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PRELIMINARY REPORT

Maybe He's Just Better Than You": Generation X Women and Higher Education

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A B S T R A C T

The next five years will be significant in international higher education as the baby boomer generation leaves our campuses. What legacy will they leave and how will the next generations manage the 'leaderist' turn in universities? This article enters the tight cluster of gender, generation and leadership, and probes how masculine ideologies of achievement, power and recognition can be critiqued and challenged. Recognizing Laura Bates 'everyday sexism' project, my piece names the daily structures, stories and scenarios that undermine and minimize women in universities.

KEY WORDS: *higher education, feminism, leadership, managerialism, everyday sexism*

Indroduction

Academic leadership is like dieting. In most universities, the vice chancellor, deputy vice chancellor, pro vice chancellor and acting pro vice chancellor needs a pill, potion, lotion, gastric band, girdle or vibrating slendertone to shake, shift, tuck, tighten or excrete the unwanted flab to reveal a sleek new shape. Similarly, a new leadership post, role, committee, strategy or action plan is announced in universities only at moments of crisis. This

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leader-magician-guru will right the titanic of a budget, rather than rearrange the deckchairs of debt, revise the dated curriculum, solve the problematic supervision policies and inspire research inactive staff to become superheroes of scholarship. Supposedly, with a great leader, all institutional problems dissipate like a tummy roll into Spanx. Unfortunately, leadership, excellence and achievement are not like stretchy lycra. A quick-fix appointment cannot create change. To solve structural problems in teaching and research and to make a difference in a school or department requires long, repetitive and brutal workdays of careful, direct and methodical effort. There is no easy way to create a high quality learning experience or a calm, stable and sustainable workforce.

This article enters the tightly clustered relationship of gender, leadership and generation. It probes the impact of 'blokes with grey hair' being 'insensitive.' It also recognizes that those 'blokes with grey hair' – individually – are not a problem. Well, not the only problem. More accurately, I explore the 'leaderist turn'(Morley, 2013) in higher education and then evaluate the impact of assumptions about masculinity and age on higher education. It then presents a model for leadership that enables the generational transformation of the university system. The final third of this paper is distinct: it is diagnostic, showing the impact of assumptions about women in higher education. I summon ten stories,[2] ten fissures in academic life. The goal is to ensure that careful and considered succession planning is in place so that our universities continue and improve the multi-layered injustices of generation and gender (Bates, 2014). I apply Laura Bates' argument in *Everyday Sexism* (Bates, 2014*),* o a university environment. She argues that the daily pinpricks of abuse are often forgotten or brushed away by women. Yet this everyday sexism is not banal or minor, but is internalized, reducing the potential of women to become their best selves.

My twenty year career has not been situated in buoyant times of success, optimism, clarity and commitment to the goals of higher education. The pettiness, jealousies, ignorance and wilful misuse of power have enacted systematic and acidic damage to our universities. A moment of change is upon us: the Baby Boomer generation is now – in waves – retiring from

[2] The word 'stories' has been used intentionally. While often ignored as historical source material, it has a crucial place in theorizing the lives of women and other disempowered communities. Please refer to B. Watkins and N. Rothchild, *In the company of women: voices from the women's movement*, (St Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1996)

their senior posts.[3] This article occupies this moment, a moment for Generation X women and the generations of university academics who follow. What type of leaders will we be? What have we learnt from the chaotic capitalism of the last two decades? Feminist cultural studies and higher education studies align to offer a commentary about academic management, academic leadership and the distinctions between the two.

Take Me to Your Leader

> **Alice:** Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?
>
> **Cheshire Cat:** That depends a good deal on where you want to go.

A new mode of talking about leadership in universities has been emerging through the last decade. Louise Morley described it as a "leaderist turn in higher education." (Morley,2013). She shows that through a pretence for rationality, logic, accessibility, transparency and meritocracy, the assumptions about leadership have silently transformed. Patriarchy and its structures are still blocking women's progress into senior university positions, wearing the frock of meritocracy to clothe the injustice. But now, the word 'leadership' is a conduit to combine marketization and managerialism into the framework into which higher education is situated (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2013). Students transform into customers. (Morley, 2013). Universities are driven by Key Performance Indicators (KPI), one-line budgets, electronic forms, delegations, 360 degree reviews and steering committees to discuss the dysfunctional decisions from earlier committees (Alvesson,, et.al., 2008). Patricia Hill Collins realized that, "oppressed groups are frequently placed in the situation of being listened to only if we frame our ideas in the language that is familiar to and comfortable for a dominant group. This requirement often changes the meaning of our ideas and works to elevate the ideas of dominant groups." (Hill Collins, 2000). The definition of empowerment changes through the realization that every statement from disempowered groups must be translated before it is understood.

Within this context, 'the woman problem' is positioned. Diana Leonard argues that the university, "actively *constitutes* gender." (Leonard, 2001). This phrase is extraordinarily important and extends beyond mere secondary socialization. Higher education actively constitutes masculinity.

