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## Erotic Capital The Relative Value of Beauty and Brains

Invitation

Catherine Hakim

Monday, September 12, 2011, 5 p.m.

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Moderated by Jutta Allmendinger

It's about much more than just physical beauty, and it can get you very far not only in private life, but also in your career: erotic capital, a term coined by British sociologist Catherine Hakim for a mixture of social and physical attractiveness. "Erotic capital", Hakim states, "is what economists call a 'personal asset,' ready to take its place alongside economic, cultural, human and social capital." To Hakim, this "nebulous but crucial" mixture of "sex appeal, beauty, charm and social skills, physical fitness and liveliness, skills in self-presentation and dress, and sexual competence" is just as important as other personal assets for social mobility and success. Women, Hakim holds, generally have more erotic capital than men and would be well placed to exploit it to get further ahead. To do so, though, they need to overcome allegedly moral obstacles, since ironically both patriarchal perspectives and feminist theories inhibit women from capitalizing on this specific asset. However erotic capital can be just as valuable as qualifications.

Catherine Hakim is a Sociologist in the Complexity Group at the London School of Economics and worked formerly as Principal Research Officer in the British Department of Employment and as Director of the Economic and Social Research Council Data Archive. Well-known for her preference theory seeking to predict women's employment and child-bearing decisions, Hakim's overall research focuses on the labor market, women's issues, and research methods.

In cooperation with Campus Verlag, Frankfurt a.M.

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*To register, please reply by September 8, 2011 to Marie Unger: [marie.unger@wzb.eu](mailto:marie.unger@wzb.eu), fax: 030/25491-680.*

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