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## Lost leaders: women in the global academy

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Drawing on data gathered from British Council seminars in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Dubai on *Absent Talent: Women in Research and Academic Leadership* (2012–2013), this paper discusses academic women's experiences and explanations for women's under-representation as knowledge leaders and producers in the global academy. Participants from South and East Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, Australasia and Europe shared experiences and identified desires for future action in the form of a *Manifesto for Change*. The paper combines empirical data on enablers, impediments and attractions with consideration of debates on women's exclusions and disqualifications from academic leadership and knowledge production. A key question is whether women are desiring, dismissing or being disqualified from senior leadership positions in the global academy.

**Keywords:** diversity; equity; faculty career; gender; leadership

### Co-constructing knowledge

This paper aims to examine women's relationship with leadership in higher education (HE) internationally by drawing on literature and empirical data collected via questionnaires, group and panel discussions and individual presentations from three British Council seminars: *Absent Talent: Women in Research and Academic Leadership* in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Dubai. The seminars complemented the *Global Education Dialogues* conferences in Hong Kong and Tokyo and the *Going Global* conference in Dubai. They aimed to bring together those interested in enhancing women's participation in HE leadership and research. Participants were invited to share experiences and knowledge of gender-related issues in HE, including enablers and obstacles to women's progression, policies and initiatives that make a difference, networks in the region that support women's career progression, data available at institution/national levels on participation in leadership in academia by gender and grade and future initiatives.

Forty questionnaires were circulated to academic women working in Australia, China, Egypt, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Turkey and 20 were returned. The sample was constructed to include current and previous vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors, deans, research directors and mid- and early-career academic women. They were asked for their views on what makes leadership attractive/unattractive to women, what enables and supports women to enter leadership positions, what interventions exist to encourage women to enter leadership and their personal experiences of being enabled or impeded from entering leadership positions. In the following

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sections, this group is referred to as *respondents*. Panel and group discussions and presentations were recorded, transcribed, analysed and coded in order to capture formal and informal narratives about how gendered power is relayed in the global academy, and to identify key themes, patterns and discontinuities across the national boundaries. In Hong Kong, the panel included six senior women academics from Australia, China, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Thailand. In Japan, the panel comprised three senior academic women from Japan, Thailand and the UK. Additionally, in Tokyo, four papers were presented from the Philippines and Malaysia and two from Japan. In Dubai, the seminar preceded the 2013 *Going Global* conference and provided the opportunity for papers to be presented from Egypt, Hong Kong, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine and Turkey. All women were invited to reflect on what structures, systems and processes they believed exist to impede or support women to enter academic leadership. In the following sections, this group is referred to as *discussants*. The 22 seminar participants in Hong Kong devised a *Manifesto for Change* (Forestier, 2013), and the 25 participants in Tokyo and 25 in Dubai discussed, reviewed and planned implementation of this document. This group is referred to as *participants*. All seminars were organised and funded by the British Council as part of their Women in Higher Education Leadership initiative (Forestier, 2013). A total of 72 *respondents*, *discussants* and *participants* in three seminars contributed to these data. From this relatively small sample, policy, statistical and often visceral knowledge was shared and co-created.

### Domesticating women in the prestige economy

There are questions about how leaders are developed and appointed. For example, who self-identifies or is identified by existing power elites, as having leadership legitimacy? In this study, the gendered division of labour inside and outside of the academy was identified in all locations as a barrier to women's leadership identity (Bagilhole & White, 2011). In Hong Kong, a Chinese respondent suggested that women work in:

Low professional titles, low-level management and administrative positions, most of them are responsible for student affairs.

Leadership itself was hierarchicalised with women allowed entry into less prestigious, inward-looking roles. This sex role spillover involved binaries of women frequently tasked with teaching and student support, while their male counterparts were encouraged to be more external-facing, focusing on international networks and research, as a Malaysian respondent in Hong Kong noted:

A rather bitter memory of a line manager (of the opposite sex) beating me out of an opportunity for funding assistance. The line manager was constantly travelling and on study leave ... This gave me no space to focus on expanding my career and when opportunities arose, I was talked out of applying and no importance was placed on my professional development for fear that there will be a gap and no one to 'man the fort' so to speak.

