Edited by
KATE WHITE
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GENDERED SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Global Perspectives

Gendered Success in Higher Education

Kate White • Pat O'Connor
Editors

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This book is dedicated to Barbara Bagilhole (1951–2015) who was co-founder of the Women in Higher Education Management (WHEM) Network and who made an outstanding contribution to research on gender and higher education, and was an inspirational friend and mentor.

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Part I

Introduction

1

Introduction: The Focus on Success Stories

Kate White

1 Introduction to this Study

This book is the third research project of the international gender research consortium, the Women in Higher Education Management (WHEM) Network. The 11 countries represented in the Network are: Australia, Austria, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Portugal, Sweden, South Africa, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and the UK. The Network's first book *Gender, Power and Management* (2011, Palgrave Macmillan) was the first multi-country study to examine the dynamics of men and women working together in higher education (HE) in senior management teams within a broader organisational context. Its next project, *Generation and Gender in Academia* (2013, Palgrave Macmillan), explored the similarities and differences in the career trajectories and experiences of senior and mid-career women

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academics. The Network has an impressive number of publications resulting from these first two WHEM projects: see www.whemnetwork.com.

From extensive research on gender and HE, the Network is aware of the challenges that women face at all hierarchical levels in universities, but especially in moving into leadership roles.

The main emphasis in the gender and HE literature to date has been on identifying the barriers – internal, interactional, structural and cultural – that impede women's progress in academic organisations. An emphasis on best practice and success is common in other organisational contexts, particularly business ones, where success is more easily defined.

We were interested in Morley's (2013, p. 126) assertion in the HE context that: 'There is scant coverage of success stories of women accessing authority and facilitating feminist change'. So we therefore thought it would be useful to turn our focus in this project from obstacles and failures to facilitators and success and to how women can and do facilitate feminist change in universities.

We have chosen to focus only on public universities. Because public universities are funded by the state, there is a requirement for them to integrate equality into their operations as a measure of public accountability. As the equality agenda has been endorsed by some states through legislative frameworks and also by cross-national organisations, the demonstration of best practice in areas such as gender equality in this context is particularly important and is a theme that will be further developed in Chapter 13.

This book will focus on case studies of universities which have successfully promoted a gender agenda, improving the working lives of women staff, and facilitating changes in structures and cultures. Such changes have been shown to increase organisational effectiveness and research innovation (OECD 2012; EU 2012). It therefore breaks new ground. Very little work has been undertaken on identifying the factors contributing to HE organisational change using academic case studies. Even less research has been undertaken on those factors that contribute to gendered change.

Stories of successfully moving forward a gendered agenda in public HE organisations will be described and analysed. While academic organisations

have historically been male dominated – and often continue to be so despite equality frameworks introduced in recent decades (Fitzgerald and Wilkinson 2010; Burkinshaw 2015) – a-typical cases exist. Such a-typical cases may suggest new models for ensuring that gender equality is embedded in HE organisations.

Researchers in each of the 11 countries making up the WHEM Network have therefore chosen a case study of an example of best practice in a public university (the countries making up the Network have resulted from either researchers in each country being invited to join or expressing interest in joining the Network because of their areas of research expertise).

2 Defining Success

Drawing on a rich and varied palette of national and international experiences, the case studies focus on success in promoting a gendered agenda in various ways such as women moving into leadership roles, implementing policies and practice to embed gender equality, and changing the traditional masculinist organisational culture. Looking at both the factors facilitating such success as well as their consequences, a broad range of interpretations of success will be canvassed. Most case studies focus on newer universities rather than more traditional, elite universities, while several are looking at external influences as well as internal ones. Nevertheless, these case studies provide a global perspective across a range of countries.

Success factors in HE will be explored by looking at what influences change in universities and how we measure transformation in the gendered nature of university culture. The book includes examples of best practice in transforming the gender profile of senior positions and the factors associated with such changes as well as their consequences at the level of organisational culture and management practices. The book thus opens up the question of the extent to which, and under what conditions, the male dominated and masculinist structure and culture of academic organisations can be changed.

The title of this book is: *Gendered success in higher education: global perspectives*. Through presenting case studies in 11 countries, it will seek to determine what factors successfully promote gendered success; for example, if success is about getting more women into leadership roles or about implementing equality policies, or about changing the culture of an organisation.

There are various ways we can define success in moving forward a gendered agenda in HE. Success can operate at a number of levels that are often inter-related, suggesting a range of possible definitions. Gendered success might be about how institutions respond to external frameworks such as national legislation on gender equality or national programmes such as Athena SWAN (Scientific Women's Academic Network), discussed later.