[3] A study of some of this generational change is found in Laura Hills, *Lasting female educational leadership: leadership legacies of women leaders*, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013

It actively constitutes femininity. It configures masculinity with many of the characteristics that infuse the 'leaderist turn.' While not as overt as Christina Hoff Sommers' ideology during the height of the conservative backlash, the assumptions about men and masculinity is clear.

> *It is a story of how we are turning against boys and forgetting a simple truth: that the energy, competitiveness and corporeal daring of normal, decent males is responsible for much of what is right in the world … Boys need discipline, respect, and moral guidance. Boys need love and tolerant understanding*
>
> (Hoff Sommers, 2000).

Here is a naturalization of competition, risk, ambition and innovation. Universities have different requirements of women. They are often invisible, completing the institutional housework of teaching and administration. Female students are not so invisible. The higher enrolment of women over men in most countries has been recognized by UNESCO (2010). Yet this increase is unmatched in staff appointments (Leathwood, 2013). The greater the seniority of university staff, the fewer women filling out this role or layer in the organization (Blandford, E. et. al, 2011). The severe under-representation of female Vice Chancellors embodies this principle.[4] In the United Kingdom in 2009/10, women were 44% of all academics. But 80.9% of professors were men. Therefore women are over-represented as lecturers and deeply under-represented as associate professors and above. Considering the rising level of female undergraduates, this disparity is not only worrying, but deeply troubling. There is also a disturbing literature emerging that confirms that when women are in management, they are in volatile and incredibly difficult situations. Eveline termed this reality, the "Ivory Basement." (Eveline, 2004). The key question is the type of career pathways and choices that are available for female academics.[5] If positions are appointed from within or appointed through patronage, then men will continue to recognize and promote men similar to themselves.

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[4] Singh reported in 2008 that in 70% of the 54 nations in the Commonwealth, all the universities were led by men. Please refer to J. Singh, *Whispers of change: Female staff numbers in Commonwealth universities*, (London: Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2008)

[5] A fine early analysis of 'choice' and 'opportunity' is Kathleen Hall Jamieson's *Beyond the double bind: women and leadership*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995)

There are also the assumptions of feminine responsibilities that Morley refers to as "women academics caught between two greedy institutions – the extended family and the university (Morley, 2013).I have found this to be particularly true in Australia. I am one of the few heads of school at Charles Sturt University. I am married to an academic, but have no children. My responsibility is to manage three campuses: Bathurst, Dubbo and Burlington in Canada. Once I fortnight, I travel to Dubbo by train and stay overnight. Once a year, I spend a month in Burlington. The question is how such a regime would be possible with childcare responsibilities. My parents – in their eighties – are not only healthy but my brother, who is an experienced doctor, lives within one kilometre of my parents. My job is so challenging that I was recalled, three weeks early, from Perth during my annual leave because a staff member had raised a complaint against a colleague that was later completely discharged. The foundation of leadership roles is that there are no other conflicting demands on time, attention or responsibility. The ruthlessness of this formation is staggering (Woodward, 2007). But actually, these questions of family and the availability of time are proxies. Louise Hay – in 1997 – stated that, "today, an unmarried woman has the whole world in front of her. She can rise as high as her capabilities and her belief in herself. This statement is clearly untrue. It was wrong in 1997 and still remains so. However it constructs 'marriage' and 'a family' as impediments or barriers to success.[6] The key in such statements is to switch the gender and see if the statement still makes sense. 'An unmarried man' does not have the same resonance, meaning or function. Instead, entire television programmes – such as *The Bachelor* and the Australian and American television programme *The Farmer wants a wife*[7] – perpetuate the value of marriage to men. This individualization – rather than institutionalization - of power suggests that a woman can be successful based on 'capabilities,' rather than constricted by access, patronage and masculine ideologies. In actuality, gaining leadership is based on opportunities being made available and then matching a set of often arbitrary criteria against lived experience and

[6] While I understand and respect the argument being made, a similar mode of argument was made by through Jocelynne Scutt's Singular women: reclaiming spinsterhood, (Melbourne: Artemis Publishing, 1995). However is marriage the problem, or is it the particular version of marriage created through the dual forces of patriarchy and neoliberal capitalism that is the difficulty. While alternative models of marriage are under-theorized, it is important to recognize the pioneering work of Alexandra Kollontai. To view some of her archived works, please refer to "Kollontai," https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/index.htm

[7] Obviously the foundation of this programme is that a farmer is not a woman.

expertise.[8] The challenge is if these arbitrary characteristics are based on narratives of masculine 'development.'