This statement was one of several outlining how women appear to be disqualified, with their capital devalued and misrecognised in current reward, recruitment and promotions practices. This can be the result of possible cognitive errors and bias in assessing merit and leadership suitability (Bardoel, Drago, Cooper, & Colbeck, 2011). It can also be because women are not strategically positioned on pathways to leadership. A

Chinese respondent in Hong Kong suggested that women's opportunity structures are impeded by organisational housework:

Traditionally males are supposed to be responsible for external affairs, females are supposed to be responsible for internal affairs, and males are assumed to be superior to females. Because of the cultural discrimination and stereotypes, it is believed that the characteristics of females make them not rational enough in making decisions, and so they are not suitable for assuming the duty of managers and administrators such as presidents ... Female teachers are supposed to teach fundamental and public courses.

This observation articulates with feminist scholarship on gender and reason. Walkerdine (1998) emphasised how femaleness is invariably positioned on the devalued side of: mind/body; nature/culture and reason/emotion dualisms. Women have been traditionally cast as unreliable knowers (Longino, 2010). Women and women's work continues to be associated with inferiority and supplementarity, as Code (1991, p. 10) observes:

If the would-be knower is female, then her sex is epistemologically significant, for it disqualifies her as a knower in the fullest sense of that term.

This has implications for women's identities as researchers.

The study found the existence of a gendered research economy. Research performance is implicitly associated with the prestige economy in HE, and is a pathway to academic seniority and an indicator for promotion. The prestige economy in an academic context is one in which social and cultural capitals are generated and exchanged, and where academic approbation can lead to tangible and intangible rewards including high rankings in global league tables, financial benefits in terms of markets, student recruitment, research grants and state funding (Blackmore & Kandiko, 2011). Globally, men have the edge as researchers by an enormous ratio of 71:29% (UNESCO, 2012). The highest proportion of women researchers is found in countries with the lowest research and development expenditure, for example, the Philippines and Thailand have more than 45% female researchers (UNESCO, 2012). The lowest proportion of women researchers is in countries with the highest research and development expenditure countries, for example, Austria (European Commission, 2008, 2011). In East Asia, Hada (2013) found that the lowest percentage of female researchers in her 18-country study was to be found in Japan (11.6%).

There is a catalogue of absences and exclusions from the research-based prestige economy. Women are less likely to be journal editors or cited in top-rated academic journals (Tight, 2008; Wilson, 2012), and are under-represented on research boards and peer review structures that allocate funding. Women are less likely to be principal investigators (European Commission, 2008, 2011). They are also awarded fewer research prizes (Nikiforova, 2011) and receive fewer invitations to be keynote conference speakers (Schroeder et al., 2013). As much of the research-based prestige economy relies on peer review, this raises questions about gender bias and discrimination in the process itself (Wenneras & Wold, 1997), or by institutionalised discriminatory practices which impede research productivity, for example, contracts that are temporary or heavily weighted towards teaching rather than research.

The prestige economy appears to construct leadership priorities and identities in the global academy, with a lack of discursive or quantitative connection between quality and equality. Universities in East Asia are rapidly ascending the global league tables, but gender equality is not a performance indicator in quality audits (Grove, 2013a).

In Hong Kong, three out of its eight universities are included in the top 50 (Quacquarelli Symonds [QS], 2012). However, women still occupy below 15% of senior academic posts. While there are currently four pro-vice-chancellors (4/34), there is no female vice-chancellor (Cheung, 2013). Japan also has three universities in the world's top 50 (QS, 2012). Shirahase (2013) reported that 20.6% of the academic workforce in Japan is female (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2011), lower than other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (UNESCO, 2012), and that there are currently 9.7% women professors in the 86 national universities and only two women vice-chancellors: Ochanomizu Women's University and Gakugei University (a merger of four former teacher training colleges). Mainland China has three universities in the global top 50 (QS, 2012), with women occupying 25.8% of the full range of professorial positions (Forester, 2012). All these statistics raise questions about how the prestige economy is being constructed on women's often-unseen labour.

