LEADING IN GENDERED ORGANISATIONS

STREAM LEADER: LINLEY LORD & ANGELA BARNES

TUESDAY 22 JULY
10.00am - 11.00am
1. Gendered leadership in Australian unions in the process of strategic renewal
   Barbara Pocock & Karen Brown

2. Women in the Legal Profession: The Impact of Male Networks and Work-Family Balance on the Career Advancement of Women Lawyers to the Partnership Level in Private Law Firms:
   Geneveve Cornejo

11.30am - 12.30pm
1. Complex and contradictory: the doing of gender on regional development boards:
   Alison Sheridan

2. Why so few? An analysis of the progress of women onto and within corporate boards in Australia
   Jane Bridge

2.30pm – 3.30pm
1. Leadership with Care: HERoism in a Feminine Organisation
   Candice Harris

2. Leadership in early childhood education and care: Facing the challenges and embracing new possibilities
   Louise Hard

4.00pm – 5.00pm
1. Women Managers in Pakistan’s Telecom Sector: An Exploratory Study into Their Leadership Roles and Influence:
   Rashida Khatoon Malik

2. Is The Concept Of Leadership Gendered? Decentering The Discourse On Gender, Power And Leadership:
   Gudny Gudbjornsdottir

WEDNESDAY 23 JULY
2.00pm – 3.30pm
1. ‘Girls Disease’?: Considering Contradictions In Women Managers’ Reticence And Ambivalence Towards Organisational Advancement.
   Anne Ross-Smith & Colleen Chesterman

   Lekkie Hopkins

3. Leadership for Business Excellence: The Gender Perspective
   Eileen Drew Trinity College Dublin
THURSDAY 24 JULY
10.00am – 11.00am
1. Assessment Of The Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Female Leaders Performance In The Workplace In Malawi
   S. Mandala, M. Mapila, H. Gausi & L. Kachale
2. The Female Gender In Traditional Leadership In Nigeria: A Socio – Cultural Perspective
   M.M. Afolabi & F.A. Olasupo

11.30am – 1.00pm
1. Leadership (or the lack thereof): Perpetuating low pay in aged care:
   Elyane Palmer & Joan Eveline
2. Women Leading Women – A Masculine Or Feminine Business? Management In Swedish Elderly Care
   Hanna Antonsson & Anna Fogelberg Eriksson
3. We are only women here: Women managers’ constructions of leadership and gender when women are in majority positions
   Klara Regnö

2.45pm – 3.45pm
1. The CEO Kit
   Jane Bridge, Boardroom Partners & Chief Executive Women
Gendered Leadership in Australian Unions In The Process Of Strategic Renewal
Barbara Pocock & Karen Brown, University of South Australia, Barbara.Pocock@unisa.edu.au

Australian unions, like those across many Anglo-Saxon countries are facing severe declines in union membership and in their power. Women’s presence in these traditionally masculinised organisations has been increasing at membership level, and – unevenly- at leadership levels. In Australia, unions have historically played an important role in the emancipatory prospects of women, especially those with weak workplace power.

What is different about union leadership by women, relative to men, in the Australian context, in the current moment? Do women and men see the strategic challenges facing unions differently or do they agree on responses, and on the nature of transformative leadership? This paper will draw on discussions with senior women and men leaders in ten Australian unions, analysing their perspectives and drawing out an assessment of the gendered nature of leadership in these organisations at present. The paper is relevant to the consideration of how leadership operates within masculine organizations and consideration of the possibilities for transforming leadership, leaders and organizations. The authors have cooperated on reviews of significant Australian unions, and one leads a research centre, while the other, has until recently led a state branch of a significant Australian union. The paper will reflect on both the theory and practice of gendered leadership in unions.
TUESDAY 22 JULY
10.00am - 11.00am

Women in the Legal Profession: The Impact of Male Networks and Work-Family Balance on the Career Advancement of Women Lawyers to the Partnership Level in Private Law Firms
Geneveve Cornejo, Joan Eveline and Donella Caspersz

This paper examines the impact of male networks and work-family balance on the career advancement of women lawyers to partner status in private law firms. The qualitative data from a case study of two private law firms in Perth, Western Australia were analysed using Acker’s (1990) theory of gendered organisations. The study highlights that a major barrier to women lawyers’ career advancement is the existence and continuance of male networks which operate to deny women opportunities to form relationships with partners and clients, necessary for promotion to partnership. Balancing work and family commitments was also found to pose a major challenge to women because as primary care-givers, they are unable to fit the image of the ‘ideal’ worker who is essentially male and ‘care-less’.

References:

Acker, Joan. ‘Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organisations’ (1990) 4 Gender and Society 139.
TUESDAY 22 JULY
11.30am – 12.30pm

Complex and contradictory: the doing of gender on regional development boards
Alison Sheridan, Griffith University

In this paper we explore the complex, and in many ways contradictory, picture of how gender is enacted and reinforced within regional development boards/commissions in NSW and WA.