> *Equality in quality?*
> *Quality is audited, equality is not.*[9]
> Louise Morley

As Baby Boomers vacate our universities in the fashion of Vegas Elvis at the end of a show, there will be a series of budgetary choices and relationships with business and government left to renegotiate and reconsider. Phrases like 'leadership' and 'succession planning' are proxies for understanding how power and the global financial crisis have changed the foundational project of universities. Leadership and management directives are disconnected from the lived reality and patterns of both teaching and research. Teaching well is difficult, built on locating the most relevant research to offer as resources, writing detailed feedback on assignments and caring for students, ensuring that they are supported throughout their professional careers. A range of scholars such as Stanley Aronowitz have described the 'knowledge factory' and the disconnection between 'managers,' 'teachers' and 'researchers.' This prescient and powerful phrase captured an odd twist in the sociology of higher education that emerged particularly in the late 1990s. Those academics who failed to excel as teachers and researchers took a third path: administration. This group then worked their way through Dean and Pro Vice Chancellor posts at the point these titles started to proliferate. But the consequences of a group that was mediocre – at best – in research and teaching then moving into administration and management cannot be measured. In *The Knowledge Factory,* Stanley Aronowitz probed,

> *Over the past thirty years, administration has become a separate career in academic life ... What are the consequences of administration as a career? First and perhaps foremost, career administrators tend to lose touch with the educational enterprise.*

[8] Gloria Steinem recognized this trend throughout her writings in the 1980s and 1990s. She stated of university-qualified women that "like most groups of the newly arrived, our faith in education and paper degrees also has yet to be shaken," from G. Steinem, Outrageous acts and everyday rebellions, (New York: Owl Books 1995: 1983), p. 231. She realized that even with a PhD, there is a lower average salary for female university graduates, with a middle management ceiling in place. Such a statement is quite ironic because the writer of this article is located right at that middle management ceiling.

[9] L. Morley, *Quality and Power in Higher Education,* (Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 2003), p. 146

> *Their allegiances and self-conception becomes increasingly corporate as they gradually surrender any pretense of doing consistent writing and teaching … It doesn't take long before he views himself as a member of a separate social layer within the academic system and sees the faculty and students as adversaries or, at least, as a different stratum*
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> (Aronowitz, 2000).

Aronowitz logged a foundational reality of contemporary higher education. The best teachers are committed to teaching and continue to teach. The best researchers are immersed in long-term projects and continue researching. Those who fail or are un(der)skilled or un(der)successful in teaching and research enter the third strand of academic life: administration. Therefore, this group of 'academics' are making decisions about those who achieve in the spheres where they underachieved. The result of such a structure is that Professional Development Reviews and promotional processes are conducted by administrator-academics who demand standards that are beyond their own academic knowledge and experience. Ironically, or perhaps not, they do not have the self-awareness to recognize the hypocrisy of their position.

Importantly, as a recent study revealed, this 'leadership turn,' that is really a basic managerialist turn, has not helped women become leaders in universities. Christine Teelken and Rosemary Deem realized that,

> *In the broader context, managerialism may have either an adverse or at best neutral impact on the promotion of gender equality in European higher education systems. Women have not been very prominent in senior management positions*
>
> (Teelken and. Deem, 2014).

What this study revealed is that the sociological group which developed and implemented theories of governance then validated and supported the already existing model of leadership. Therefore, what is called "vertical segregation" (Teelken and. Deem, 2014) is increased. That phrase means that there is a high proportion of female undergraduates. This proportion lessens in doctoral programmes, reduces further at doctoral graduation, and at each subsequent stage of seniority in academic life. Increased participation does not guarantee success at a higher level. There is

no vertical integration. Participation does not equate with progress into and through seniority in higher education. Blockages and barriers proliferate.

Teaching well is incredibly difficult. Any leader who does not have the expertise to sit with a staff member, diagnose the flaws in their mode of preparation and provide concrete alternative patterns and pathways will not improve teaching and learning in that department, school or university. Top-down management of teaching and teachers may create fear. It may produce stress. It will not initiate the motivation for – or capacity to instigate - change. Importantly, teaching is a feminine activity. As Alice Prentice and Marjorie Theobald recognized, "'Woman teacher' is a phrase that still has evocative power" (Prentice and Theobald, 1991, p. 6)". Therefore, it is no surprise that women dominate the lower levels of academia – the teaching positions. Indeed, when women reach middle management, these roles are administering teaching: programme leaders, heads of school and deans. These posts manage teaching staff, workload, timetabling and assessment: the 'housework' of universities. That is why a celebration of the moment of female academics into middle management is not the clean victory it appears. The structures have not changed. The assumptions about teaching 'value' have not altered. Instead, the antagonism – in a time of tightening budgets and increased scrutiny of teaching and research 'quality' - has increased, based on the unproductive division of 'management' and 'academics.'(Krucken, et. al, 2013). "Therefore, women in these low level management positions "are charged with responsibility for auditing and managing targets, performance, and improvements. Quality assurance processes co-opt women into managerial discourses that run counter to securing equitable outcomes" (Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 34), Therefore women in middle management are scapegoats, the people who have to explain ruthless decisions. Women middle-managers become the foot soldiers for the more senior men. That is why Sue Middleton proposed a much more radical reconfiguration.