Success might be influenced by the type of university – whether it is an older, elite university or a newer one. Newer universities often have strong links with their local communities and, unimpeded by centuries of tradition which preserves the status quo of male entitlement, are often committed to gender equality and to ensuring a higher representation of women in leadership positions (Bagilhole and White 2011).

Or again, success might be a university's strategic plan that recognises not all the talents of its staff are being effectively utilised, and that to be innovative the organisation needs to pay more attention to the career progression of women and the factors that influence their careers. As well, it could be a change in a university's organisational structure or processes that demonstrate a commitment to improving the representation of women in senior positions and/or ensuring effective career progression for women staff.

Gendered success might focus both on the process that has led to significant change in the gendered agenda and also on looking beyond process, since there is evidence that sometimes the most comprehensive HE institutional equality and diversity policies can be subverted or neutralised and do not necessarily change the organisational culture (Fitzgerald and Wilkinson 2010; Burkinshaw 2015; Bagilhole and White 2011), but in other contexts they can be effective (Wroblewski 2014).

Again, gendered success might be demonstrated in a university's gender equality strategy that is mainstreamed throughout the organisation; that is, women and men are equally involved in all decisions and policy development. It might also be demonstrated through the implementation of quotas to increase the percentage of women in leadership within a fixed period of time. Success could include measures undertaken to reduce or even eliminate the institution's gender pay gap, the effectiveness of which is indicated by the University of Essex in the UK, for example, which has lifted the average salaries of female professors to the same level as male professors (Grove 2016).

Gendered success may be about the impact of informal change agents at all levels in the organisation in setting agendas for those in power. As well, it can be about role modelling appropriate behaviour and implementing new leadership styles that can ensure the organisational culture is more equitable than the traditional masculinist leadership of HE (O'Connor 2014). Such transformational leadership has been demonstrated to allow leaders to become role models through establishing trust and confidence and empowering staff (Eagly and Carli 2007). Importantly, gendered success can be about achieving sustainable change, because such is the nature of HE that any examples of best practice can often be undermined/de-legitimated or can be used to frustrate the ultimate transformation of the academy.

At another level new leadership models could include a radical transformation of the academy, taking on managerialism as well as the whole masculinist structure and culture of HE that is so resistant to change, together with other bases for discrimination (O'Connor 2014).

To summarise, in this book we define gendered success in HE as: a response to gendered outcomes and processes and factors which facilitate them; a range of internal strategies that demonstrate the commitment of institutions to improving the representation of women at senior levels by implementing changes in policies and practices; changes in organisational structures and processes; role modelling transformational leadership; and achieving sustainable change. The definition of success and the factors which facilitate it will be discussed further in Chapter 13.

3 Methodology

Given the interest of the WHEM Network in how women can and do facilitate feminist change in universities, it was decided that an appreciative inquiry (AI) theoretical basis was most appropriate for this book. Much is already known about barriers to women's advancement in the academy but less attention has been paid to what works well in terms of enhancing opportunities. AI focuses on what is working well, understanding that different strategies work in different contexts. Key learnings can be drawn from interrogating strategies and initiatives that have resulted in movement on the gender agenda. Therefore, moving beyond the usual deficit methodological approaches, AI is particularly salient when looking at organisational change (Coperrider and Whitney 2005). AI theorises that organisations are about relationships and they thrive when people are appreciative of positive approaches.

The methodological approach taken is the success case method (SCM), which is particularly suited to research questions that require an understanding of social or organisational processes. While a case study is used to investigate and gain insight into contemporary phenomena in a real-life situation (Yin 2014), SCM takes this a step further and aims to identify and explain the contextual factors that distinguish successful interventions (Brinkerhoff 2005). This does not preclude discussion of elements that are less successful; rather it allows for situational factors to be taken into consideration when exploring success. Thus, overall a comprehensive picture is built up with the diverse cases in this book, outlining what works well and under what circumstances. The use of AI and SCM rests on the assumption that one size does not fit all; rather it is particular combinations of factors that are successful. SCM allowed researchers in this book to construct their specific definition of success to select the appropriate university for their case study. Each case study chapter will describe the data collection methods used.

The case studies in this book have been anonymised in order to protect informants. No case study university is identified by name. While staff within these particular universities may recognise the case study relating to their institution, it will not be obvious to readers

external to the institution. The job title of any key informants quoted in the case study chapters is not provided, again to ensure anonymity. Informants are mostly referred to by using identifiers such as interview 1.

4 Indices and National Context

This section examines gender indices and the national context for countries in this study. We have chosen to explore only a few of the gender equality indices from the range available. None of the indices, however, tap elements related to gender equality in HE. At best we can only use proxies of these.