While the number of women on these regional organisations has increased over the past decade, the overwhelming sense of these organisations is one of homogeneity. Members of the boards/commission are very alike in age and socio-economic circumstances, highlighting that body counting by sex doesn’t adequately capture gender, which we take to be a socially constructed facet of identity. Recognising gender as a social construction where the doing of masculinity is privileged over femininity takes our analysis to a deeper level. In this context, as Ministerially appointed organisations, the individuals appointed can be seen to be privileged through the social structures. Their roles, while ambiguous, provide status to those involved and benefits through increased networking and knowledge. Their membership positions them within the (masculine) hegemony.

For women to be appointed to these roles, they have had to perform much like their male counterparts, so they can ‘pass’ for the elite and their nominations be accepted by the Minister; that is, they are connected, have a high profile and they are able to understand and conform to the ‘rules’ of the boards/commissions (in terms of being able to make it to meetings, fit in socially with the group, like mindedness...).

While the women performed similar roles as men to gain access to the boards, they are less likely to label their appointments as political. They do not lay claim to the political nature of their appointments as their male counterparts do. The women’s narratives relate to connections within and external to their region, where these connections are represented as a means of ‘serving’ their community. In contrast, men saw their connections as something they could utilise for their community; almost as a benevolent act. Using a gender lens highlights how the gender roles are reinforced along sex lines – women framed themselves as ‘serving’ (associated with femininity) while men framed themselves as ‘doing’ (highly masculinised). Such compatibility with the normative gender expectations highlights the ‘doing’ of gender. Another layer to the doing of gender on regional development boards concerns the ‘feminisation’ of these boards. The title of board conveys an authority and power which on closer examination is unfounded. With limited resources at their disposal, and little public recognition or understanding of their roles, the boards/commissions have limited agency. Rather, as ‘modestly staffed and modestly resourced’ organisations, they are expected to facilitate/coordinate networking activities. It can be argued then that these poorly resourced boards are populated by women and men who, while vested with important titles, are relatively ‘powerless’ and are expected to undertake duties and display behaviours more consistent with a feminized role.

Making sense of how gender is manifested in the boards/commission is further compounded when the discourse around regional development is considered. The responses pointed to a primacy of the economic over the social in regional development, where the economic is strongly associated with creating employment, especially in the industries where men have traditionally dominated, rather than in what could be argued to be the more feminised domains of services. The doing of gender in this domain points to the persistence of conservative gender patterns reinforcing a masculinised model of business. The contradiction here is that while they are subscribing to this masculinised model, they are unable to deliver on the outcomes because they do not have direct agency over resources.
Why so few? An analysis of the progress of women onto and within corporate boards in Australia

Jane Bridge, Boardroom Partners, jane@boardroompartners.com.au

In 1982, Prof Leonie Still looked at the position of women in managerial roles in Australia and established a useful data point of around 11% that has been referenced many times since, notably to comment on the lack of change in the intervening years.

The same research found that around 10% of the 134 companies included had appointed ‘a woman to the board’ In 2008, latest figures show that 10% of the top 200 company board directors are women.

What has been going on for the past 26 years? And is the same story true in government?

Our research shows that

- there are significant differences between the government and private sectors
- Comparisons are extremely difficult as the target ‘population’ shifts continuously and so time series analysis is almost impossible in the private sector
- the size, shape and role of boards have all changed significantly over the past 25 years
- progress has been slow in the private sector but is steady and fairly consistent
- women on listed company boards are younger than their male peers and arrive on boards from with varied backgrounds and via different routes
- government appointments overall are well above the private sector, but are highly sector specific within government
- career paths are developing at board level, particularly for women
- women, once appointed to one board are likely to be appointed to another board
- women are more likely to be appointed to boards in certain industries and that these do not necessarily correlate with their executive experience

In the same period, significant progress was made by state and federal governments, with the passing of legislation requiring appointment and promotion to be merit based.

This group is often cited as the ‘feeder group’ for board positions of independent directors i.e those who are employed by organisations as external non executive directors to advise at the highest level on company strategy, CEO hiring and firing and monitoring organisational performance.

On the boards of these same organisations, where legislation does not apply, progress has been not only at snail’s pace but also a snail’s path, showing a long and meandering track towards any ‘progress’.

This session will explore the success of a sample of women, analysing the varied career paths of women directors in contrast to their male counterparts. Various reasons have been offered over the last years for the small number of women on boards and these will be explored alongside the latest statistics and analysis of a sample of current female directors with multiple board seats.