> *While liberal feminists have focused on the attainment of equal access for women to existing curriculum subjects and positions of seniority in education, those of more radical persuasions have challenged the very nature of educational institutions – in particular, the selection, social organisation and teaching strategies of what counts as 'academic' knowledge*
>
> (Middleton, 1992).

This powerful argument was made in 1992. When men do teach in universities, they are described as "Masters." (Epstein, 1981). Instead of concerns over workload and quality assurance, the celebration is of the "peaceful pleasures of reading and thinking." (Wain, 2008, p. 238). Therefore, such a configuration of teaching – and teaching administration – also necessitates an understanding of the ideologies encircling research.

'Leadership' in research is meant to provide a structure, synergy, strategy and goals for an institution. But – with an array of KPIs and benchmarks in place - what happens to the research inactive staff member who has never written an academic article and does not hold a postgraduate degree? How can they even begin to understand the level and mode of writing required for refereed scholarship? 'Encouraging' research activity or demanding it within the context of performance management and promotion is not effective. It is easy to create action plans and key performance indicators. It is much harder to spend the hours each week that are necessary to move research inactive staff through to the submission of a first article.

The point is an obvious – if unpopular – one. If research activity is a goal for an institution and a staff member is hired who has never published refereed scholarship, then someone has to spend the time equivalent to the supervision of a research masters to enable them to write articles that may be accepted by a journal. No shortcuts, policies or plans erase the reality that writing an academic article is challenging. It does not matter how many emails are sent demanding staff become research active. It does not matter if research activity is a key outcome in a strategic plan. Without deep commitment from fellow academics at the level of sending reading materials, suggesting possible topics, sketching a structure, introducing staff members to editors and supporting them through the rejections as much as the successes, research inactive staff members have no method or pathway to even commence a scholarly writing career. Leadership models for research often confuse motivation to commence research with a capacity to complete it. Therefore, assuming that an underperforming researcher who then chose an administrative path because of a lack of results can enable and assist an underperforming colleague through the complexity of research culture is optimistic at best.

I hold hopes for the next twenty years of academic life. I have just turned 45 years of age. These next twenty years will be my final twenty years in the sector. I want universities to become environments of experience, expertise, generosity, laughter and quiet reflection. Our students – the

scholars who will replace us – deserve the best legacy we can give them. Throughout my professional life, I have been administered and managed by baby boomers. My heads of department, deans and vice chancellors have been Boomers. Generation Xer academics, born between 1961 and 1981, have worked with Baby Boomer leadership styles throughout our careers. We heard the stories about Cambridge in the sixties. We heard the promises about all the new academic jobs that would be available for those postgraduates in the nineties. We also heard through the 2000s about how many Baby Boomer academics were 'about' to retire. I am not proposing a generational feud in this article. Most of the academics I admire and respect are in their sixties. The real question is, when these Baby Boomer scholars leave our campuses, what models of leadership will the next generation create?

It is when confronting these difficult questions that the 'woman problem' returns. When reading the history, historiography and theories of women, leadership and universities, it is the righteous anger and optimism in the 1970s that are so remarkable. The 1980s – the era of big shoulder pads and carping despair – had a huge impact (Segal, 1990, p. 12). New versions of the men's movement emerged, and while complex theorizations of masculinity were generated, the centrality of men and masculine ideologies remained. It is in men's interests to define the limitations of femininity and the contracted career and life pathways for women.[10] While women have been defined and circumscribed as wives and mothers throughout much of history, a new cap on expectations[11] has been added: middle manager. This is no surprise, as the trajectory of 'the university-educated woman' is still in flux. Feminism and feminist theory has focused a great deal on power and sex. Less attention has been spent on expectations and hopes. Because the changes to women's positions in the home and workplace have been relatively recent (Orbach and Eichenbaum, 1994), some stretch marks in the culture have emerged. These particularly emerge in the collision between 'woman' and 'leader.'

[10] Cornelius Murphy, in *Beyond feminism: toward a dialogue of difference*, (Washington: Catholic university of America Press, 1995), stated that, "Men have nothing to gain and everything to lose from abusing or avoiding women," p. 41. This statement is incorrect. In the field of the workplace alone, abusing or avoiding women increases the opportunity to gain both employment and promotion. There are few strategies in life like sexism that can remove 50% of the competitors for a particular job.

[11] The word 'expectations' has been used with intentionality in this passage. This word resonates with Gloria Steinem's commentary in *Revolution from within: a book of self-esteem*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1992). She stated that, "There were books about low expectations for women in the public sphere, but almost none about low expectations for men in the private one," p. 5

Middle management is an incredibly difficult job in universities. At the historical moment that women may be at the springboard of vice chancellor posts, ruthless pseudo-business tactics are deployed, providing 'targets' that are not possible to meet. This is not anti-feminism in the academy (Clark et. al.,1996). This is not anti-women in the academy. Now that women actually have the qualifications and experience to move into leadership positions, new barriers and obstructions are put in place to block, stop and limit development. This is not only a new version of the glass ceiling. This is about women who have dedicated a decade to gaining higher degrees and building a career then leaving universities. Susan Gardner published a deeply disturbing article of how and why women leave institutions. While "women faculty tend to publish and present at the same rate as men", she found that "academia often recognizes men's achievement over women's and tends to see women's achievement as owing to something other than ability" (Gardner, 2013, p. 354). "That is why – increasingly – men are holding the range of professorships in North American institutions, and women dominate the untenured faculty. When women leave universities, they report 'personal issues' and salary as key triggers (Gardner, 2013, p. 356)."

