

Title: Similarities and Differences in Collegiality/Managerialism in Irish and Australian Universities (6th Sept 2010)- (8744 words)

Abstract

In the collegial model the basis for appointment to senior management is nomination by a community of scholars, whereas it is by line management in the managerial one. This article focuses on the basis of appointments in universities and the gendering of such structures. Data is drawn from qualitative interviews with both men and women senior manager-academics (Deem, 2003) at Dean level and above in Ireland and Australia (n=44). In both countries the power of the President/VC was very much as a Chief Executive Officer in the managerialist model, rather than the 'primus inter pares' of the collegial model. Moreover Presidents/VCs controlled the appointments of Vice-Presidents/DVCs and Deans and were seen as being able to affect the gender profile of senior management. However, in the Australian system (in contrast to the Irish one) there was no ambivalence about the VC actively rectifying gender inequalities in management. In a context where hybrid forms of management (Deem et al 2008) are emerging, this article questions the relevance of collegial/managerialist models in understanding the gendering of universities (173 words)

Key words: Universities, gender, collegial/managerial, Irish, Australian, management

Introduction

Collegial management, the traditional model in universities, has been described as governance by a community of scholars, as opposed to a central managerial authority (Meek 2002). In the collegial model the leader facilitates the process of decision making (Meek 2002), with formal decision-making being through a committee structure in which academics are strongly represented and which preserves their professional autonomy (Winter et al. 2000); while their authority is exercised 'through expertise, peer equality and consensus decision making, all operating through white middle class male academics' (Hearn 2001, 76). Bensimon (1995, 608) argues that collegiality 'reinforces the natural tendency to value conformity to taken-for-granted standards of knowledge, quality, and legitimacy [and] can be a threat to efforts underway on many campuses to dismantle practices and structures that sustain gender and racially exclusive patriarchal arrangements'. Indeed the non-inclusive reality of collegial structures is clearly indicated by the predominantly male dominated nature of the management structures it has created.

There has been an increasing movement towards managerialism in Universities internationally in the light of state pressure (Meek 2002; Deem 1998; Acker and Armenti 2004; Morley 2009). Deem (1998, 47) sees 'new managerialism' as characterised by 'the adoption by public sector organisations of organisational forms, technologies, management practices and values more commonly found in the private business sector'. Deem et al (2008, 22 and 27) also suggest that new managerialism, whatever its form, 'gnaws away at professional autonomy and control' and more particularly at 'the power, status and role of academics in university governance and management'. It assumes that senior management can solve almost any problem if it has strong executive leadership and adopts private sector business techniques (Winter et al 2000). Thus new managerialism involves the existence and valorization of mechanisms to facilitate public accountability; measures to reduce the importance of professional autonomy; as well as an increased stress on executive decision making, on the commercial aspect of the University's mission and on the international ranking of its research outputs.

Internationally there has been an ongoing debate about the impact of managerialism on academic autonomy and on university management structures (Meek 2002; Marginson and Considine 2001; Kekale 2003; Carvalho and Santiago 2009; Blackmore and Sachs 2001; Winter et.al. 2000; Morley 2009). In Australia, collegial governance has been undermined by government policies since the early 1990s (Meek 2002). Similar processes began to be evident in Irish Universities in the early 1990s (O'Sullivan 2005) but they have become particularly obvious in the past ten years (Grummell et al. 2007, 2008 and 2009).

There has been a good deal of discussion about the extent to which collegial or managerial models are more helpful for women. Deem (1998, 48 and 50) suggests that at first glance, managerialism may appear attractive to women - not least because the collegial model involving rather 'gentlemanly' governance practices was based on stereotyped gender roles with 'women in 'caring' and servicing jobs and men in what are seen as high status roles'. Thus managerialism may be seen as having the advantage

of making explicit the low profile administrative and caring roles that have typically been carried out by women in collegial structures (Brooks 1997). But Deem (1998, 66) suggests that new managerialism is 'infused with notions of masculinities'- and that in particular, 'it is incompatible with concerns about equity and feminist values'. A similar conclusion was reached by Ozga and Walker (1999, 107) who highlighted the ways in which a managerial culture was imbued with 'the characteristics of heterosexual masculinity ... competitive, ritualistic, unreflective' its practices being characterised by 'overly rational, disembodied and instrumental pursuits' so that management structures and practices were 'particularly important sites for the reproduction of masculine discourses and practices' (Kerfoot and Knights 1996, 97). Similarly, Currie and Thiele (2001, 108) argue that even where certain aspects of managerialism such as equity targets assist a few women to move into senior positions, most women, like most men, are likely to be 'proletarianised' by it.