Davies (1996) claimed that women are successful at entering adjunct, rather than top-level leadership. This observation featured in many narratives. A Malaysian respondent in Hong Kong commented how: *women are usually holding middle level and senior level positions (but not the top most positions) in most HE institutions*. A participant from the Philippines in Tokyo reported:

There has been only one woman president of the University of the Philippines system in 100 years. Our president is assisted by four vice-presidents who are women.

The current president is male.

Critical attention to women in academic leadership has been widely generated in Australia (Blackmore & Sachs, 2007; Currie, Thiele, & Harris, 2002; Fitzgerald & Wilkinson, 2010; Pyke, 2009). However, an Australian respondent reported that:

While women are becoming equal at junior to middle level academic ranks in Australia, women continue to be under-represented at a senior level in higher education ... at the professorial level, women's share of leadership roles is around 25%. In 2010, only 17.9% of vice-chancellors were women. There is also substantial under-representation of women in the most prestigious research institutes and centres – particularly in the natural sciences.

A Japanese discussant observed that as women are so under-represented in academic and public positions of seniority in her country, it would be difficult to claim authority as leaders:

I have been uncomfortable talking about leadership, particularly in Japan. So many things we have to do to achieve a gender-free society ... In that sense it seems to me to be a big jump to discuss how we can build leadership ... we are so much behind.

Japan was repeatedly discursively positioned as having lower levels of gender equality than many of its neighbours. For example, the Philippines ranks 8th out of 135 in the 2012 Global Gender Gap (based on equality in economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment and health), while Japan ranks 101st (World Economic Forum, 2012). A question in all the participating countries was whether women's under-representation was simply a case of discrimination or whether women are making affective and material calculations regarding the costliness of attachment to leadership aspirations?

### The cruel optimism of career progression?

The global academy is contradictorily constructed in terms of innovation and hypermodernisation underpinned by the archaism of male-dominated leadership (Morley, 2011, 2013a, 2013b). Few countries have achieved Norway's rate of 32% of female vice chancellors (She Figures, 2012). From the limited statistical data on the topic (Blandford, Brill, Neave, & Roberts Allison, 2011; Higher Education Funding Council for England [HEFCE], 2012; Lund, 1998; She Figures, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012; Singh, 2002, 2008; Universities and Colleges Union, 2013), it appears that a global gender gap remains. In 70% of Commonwealth countries, *all* universities were led by men in 2007 (Singh, 2008). In Malaysia's 20 public universities, there are three female vice-chancellors (15%) and 11 out of 40 female deputy vice-chancellors (Hapsah Shahabudin, 2013). In India, in 2009, 13 of the country's 431 recognised universities had female vice-chancellors – 3% of the total – and just under half of these were at women-only colleges. Women comprise 60% of the country's university lecturers, but 20% of the professoriate (Mishra, 2013). She Figures (2009) reported that 13% of HE institutions in the 27 European Union (EU) countries were headed by women. The highest shares of female vice-chancellors were recorded in Sweden, Iceland, Norway, Finland and Israel. Women's proportion of vice-chancellors was low (7% at most) in Romania, Austria, Slovakia, Italy, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Belgium and Germany. In the EU, women represent 18% of professorial staff (She Figures, 2009). In the UK, in 2010/2011, women were 43% of all academics, but only 21% of the professoriate and 14% of vice-chancellors (HEFCE, 2012).