**TUESDAY 22 JULY**

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Sinclair A. (1994) Trials at the Top


Still, L.V. (1986) Everything a Woman Needs to Know About Winning the Corporate Battle
Leadership with Care: HERoism in a Feminine Organisation
Candice Harris, AUT University, candice.harris@aut.ac.nz

In the Gender and Management field much of the debate is around the place and fit of women in the masculinised organisation, where men hold a central place and heroic masculinity in leadership roles is natural, valued and rewarded. Masculinity is “so institutionalized in organizational cultures and workplace practices that they are taken for granted, perpetuated as the status quo, and intermeshed with managerial performance” (Pringle, 2008, p.S113). What happens though when men are all but absent from an organisational context; where instead women dominate in numbers and authority at all levels? How does a feminine organisation achieve success to win several business awards and accolades when measured traditional masculinised organisations across diverse industries?

This paper aims to contribute an alternative to constructions of heroic masculinity which emphasise powerful individuals to instead consider ‘caring HERoism’ accentuating empowerment of groups underpinned by a duty of a care to each other and clients for organisational success. The case of a rest home providing leadership in the care of the elderly, and a range of services for their changing and diverse needs used to illustrate a feminine organisation in operation. The home has 75 staff, of which 95% are women with an average age of 45 years. The workforce is ethnicity diverse with 50% Maori, and the remaining Pasifika, British or New Zealand European. The work performed at the home demands emotional labour, or as Eaton (2000) describes in the nursing home context, the ability to behave and complete tasks patiently, gently and with tolerance. Sociologists observe that both the elderly and their caregivers are socially devalued and marginalized; most ‘caring’ work has been systematically undervalued (Eaton, 2000).

Given the financial constraints the rest home operates within and increased demand for their services, the challenge for managers was to find ways to improve job design and work practices to retain staff that have options in industries that make less physical and emotional demands on them, yet offer greater wages. The female General Manager realised that staff largely determine organisational performance, so restructured to create empowered teams, and embarked on several productivity initiatives driven from the primary objective of care for staff and clients. These changes were made through managers and staff creating a climate of patience, open communication, encouragement and empowerment to enable changes to be made to structures, systems and working practices.

The rest home case supports Eagly’s (2007) proposition that leaders’ effectiveness depends on context, so it is not surprising that the stereotypically feminine qualities of cooperation and collaboration have been imperative to the home’s success measured against several business performance measures (occupancy, standard of care, absenteeism, turnover, health and safety, reputation, achievement of accreditation standards). The performance demonstrates the business case for feminine leadership at work; that women can merge the “contradictory demands of being feminine and business like” (Wacjman, 1998, p.7).

Note: If the abstract is accepted, then the paper will contain the actual organisation’s name, and the presentation will include DVD footage of the organisation, featuring the managers and staff at the home.

References
Leadership in early childhood education and care: Facing the challenges and embracing new possibilities. 
Louise Hard, Charles Sturt University, lhard@csu.edu.au

The concept of leadership continues to attract considerable literary and research attention manifesting in multiple interpretations and popular trends. In the highly feminised field of early childhood education and care (ECEC) work around leadership indicates discord with traditional notions and rationales which are more related to equity and communal benefit. The incongruence between traditional images and behaviours of leadership and more altruistic rationales is compounded by negative behaviours (such as horizontal violence) which make leadership enactment problematic (Hard 2006).

A research project which explored how early childhood personnel understand and enact leadership (Hard 2005) provides the foundation for this paper. It then draws on recent literature from Sinclair (2007) and Wheatley (2005) and suggests that these leadership discussions offer much to the ECEC field in terms of alternative notions of leadership. Sinclair (2007) proffers a leadership involving connecting with others and understanding identity as a “...vehicle through which to better understand one’s power, actions, vulnerabilities and possibilities” (p. 143). Her challenging of current discourses of authentic and spiritual leadership helps to make evident the hidden agendas which continue to constrain leaders although masked in the language of emancipation. Wheatley (2005) promotes a new story of leadership that trusts humanity, welcomes surprises, is curious about differences, delights in inventiveness as well as nurtures and connects people. She proposes that leaders “...trust that we can create wisely and well, that we seek the best interests of our organisation and our community, that we want to bring more good into the world” (p. 30). These aims have resonance with the aims, goals and desires articulated by participants in the Hard (2005) study. For example, one participant acknowledged the activities of someone she felt was an effective leader by stating “I don’t believe that he has an agenda of any sort except for the promotion of early childhood services”. Another suggested that a leader in ECEC needs to be someone “that doesn’t have their own agenda”. This egalitarian rationale for leadership as articulated by participants appeared in contrast to models of leadership identified outside the ECEC field and for some participants this was difficult to reconcile.

The challenges around leadership in ECEC are many. They involve multiple and varied interpretations of what leadership is but in many cases a common resolve of achieving improved outcomes for children, staff and families. The complexities of lingering cultural expectations of “niceness” are often considered incongruent with interpretations of leadership resulting in limited leadership enactment. Horizontal violence emerges as a resulting frustration and provides an additional barrier to leadership in the ECEC field.