Overall then Knight and Richards (2003, 227) suggested that: 'Dominated as they have been by men, academic organisational hierarchies, whether based on bureaucratic position or peer esteem are a condition and a consequence of this preoccupation with the masculine self and its insecurities'. Thus both collegial and managerialist structures have been seen as gendered.

This article looks at Universities in Ireland and Australia as these countries provide very different societal contexts as regards gender equality, although both of them were colonised by the UK and have broadly similar University structures. In particular it will look at one indicator of collegiality/managerialism- viz. the basis of appointment to senior management in such Universities, as well as at the gendered nature of these structures. A brief description of the gender equality contexts in which universities in both of these countries are located will first be outlined.

Irish and Australian contexts: national and university level

The legal and constitutional framework provided by the Irish State in relation to women's position in Irish society came under a great deal of scrutiny in the context of

entry to the European Community in 1973. As signatories of the Treaty of Rome, Ireland became bound by a series of Directives as regards equal pay and equal treatment in access to employment and vocational training (including the ending of the Marriage Bar; O'Connor 1998) and of different pay rates for men and women. Pressure for legal change was most effective when it came from outside Ireland, followed up by individual legal action and/or group pressure within Ireland (O'Connor 1998). Legislation was introduced to conform to those Directives in the 1970s and 1980s and has been subsequently amended and extended.

Thus subsequent legislation has extended the grounds prohibiting discrimination in the workplace (to include, for example, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation), and in vocational training (in selection, promotion and training). The duration of paid Maternity Leave has improved since its introduction in 1981 and unpaid Parental Leave has been introduced. In the 1990s the government recommended a target of 40 per cent representation on all state boards, but has created no structure to enforce or even to monitor this. In 1999 legislation was introduced which established the Equality Authority on a statutory basis with a brief to 'combat discrimination and promote equality of opportunity' and 'to provide information to the general public' and to 'keep the equality legislation under review' (Crowley 2010, 7). The Equality Act (2004) was concerned with actively promoting gender equality insofar as certain kinds of positive action are allowed, but not required.

However, a number of attempts have been made to reduce the impact of equality legislation (arguably reflecting the patriarchal nature of the state's more powerful elements: O'Connor 2008a and b). Thus, in the late 1990s, the Department of Equality and Law Reform was fused with the very much larger and more conservative Department of Justice (O'Connor 2008a). The state has largely ignored its own regulation requiring 40 per cent representation on state boards. In 2008 it imposed a cut of 42 per cent in the Equality Authority's budget at a time when cuts of 2-9 per cent were being imposed in broadly similar structures (Crowley 2010). This greatly reduced the ability of the Equality Authority to both take legal cases and to encourage a pro-

active approach to gender and the development of action plans. There was also an attempt to reduce the independence of the Equality Authority in a context where roughly half of their case files related to allegations of discrimination in public sector bodies (Crowley 2010). Contract compliance, which has been widely used in Northern Ireland, constitutes one of the most effective ways of combating discrimination (and one which is compatible with EU law: Lester 1997). No interest has been evinced in introducing it in Ireland. Indeed, there is no requirement for public bodies in Ireland to have ‘due regard to equality in carrying out their functions’ and no obligation on them to produce plans for promoting equality (Crowley 2010, 6). Thus the overall national picture is one of legislative progress but weak implementation.

Ireland has seven main publicly funded universities. Although a National Strategy document for Higher Education is currently being prepared (2010), little attention has been paid by the state to universities over the past forty years. O’Carroll (2008, 43) suggests that ‘current policy is based completely on unquestioned neoliberal thinking that reflects corporate interests’. He attributes this to an ‘international subculture of educational bureaucrats; a preoccupation with the development of science and technology ...; a managerialist culture concerned with auditing teaching performance, research output and institutional effectiveness; a limited educational paradigm which is preoccupied with a positivistic concern with ‘facts’; and a wider populist and anti-intellectual culture within Irish society which implicitly favours a utilitarian market driven approach’ (Carroll, 2008: 50-53; see also O’Sullivan 2005). In the context of gender the state has simply been concerned with the attraction of high achieving female students to science and technology courses. Thus despite its obligations under Universities Act 1997, it has failed to create a structure to foster or monitor gender equality, (having closed the Unit in University College Cork (2002) which had an active gender equality brief). It has also failed to implement its own recommendation that universities develop equality action plans ‘which set out explicit and challenging targets and timetables as well as the names of those responsible for delivery’ (HEA 2004, 59). It failed to prioritise gender in its Guidelines for University Governance (HEA 2007). It has also failed to even collect gender data on staffing in publicly funded

universities since 2004. Thus, the impact, if any, of equality legislation on the Irish universities is unknown.

