

Working for Gender Equality across Borders and Disciplines

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Standing Committee
for **Gender Equality** in Science



**International
Science Council**

IUHPST

International Union of History and
Philosophy of Science and Technology

Experience and Assumptions

- Trained in mathematics and in Chinese studies
- Historian of science
- Research on the circulation of knowledge between Europe and China in the 17th and 18th centuries: how scientific knowledge produced elsewhere can be appropriated.

- The universality of science is a construction, not a given.
- Importance of making all voices heard
- Awareness of the presence of silent, invisible actors

How we read the evidence

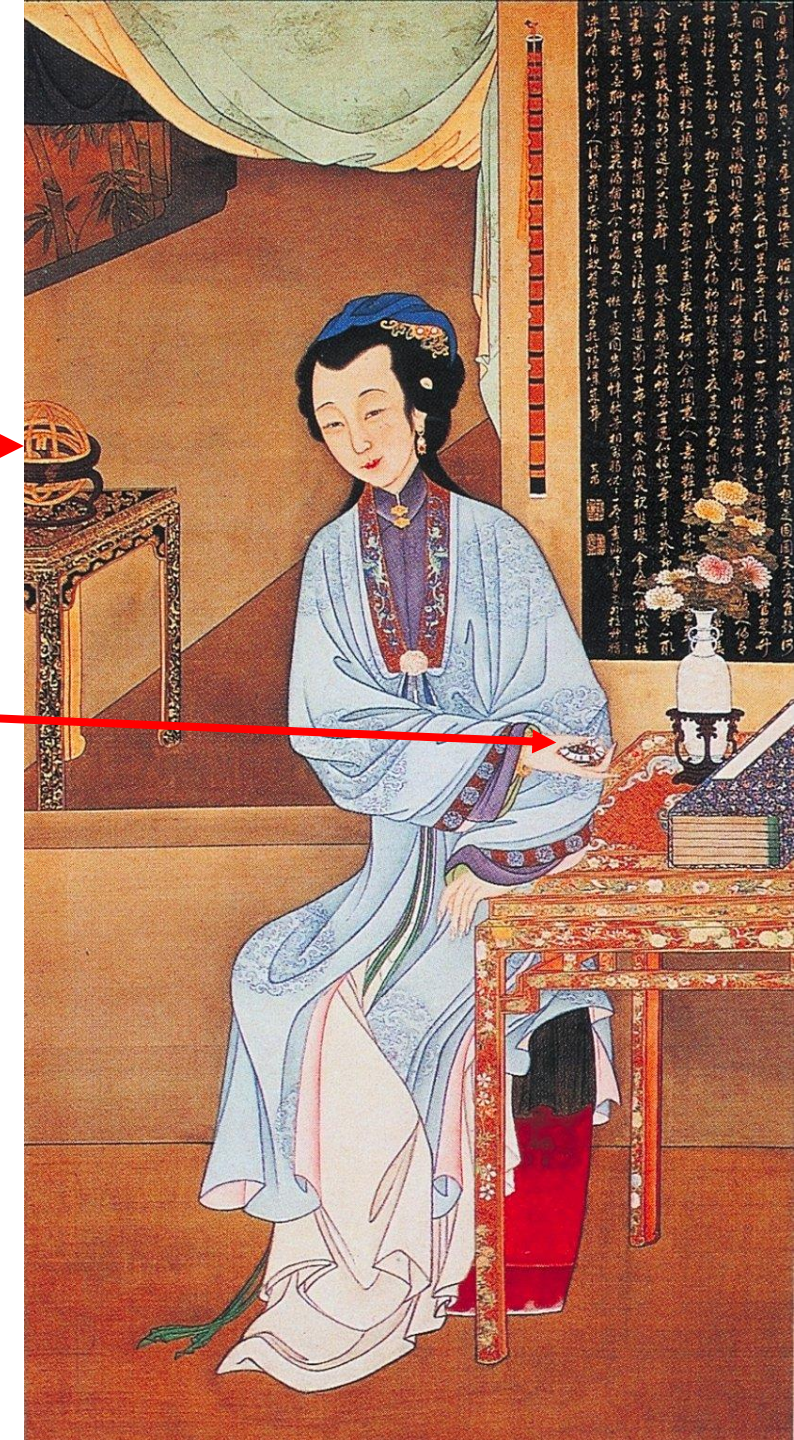
A Chinese painting of the early 18th century: the portrait of a woman belonging to the elite

Received comment: “Scientific instruments were treated as luxury items to be displayed.”

Other possibility: Women may well have participated in the taste for astronomy that prevailed at the imperial court.

Armillary Sphere

Watch



持表观菊 “Holding a watch, looking at chrysanthemums”

故宫 《十二美人图》 Palace Museum, Gu6458 8

Gender Equality: Between Local and Global

- The gender gap is not something specific to the sciences. It pervades all human societies around the world. Gender equality is one of UN's sustainable development goals.
- Scientific professions are embedded in these societies.
- The gender gap in science varies in width; no single country has done away with it.
- What can we, as scientists, do about the gender gap in science?

