

search, as education is not only an individual good but also an investment of welfare societies. Future work in the sociology of education may fruitfully fill some of these gaps, by focusing on individual experiences, on how institutions influence and stimulate educational developments, and on the structure of relations between social and educational institutions. This report is a valuable starting point for more in-depth sociological research explaining the deeper social mechanisms behind the evidence presented here.

Katrin Gasior

European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and  
Research, Vienna  
gasior@euro.centre.org

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**Paul Seabright: *The War of the Sexes. How Conflict and Cooperation Have Shaped Men and Women from Prehistory to the Present***

Princeton, NJ, 2012: Princeton University Press, 241 pp.

Economic relations between men and women are unequal today. Women are severely under-represented in many (high-status)

professions and earn less than men in comparable positions. The top layer of the labour market remains clearly male-dominated. For instance, only 1 in every 40 chief executive officers affiliated with Fortune 500 companies is a woman. These inequalities endure even though formal barriers to women's employment were lifted decades ago—often in the second half of the 20th century—while female labour force participation rates have converged towards men's. Women have reached par or even outnumber men in the most recent cohorts of university graduates in many Western countries. Why then do economic inequalities between men and women continue to persist? The economist Paul Seabright puts forward an interesting thesis: Today's inequalities are rooted in our biological inheritance which we need to appreciate in order to understand the present.

In the second part of the book, Seabright reviews other possible explanations. He takes up (and later rejects) the argument that inequalities between men and women are driven by differences in talent (Chapter 5). Measuring talent is challenging, yet if cognitive abilities and personality traits (the 'Big Five') are taken as valid indicators, the minor sex differences that appear to exist do not warrant the large gaps in economic returns. But while averages between the sexes are close, men show a higher degree of variation in certain traits. Tending to more extreme behaviours, they are more often found both at the top and at the bottom (in prisons and among the homeless) of society. It is, however, implausible that a certain measured talent would uncover the particular and complex talents needed in order to perform a job well and, empirically, talent explains economic outcomes only partially. In sum, Seabright dismisses an explanation based on talent as entirely unconvincing.

He instead turns to the argument that discrepancies in economic rewards between men and women are due to differ-

ences in preferences for certain behaviour and jobs (Chapter 6). Women have been observed to be more risk-averse and less competitive than men (although the reason why does not matter for the argumentation). In itself, this difference fails to account for the large inequalities since it is modest and sensitive to context. Moreover, present economies are as much based on competition as on managing competition. Seabright argues, however, that the organisation of labour amplifies these differences. Employers negotiate harder with women (and women negotiate less aggressively than men), who are then left to pay a high price for their preferences. Most importantly, women take career breaks and reduce their working hours after the birth of a child—to then face unreasonably high costs. Companies are usually well able to accommodate to these choices, but they are taken as signals of being less committed to the job. A very high number of working hours may not be the most efficient and useful way to get a job done, but it signals a high value attached to one's work. Since taking time off for childcare is decoded as less commitment, signalling commitment is more difficult for women than for men.

Another explanation relates to the different ways in which men and women cooperate and form networks (Chapter 7). While women tend to invest substantially and repeatedly in relations with fewer persons, thus forming strong ties, men establish a larger number of weak ties. Moreover, each sex prefers to network with same-sex individuals to the disadvantage of women who lack ties in strategic domains since fewer of them hold positions of power. But are these networks at all relevant for economic rewards? Seabright presents his own empirical study on the board members and senior executives of American and European companies. Network size is calculated as the number of currently powerful people with whom an individual has crossed paths in the past. As expected, larger numbers of

ties are linked to higher salaries, but sex-specific effects differ by hierarchical level. Among non-executives (those who sit on boards), men and women profit in equal measure from a larger network. Male executives (those who run companies) yield higher revenues from more contacts, while their female counterparts do not. Hence, there is evidence that in certain contexts, men are able to gain more professional benefits from their networks.