Australia has had Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action frameworks since the mid 1980s. The *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)* gives effect to Australia's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and certain aspects of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 156. Its major objectives include the promotion of equality between men and women and the elimination of discrimination on the basis of sex, marital status or pregnancy as well as its elimination with respect to dismissals based on family responsibilities. In response to recommendations made by the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs following its review of the effectiveness of the *Sex Discrimination Act* in 2008, the Federal Government announced that it intended to introduce a single comprehensive Commonwealth Anti-discrimination Act. Proposed key changes to the *Sex Discrimination Act* include the introduction of breastfeeding as a separate ground of discrimination, and protection from family responsibilities discrimination in all areas of employment. In addition, the Australian Human Rights Commission (2010) released *The Gender Equality Blueprint 2010* setting out recommendations in the following priority areas which significantly affect both the public and private lives of women and men:

- Balancing paid work and family and caring responsibilities;
- Ensuring women's lifetime economic security;
- Promoting women in leadership;
- Preventing violence against women and sexual harassment;
- Strengthening national gender equality laws, agencies and monitoring.

In addition, the federal government enacted the *Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunity for Women) in the Workplace Act (Cth) 1986* which covered private sector corporations with more than 100 employees, as well as universities. It was replaced by the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act (Cth) (1999)* which requires large employers (100 plus staff) to establish a workplace programme to remove the barriers to women entering and advancing in the organisation. The Equal Opportunity for Women

in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) is the statutory authority that monitors compliance with the legislation and requires organisations to submit annual compliance reports (EOWA, 2008). The *Paid Parental Leave Act (Cth) 2010* established Australia's first national paid parental leave scheme to operate from 1 January 2011. Previously parental leave provisions had been largely channelled through the industrial relations system rather than national legislation (Zacharias 2006).

The Australian university sector is a leader in parental leave provisions (EOWA, 2010). Universities Australia (UA) has released its third Action Plan for Women Employed in Australian Universities. The objectives of the plan (UA 2010, 4) are:

- Encourage universities to continue to take responsibility for ensuring equitable work practices and to incorporate equity strategies and targets in their strategic planning, with unambiguous leadership by the Vice-Chancellors;
- Increase the recognition of the contributions of women to the productivity and advancement of Australia's universities;
- Improve representation of women in HE at all levels to more strongly reflect representation in society;
- Increase the proportion of women in senior leadership positions including Deans, Directors and Senior Managers and in a wider range of portfolios and discipline groupings;
- Identify women in middle management and mentor them as the future senior leaders.

However, despite, National Action Plans for women in Australian universities, it is argued that EEO policies have had limited impact on women in the higher education sector (Noble and Meers 2000, 409; Thornton 2008). Noble and Meers (2000, 409) assert that “despite policies and programs designed to promote equality in employment for women, there was very little accompanying analysis of the causes and/or reasons women continue to experience discrimination”. Moreover, the impact of managerialism on universities has meant that “the everyday reality of work intensification, competition and uncertainty, which includes the need to reinvent the self or face redundancy, has very effectively suppressed the voices of women and Others within the academy so that the discourses of EEO have been rendered passé” (Thornton 2008, 19).

Hence the University and national contexts in which Irish and Australian universities operate are very different although there are both experiencing similar pressures towards managerialism.

Methodology

Senior management is defined in this study as those at Dean level or above who are currently or who had been in senior management in Irish or Australian universities in the past five years. In the Irish part of the study a total of 40 people were identified in a purposive sample, involving those at Presidential to Dean level; academics and non-academics across all seven public universities. Interviews were completed with 34 people (85% response rate) although only the 23 senior ‘manager-academics’ (Deem, 2003) at Presidential, Vice Presidential (VP) or Dean level are included in this paper. In the Australian part of the study 28 people were identified in a purposive sample, including Vice-Chancellors (VCs), Deputy Vice-Chancellors (DVCs) and Pro Vice-Chancellors (PVCs). Interviews were completed with 21 of these (75 per cent response rate). All of these were manager-academics.

The interview guide was devised as part of a larger study by the Women in Higher Education Management (WHEM) Network. It included three sections: getting into and on in senior management; the dynamics of women and men working together in senior management teams, and perceptions of the broader management culture in universities. In the Irish study interviews varied in length from 40 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes with the majority being over an hour. All of the interviews were face-to-face and tape-recorded, with detailed verbatim notes being made during the interview. Following the interviews the tapes were replayed and any additional material was inserted in these verbatim recordings. Australian interviews varied in length from 45 minutes to two hours. On several occasions participants asked for the tape to be turned off to discuss confidential information. All but six interviews were tape recorded and face-to-face. The researcher took notes during telephone interviews with these six.