Where can we act? Locally

- In the institution where we work
- In the classroom where we teach
- At home as parents
- As citizens

Where can we act? Globally

- Science is international and global
- Scientific unions, and international associations, have been working for gender equality for years, sometimes for decades.
- Can we share standards and good practices globally?
- Coordinating efforts, exchanging experiences

The Dual Role of Science

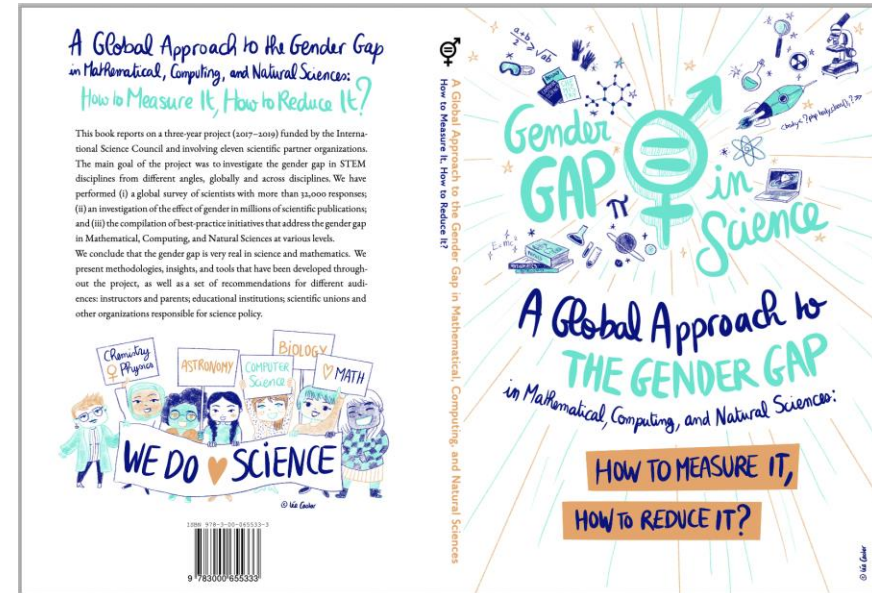
- Science as our profession: act from within the profession, to make it inclusive.
- Science as shared knowledge: approaching the issue of gender equality with the tools that some of our disciplines provide.
 - Biology, statistics, data science, psychology, sociology, political sciences...
- What I have learned from history of science:
 - There have always been women of science: invisibilization
 - The role that science has played in the past in the 'naturalization' of the gender gap.
- As scientists, we are well placed to use the tools provided by science to implement good practices in our profession.

Across Borders and Disciplines

- Taking on board the diversity of situations depending on both countries and disciplines.
 - For example, at international conferences
 - Child care and baby feeding rooms
 - Who has authority to decide whether a woman can attend: herself? Her boss? Her husband?
- This is NOT about the “Global North” “leading the way”, but rather about ensuring that best practices are defined taking into account the diversity of situations.
 - For example, the issue of retirement age.

From the Gender Gap in Science to the Standing Committee for Gender Equality in Science

- A joint project of several unions, led by IMU (mathematicians) and IUPAC (chemists), funded by the International Science Council, 2017-2019.
- To make the networks created during the Gender Gap in Science Project permanent, founding of the Standing Committee for Gender Equality in Science in 2020.



Joining forces in the SCGES

- 25 international unions
- Working together: [Standing for Gender Equality in Science in times of Covid-19](#)
- Codes of conduct
- Collecting data
- For my union: appointing a Gender and Diversity Champion, following the policy of IUPAC.
- SCGES: participation in the Global Women Breakfast, initiated by IUPAC

Statement (2020): “Standing for Gender Equality in Science in times of Covid-19”

- Academic institutions should urgently **extend the contracts of academics who are in temporary positions**, and they should take caregiver burdens into account when scheduling decisions about promotion or tenure.
- Funding agencies and recruitment committees should take into account the **burdens of increased caregiving** and of preparing online teaching (often at short notice) when assessing applications, as these are major causes of lapses in research productivity.
- Journals **should ask authors to indicate their caregiving burden**, and put authors who report a major load of childcare or eldercare at the front of the queue for publication.
- Fees for online conferences **should be adjusted for participants who have lost income** due to pandemic-related job changes or caregiver responsibilities.
- All these forms of support need to be publicized widely, so as to encourage those who can benefit from them to submit their papers and projects.

Joining forces

- 25 international unions
- Speaking for all disciplines: [Standing for Gender Equality in Science in times of Covid-19](#)
- Codes of conduct
- Collecting data
- IUHPST (historians and philosophers of science): appointing a Gender and Diversity Champion, adopting the policy of IUPAP (physicists).
- SCGES: participation in the Global Women's Breakfast, initiated by IUPAC (chemists)

Invitation to join the Global Women's Breakfast



<https://iupac.org/gwb/>

<https://gender-equality-in-science.org/>