

Other Sides of the Coin. A Feminist Perspective on Robustness in Science and Knowledge Production

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Driving forces behind the occurrence of either paradigm shifts in science, or the development of new orientations within science, are often linked to demands for an increased validity or reliability in knowledge production in science. With this as a starting point, I discuss parallels and diversities between gender and feminist research and interactive research orientations¹. Both traditions have a joint democratic ambition, as well as an aim to increase reliability of science. Reliability will be discussed as “social robustness” (Novotny et al. 2001). Focus will be on contributions from gender and feminist research that can lead to a joint qualifying process for both research traditions. Starting from a general discussion using “reflexive gender reminders”, to frame knowledge production, I then discuss dilemmas of robustness in interactive research processes, and researcher and participant subjectivity

Key words: Interactive research, gender reminders, robustness, validity, democracy

¹ I will here use the concept gender research for the whole field and the concept feminist research for the stream within the field of gender research that in addition emphasizes the need for a normative change (Gunnarsson 2006). For an overview of the field see Thurén, 2003 or a short English version: Gender Studies: A Summary from the Swedish Research Council’s Committee on Gender Research (2003). I will use the concept action research for the whole field and interactive research for the stream within action research that to a higher degree emphasizes the joint learning processes between researcher and participants in the research process and also emphasizes a more supportive than driving role for the researcher (Svensson 2002; Nielsen/Svensson 2006)