All the interviewing was conducted by the authors. Because of the small size of the university sector in Ireland, the level of those interviewed (President; Vice President, Dean) is not revealed in any quotations. In the interests of confidentiality interview numbers and gender identifiers alone are used (e.g. AUS or IRE, man/woman and number of interview), and features that would identify those involved are obscured.

The researcher in each country selected major themes emerging from the data for analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994). Using local expertise and understanding in identifying such themes contrasts with other cross national studies and adds to the validity of those themes which emerged cross nationally. It was clear that both the Irish and Australian university management systems have been affected by global processes involving the decline of collegial models of organisation and the rise of managerial ones characterised by a 'quasi-corporate logic in decision making' (Danowitz Sagaria and Van Horn 2007, 180). Thus for example, while the interview schedule did not use the words collegial management or managerialism, these discourses emerged in the interviewees' responses.

In this article particular attention is paid to the appointment processes involving senior managers in each of the respondent's universities; the male/female balance in senior management in that university; and the respondent's perception of the President's power, especially regarding the gender profile of senior management.

Indicator of Collegial/Managerial structures: basis of appointment

One of the key differences between collegial and managerial structures cross nationally is the basis for appointments. Thus nomination by one's peers is the typical method in the collegial system and some kind of appointment process involving line management characterises the managerial model. Thus, in a collegial structure, having support from one's colleagues is critical, whereas in a managerial structure being acceptable to one's line manager is critical.

At the very top of the university hierarchy (e.g. President in Ireland or Vice-Chancellor in Australia), positional power (Middleton 2007) is defined in the relevant legislation. The Irish Universities Act, 1997 refers to this person as the 'Chief Officer' 'President or Provost' (section 24). In Australia, apart from the Australian National University, which is constituted under an Act of the Federal Parliament, each university is recognised under legislation in the State or Territory in which they operate and the power of the

VC is clearly defined. The appointment term of University Presidents in Ireland is typically ten years, with academic-managerial secondments at Vice-President or Dean level being for three to five years, with the possibility of renewal in the same university. In contrast to Finland (Husu 2001) and to Australia (O'Meara and Petzall 2005), in Ireland there is 'a lack of any tradition of mobility between institutions ... that by becoming a Dean here you might be a Vice President there [in another Irish University] ... there is no tradition of that whatsoever' (IRE man 19). Australian VCs are generally appointed for five years. However it is not uncommon for an incumbent to be offered an extension on the original contract. Unlike Ireland, there is considerable mobility between universities both at VC level and below it.

In the Irish system, in the case of a Presidential appointment, criteria are laid down by Governing Authority: 'they set up the criteria, the terms of reference' (IRE man 21). In both countries, typically a search committee is set up, external consultants are used and a selection/interview committee makes a recommendation to Governing Authority/University Council. Although in theory the recommendation can be turned down, this had almost never occurred in either Ireland or Australia. In Ireland, reference was made to the one or two occasions where Governing Authority had acted in this way and was still considered an extraordinary event many years later.

The University system as a whole in Ireland is in a state of transition between collegiality and managerialism with specific universities being differentially located on that continuum. Thus in only a minority of Irish universities is the President and/or the Registrar elected so the collegial basis of most Irish universities is structurally weak. Where they are elected by the academic community that person 'has to be responsive and democratic ... responsive to the college's concerns' (IRE man 11): 'The Registrar is elected ... by the Professors at Academic Council ... I think it is good to have that balance, that an academic community can elect someone to represent their interests' (IRE man 19). In both the Australian and the Irish systems it was clear that in most cases the President/VC was a Chief Executive rather than being the 'primus inter pares'

of the collegial system. In Australia this was recognised as a relatively recent phenomenon:

Only in the 1990s have we seen the growth of the VC as a CEO with an executive and reporting to the Board. There has been a shift in management culture. The VC is no longer first among equals. Universities have large budgets and need to be managed (AUS man 21).

