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Research on Women's Leadership in Finland – a Historical Perspective

In this article, the aim was, on the one hand, to give from a historical perspective an overall picture of academic research on women's leadership in Finland, and, on the other hand, to evaluate the development of this research. The chosen time-span was from 1985 to 2005. The data comprised 92 publications which were analysed by content analysis. The results showed that the research debate on women's leadership became widely established in Finland only towards the latter end of the 1990's, that is, following a 10–15 years time lag compared to

much of the international discussion. Research on women's leadership in Finland has been conducted predominantly by women, with only a few men showing interest in this area. During the chosen time-span most of the work has been published in university or research centre series, while internationally refereed journal articles were quite few. However, in the 2000's the number of international journal articles has increased somewhat. Epistemologically, the Finnish research has seemed to follow international trends, specifically the relative proportion of qualitative research increased in the 2000's. With regard to content, themes related to equality and discrimination have been the most prevalent, even if research on women's careers and women managers' position in work life were quite often a focus. It seems that Finnish research on women's leadership is growing and becoming more diverse in orientation and focus. The next step is likely to be greater internationalisation of Finnish research on women's leadership which would involve increasing international publishing and networking, as well as multinational research projects.

Key words: women, women's leadership, women managers, women in management, gender, leadership, leader, foremen, femininity, content analysis, Finland ■