Wheatley (2005) and Sinclair (2007) explore new stories of leadership which may provide ECEC personnel with ideas beyond the traditional models of leadership. They suggest ideas of less-ego in leadership (Sinclair 2007) and thinking about organisations as living systems which are self organising and involve identity, information and relationships (Wheatley 2005, p. 37). These stories open up new possibilities of understanding and enacting leadership which ECEC personnel may find liberating and provide voice to leadership rationales previously deemed out of step with interpreted models of leadership. This has the potential to make leadership activity more accessible and appealing.

**Keywords:** Early childhood, leadership, horizontal violence, (Sinclair 2007), (Wheatley 2005).

**References:**
Hard, L. 2005, How is Leadership Understood and Enacted within the Field of Early Childhood Education and Care? Queensland University of Technology.
**TUESDAY 22 JULY**

4.00pm – 5.00pm:

**Women Managers in Pakistan’s Telecom Sector: An Exploratory Study into Their Leadership Roles and Influence**

*Rashida Khatoon Malik & Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology*

Gender has been a prominent factor in determining the leadership roles of women in Pakistan. In organizational settings women were not trusted with managerial roles and responsibilities. Traditionally, there was a general misunderstanding that women lack leadership qualities and abilities to perform as effective managers. Accredit it to globalization, changing economics or simply a change in people but no longer is the conventional acceptable as the norm. The work environment has changed considerably over the last couple of decades, and the change also influenced the roles of women in corporate sector in Pakistan. This is perhaps most apparent in the increasing number of women managers in organizations today who are posted on leadership positions. Though, despite all advances this number is significantly lower compared to their male counterparts. However, despite all advances this number is significantly lower compared to males. In a paper, Sümer has discussed the disproportion in this figure comparative to the United States, France and Turkey (Sümer 2006). The paper goes on to discuss various forms of ‘differential treatments’ for women managers.

Recent years have shown an increase in the number of women managers employed in various industries. Gender bias seems to be on declining side and more women are actively involved in leadership roles. This growth has been seen in their traditional and non traditional roles. More women managers are entrusted with leadership responsibilities and ‘differential treatments’ for women managers are changing its dimensions. Interestingly, most bosses do not rate men and women differently in terms of ‘General Effectiveness’ which covers current effectiveness, future potential and credibility. (Kabacoff, 1998). Despite this, more people prefer male than female bosses (Eagly, 2007). This does seem to make it harder for women to become leaders and to be successful in male-dominated leadership roles.

The paper will try to establish the current roles of Pakistani women managers in today’s private investment funded economy by using firms in the telecom sector as a sample. The reason for choosing this sector is the phenomenally high rate of investment and growth that this sector has shown over the last fifteen years. In terms of influence in the economy, rapid investment and preferred employer status place this sector as a major influence in dictating trends in employment, behaviour and culture today.

The paper is based on a study that is conducted to understand the growth in real terms by focusing on women managers in one sector. Pakistan’s telecom sector, dominated by private foreign investment has grown rapidly over the past decade. It is considered as the benchmark in following innovative practices and establishing new trends in management. Women managers in various roles appreciate the new practices and allow that mostly lateral expansion in organizations allows them to perform more effectively. For the most part, both male and female managers do not feel gender has any role to play in the modern organization. Performance measures and consequent effectiveness in roles are based on goal achievement, both individual and organizational. This effectiveness is relative to each manager’s own skill, capability and knowledge.

Gender does not appear to have any apparent influence on these measures. However, managers do feel that some influences of cultural and social affect the measure of their performance. Different parameters in judging leadership and managerial effectiveness for males and females are derived somewhat from social conservatism and conventions. There is optimism though, that changes in management and organizational policies can further reduce the influence of personal bias that may affect performance measurement. Further research is needed to generalize these conclusions. Comparative studies on practices in other sectors of the economy, including public sector organizations may help validate the findings of this research.

**Keywords:** Human resource management, Leadership, women managers, gender, roles, organizational effectiveness

**References:**


**Is The Concept Of Leadership Gendered? Decentering The Discourse On Gender, Power And Leadership**

_Gudny Gudbjörnsdóttir, University of Iceland; gg@hi.is_

Why are there fewer women in positions of leadership than men, how has it been theorized and how to proceed from here? In this paper I will look at the state of research on women, power and leadership, both in terms of numbers, the discourse of explanations, and theoretical approaches. My main focus is on educational leadership and on my qualitative study of women and leadership in Iceland. I maintain that neither research with focus on what women have in common nor approaches with focus on “difference” between women and how the category of gender interacts with other categories like race or ethnicity are satisfactory. Neither approach challenges masculine hegemony because the public/private dualisms remain intact and the positive elements of leadership are associated with masculinity, hence the leadership concept seems gendered even if defined in a gender neutral way.