In Australia the bottom line was that, 'VC's can make or break a university' (AUS woman 18) and this may help to explain the intense focus on the position of Vice-Chancellor. Most senior management posts were publicly advertised in Australia, and frequently filled externally, whereas in Ireland, virtually all academic managerial posts (whether publicly advertised or not) were filled internally. In both countries VCs/Presidents were critical in the selection of the senior management team (and even in some cases in the appointment of senior academics in a context where professorial level was seen as a pre-requisite for appointment as a senior academic manager). Thus, VCs/Presidents' power in appointments extended to Deans which it was argued 'are no longer primarily representatives of the disciplines but of senior management' (Moodie 2002, 20) and even to professorial appointments: 'The VC is absolutely very powerful ... His opinion counts' (AUS woman 14); 'The VC is the key person influencing the appointment process. Our VC has a very hands-on role on appointment of senior academics within the faculties, as well as senior managers' (AUS man 5). As in the Australian system, among the Irish respondents there was a strong focus by these senior managers on the virtually untrammelled power of the President. This was seen as partly related to the *Universities Act, 1997*:

University legislation is constructed in such a way that it greatly limits Governing Body and greatly strengthens the hand of the President. If you think of Governance at senior management level being checks and balances ... In the university the preponderance of power rests very heavily with the President vis-a-vis Governing body (IRE man 17)

The power of the President was also seen as related to the emergence of a more centralised funding model and to the managerialist expectations of government and the civil service: 'people want quick decisions. They phone up the President's office and they ask for decisions and have to be given them' (IRE man 22). Furthermore, in addition to positional power, the President was seen as having power through their

personal charisma and through the deference and subservience of those working in Irish universities: ‘The President is very powerful; very hard for people to go against the President ... It does not seem easy for a part of University in Ireland to thwart the Head of the University’ (IRE man 11).

Typically in Irish Universities all the Vice-Presidents and many of the Deans were appointed directly by the President who, as the line manager in the ‘classical business sense’, had the ‘final call’ on who occupied these positions:

In the Irish system, Presidents are still very powerful - more so than in other countries ... such as the US, UK and Europe ... The appointment of staff is almost entirely devolved to the Chief Officer if you look to the Universities Act (IRE man 9)

Even where a competitive process for these appointments existed, the President was seen as: ‘Very powerful, very powerful. In a sense it is largely the President’s call’ (IRE, man, 9); ‘a lot of it is down to the President and who he decides, who he wants to promote’ (IRE, man 21); ‘At the moment the President is very powerful because he is instrumental in picking Heads of College, he has control over them’ (IRE woman 14); ‘The reality is that senior management is appointed by the President whatever we might say. Nobody will get appointed to a senior management role unless the President is comfortable [with them]’ (IRE man 18); ‘The procedure looks transparent but in fact the outcome is frequently not at all surprising - and reflects power plays at that level ... the critical thing is the President’ (IRE woman 1).

There was a strong sense in many of the Irish interviews that ideally the typical academic career path involved a gradual progression from minor positions of academic management to Head of Department, Assistant Dean, Dean, the ‘demonstrated effectiveness’ model (IRE man 18). However, the current situation was that the appointment of those at Vice-Presidential and Dean level was considered much more haphazard: ‘it’s a bit random really’: IRE man 21): ‘there is not one at the moment- the whole thing is in a process of change’ (IRE woman 23): it’s a bit ‘hit and miss’: ‘plucking people who have not been Head of Department nor Dean and who, for whatever reason, have been identified by the President as people with talent or

potential' (IRE woman 1) as a way of putting their own stamp on the University. Occasionally the tension between this managerial process and collegial structures was recognised:

they [the Presidents] are extremely powerful, as powerful as they want to be in relation to faculty. I wouldn't quite say a pretence of democracy. That is not fair. But at the end of the day it is quite a small group of people who make decisions [although] people have the right to go to Faculty/ speak at Committees etc (IRE woman 15)

In a context where the definition of success is filtered through the lens of those in power, visibility and networking with stakeholders were seen as important:

People who have become visible in the organisation as fair or even handed or good with people will tend to be asked and take over the role of Associate Dean or Head of School. In general depending on how they function they may be actively encouraged when the Deanship becomes vacant (IRE woman 13)

Among Australian participants there was evidence of VCs being appointed through present incumbents identifying and developing future leaders (O'Meara and Petzall 2005, 26): 'Having the right mentors is important ... What is important is the network that operates between current and previous VCs. You can't move into these positions without mentoring from this network' (AUS man 2). Indeed it is not uncommon in Australia for senior management appointments to be made without an open selection process: 'There are two or three very powerful people who basically decide how different appointments will go' (AUS, woman, 3). Australian men talked confidently about their networking: 'by the time I was a senior manager I was networking a lot externally at various functions' (AUS man 5), while women talked about male advantage in networking: 'Because of men's networking I can tell you of handfuls of men who got to be professor whereas women would never have got those appointments' (AUS woman 13).