One of the main indices is the Global Gender Gap Index (Table 1.1). The Network countries encompass quite different economic, social and political contexts and include those from northern and southern Europe – Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey and the UK – as well as from the British commonwealth – Australia, India, New Zealand and South Africa – and from the Middle East. While this index is useful to help us understand the national context, it does not help us understand particular trends in HE in the countries in this study. For example, Sweden is rated high for gender equality, and Turkey is one of the lowest of the 145 countries measured; yet Turkey has a higher representation of women as professors than Sweden. So we recognise that in some circumstances the machinery of equality may not necessarily produce good results because of the strength of internal organisational factors.

Another measure, the Gender Equality Index (EIGE 2015), assesses the impact of gender equality policies in the European Union (EU) and Member States over time. In relation to education, it examines differences between women and men in their access to and participation in education and training, but what remains largely unchanged is the gender-based pattern of segregation in education, with greater under-representation of women and men in certain fields, such as education for men, or engineering, manufacturing and construction for women. In the EU countries in this study, Sweden has the least gender disparity and Portugal the greater disparity.

Table 1.1 Global gender gap index 2015

Country	Global gender gap index ranking	Education (f/m ratio)	Economic participation (f/m ratio)	Political empowerment (f/m ratio)
Australia	36	1	0.76	0.193
Austria	37	1	0.67	0.246
India	108	0.896	0.383	0.385
Ireland	5	0.998	0.77	0.47
New Zealand	10	1	0.768	0.39
Portugal	39	0.995	0.7	0.23
Sweden	4	0.996	0.836	0.486
South Africa	17	0.987	0.647	0.4
Turkey	130	0.957	0.459	0.103
United Arab Emirates	119	0.987	0.519	0.115
UK	18	1	0.74	0.335

Source: World Economic Forum (2015). *Global Gender Gap Report*

Universities exist in the context of national legislative frameworks. The countries we have chosen for this study have a wide spectrum of legislative contexts in relation to gender equality, and this national legislation may be facilitative or regulatory. For example, countries such as Sweden and Austria are quite prescriptive about gender equality, reflecting a longstanding commitment to gender equality, and for others, like South Africa, gender equality is part of a much wider transformation agenda. Therefore, national legislation can play a central role in facilitating strategies to achieve gender equality. The book will examine how both national legislative frameworks and their intervention strategies and universities address the under-representation of women at senior levels in the organisation.

5 Labour Force Participation of Women

The discussion of the labour force participation of women in this section presents an overview of employment patterns across the 11 countries. This overall picture may reflect or have implications for dissemination of best practice in the a-typical examples in the case study chapters (Chapters 2–12).

Women in the countries that are the focus of this book are significantly under-represented in the labour force and there is a substantial gender pay gap between women and men. On average women in the EU earn 16.4% less per hour than men, although this varies: in Ireland, the national gender pay gap is 14.4%, in Portugal 15.7%, in the UK 19.1%, in Sweden 19.9% and in Austria 23.4% (EC 2014), while in Australia it is 19.1% and in New Zealand 11.8% (Statistics New Zealand 2015). Several case studies, including the Australian and the UK ones, discuss this issue.

While there are different patterns of employment between women and men in the countries studied, the common pattern is the gap between men's and women's participation in the labour market, with women under-represented in the labour force and a higher proportion of women than men working part-time. In India, for example, the proportion of women who are either of an age to work or are able/expected to work is between 20 and 30%, compared to 70–80% for men

(MasterCard 2016) and in Turkey the employment rate of women is 28.7%, whereas in New Zealand the female labour force participation rate is 64%, compared to 75% for men. Although women are more likely than men to work part-time, this varies across the Network countries. Portugal and Turkey have high rates of women working full-time, whereas there is a higher percentage of women working part-time in Sweden, and in the UK there is more acceptance of part-time work (White 2011). This is important because whether women work predominantly full-time or part-time is an indicator of a societal norm. Take, for instance, Austria where the norm is that women are potential mothers and will not stay in the workforce. But there are other examples of this norm being challenged. Charles (2014) noted that the National Assembly for Wales sits only during school time; its plenary sessions finish at 17.30 and Assembly members are only expected to be present three days per week. Thus the gendering of roles can be 'challenged by institutional commitment to equality, consensual working practices and the adoption of family friendly measures' (Charles 2014, p. 377). Such acceptance of part-time and flexible work arrangements suggests that greater acknowledgement of part-time work leads to a less masculine work culture and enables women to build careers. In some countries legislation protects flexible working arrangements for parents with young children, but often women in more senior roles are expected to work full-time, regardless of their family responsibilities, which can affect their careers.