Simone de Beauvoir maintained over 50 years ago that men are human beings with sexuality and that women can only be equal to males if they can allow themselves to be individuals with sexuality. To renounce their femininity they are renouncing part of their humanity. While men can use their gender and sexuality to empower themselves as self-confident credible leaders, women have to renounce their femininity and thereby part of their humanity, and thereby their authenticity as leaders.

In view of the power the scientific discourse can have, the key question of the paper is if the leadership concept is gendered and if a change or deconstruction of that understanding is feasible or possible. Do we need to dump the leadership concept in order for women to have the same chance as agents of power? A new approach is being called for, and here an attempt is made to theorize how to proceed both in research and practice.

**Keywords:** Leadership, gender, decentering, discourse, education.

**References:**


‘Girls Disease’?: Considering Contradictions In Women Managers’ Reticence And Ambivalence Towards Organisational Advancement

Anne Ross-Smith & Colleen Chesterman, University of Technology Sydney, anne.ross-smith@uts.edu.au colleen.chesterman@uts.edu.au

Reticence is a term frequently associated with modesty and reserve. Ambivalence can be defined as being pulled in opposite directions. We use these terms to explore the contradictions that emerge when a group of women in senior positions talk about their careers, promotion and organisational advancement. The paper is based on selected findings of an Australia-wide study of the experiences of women and men in senior management in the public, private and higher education sectors. Males in our study evinced more ambition about career advancement and at times even asserted their ‘right’ to be promoted. Women on the other hand frequently expressed uncertainty and reluctance about advancing their careers and prospects for promotion; this hesitancy was described by one woman as ‘girl disease’. Embedded within the contradictions that emerged from the in-depth interviews which formed our primary method of data collection were distinctive differences in both the attitudes and experiences of the different age and sector cohorts that participated in the project. Older women interviewed had frequently struggled against discrimination and many in the higher education and the public sector had been ‘first generation’ senior women managers. But most no longer saw themselves as tokens in leadership expressing enthusiasm about their positions and what they had been able to achieve. Younger women interviewed came mainly from the private sector; they believed they had been appointed on merit, were at ease with their male colleagues and confident of their capacity to influence events and to effect changes. Yet there was still some evidence of ambivalence and reticence about proceeding to more senior positions. This reflected both individual confidence but also structural discrimination that suggested to women that they might not be accepted in senior positions. In addition, the forms of ambivalence varied: some women were explicit in expressing their lack of confidence in their abilities while others demonstrated this by a tendency to seek additional qualifications. Evidence of women’s difficulties in reconciling family responsibilities with the demands of senior level appointments was also manifest. Drawing on a range of approaches to understanding women’s social identity we illustrate different instances of ambivalence and reticence evident among our participants. We seek to explain this phenomenon by analysing the tensions between women’s gender identity and the organisational factors that shape their ‘managerial’ identity. We conclude by suggesting strategies to improve organisational practices in relation to women’s career development and promotion practices.

Keywords: Gendered organisations; Reticence; Ambivalence; Cultural determination

References:
WEDNESDAY 23 JULY
2.00pm – 3.30pm

How Notions Of Leadership Might Be Transformed Within Masculinist Organisations By Drawing Lessons From Our Feminist Past
Lekkie Hopkin, Edith Cowan University, l.hopkins@ecu.edu.au

This paper responds to the challenge to address the question of how notions of leadership might be transformed within masculinist organisations by drawing lessons from our feminist past.

The focus of the paper is on the work of Australian feminist activist Patricia Jessie Giles in the (decidedly masculinist) Australian trade union movement from 1974 until her election as a Senator to the Australian Parliament in 1981. The paper draws on material gathered in writing the biography of Pat Giles to consider her as one of several critical actors within the Australian trade union movement during the 1970s who were strategically working to ensure that unions came to understand the needs of women workers, and who simultaneously were working towards internal reform of the trade union movement itself.

The paper opens with a brief discussion of Pat Giles’ career as a trade unionist and of the background she brought to it. The paper uses the campaign to have the ACTU adopt and implement the Working Women’s Charter during the mid to late 1970s as a case study, in order to uncover the strategies used by activists such as Pat Giles to introduce policy changes favourable to women, and, in the process, to lead the trade union movement through a process of cultural organisational change. In particular, the paper considers the significance of working from within mainstream institutions while remaining connected to an external women’s movement; the importance of separate institution building via the creation of women’s committees within the trade union movement locally and nationally; the importance of alliance-building, creating allies in the struggle for policy change; and the importance of effective discursive strategies linking feminist goals to dominant discourses. In its reading of Giles’ trade union activism, the paper acknowledges the significance of critical actions, collective strategies and favourable circumstances in introducing policy change and cultural shifts.
WEDNESDAY 23 JULY
2.00pm – 3.30pm

Leadership for Business Excellence: The Gender Perspective
Eileen Drew Trinity College Dublin; edrew@tcd.ie

The adoption of appropriate forms of leadership in response to modern organisational needs has become a major strand of management theory and underpins the pursuit of Total Quality/Business Excellence. With some notable exceptions, most of the leadership literature ignores the gender dimension of leadership. This gender blindness and the association with management and leadership with men is being challenged through feminist/gender studies which draw upon ideas about power, communication, empathy and equality from the women’s movement. Changing gender roles have been evolving in parallel with the quest for Total Quality/Business Excellence.