Husu (2006, 5) stresses that gate keeping has a 'dual nature'; it 'can function as exclusion and control, on the one hand, and as inclusion and facilitation on the other'. In both Australia and Ireland in addition to the President/VC, other senior gatekeepers played an important role in deciding which candidates would be appointed either by

tapping them on the shoulder; creating new portfolios for those who have not had a typical academic career path; nominating potential appointees and/or drawing the attention of the President to them: 'All Senior Managers have an important call in flagging potential candidates' (IRE, woman, 13). However their role was seen as simply advisory:

Other people ... can have key advisory role and can sometimes persuade the President that they have got someone wrong....I'm not sure if this is the right person for the job they will say and you will see an initial enthusiasm going -... maybe you are right (IRE man 18)

There were very occasional suggestions by the Irish respondents that the President's positional power (Middleton 2007) was being eroded by a stress on activities (such as research) where excellence was measured externally; thus affecting the President's ability to influence academic promotion, and hence access to senior management positions: 'The President said: "we cannot guarantee this person anything. They will have to go into the pot for promotions"' (IRE man 16). The Irish and Australian respondents made few references to any kind of team based skills analysis in the filling of senior management posts. Rather it was suggested that at each appointment the President/VC's focus was on getting the profile and experience for that particular task rather than on looking for the skills profile that would compliment those already on the senior management team.

In summary, overwhelmingly both the Irish and the Australian respondents saw the President/VC as a CEO who had almost unlimited power in determining senior academic managerial appointments. In Irish Universities internal candidates were overwhelmingly favoured, whereas in Australian universities external candidates for such positions were favoured.

The Gendering of Collegial/ Managerialist structures

Academia presents itself as gender neutral but it has been widely recognised that it is gendered: 'We know that whatever is represented as gender-neutral is likely to obscure the power relations of gender ... It is simply fiction that tests of excellence are neutral and that merit is an objective assessment. Women 'fail' to gain inclusion because they

are judged in systems set up by men reflecting male standards and criteria' (Oakley 2001: xii; see also Hearn 2001; Finch 2003; Currie and Thiele 2002; Deem et al 2008) For Hearn (2001) the most important aspect of this is 'changing men and men's position in universities and their cultures'. Man as he sees it is 'is a social category associated with hierarchy and power ... Management is a social activity that is also clearly based on hierarchy and power ... Academia is a social institution that is also intimately associated with hierarchy and power' (Hearn 2001, 70). These structures are ultimately premised on 'the way masculinity is constructed as a care-less identity' (Lynch and Lyons 2008, 181; see also Acker 2003). In this context gendered processes 'reinforce, even constitute, the ways that gender assumptions are built into organisational functioning' (Acker 1998, 202; see also Bailyn 2003). Thus the gendering of academic structures is reflected in male definitions of merit; male dominated career paths; issues around women's embodiment and caring responsibilities; the levels of collegial support women receive from peers in a 'chilly' organisational culture (Brooks 2001; Currie and Thiele 2001; Hearn 2001); and one where senior positions are gendered 'posts of confidence' (Bond in Brooks 2001, 24).

No Irish university has ever had a woman as President whereas around one fifth of Australian VCs over the past decade have been women. Homosociability has been seen as a characteristic of both collegial and managerial models. Witz and Savage (1992, 16) suggest that 'homosociability is often gendered as men (and other dominant groups) 'effectively 'clone' themselves in their own image' limiting access to 'those of their own kind' (see also Essed and Goldberg 2002; Grummell et al 2009), so that a 'culture of sameness' is prioritised (Grummell et al 2007). Such patterns are not peculiar to Ireland with Gronn and Lacey (2006, 119) referring to a similar process of 'cloning' in Australia mediated by homosociability (see also Thornton 1989; Kanter 1993). Benschop and Brouns (2003) are particularly concerned with the ways in which the procedures in relation to appointments serves to perpetuate a pattern of male dominance (see also van den Brink 2007). Typically those in senior management in Ireland suggested that neither collegial or managerialist structures would necessarily militate against women accessing these positions, whether through Presidential nomination or

faculty election. However in each of these cases, these structures and/or constituencies were male dominated: 'It is about signals and the signal at the moment is that senior management is male' (IRE man 18). In the Irish interviews and to a lesser extent in the Australian ones there was some suggestion that Presidents/VCs seemed to frequently appoint people who were like themselves. The example of one Irish University was given where the key members of senior management were of the same gender and from the same disciplinary background and this was 'not an effective view of the entire University'.

There was also evidence among Irish participants that women were constructed as a remedial group (Morley, 1994). Furthermore, when these senior managers were asked 'What do you think women see as the barriers to promotion in your university', they referred to perceived barriers to academic promotion – implicitly to professorial position (see O'Connor 2007b). Some high profile male manager-academic appointments within the Irish University system have not been at professorial level but this was ignored by both men and women. The effect of requiring professorial level is particularly acute in the Irish context where women's chances of promotion to Professorial level were one of the worst in Europe (EU 2003).

