for undervalued care work, are paid less than men, and are disproportionately subjected to symbolic violence (Acker, 1990; McLaughlin et al., 2017; Castelao-Huerta, 2022).

Academia, despite being one of the sectors directly involved in championing gender equality, continues to feature a widespread gender pay gap and the ostensible lack of women in leadership positions, hence demonstrating the persistence of traditional gender politics and normative regimes built around them (Husu & Koskinen 2010; White & Bagilhole, 2013; see also Van den Brink & Benschop, 2012; Knights & Richards, 2003; Fotaki, 2013; Jones et al., 2019). The recent marketization of academic work contexts, particularly in business schools, produced structural changes (Jones et al., 2019) that have led to the growth of managerialism, contributing to the commodification and transformation of the public image of higher education (Sappey, 2005) and driving changes to governance, processes, and organizational structures that become increasingly marked by work intensification,

surveillance, and control (Broadbent et al., 2013; Teelken & Deem, 2013; Sang et al., 2015). Unsurprisingly, the destructive effects of academic sexism continue to be extensively noted (Gutiérrez y Muhs et al., 2012; Mountz, 2016). Despite efforts to challenge sexist practices (e.g., through equality-centric organisational policies), and even in contexts that are considered leading in terms of gender equality (e.g., the educational sector in Finland), universities are still characterized by everyday sexism of role divisions, symbols, and interactions (Husu, 2001). In such contexts, “silence around organizational sexism takes a form of a forced or deliberate retreat into passivity born out of the interplay between individual- and organization-level reactions to the reality of gender power structures” (Shymko et al., 2023: 16).

As sexist practices continue to prevail, we also witness an escalation of the so-called ‘gender-washing’ phenomena, where institutions display efforts to achieve more gender equality by sticking to and appropriating the EDI narrative, whilst simultaneously masking real issues related to remuneration and promotion practices. One poignant illustration is displaying the gender parity in the number of recruited and promoted faculty but hiding the pay gap and the unequal opportunities for career progression. Interestingly, although there is a significant literature in business and management studies criticizing the so-called ‘greenwashing,’ in which organizations use corporate social responsibility programs and related marketing strategies to present themselves as environmentally friendly and to deflect criticism from harmful environmental practices (see for instance Ozkazanc-Pan, 2019), critiques of gender-washing remain much scarcer (Fox-Kirk, Gardiner, Finn, & Chisholm, 2020; Walters, 2021).

With this special issue, we want to highlight the need to investigate how dominant and dissonant discourses and organizational practices such as gender-washing, are enacted to produce sexism in organizations. We invite texts, accounts, alternative narratives, autobiographies, collective accounts, and other forms of contemplation on issues surrounding sexism and gender-washing in academia and beyond. We particularly encourage feminist and interdisciplinary approaches taking a multifaceted take on the topic. Work submitted to the special issue can have a large scope, and can include, but is not restricted to the following issues:

- What is the praxis of sexism and gender-washing in today's academic and other sectors of the knowledge economy?
- How are sexism and gender-washing articulated in specific global, socio-economic, or cultural contexts?
- How are sexism and gender-washing prevalent across hierarchies, disciplinary differences, and categories of workers?
- How are sexism and gender-washing experienced at the intersection of class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age and/or gender?
- How can sexism and gender-washing be responded to and how can social change be achieved?
- What is the role of allies, networks, and mentoring in the action against sexism and gender-washing?
- What does it mean to be sexist for men and women in today's organizational and academic context?
- Why do people who experience and perceive sexism and gender-washing remain silent?
- What are the mechanisms that render it difficult to mobilize a collective action against sexist practices?

### **Submission Information**

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submission. Please select the 'Original Article' as the article type on submission. On the

Additional Information page during submission, select 'Yes, this is for a Special Issue' and the

Special Issue title from the dropdown list, 'Sexism and Gender-Washing in Academia and

Beyond'. For questions about the submission system please contact the Editorial Office at

[gwooffice@wiley.com](mailto:gwooffice@wiley.com).

For enquiries and information about the scope of the Special Issue and article suitability, please contact Camilla Quental ([cquental@audencia.com](mailto:cquental@audencia.com)).

**Deadline for submissions: 25 March 2024**

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