The paper reviews traditional and emerging theories of leadership and management and examines them in the context of changing organisational needs demanded by the adoption of quality and excellence approaches. It explores the broader range of required leadership skills, from a gender perspective, including those previously not considered of value: "people" and interpersonal skills, the ability to build bridges, to be vision/mission-driven and able to react quickly to a constantly changing environment, maintaining competitive strength by holding onto highly trained and valued employees.

Drawing upon an international study of 1686 political and business leaders across 27 industrialised countries, the paper presents the findings of 902 top business leaders in terms of their professed management style. To validate and elaborate on these results, a small national sub sample of Irish political (three male, four female) and business leaders (two male, four female) were interviewed about differences in leadership style between men and women. The unanimous responses from women and men suggest that a difference exists, though there was considerable variation in how that difference was perceived by respondents.
THURSDAY 24 JULY  
10.00am – 11.00am

The Female Gender In Traditional Leadership In Nigeria: A Socio – Cultural Perspective  
M.M. Afolabi & F.A. Olasupo Obafemi Awolowo University, mojirayoafolabi@yahoo.com & faolasupo@yahoo.com

Most societies in Africa are patriarchal, that is they are societies with a social system in which the male gender rules the family or clan, and in which descent is traced through the male line. The implication of this is that leadership positions in society are mainly reserved for the men. This is because men are generally regarded as being more dynamic, more charismatic and stronger in character than women. These attributes are seen as some of the major leadership qualities with which persons in positions of authority and power rule those who are under their authority. Women are generally seen as the weaker vessel that must be handled delicately, and so must not be involved with the rigours of administration at high level. This attitude permeates all ages in virtually all human societies from the primordial to the modern times. Deep research has however revealed the fact that in some traditional societies in Nigeria, women were given leadership roles in societies, above their male counterparts. They were made the rulers in human societies. In this scheme, three identifiable approaches of leadership are manifest. These are the method of direct leadership of societies, the regency method and the dual leadership method.

This paper examines the phenomenon of women leadership in some traditional societies in ancient Nigeria and the three methods of leadership involved. It identified such societies where women were traditional rulers of communities and what they were able to achieve during their tenures in office. The paper contrasts such achievements with the achievements of some women rulers in modern Nigerian societies and in other societies of the modern world. Such modern women rulers include Mrs. Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, Queen Elizabeth the second of Great Britain, Maria Estella of Argentina, Mrs Indra Ghandi of India, Mrs Sirimawo Bandara Naike of Sri Lanka and Mrs Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia. The paper concludes like Aristophanes did in the Ecclesiazusae (The women of parliament) that the human society may be in better hands if it were entrusted to women.  

Keywords: empowerment, equality, equity, and participation of women in decision making
Assessment Of The Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Female Leaders Performance In The Workplace In Malawi
S. Mandala, M. Mapila, H. Gausi, L. Kachale, Women in Science and Technology Network; mmapilafastmail.net
maleytata@yahoo.com

A study was conducted to analyze the socio cultural factors affecting women's performance as leaders in the workplace in Malawi. Although great strides have been made to advance the role of women in economic development and in technical work, many obstacles still hinder women from excelling as leaders (Kottke et al, 2005). Purposeful random sampling was used to select a total of 100 females in leadership positions in government, educational institutions, research and non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Different tools were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from the respondents.

Using Principal Factor Analysis, the results show that the performance of women leaders in the workplace is influenced by three latent factors and these are the socio-economic background of the respondent and that of the higher ranking officer, and the norms of the institution for which the woman is working.

The analysis shows that variables such as age, number of years of education and experience in the workplace were factors that had high positive loadings on the first factor. This entails that as women leaders get higher education and as their experience in the workplace increases, their performance is less likely to be influenced by external factors. Despite these findings, other factors such as number and age of children, and marital status of the respondent were also found to load highly on the first factor but with negative factor loadings. This entails that women with younger children who are married are less likely to performance as well as their counterparts who have older children or who are unmarried if they do not receive support from their spouses.