How we think about inequality in higher education is important. The systems currently in place have not moved many women into vice chancellor roles. Every decade, the hurdle becomes higher: qualifications, expertise, international experience, and capacity to move between cities, states, provinces and countries. But at the moment that women and disadvantaged minorities can reach that level, a new discourse of 'management' marinates higher education. It is difficult to fathom the scale of the changes required to naturalize women into senior management posts. At its most basic, ambitious men are fighting each other to be 'king' of a finite number of universities. Any increasing reputation for women threatens their opportunity and chances to gain that post.

The final part of this article summons ten stories from the last twenty years of my career that provides the consequences of the mode of masculinity and management presented in this article. This is 'everyday sexism' in our universities. Some of these events are disturbing, but they demonstrate the deep cuts of power and the impact of naturalizing masculinity in our universities. Such stories do matter, because they tell a truth that rarely emerges. When such events occur, it is easier to leave the university, leave the profession and remain silent. This silence allows these men and women

to continue to behave in this way. Unless Generation X women who – somehow – have survived this system speak out, then these structures will be perpetuated. Each story is accompanied by a maxim – a lesson – to consider.

Stories of Survival

1. **Just because your manager is a woman does not mean she is a good manager**

Here lies the great feminist betrayal. The two worst line managers I have worked with in universities were women. We cannot assume that simply because a manager is a woman that she is a feminist. Further, we cannot assume that simply because a female manager is a feminist that she is competent at her job. Instead of judging these women, I now understand them better. For the baby boomer generation of women, they had to present a version of masculinity to be successful. They had to be nasty, tough, aggressive and ambitious to gain traction in the organization. They pushed down and pushed back rather than helped and encouraged other women. Helen Thompson, Andrea Sant Hartig and Diane Thurber, in their attempt to design a 'woman-friendly workplace,' argued that one of the indicators was a woman in leadership positions (Thompson, Sant Hartig, and Thurber, 2009). I have learnt to be wary of such an argument. I add caveats. Look for women throughout the organization in a range of leadership positions – beyond HR, Education, the Humanities and the administration of teaching and learning. Further, look at the women in posts around these women. Have they hired people just like themselves? Have they hired their friends? A great leader welcomes diversity, rather than being surrounded by a Stalinist show trial of sameness. It is easy to complain about the women who have made our universities unpleasant places to work, but it is up to the next generation to be positive, be optimist and to promote and deliver new ways of thinking, teaching, researching and behaving as women in leadership rather than men in drag.

2. **There are pockets of predatory sexism – be careful**

While my two worst line managers were women, the next two on my list of shame were blatant bullies, not accidentally aggressive or occasionally nasty. These two men were systematically, almost pathologically, needed to belittle, abuse, ridicule and undermine others to increase their power and sense of self-worth. One sexually feasted off female academics suffering emotional and personal difficulties. The other was an unreconstructed mi-

sogynist who matched his inexperience with women with a parallel belief of how femininity should be performed by women. On my first meeting with him, he had three urgent pieces of advice for me.

1. Be careful how I dressed. I had a tendency to be somewhat (uncomfortable pause) eccentric. No, that is not the right word. Extrovert.
2. Change my personality. I may frighten other staff.
3. Two of the staff in the school were <hushed tones> lesbians. This was supposedly a problem, like homosexuality was contagious.

I was a professor at the time he offered this briefing to me. He was not. It was an odd way to orient senior staff on their first day in a new post. I wonder if any of this information would have been relevant or important if a male professor was in his office. But it was an important reminder that women are rewarded for feminine behaviour, being supportive, submissive and needy. Women are encouraged to slot into the masculine model, or aim lower to naturalize subservience and submission. We must be feminine but not too visible, supportive but not too talkative.

The other bullying boss was easily handled. I was in my mid-20s. He was in his early fifties. After his fifth groping attempt, I replied that I respected his authority in the workplace. That is all. While he, in subsequent years, rubbed my upper arm a bit too much, the sleazy senior academic routine did cease. It did not for other women. He ruined three marriages. These three women had to move universities and cities and take a pay cut to get away from him. I am happy to report – after a five year detour in their career, two are full professors and the other is a PVC.