In the Dubai seminar, Khyami-Horani (2013) reported that in Jordan, women account for over half of undergraduates, 21.6% of university staff and 5.7% of the professoriate, but there are no female vice-chancellors in Jordan's 21 universities. Tebbaa (2013) also reported that no female vice-chancellors exist in Moroccan universities. Hayat (2013) outlined how, in Kuwait, women comprise over 60% of the undergraduate population, but 2% of its university vice-chancellors. Hazou (2013) described how, in Palestine, women comprise 56% of students but 2.4% of the professoriate. While 60% of the Gulf region students are women (Jaramillo, 2013), retrogressive moves are surfacing including restricting women's access to some courses in Iran (Sahraei, 2012), and the resurrection of a segregation law in post-secondary education in Kuwait (Al-Khalid, 2008). The region performs poorly in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index. The United Arab Emirates does best among Arab countries in 107th place among 135 nations. Yemen occupies the 135th place (World Economic Forum, 2012). Gender equality in academic leadership has escaped organisational logic and rationalities in most national locations and the pattern of male dominance of senior leadership positions is visible in countries with diverse cultures, policies and legislation for gender equality.

### Attracting women

The economic concept of wasted talent was an argument deployed by some in this study for diversifying leadership. A Japanese respondent cautioned that unless better use is made of the talents of all its citizens: 'the society won't be able to survive in globalization'. However, not all women embraced the reasoning of macro-level economics or located their choices within the 'cultural circuits' of capitalism (Mills & Ratcliffe, 2012). For some, attractions were mainly discussed in terms of the micro-level gains of achievement, financial rewards, and flexible working conditions or the meso-level



organisational gains of influence, power and change agency. An Egyptian respondent noted:

(Leadership) enables her to express her ideas and apply what she was dreaming to do.

A Hong Kong respondent also invoked institutional power:

Being in senior leadership position gives women opportunity to share in decision-making.

The navigation between professional and domestic responsibilities dominated narratives. Flexible working conditions in academia were sometimes seen to compensate for lower salaries. However, flexibility did not always include time in and out of the profession. A Hong Kong participant described how she was expected to compensate for maternity leave by conducting a double shift before she left:

Somebody suggested 'OK, so you give birth in March so why don't you pack these five weeks of lectures together' ... There was an institutional prejudice. It was the men who were making decisions and they had never experienced it.

While influence, reward and opportunities seemed to offer desirable gains for some, these were overshadowed by the multiple examples of perceived losses involved in entering leadership.

### **Leadership as loss**

Leadership, in this study, was often perceived as loss. Women discussed how unsuccessful applications result in loss of status and self-esteem, whereas successful applications result in loss of independence, research time, health and well-being. The rapidly expanding, audited, neo-liberalised, globalised and male-dominated managerialised academy was seen as an unattractive space by a Hong Kong respondent:

The boys' club issue, also massification and internationalisation of the sector together with reduction in funding by government means roles have changed and are more challenging in terms of time and skills – business management, fund raising, marketing/ambassador type ...

This was not just a question of the long-hours' culture, but also a matter of values. Leadership can be seen as inducing conventionality and conformity to norms and values that are alien and alienating. A Hong Kong respondent commented on the dehumanising aspects of audit cultures that reduce colleagues to calculable units of productivity:

There is an increasing emphasis by universities on performance indicators based on metrics, forgetting about the sense of community that forms a university.

It appears that many women in this study were reflexively scanning leadership and dismissing it as a career option (Morley, 2013a). They decided not to aspire to an object that statistically they are unlikely to acquire. Additionally, formal leadership was not always equated with vertical career success, but more in terms of incarceration in an identity cage that restricts rather than generates capacity and creativity (Alvesson,

Lee Ashcraft, & Thomas, 2008; Haake, 2009). Berlant (2011) described the relation in which one depends on objects that block the very thriving that motivates our attachment in the first place as ‘cruel optimism’. Women’s relationship with leadership can be a form of cruel optimism insofar as desiring it seldom leads to its acquisition. While some women do enter and flourish in leadership, for others, the belief that they will be able to lead differently in today’s managerialised global academy can also be a form of cruel optimism. An Australian respondent in Hong Kong believed that the key factors that dissuade women’s aspirations include:

Perception that senior leadership positions will prevent research and teaching in their discipline; perception of negative political environment; fear of the ‘glass cliff’ – there are many examples of women achieving senior leadership only to find it a ‘poisoned chalice’ – that is, the role becomes available when conditions are such that there is no chance of success.