The other two underlying factors, characteristics of the institutions and the socio-economic background of the immediate supervisor were also found to have high positive loadings with several variables. The analysis of these variables shows that institutions that are traditionally dominated by men, women faced greater challenges to lead as they met a lot of opposition. Consequently, this situation was aggravated by the immediate supervisor’s background.

In conclusion this study has found that in order to transform organizations and to enable the creation of strong female leaders, there is need to empower women through higher education and capacity building to enable them to overcome challenges and bring about transformation. Additionally, there is need for a concerted effort to change the mindset and cultural orientation of communities and policy makes of women’s role in the workplace. Policy makers need to make deliberate efforts to put in place policies that are conducive to female leaders in the workplace. The recommendation of this study is that female leaders need to create a lobbying and advocacy platform to target policy makers and communities. In addition, this platform can be used as a research engine for generating new knowledge and information for engendering leadership and transforming organizations in respect to cultural norms.

Keywords: Leadership; Organizations; Socio-cultural Factors; Women
This paper examines the ways in which employers in the aged care sector justify and sustain low pay for work which is both highly skilled and in high demand. The paper draws on a study which used in-depth interviews to explore employer responses to shortages of direct care workers in the Western Australian aged care sector. Theoretical triangulation is used to develop a theoretical framework drawing from feminist economic theory, welfare state analysis and the sociology of work.

The framework reinvigorates early feminist debates, recently revisited in feminist economic theory by writers such as Paula England, Nancy Folbre and Julie Nelson, about whether care work is or should be performed ‘for love or money’ (Nelson & England 2002; Folbre & Nelson 2000; Nelson 1999). It builds on Trudie Knijn’s ideal-typical framework, the Struggling Logics of Care (Knijn 2000; further developed in Knijn 2006; Knijn & Verhagen 2007), which provides a structural account of caring regimes in different welfare state systems.

Knijn proposes that there are four main ‘logics’ which underpin the social provision of care: familial, bureaucratic, professional and market. Knijn uses the ‘familial logic’ to characterise care provided in the context of private relations such as family. In the familial logic, care is provided upon normative criteria of the family or community. It is enacted through strongly gendered moral claims and social bonding, assumed to ensure quality care.

This paper argues that rather than being restricted to the domestic sphere, the familial logic plays a significant role in how aged care work is defined in the public provision of care. In particular, the familial logic and the associated gendering of care work sets up a particular relationship between skill, quality and reward. The familial logic reminds us that care is predominantly accomplished in the home as unpaid work performed by women. This calls into question the need for a formally ‘skilled’ workforce and thus disguises the skill involved in care work. Women’s structural position is such that their participation in the labour market is seen as secondary to their role providing unpaid, familial care in the home. Family-friendly work arrangements are assumed to be more important than a well-paid job. Care workers are presumed to be financially supported and therefore less likely to contest higher pay.

This paper will show how employers are not simply passive recipients of the benefits they gain from the familial care logic, but also active producers of it. It highlights how employers engage in the process of symbolically shaping the idea that care work needs to be done for love rather than for money. The data shows that when employers apply the familial logic to aged care, they (re)produce an assumption that an effective and committed care worker must be emotionally and selflessly motivated. In other words, they represent the relationship between quality and reward as a zero-sum equation in which increased reward will attract lower-quality labour. Increasing pay for aged care workers is therefore deemed inappropriate and/or irrelevant.

How might our traditional theories of leadership explain employer engagement in shaping this representation of aged care workers? In such theories an organisational ‘leader’ is someone who has the capacity to symbolically shape an organisational culture (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). We acknowledge our debt to the theory of the gendered organization (Acker, 1990) to ask how employers in the aged care sector should be seen on the issue of workers’ pay: do they demonstrate leadership - or a profound lack of it?

Keywords: low pay, aged care work, employer strategy, familial care logic, symbolic shaping, skill

References:


Women Leading Women – A Masculine Or Feminine Business? Management In Swedish Elderly Care.
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The main purpose of the paper is to describe and analyze how leadership and gender is constructed in organizations dominated by women. The paper presents findings in a research project concerning leadership in service producing organizations with a majority of women employees – here care of elderly people (non medical care provided by the municipality) in Sweden. What does the “doing gender process” look like in that kind of organization?

After the second world war, health care and service has been a public sector responsibility in Sweden where co-workers as well as managers have been public employees. The public sector in this case is also a female sector. During the last decade a number of changes have been directed towards the public sector; new organizational forms and models and new owners, not least within care of the elderly. New owners imply that some of the characteristics of the public sector do not apply any more, but are rather replaced by the logics of the private sector.

The above mentioned female dominance amongst employees and first line managers contributes to the notion of elderly care as having a female image. The changes of public welfare services, in practice as well as in rhetoric, however imply a change of traditional assumptions. What does that mean for the female image of the services and management? Do we see a masculinisation of the public sector – and in management?