However, the presence of women in senior management can be most easily legitimated in a collegial discourse stressing the value of diversity in decision-making and representation: 'If you are a team player why would you not have women in the team? senior and junior? ... it is a bit strange when people don't think [that] 50% of the people are men 50% are women' (IRE man 11). For some of the Irish interviewees the collegial discourse reflected concerns about representation, equality and inclusivity whereas the managerial discourse did not: 'There can be a kind of almost corporate type language that can creep into the discussions in Higher Education ... it wouldn't be informed by principles of equality or equity' (IRE woman 14).

In both collegial and managerialist structures and among both Irish and Australian respondents it was recognised that there was a burden on women when there are few in number: 'bringing to the table those kinds of issues that might relate directly to gender

like how come all chairs are men or just being the voice for concerns for equality or for values other than those of the commercial or corporate world' (IRE woman 14); 'a few women end up on a ridiculous number of committees and it is to their disadvantage' (AUS man 15).

A very small number of the Irish respondents suggested that a representational discourse legitimated, and indeed created, the expectation that women would be in senior management: 'without it being stated, it would be unthinkable for a President to have Senior Management Team without the visibility of female members' (IRE man 17); 'if it was entirely male I would say women academics would see it as hostile to them in some way and unsympathetic to them [they] would feel that there was no one there to represent our point of view' (IRE man 22). However, despite the potential inclusivity of the collegial discourse, it was clear that overwhelmingly it had not been inclusive of women.

The appointment of women to senior management was seen by some as producing better decision making 'with the tendency for women to be more team oriented and men more push, the combination is the perfect way' (IRE, man, 7); and the latter participant and an Australian one preferred working with female senior managers: 'I probably value working more with teams of women than men; I find them focused and their points of view creative and divergent' (AUS man 2). For most other Irish respondents the importance of having women in senior management was related to providing role models, while a minority saw its importance as limited or rhetorical: 'one can point to the fact that one has lots of women in senior management. That in itself is not without significance in the current climate' (IRE, man 8).

Overwhelmingly both the Australian and Irish respondents thought that Presidents/ VCs were very powerful as regards the gender profile of organisations. Australian respondents had strong views about how a Vice-Chancellor could change the gender balance in senior management and discussed examples of interventions – particularly by female VCs - that had led to improved gender balance in senior management teams: 'The VC has an important role in the gender balance of senior management, in trying to

make sure there is active searching for women to be on short lists, and around leadership training' (AUS man 21)

Male as well as female respondents (including VCs) in Australia discussed examples of interventions by both male and female VCs that had led to a better gender balance on senior management teams: 'He [male VC] worked hard to get two women on senior management. He did that at a time when a couple of the senior women professors were saying to the VC, it is time to change things' (AUS, man, 11). Other VCs had on occasion put women in acting management roles and then encouraged them to apply when the position was advertised. Some asserted that: 'VCs can change the gender profile of senior management by fiat. The authority is there is they wish to use it' (AUS, man, 17); and yet others spoke of having a responsibility to influence the gender profile and, when having difficulty filling positions, doing so by 'semi-invitation' (AUS, man, 21). A recipient of such initiatives described how: 'The university approached me because I was female and I fitted the work practices of the organisation' (AUS, woman, 14). In contrast the Irish respondents were ambivalent about that power being used:

Presidents are very powerful, they have the option, the big challenge is the pool of available candidates. Not to say that we don't have good women ... we have a number of good women doing a great job ... but I wouldn't want to pull them out of what they are doing... into the management area even from their own career path point of view they are better off heading up Research Institutes, doing their own research, publishing papers, getting money in, getting very well known in their own area (IRE, man, 19).

This kind of paternalism can be seen as reflecting 'heroic masculinity' (Kerfoot and Whitehead 1998, 451) insofar as it purports to protect women while at the same time reflecting and maintaining men's own positional power. It was also striking that among the Irish respondents, insofar as any criticism was made as regards the pace of change in this area, it was particularly likely to be expressed by women (a pattern that has also emerged in other studies such as Harris et al 1998): 'In relation to gender I just wonder are they gender blind, they don't see it as an issue. I'd say they are gender blind' (IRE woman 15). Some contrasted the situation in Ireland with what they had experienced in other countries as regards 'real' gender balance on committees and on interview panels i.e. 'similar numbers of men and women'. Even those who supported having more

women showed certain passivity: ‘It is important all things being equal, decisions that are at the margins they should go in the direction of gender balance’ (IRE man 20); ‘I think he [President] is interested in equality issues I don’t think he would do anything to undermine it. But I don’t think he would say to the Director of HR we need to get another woman on Senior Management’ (IRE woman 13)

A small number of Irish men suggested ways in which gender balance at senior management level might be improved: e.g. going out and ‘persuading women to become involved’ (IRE man 22); identifying the areas where Vice Presidents were going to be located and:

to say that at least one of these has to be female, if only because to represent the institution other than that would be actually counter productive ... Strategically it [university] needs ... to represent itself publicly as having a concern with these matters and they could make that decision strategically even if the purpose is to recruit female students (IRE man 17).