3. The mobility of academic life costs time, friends, intimacy and a life

The hardest part of academic life is the mobility that is required to obtain employment and gain promotions. I knew this was the reality from the start. My first full time post was in Wellington in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It was a short term replacement for a male academic, who received a research grant. I was hired to baby sit the first years. There was little care for the 24 year old woman they had employed. A week after I arrived in Wellington, I have this memory of laying in this cold bed, in this cold room, in this cold house, not knowing a single person in the country and teaching three hundred first year students. The combination of stress, inexperience and remembering my life that could have been at home was overwhelming. I thought about getting on the first flight home. But I knew that if I did – I may never work in academia again. Mobility is a clear strategy to gain pro-

motion. This mobility is particularly important for women, because we tend to complete the 'housework' of universities, the work that is undervalued and forgotten. Promotion is difficult because the effort is invisible. That is why it is often necessary for women to move institutions to gain promotion.

4. **Do not look for a guru or mentor. Find characteristics, strategies and careers that you admire.**

Many discussions of academic leadership for either men or women mention mentoring and networking. I have never had a mentor or networked. There have been important people in my life that have changed it and improved it. These connections have been formed as an accidental biproduct of work, rather than intent of attending a conference and creating relationships on the basis of what a person can do to enhance an academic's career. I met the man who taught me everything I know about graduate education – Professor Frank Murray – from being nominated onto a committee. What he taught me is incalculable. Also, never underestimate the importance of writing and publishing in building a relationship with colleagues around the world. These relationships are more real and intimate than sharing a stale pastry at a conference. Keep reading and writing, use open access journals to widen the audience for publications, and emails will emerge from admired and respected scholars who may enable future publications or positions.

5. **Be confident in your choices. Be authentic rather than living a version of yourself for other people.**

Images and assumptions are particularly limiting for women. Women in the paid workforce must decide which components of the complex narrative of femininity works for them. From my perspective, I see the role of academic as an integrated dialogue between teaching, research and administration. Such commitments do not fit the baby boomer leadership model where the goal is administrative power, rather than the (seemingly smaller) successes of teaching and writing. A fine example of this dissonance was during one of my probation meetings for a leadership role. No one with any humanities expertise was placed on the panel, even after my request for this knowledge base to be represented. Even more significantly, the only variables to be discussed were my achievements as a manager. Research achievement was actively separated from administrative achievement. Such a separation is not possible personally, intellectually or professionally. But the intent to evaluate 'administration' in a way that was separated from intellectual functions is telling about the new mode of university. Therefore

leadership in a university is no longer a trajectory for the best and the brightest. Similarly, I have been a member of an interview panel where a Vice Chancellor dismissed a candidate for a Dean's post because she was "research active." A research inactive man was appointed.

6. You will have to fight – hard – to be paid a fair wage.

This story is real. It is also rare. It is so startling that a part of it formed the title for this article. It is a demonstration that women will not be paid an equitable wage with men, even if they are better qualified and more experienced. For one of my posts, I was appointed on the same day as a man in an identical role. I exceeded his qualifications, had five times his publications, had won an array of teaching awards and had worked around the world. This man – to complete the same job – was to be paid much (much) more than my salary. When I discovered this fact, I immediately made an appointment with HR. The Head of HR would not see me, but a more junior staffer (a woman – obviously) was sent to address my concerns. It transpired that my salary was pegged at 15% below the median professorial salary. I explained to the rather underwhelmed HR representative that there must be a mistake. She replied that there had been "no mistake." I went through the two CVs, line at a time and reassured her that I did not want to be paid more than him, just an equal wage. She became somewhat flabbergasted and stated, "maybe you are just not as good as him. Maybe he's just better than you." Pause. I let the walls of the interview room soak in her words. I lengthened pause. A beetroot stain started to crawl up her neck. Within five seconds, her face was the colour of raw steak.

I looked at the now perspiring and agitated HR officer, smiled, and stated, "Find me one element of this job specification where I am not superior to this gentleman. Just one. You made that statement. You have to back that statement up with evidence."

By now, her entire chest was covered in a nervous rash. She appeared to be gasping for air. Her only reply was that, there "may have been a mistake in calculating your professorial salary." She decided to lift my professorial salary to the 'median.' In other words, instead of being underpaid by 15%, I was now to be paid about what the other professors were paid. Not the mean, but the 'median'. I was still paid less than a man, but at least the inequality was no longer offensive. Clearly, it was impossible to even consider that a woman may be better than a man.

If any women reading these words think that the fight for equality is over, then remember this story. Gail Evans stated that, "even when women

do make it to the top, we don't make as much money." (Evans, 2000). She had lived that experience. I have lived that experience. There is a reason. Adrienne Mendell argued that,

> *In our culture, competence is not feminine – particularly if it means demonstrating greater competence than a man. The cultural imperative is for women to make men feel strong, not to point out a man's weakness. And the aggression a woman needs to win is likely to be criticised. If you want to win, you have to be willing to defeat your opponent*
>
> (Mendell, 1996).

While the war-like metaphors in Mendell's statement are disturbing, I did not want to 'win.' I did not want to be paid more than this man. I wanted to be paid the same as this man. But I had to be strong, aggressive, clear and convincing to achieve even this basic goal. I still failed to be paid equitably.