The main theoretical framework in the paper relates to a doing gender perspective (Acker, 1990). Different analytical entries are used that highlight individual sensemaking, interactions, symbols and structure in the analysis of how leadership and gender is constructed in organizations. Initially examined is how leaders discuss and talk about their work, leadership, women, men, feminine and masculine. Secondly the actions and interactions of leaders are studied: what they do and together with whom? Thirdly the organizational context in which the leaders find themselves is described and analyzed. The organizational context is studied from the perspectives of gender distribution, organizational structure, the organizational operation as well as policy values. In addition to the main theoretical framework, the research topic is discussed from theoretical viewpoints on the public sector and its change (Thomas & Davies, 2002; Christensen & Laegreid, 2007), first line managers (Kanter, 1993), gender equality in the work place (Billing & Sundin, 2006) as well as gender and leadership (Hearn, 2006; Wahl, 2005).

The empirical data consists of qualitative interviews (and observations) within public and private elderly care organizations: 29 interviews with first line managers (28 women and one man). Observations of management meetings as well as shadowings (Czarniawska, 2007) of a number of managers provide background information.

Keywords: doing gender in organizations, leadership, managers, gender equality, the arena between public and private sector
We are only women here: Women managers’ constructions of leadership and gender when women are in majority positions

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This paper explores how women managers construct leadership and gender when women are in majority in leadership positions, as well as in the whole organization.


In this study I examine what role the majority position plays in shaping women managers’ work place experiences. The findings are based on 24 interviews with 12 women managers. They work in Swedish geriatric care and in housing services and care for the disabled. There are 87 women and 13 percent men employed in the care sector in Sweden. Among managers, 77 percent are women and, 27 percent are men. Each manager was interviewed twice over a period of two to three weeks and asked to fill out a form between the interviews. The women interviewed were asked to describe a situation when they felt like managers, women, women managers and so forth.

The paper applies analytical insights of earlier work on gender demography, gendered structures and processes and symbols presented above. Gender is an accomplishment that is actively constructed in relation to power. In this study I explore how women managers negotiate meanings of gender and leadership when they find themselves in majority at positions of power.

Results suggest that the majority position opens up various ways of challenging and transforming prevailing male constructions of leadership. At the same time however, women’s subordination in gender power relations in society affects the social constructions of gender identity and leadership among the women managers.

Keywords: Women, management, power gender, women majority, gender order

References:


THURSDAY 24 JULY
2.45pm – 3.45pm

The CEO KIT: What it aims to do – who is using it? What is it telling us and where we might go next?
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Background
The CEO Kit was developed by a group of members of Chief Executive Women (a not for profit member based organisation) in response to requests for assistance from male CEOs frustrated at their failure to either recruit or retain women at senior levels in corporate Australia.

Originally designed to be a set of simple metrics to identify and track progress of women through corporate life, the Kit developed into a comprehensive index of analyses, reference materials and suggestions for action. The underpinning philosophies of the Kit will be discussed, along with the process of development of this unique tool which brings together the experiences of a group of six individual women leaders.

The Kit is arranged around 5 core questions that reflect the stages and context of a career and test the environment for ‘commitment from the top’. (Is identifying and promoting female talent a top priority for our CEO, leadership team and Board? Are we appointing our fair share of female talent? Is organisational culture driving our female talent out? Does our pay by distribution tell a story? Are we managing our female talent for leadership roles?)

These questions are followed up with tools and requirements for data collection and graphics designed to highlight particular analysis or patterns in organisations.
In year 1, (2007) eight questions were selected as ‘benchmarks’ and a small number of companies volunteered data to Hewitt, the HR consulting firm, who have partnered with CEW to collate the data and develop benchmarks for Australia.

Interest in the Kit has been high, with take up from small and large corporates; the university sector; professional services firms; professional groups looking for an industry wide approach to track the progress of women; the government sector and some multi national companies. While there is a strong interest in comparisons, participation in the benchmarking exercise has been low, although 2008 promises to have a more substantial data pool.

Overall, it is fair to say that there has been very little progress in Australia over the last 20 years, while there has been a lot of ‘revolving door’ activity, there has not been a sustained progression of women into the ‘top jobs’. In Australia, it has become apparent that there are still CEOs who do not see the legitimacy or need to hire and develop women into senior positions.

The next stages for the Kit are challenging – CEW with Hewitt will put more efforts into data collection for benchmarking; some specific industries and sectors are already showing interest in particular ‘cuts’ of data. It is also possible that there will need to be adaptations of the Kit model for specific populations – e.g the university sector; the government sector.

As the programme rolls out, there will be considerable interest in the impact of the Kit and the benchmarking project has the potential to make a significant contribution to present scarce data pool about women’s progress into and through senior positions.

This session will describe the evolution, challenges and options for the future of the Kit and the potential it has for changing and monitoring the position of women in the Australian labour force.