Occasionally Governing Authority’s role in relation to gender policies was adverted to: ‘There is of course a gender target: 40% of the elected members of Governing Authority have to be female’ (IRE man 17). However in all but one University the composition of the University Governing Authority breached that 40 per cent guideline. Hence the likelihood of pressure as regards improved gender balance coming from Governing Authorities in Irish universities seemed remote. In contrast Australia universities are required to submit annual reports to demonstrate their compliance with the legislation and to identify targets (O’Connor and White 2009).

In summary then there was no ambivalence among Australian participants, compared to Irish participants, about VCs/Presidents intervening to improve the representation of women in senior management. This is arguably linked to the impact of different state contexts as regards affirmative action in the gender area.

Summary and conclusions

This article examined Irish and Australian universities focusing on one indicator of their collegial/managerial status viz. the basis on which appointments were made, in addition

to examining evidence related to the gendering of such structures. It is clear that managerialism is firmly established in Australian universities, and that despite a collegial discourse in Ireland, the President/VC positions were seen as Chief Executive Officers in both countries, with untrammelled control over the appointments of those reporting to them (i.e. at DVC/Vice Presidential and Dean level). In this context it is all too possible that a culture of sameness may prevail, particularly in Ireland where internal appointments are favoured.

The perception of Australian and Irish participants, regardless of the collegial/managerial nature of the structure, was that Presidents/VCs and other senior gatekeepers played an important role in facilitating access to senior management positions. Therefore, although Irish participants saw the ‘demonstrated effectiveness’ model involving a graduated movement through a series of academic management posts as the ideal, this had been replaced by Presidential selection, a pattern that has coincided with increasing managerialism.

There was widespread acceptance by both the Irish and the Australian respondents that the President/VC could determine the gender profile of the senior management. However there was a marked perceived reluctance among Irish Presidents to actually do this, with evidence of attitudes reflecting ‘heroic masculinity’ i.e. that women were ‘better off’ out of management (Sinclair 1998). There was no such ambivalence among Australian respondents about the need for VCs to intervene to improve the representation of women in these positions. Such patterns can be seen as reflecting the wider legal and cultural contexts in the two countries, and particularly variation in the institutional pressure from the state as regards gender balance in senior management.

Deem et al (2008) suggest the possibility ‘of more complex and robust governance and management structures in which hybrid forms of collegiality and management emerge to take the university forward’ (see also White et al 2010). In both Ireland and Australia, the positional power of the President/VC was striking. In Ireland, despite a greater cultural endorsement of collegiality, both in its own right and as a discourse that

facilitated inclusivity, Presidential willingness to take action as regards gender balance was much weaker than in Australia.

Hence this paper suggests that simply juxtaposing collegiality and managerialism is unhelpful, since hybrids are emerging, shaped by particular national and university contexts. In the case of Ireland and Australia there are similarities in relation to the positional power of the President/VC and the importance of gatekeepers. However there are also differences. It was difficult to avoid the conclusion that in Ireland power within the universities was used as a mechanism for internal institutional homosociability (i.e. selecting leaders 'with familiar qualities and characteristics to one's self': Grummell et al 2009, 335). However, partly because of the Australian state's endorsement of a gender agenda, and partly because of greater mobility between institutions there, the concentration of power at VC level seemed to offer greater possibilities as regards gender representation. Nevertheless, it is suggested that differences however between the two countries are not simply due to variation along the collegial/managerialist continuum. Thus increased movement by Irish universities towards managerialism is unlikely to facilitate the development of the more positive gender involvement evident in the Australian responses.

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*Footnote: Irish Higher Education Authority (HEA)

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the statutory planning and policy development body for higher education and research in Ireland. The HEA has wide advisory powers and is the funding authority for the universities and other designated higher education institutions. Under Section 49 of the Universities Act 1997 the HEA has an advisory and review role in relation to obligations to promote gender balance amongst University staff and in the preparation and monitoring of gender equality policies (<http://www.heai.ie/en/AboutHEA-accessed> 6th Sept 2010 and Universities Act 199