7. **Make a decision and live by its consequences.**

Living a life with regrets is pointless. Therefore decisions are the punctuation of our lives. It is important to write down and reflect on the decisions about life and work. It is also important to keep these pieces of paper. It stops regret. This has been particularly important for me in the selection of academic appointments. Every post has advantages and disadvantages.

The hardest decision I have ever had to make was leaving Australia and Murdoch University. Actually, I stayed there too long. My family was there. My friends were there. I owned a beautiful house across the way from the university and supervised the most extraordinary students in a doctoral programme. I was in a senior management group, ran the doctoral programme for the university and was on the academy of advanced studies and an associate professor. But I decided to leave. There were many reasons. My husband is English and found a post in the UK. We did not wish to manage a long distance relationship. Also, his father was unwell, so we needed to be within a train ride, rather than a flight. But also, I was intellectually stale. Everything I could have written about and done, I had done. I was also modelling bad behaviour for my postgraduates. I was not developing my career because I was complacent and happy. Also, I would never have been promoted to professor. The fight to be promoted to associate professor was ruthless, aggressive and demeaning.

Therefore, I left for a new U.K. university, comprising a staff group that were unhappy, facing challenges, and a leadership group that, although

they did not really comprehend 'media and cultural studies', appointed a professor anyway. This is an important lesson I have learnt from the neo-liberal academy. Universities will only appoint full time staff – and particularly senior staff – if they have a problem to solve. To leave my home and home university was the toughest decision of my life. But remember the motivations for leaving and if they are sound, then they will sustain that decision.

8. Get up the sixth time.

Female academic staff confront sexism that shocks, stuns and horrifies. Appalling events and behaviours happen to women that never appear in a man's career. The oppression, discrimination and prejudice will – more often than not – go unpunished. It will be difficult, but in those moments, take a breath, crawl to your feet, push your shoulders back, lift your head up, and move on with your life. I have coined this maxim the 'Get up the sixth time, rule.' To reinforce this point, I will tell you about the worst moment in my academic life. I very rarely talk about it. The first professorial post I applied for was in Australia. I was shortlisted and travelled to the city for the interview. A colleague on the staff informed me that the Vice Chancellor had a friend he wanted to appoint. This friend had never taught, had few publications and was 'from industry.' No problem. I remembered my other rule, from the Australian cricket team: we have to be prepared to lose to win. A week before the interview, I had been shortlisted for Australian of the year, with a fair amount of publicity, so it was worth the trip.

The other two candidates were men in their fifties. I was a woman in my early thirties. I was also aware that an academic in this department had been a postgraduate in the department of one of my former posts. I had few dealings with her. Everything seemed fine. Upon arrival, I said hello to this woman. She blanked me. Odd. While my seminar progressed well, my friend's comment was correct. The VC was asking odd question to reveal weakness so he could appoint his favoured candidate. His wife was present in the audience for the seminar. She was not employed by the university, but throughout the proceedings, they continued to pass notes and exchange glances.

There was a gap between the seminar and the interview. The candidates were informed that the some of the staff had talked with the panel and constructed their own questions to ask the candidates. The first question asked by the VC that he stated was relayed from a staff member was, "how do we know that you won't treat this department like you treated your first

husband?" To be clear: I am not Liz Taylor. I have had two husbands and not at the same time. The first marriage was short-lived and destructive. I never speak of it, not because of shame, but because of the personal cost it presented to me at the time and subsequently.

Yet somehow, I was asked about a former marriage during an interview. The room became oddly silent. The women looked away from my gaze. The external member of the panel blushed. The VC held my eyes. I held his and stated that, "I had never told anyone about the events of my first marriage out of respect for his family. But I will release the facts now." At the conclusion of the story, the women on the panel apologized and the interview was brought to an end. No appointment was made on that day. Within a month, the VC's candidate was hired – not as a professor – but as an associate professor. In the guidelines for the post, it was stated that if an appointment was not made, then a position could be offered to one of the shortlisted candidates at a lower level.

This was a dreadful experience. I promised from that day that I would never use someone's personal experience to minimize, reduce, hurt or marginalize them. This story has not been presented to frighten, disturb or worry. It is important to note that sometimes in universities; it feels like feminism never happened. The goal is to make sure – in the next generation of management and leadership - that such practices never happen to anyone again. Care and respect are principles that matter. Seek out the people who believe that, and rely on them.

9. When people tell you the truth about themselves, believe them.

Invariably, when we work with people they tell us who they are. If academics treat students badly or relinquish their responsibilities in one semester, then do not be surprised if they enact the same process during the following year. The point is a key one: learn from the behaviour, rather than the words, of colleagues. Ruthless sexism still happens. Do not summon narratives of revenge. Learn from their mistakes and ensure that professionalism, integrity, respect and respectfulness are carried forward and beyond a single event or university.