Provision of maternity leave or elder care can also impact on women's labour force participation. While all countries in the Network have national maternity leave legislation, in Portuguese and Turkish universities, for example, there is no maternity leave replacement – existing staff share the workload. In Austria up to two years can be taken for parental leave; one year is paid at 80% of salary and if longer it is paid at a flat rate. Academics in Austria tend to take shorter maternity leave in order to avoid negative consequences for their further career. Thus maternity leave provisions can negatively affect women's careers and make it more difficult for them to compete in the labour market.

6 Higher Education and Gender Equality

Universities have been undergoing rapid change over the past two decades (Shattock 2009) in the broader context of 'the dominance of neo-liberalism and the depiction of HE as a private rather than a public good' (O'Connor 2014, p. 147), and the process of economic rationalism 'making education just another arm of national productivity and global capitalism' (Blackmore and Sachs 2007, p. 268). While national governments have developed a robust suite of legislation aimed at removing discrimination in the workplace, including HE (White 2011), this legislation has not necessarily had a significant impact on the position of women in universities.

Increasingly, in Western universities there is 'a delicate balance between professional autonomy and political and economic forces' (Goransson 2011, p. 51) as managerialism replaces traditional collegial leadership. The collegial model has been described as governance by a community of scholars, as opposed to central managerial authority with the rector/vice-chancellor taking on the role of a CEO (Meek 2002). In the managerial model decisions are made from the top-down and the power of professors is reduced (Goransson 2011). Parsons and Priola (2010) argue that managerial universities reinforce rather than reduce gender inequalities, as the long-hours' work culture precludes responsibility for parenting roles (Lynch et al. 2012). Although managerialism can have a positive effect on women's ability to influence decision-making in university senior management, these positive traits tended to reproduce the stereotypical association with 'soft' management. As managerialism is usually identified with 'hard' management, this can represent a threat for women (White et al. 2011).

While external influences on the increasingly managerial university have generated change in HE, the pace of change in gender equality has been glacial (O'Connor 2014). Promoting gender equality at a national level can contribute significantly to economic growth through increasing the stock of human capital and market competitiveness which foster higher labour productivity and attract investment in physical capital (Chatham House 2010; OECD 2012). But it is clear that economic growth cannot be achieved unless governments harness all the available human capital.

Women continue to be under-represented in top academic decision-making positions (Bagilhole and White 2011). Only 21% of top-level academics in the EU are women (SHE 2015). In 2014, within the group of 22 EU countries for which data was available, women represented less than 40% of the members of scientific and administrative boards at national level in 14 countries, and close to 50% of the board members in only three countries (Sweden, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) (SHE 2015).

There is not necessarily a correlation between labour force participation and the position of women in academia in the WHEM countries. The SHE figures on women in the professoriate (Level A) show that Ireland has the highest proportion (28.2%) and the UK the lowest (17.5%) of the EU countries in the study (SHE 2015). However, there are difficulties in getting comparative figures across countries and there are at times inconsistencies [e.g. the higher education authority (HEA) figures show that only 21% of professors in Ireland are women (HEA 2016)]. Moreover, as mentioned above, while Turkey has low participation of women in the workforce (see Table 1.1), it has a high representation of women in the professoriate, indicating other factors are of influence.

Women comprise around 60% of all graduates from EU universities and more than half the potential labour force, and 'ignoring this means that the pool of talent is artificially reduced so that less competent men will end up being selected' (O'Connor 2014, p. 6). Gendered processes effectively limit the available talent in HE and result in women not progressing in their careers at a comparable rate to men: 'Yet any kind of positive action for women typically generates reference to meritocracy, the assumption being that the appointments of all men are unaffected by anything other than merit' (O'Connor 2014, p. 5).

Consequently, recent debates emphasise the need to keep younger women in research in order to increase national competitiveness and innovation (White 2015). While the EU pursues the objectives of gender equality in careers, gender balance in decision-making and the integration of the gender dimension in the content of research (EU 2012), there is a real crisis to remain globally competitive. For example, only 20% of science research is now being conducted in the EU, which

is losing out to South East Asia. And while EU scientists produce even more publications than the US, most of this knowledge is being commercialised somewhere else in the world (Carvalho 2012). In the UK it is also recognised that the economy needs more skilled scientists and engineers and that 'this need will not be met unless greater efforts are made to recruit and retain women in STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] careers' (HoC 2014, p. 49). Moreover, the consistently lower workforce participation of women in developing countries in the Asia Pacific region (MasterCard 2016) translates into lower representation of women in research and innovation.