These observations reflect Ryan and Haslam’s (2007) theory of how women are often found in unpopular and precarious management areas, that is, ‘glass cliffs’ – the unrewarding organisational tasks and leadership roles associated with an increased risk of negative consequences. Glass cliffs often carry considerable affective loads, for example, managing occupational stress, dealing with conflict, anxiety, morale, disappointment, resistance, pessimism and recalcitrance (Acker, 2012). This can be exacerbated if, as a female, your authority is in doubt. Working with resistance and recalcitrance, colonising colleagues’ subjectivities towards the goals of the managerially inspired discourses and values of the competitive prestige economy involve material and affective workloads that can often result in unliveable lives (Butler, 2004). While there is research evidence that women are being disqualified from leadership (Van den Brink, Benschop, & Jansen, 2010), it could also be that women are exercising their personal powers to reject the situational logic of career progression.

### **Enabling women**

Enablement was encoded in terms of support, training and encouragement including mentorship, professional development, advice and sponsorship at key points in career progression. However, policy contexts, legislative frameworks and effective advocacy were also seen as crucial drivers for change. The Malaysian speaker in Tokyo identified how the establishment of the Ministry for Women, Family and Community Development in 1992, a constitutional amendment to prohibit discrimination based on gender in 2000, and the development of a policy for at least 30% representation of women in higher decision-making levels in 2008, in the private and public sectors and corporate boards, including HE, were all proving effective interventions for change. Political discursive space for gender equality was frequently cited. A Turkish respondent cited 12 women rectors in Turkey’s 168 universities, and how the president of the Council of Higher Education frequently declared in his speeches that numbers of women leaders should be increased.

In addition to a women-friendly political context, the affective dimensions of recognition, affirmation and support in professional development were widely acknowledged. In Hong Kong, a Chinese respondent emphasised the need for ‘encouragement from the master advisor’, particularly in relation to ‘encouraging female teachers to apply research funding’. The need to decode the rules of the game and develop political and



micropolitical skills has been extensively discussed (Morley, 1999, 2013a). This could be achieved, according to an Australian respondent via:

The maintenance of strong professional networks, and a critical mentor who can provide access to networks, demonstrate a model of practice, will generously represent your interests in the right circles, provide opportunities for co-publication and access to research funding.

Women's historical exclusions from academia meant that they often lacked tacit knowledge of how the system works, noted a Japanese respondent:

From the Meiji Era to the end of World War II, the Japanese Imperial University excluded women. For more than 60 years, only men were allowed to teach and conduct research as members of the academic profession. ... Women could only become fully involved in research activities after the new, post-war university system was launched.

This contrasted with an account from the Philippines where women were reported to have played a prominent role in public life:

Women were always equal to men ... the minute we became sovereign we started having house of representative women, governors, mayors, and then of course you see we have had two women presidents ...

In response to the question about what support they had received, most respondents reported very little, or none at all. Support emanated from personal and familial networks, rather than from institutional interventions. The absence of structured support can have serious consequences as leadership identities and capacities are frequently forged in relation to how women are seen and invested in by others.

### **Impeding women**

A cultural climate, or hidden curriculum, resulting in organisational and cultural norms that depress women's aspirations and career orientations was widely noted in this study. Over three decades ago, Acker (1990) argued that gender inequality is tenacious because it is built into the structure of work organisations. A common structural observation related to the incompatibility of women's caring responsibilities with the temporalities and rhythms of academia (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). Universities were not designed to correspond to timetables of motherhood, as an Australian discussant in Hong Kong exemplified:

I noted my female colleagues having enormous problems, for example to turn up and give a 9 o' clock lecture because the kindergarten did not open until then, or there weren't enough spaces in there and you couldn't get them in.

A Jordanian respondent identified how academia was designed by men for men:

The idea of living in men's communities, they design, and implement according to what they believe, and mostly they think that women do not have time for such higher leadership positions.