From his discussion so far, Seabright suggests two policies to combat economic inequalities between the sexes (Chapter 9). First, he proposes the use of gender-balanced short lists from which firms choose whom to employ. The concrete balance should depend on the presence of men and women in a certain profession. In this way, imbalance in the attention of recruiters, which is due to men's and women's non-congruent networks, would be targeted. Second, paternity leave should be made compulsory as is maternity leave. The rationale behind this policy is that parenthood would involve a work interruption independent of the parent's sex, talent or motivation. Thus, the negative signalling effect of a career break would be mitigated. Seabright argues that the ways parents bring up their children have major repercussions for the future, it is thus in the interest of society that fathers divert some professional responsibility to the domestic sphere.

In the first part of the book, Seabright explains where these discrepancies in sex-specific preferences and co-operation come from (Chapters 1–4). His main argument is that they are rooted in our biological inheritance, more precisely in sex-specific reproductive strategies. Sexual conflict lies at the core of the relationship between men and women, because men target a high number of offspring, while women, aiming at quality, have to be selective because their eggs are scarce. Men have therefore invented strategies to credibly advertise for sex:

They accumulate and control resources because of their signalling effect. Since seduction is largely emotional, men amass more resources than needed (the author relates this behaviour to a wasteful consumerist lifestyle). Seabright underpins his argument with a large number of examples from different species, for example male dance flies making their gathered food look more abundant or male scorpions drugging their partners. Men also need to signal commitment and intention to support their female partners in raising children. Whereas men compete for sex, women compete for the most reliable provider of that care. Despite conflict at the core, human beings are also the most co-operative species on earth since human childhood is extraordinary long as compared with other offspring. Caring for children is very elaborate and requires a large degree of co-operation between the parents and beyond. Throughout history, women have often been constrained in making autonomous choices that would conform to their reproductive interests. In prehistoric hunter-gatherer societies, women enjoyed a larger degree of autonomy because they played an important role in foraging. Men's and women's brains evolved so similarly precisely because both sexes faced similar cognitive challenges throughout this period. Later, in agricultural societies, men exercised more control over women.

*The War of the Sexes* is a very inspiring book and an impressive scientific contribution. It analyses the inequality between the sexes in a compelling way, lightly crossing the borders between biology, history and the social sciences. The author gathered a remarkable amount of empirical data covering various disciplines and periods in history. He presents this wealth of information in a clear and coherent way, thus bringing forward a highly readable book full of fascinating and witty anecdotes.

Since Seabright adopts such a broad perspective, however, the connection be-

tween the first part (biological inheritance and historical foundation) and the second part of the book (present inequalities) is not always comprehensible. One reason may be that the author proceeds directly from pre-history to contemporary times, omitting the period of agricultural societies.

This book adds an interdisciplinary perspective to the social scientific literature on gender inequality. The author argues that these inequalities have a biological basis without suggesting that the differences between the sexes are large or that divergent economic outcomes are inevitable. Moreover, focusing on the work sphere, this contribution complements many recent studies which have concentrated on the unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work within families. Seabright's work-related policy suggestions are closely tied to the arguments presented and are reasonable and practical.

Caroline Berghammer  
University of Vienna and  
Austrian Academy of Sciences  
caroline.berghammer@univie.ac.at

**Patrick Emmenegger, Silja Häussermann, Bruno Palier and Martin Seeleib-Kaiser (eds.): *The Age of Dualization. The Changing Face of Inequality in Deindustrializing Societies***  
Oxford 2012: Oxford University Press, 368 pp.

Do all industrialised democracies experience problems of social, political and labour-market exclusion? Are these problems here to stay, and will they change for good the politics of contemporary welfare states? Do we know and understand the dividing lines between insiders and outsiders when it comes to employment prospects and policy preferences? *The Age of Dualization. The Changing Face of Inequality in Deindustrializing Societies* tackles these big questions. It