7 Strategies to Achieve Gender Equality in HE

Despite implementation of gender equality plans in research organisations – if this is one indicator of success – they are not necessarily associated with increased representation of women in academia (Fitzgerald and Wilkinson 2010). It is clear that cross-national structures such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and EU, driven by market logic, 'are becoming uneasy about the loss to society consequent on the exclusion or marginalisation of highly educated women' (O'Connor et al. 2015). In response, the EC's new funding programme, Horizon 2020, has set about an ambitious programme for organisational change, with gender as a cross-cutting issue, which must now be considered in all future EU-funded research.

This chapter now examines a range of both external and internal strategies implemented in HE to achieve gender equality and analyses their effectiveness. Universities in several countries in the WHEM Network have adopted various strategies to address the marginalisation of highly educated women; for example, metrics and performance targets to ensure a focus on gender equality and on under-representation of women in leadership roles. They have also implemented initiatives such as the mainstreaming of equality and diversity, and implementing affirmative action and quotas (Burkinshaw 2015).

Some strategies adopted by universities are a response to external influences. For instance, league tables and international performance indicators are 'governing the culture of academic management in higher education' (Lynch et al. 2012, p. 189), as institutions are under pressure to increase their position on national and international rankings. There has been debate about whether or not externally imposed metrics represent a commitment of universities to improving their performance, or merely ticking the boxes because they want to be regarded as world class. Importantly, gender equality is not a key issue for league tables (David 2014), which led O'Connor (2014, p. 39) to conclude that 'despite . . . performance indicators and auditing, there is little evidence of a systematic focus on gender outcomes'.

Other external strategies at a national level are quotas to increase the representation of women in public companies and/or in politics that have been introduced in Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy and the Netherlands. The Lisbon Agreement, as it related specifically to HE, included a goal of 25% women professors throughout Europe by 2010 but this was not achieved. While quotas can ensure search and selection processes become more rigorous and more innovative, and a critical mass can be achieved quickly (Whelan 2014), some take the view that quotas do not increase the pool of women for HE management positions (Burkinshaw 2015). In Sweden, Peterson (2014) pointed to political pressure in the form of goals and policies, targets and a top-level commitment to gender equality goals, leading to women's increased representation in HE leadership. However, these leadership positions have lost status compared to the research career track and, moreover, now have high administrative loads. In Austria, a 2002 equality law requires university bodies such as the rectorate (and senior leadership positions within the rectorate), the senate and all commissions appointed by the senate to meet a quota of 40% female members. This legislation appears to have been successfully implemented with all but one of the university councils fulfilling the 40% quota (Federal Ministry 2016). But do quotas in HE lead to cultural change? Wroblewski (2014) found that women 'had to comply with the norm of an ideal scientist at least as well as their male counterparts'. This led to equality policies and cultural change being 'women only projects' which 'will end up with a paradoxical and even

unfair situation in which we expect women to change the system from within at their own expense' because it means they have a different experience of leadership than their male colleagues.

Further external strategies to achieve gender equality in HE include ways in which research councils can drive equality and national programmes to support women's career advancement. For example, Athena Swan in the UK has been effective because it links commitment to improving women's representation in STEM to medical research funding. From 2017 science funding will be aligned to an institution's performance in improving gender representation, especially at senior levels. The programme has therefore become a catalyst for institutional change (ECU 2015). A pilot of this programme is being conducted in Australia by the Australian Academy of Science and the programme is also being extended to Ireland, where a recent national review has adopted a systemic, implementable and radical approach (HEA 2016). Another recent external strategy is the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC's) new gender equality policy that applies to all institutions receiving its funding and requires them to submit annual gender equality policies (NHMRC 2015). But its effectiveness is still to be assessed.

Internal strategies, such as mentoring, institutional quotas and affirmative action, have been widely discussed as tools for promoting gendered success, but there have been few attempts (see Wroblewski 2014) to actually evaluate them. Rice (2012) usefully identified key factors and strategies to change the proportion of women in the professoriate, and the UK Equality Challenge Unit (ECU 2014) has produced a series of case studies on equality and diversity as exemplars. HE institutions in several European countries have introduced gender mainstreaming of structures, policies and practices as an alternative to imposing quotas (Burkinshaw 2015), although this strategy also has its critics (see, e.g., Benschop and Verloo 2006).

Another internal strategy to achieve gender equality in HE is flexible work arrangements, discussed earlier. Although national legislation can ensure the right to request flexibility for those with parental responsibilities, including working from home, such flexibility is not always provided. Long working hours and the requirements