Extensive identity work is involved in being 'other' in masculinist cultures. Bardoel and colleagues (2011) used the term 'bias avoidance' to describe how individuals

feel that they have to minimise or hide extended family commitments to achieve career success. An Indonesian respondent in Hong Kong believed that: ‘women need to juggle between their personal and family life and their professional life’. The notion of being caught between two greedy organisations – the family and the university – was widely discussed. A Philippina discussant in Hong Kong exemplified Devine, Grummell, and Lynch’s (2011, p. 632) observation that academic leaders are expected to have ‘an elastic self’ that can contain any amount of work without boundaries in time, space, energy or emotion.

It is a lack of time because of our activities like homemaking are full time jobs ... Why are we not awarded large grants? There is lack of access to grants. Lack of involvement in the research groups that can apply for grants ... Last month I got from the Department of Education an invitation for a proposal to review most of the education in the Philippines and I got an 87-page instruction book!

A Japanese respondent saw the gendered division of labour in wider society as a major barrier:

We have an old belief that ‘Men work outside and women take care of their family inside.’ And this belief is reflected in the fact that 62% of the spouses of male university teachers are housewives in Japan. ... Consequently most male teachers can concentrate on their work without worrying about domestic matters. A woman in Japan has to take care of her children, as well as both her parents, and sometimes even her husband’s parents, besides the domestic duties on daily life. They do not have enough time to concentrate on doing research. And the percentage female university teachers in Japan who do not marry is 47.5%.

However, not all women are mothers or are living in nuclear families, with sole caring responsibilities. A Turkish respondent highlighted the availability of affordable domestic and childcare services in many countries in the regions, suggesting that other explanations for women’s absences from leadership must exist. Women reported how they were often viewed as defective men, characterised by deficit and defined by what they lack, rather than by what they contribute. A Moroccan respondent described how women’s potential is depressed through masculinist constructions of society:

The state policy seems to favour a macho vision of society ... This discourages women and makes them have less ambition.

A Japanese respondent reported how overt discrimination had slowed down her career progress:

My university is an inbreeding society. And I received academic harassment and could not get a professorship ... and moved to a new university and finally received a professorship there. It took so long years in comparison with other male teachers.

Gender bias has been theorised in terms of dominant groups ‘cloning’ themselves and appointing in their own image in order to minimise risk (Gronn & Lacey, 2006). Bias thrives when there is opaqueness in decision-making and lack of transparency (Rees, 2011; Sharma, 2012). However, Van den Brink and colleagues’ Dutch study (2010) revealed a range of casual discriminatory practices in professorial appointments that eluded formal protocols and objective criteria. While strengthening procedures is

important, the problem may reside in wider cultural scripts for leaders that coalesce or collide with normative gender performances. If leadership is associated with particular forms of masculinity, women leaders can represent a contextual discontinuity, interruptive in their shock quality.

### **The third sex**

Socio-cultural practices and belief systems were cited as impediments to women's progress in the public domain. A Chinese respondent in Hong Kong described how educated women fell outside traditional norms:

A saying that 'people can be classified into three categories: male, female, and female PhD'.

The educated woman was the third sex because she transgressed cultural and age-appropriate norms, according to a Chinese discussant in Hong Kong:

In the Chinese context ... there is a very strong cultural and social bias against women pursuing PhD study. Because generally there is a view that the ignorance of a woman is a virtue. So if you pursue further or higher degrees that means that you do not have virtue. And also they classify these PhDs as a third gender.

A Hong Kong participant reported how male prejudice and gender bias can be masked as women's lack, and how women had to be metaphorically several educational steps behind her husband:

A few weeks ago we organised a seminar with the Equal Opportunities Commission. The commissioner was with us. We said look at the data. And he said yes. Women are under-represented. Then he got on to say in his experience it was because women didn't want the job, women didn't want promotion so then some other speakers say OK, women are afraid they will be more successful than their husbands.

The traditional cultural message that the higher educated woman was unmarriageable was also reported by the Japanese discussant in Tokyo:

In Japan ... it is hard to change, because they don't want to pay the cost to change it. Even now, young women don't want to go to the University of Tokyo because their parents say that if you go to the University of Tokyo you won't be able to get married, you won't be able to be happy. So being conventional implies that OK there is less risk. We have to encourage women to take the risk.