10. Never google yourself.

Googling is not productive for an academic. It may be flattering to read something positive. But it will then also be necessary to manage the damaging and often awful behaviour that confronts women online. The moment that we enter the digital comment culture, we are mortgaging our emotions to people that frequently do not hold the courage to use their own

name. Therefore, make decisions. Have a clear sense of identity, principles and beliefs. Be surrounded by strong and reliable people who offer an accurate mirror and advice when it is needed. The internet is a circus where the clowns feed the lions. It is important to value ourselves by more than the words of the few. If I spent one moment worried about all the people who have called me stupid, a bitch, ugly, not as good as I think I am, dumb, boring, pathetic or Australian (which is supposedly an insult), then I would never get out of bed.

These ten maxims configure a strategy to naturalize women's achievement in academic life. Our role is not only to connect femininity and competence, but femininity and excellence. Women in leadership roles can be different, not because of biological determinism but because women have been treated with disrespect through their careers. They have been marginalized and overlooked. Our opportunity – our responsibility – is to behave better and more respectfully to our colleagues in higher education. We also know that management and leadership are different. One of our tasks is to bring them closer together.

Turtle on the Fencepost

> *If you see a turtle on a fencepost, the chances are it didn't get there by accident.*
>
> Bill Clinton

Women in leadership within higher education are like that turtle on the fencepost. There is a story behind every woman in power. The message from my ten stories and this article more generally is that Generation X women made a mistake: we waited for 'the system' to recognize 'achievements.' We did not have the wisdom to realize that – within higher education – achievement is by default masculine. That is why the dominance of the sciences, scientific methods and particular models of promotion has been sustained. Even by 2013, Penny Pasque and Erin Simpson still logged "current and persistent gender inequalities" (Pasque and Simpson, 2013). Without assertiveness, high level communication skills, and repetitive cycles of challenge to the status quo, our universities will not change. The greatest problem women confront is that they have to fight to prove competence (Kaseman, 1998). It is not assumed. Therefore aligning women and leadership is a profound struggle. Leadership is not 'about' individuals or

personalities. It emerges from organizational structures (Rosenthal, 1997). The challenge for women is that we are fighting history. The legacy of centuries of university education is that men are the experts and women are excluded, marginalized and demeaned.

If women have structural impediments to avert the development of their careers in higher education, then the talent and potential of half of the population is not being deployed. But this rational, logical argument is not the point. If the potential of half the population is not activated, then the remaining academic contenders have an easier path to the top. As Joanna Barsh and Susie Cranston revealed, "If someone doesn't want you to succeed, there are infinite ways to let you know, slowly erasing your self-worth" (Barsh and Cranston, 2011, p. 3). Our role – our goal – is to validate intelligence, experience and expertise and enable self-worth wherever we may find it.

A final story finishes this paper. It has two parts, separated by twenty years. During my first post, as a low-level, temporary lecturer in New Zealand, I was asked to go to lunch with one of the female professors. She congratulated me on a great teaching and research year and stated – in a way disconnected from all other encircling sentences – that when I arrived in Wellington, "all the staff thought that I had just passed through a sex change." I was twenty four years old. I remember looking at her, flicking my eyes to Oriental Bay, and looking back at her. I said nothing. What could be said? As a (very) short woman, it was left to me to wonder why "all the staff" was having this conversation about a new colleague in the first place.

Cut to twenty years later. I am a professor and head of department. A male professor comes into my office and closes the door. He states that he wants to ask me a question. He asks if I – like another colleague – am "transgenderist"? I look at him. Smile. I state lightly that I had not made the transgender movement from male to female, and moved to another topic.

Conclusion

There are many interpretations of these two stories separated by twenty years, different countries and a gulf of seniority. What both these stories share is that competence and achievement are masculine ideologies. If a woman is successful, then there must be a reason beyond being a woman. Also, the tight constrictions on femininity and women's behaviour demon-

strate that any deviance, any difference, must signal a wider sexualized issue. As a woman without children – a clear strategy to 'prove' femininity – and in leadership, it remains necessary to defend my choices and – once more – be pulled back to the body as a defence. Like Bill Clinton's turtle on a fencepost, women in leadership have stories to tell. For the next generation, I hope these stories move from sex, bodies and disempowerment and through to achievement, excellence and social justice.

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„Možda je on bolji nego ti“: Generacija žena X i visoko obrazovanje

A P S T R A K T

Narednih pet godina biće značajne za međunarodno visoko obrazovanje obzirom da „baby boom“ generacija napušta naše kampuse. Šta će oni ostaviti u nasleđe i kako će naredne generacije uspeti da savladaju zaokret prema „liderizmu“ na univerzitetima?Ovaj članak se fokusira na pitanja pola, generacije i liderstva, i istražuje kako mogu biti kritikovane i osporene muške ideologije dostignuća, moći i vrednovanja. Prepoznajući projekat Laure Bates „svakodnevni seksizam“, članak izdvaja svakodnevne strukture, priče i scenarije koje podrivaju i minimiziraju ulogu žene na univerzitetima.

KLJUČNE REČI: *visoko obrazovanje, feminizam, liderstvo, menadžerizam, svakodnevni seksizam*

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