The invocation of happiness equalising traditional choices and unhappiness as the result of de-traditionalisation is evocative of Ahmed's arguments (2010) about the regulatory function of the concept of happiness; that is, women are told to conform to patriarchal norms or risk unhappiness. Leadership is perceived as a transgression, for which there will be social and affective consequences.

### ***Manifesto for Change***

All seminar participants collaborated to develop and discuss a *Manifesto for Change for women in academic leadership and research* (Grove, 2013b). This related to accountability, transparency, development and data:

1. *Equality as quality* – equality should be a key performance indicator in quality audits, with data returned on percentage and location of women professors and leaders, percentage and location of undergraduate and postgraduate students and gender pay equality. Gender equity achievements should be included in international recognition and reputation for universities in league tables.
2. *Research grants* – funders should monitor the percentage of applications and awards made to women and actively promote more women as principal investigators. The application procedures should be reviewed to incorporate a more inclusive and diverse philosophy of achievement. Gender implications and impact should also be included in assessment criteria.
3. *Journals* – Editorial Boards, and the appointment of editors, need more transparent selection processes, and policies on gender equality, for example, to keep the gender balance in contributions under review.
4. *Data* – a global database on women and leadership in HE should be established.
5. *Development* – more investment needs to be made in mentorship and leadership development programmes for women and gender needs to be included in existing leadership development programmes.
6. *Mainstreaming* – work cultures should be reviewed to ensure that diversity is mainstreamed into all organisational practices and procedures.

The *Manifesto for Change* is designed to confront and challenge some of the structural inequalities, and is now being taken forward by seminar participants in their own countries and in the media (Grove, 2013b).

## Conclusions

Counting more women into elite systems of knowledge production is not an end in itself. Emphasis on numbers only can disguise how gender is formed and reformed in the spatial and temporal contexts of HE. The inclusion of more women is not always transformative and can result in new constituencies being expected to assimilate and conform to normative practices. Representation can be an essentialised strategy that assumes women will lead in a more gender-sensitive way. Braidotti (1994) argued that it is not possible simply to insert new wine in old bottles. She called, instead, for a feminist project which ‘implies the transformation of the very structures and images of thought’ (p. 120). As women in this study have shown, gender is not simply a demographical variable, but is in continual production via socio-cultural and organisational practices. Women reported that how they are not, or are rarely, identified, supported and developed for leadership. Nor are they achieving the most senior leadership positions in prestigious, national co-educational universities. While the sample included vice-chancellors and deputy/pro-vice-chancellors, these women recognised that they are still in a minority and that when women do enter leadership, it invariably involves middle management. This was attributed to the challenges of navigating between professional and domestic responsibilities, but also located in discriminatory structures including how women are often located on career pathways that do not lead to senior positions.

The study found that the logic of reciprocity implied in meritocracy, that is, that talent, hard work and commitment will be identified and rewarded, is being breached in relation to the recognition of women as leaders. This matters, in employment terms, because it could be evidence of a democratic deficit, distributive injustice, structural prejudices and depressed career opportunities. The relentless reproduction of

institutional norms and practices could also involve knowledge distortions, and cognitive and epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007). Furthermore, messages are relayed about margins/mainstream hegemonies, with women leaders positioned as organisational ‘other’ in the global knowledge economy (Walby, 2011).

However, while early- and mid-career women berated the absences, many were not desiring, or overtly expressing a desire for senior leadership. This was largely attributed to the labour intensity of competitive, audit cultures in the managerialised global academy. While some women were attracted to influence, rewards and recognition, the affective load of being ‘other’ in masculinist organisational cultures and transgressing socio-cultural messages, for example, the highly educated woman as the ‘third sex’, deterred others. Hence, the complex and contradictory positioning of women in relation to academic leadership. It is a sign of upward mobility, influence and power, but also a normative fantasy about what constitutes success, and its current conditions and limitations in the global academy mean that many women do not construct it as an object of desire.

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