

Constructing or Rejecting the Notion of the Other in Senior University Management: The Cases of Ireland and Sweden

By O'Connor, P. and Goransson, A. (2014) *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership* 1-18

Introduction

In this paper we are concerned with gender stereotyping by senior manager-academics (Deem, 2003) in Irish and Swedish universities. Sweden and Ireland are similar in that both are relatively affluent industrialized West European countries but with very different traditions of gender equality arrangements and discourses. They thus provide an interesting context for exploring the existence and content of gendered management stereotypes

Previous research has shown that what is seen as male and female changes over time and space. What is regarded as female and male in a certain society at a certain time is expressed in the gendering of the individual, including how we live our lives and think of ourselves in relation to others; in stereotypes, expectations and symbols, in our ways of behaving, in organisational structures and cultures and in institutions (including the labour market and the state: Scott, 1987). However stereotypically female activities are typically valued less than male ones, with the exact same task valued differently depending on whether it is done by a woman or a man (Lindgren 1985, Wikander, 1988). That difference in value may be greater in some cultures, periods, or contexts than in other ones (Scott 1987, Göransson 1998 and 2,000), but the primary principle is that the connection between masculinity and superordination will usually be preserved. Within those parameters, the content of what is gendered is contextually determined (Connell 1987, Bengtsson 2001).

Stereotypes are defined as 'beliefs about the characteristics, attributes and behaviours of members of certain groups' (Hilton and Von Hippel, 1996: 240) and are resistant to change. They can be seen as part of the symbolic structure that reflects and reinforces men's managerial position (Acker, 1990). Gender stereotypes are 'one-sided and exaggerated images of men and women which are deployed repeatedly in everyday life. They (- - -) operate as a widely understood shorthand' (Marshall, 1998:251). Stereotypes play an important part in affecting and legitimating the absence of women in senior positions in male dominated organisations and create potential difficulties for women in envisioning themselves in academic management roles (Powell et al, 2002). Women have frequently been

identified as Other, both in general terms and specifically in the academy (Acker, 1980).). The existence of male gender stereotypes encourages the definition of women as Other and constitutes another barrier to the utilisation of women's leadership potential: 'When leadership is defined in masculine terms, the leaders who emerge are disproportionately men, regardless of the sex composition of the community of followers' (Eagly, 2005:463). Equally when leaders are predominantly men, leadership will tend to be defined in masculine terms. In this article it will be shown that when, as in Sweden, a gender-balanced leadership exists in universities, these gender stereotypes are undermined.

It is suggested that variation in the endorsement of gender stereotypes in Ireland and Sweden provides a particular insight into the scope of the gender order (i.e. how many areas of collective life (jobs, tasks, etc) are gendered; and its force (i.e. the degree of importance assigned to a man being very 'masculine' or a woman very 'feminine'). The endorsement of gender stereotypes in senior management positions, provides an insight not only into the scope and force of genderization, but also into its degree of hierarchy (i.e. the extent to which the gender order involves not just 'difference' horizontally, but 'inequality' vertically: Thurén, 2000).

Wider Societal Contexts

In the World Values Survey Sweden is an outlier in comparison with all other countries and even in comparison with the rest of Protestant Europe, a position due mainly to its secular values and the high value of gender equality. In that study, Ireland is depicted as Catholic and positioned as having more traditional values than most of the other English-speaking countries, but at the same time highly valuing self-expression as opposed to survival values (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005:63). In both countries legislation and regulations exist that aim at securing and furthering gender equality in society.

The official definition of gender equality by the Swedish parliament is that women and men should have the same power to shape their own lives and society. Thus, in addition to equality legislation, there are rules that 40 per cent of leading positions and memberships of committees in university management should be occupied by 'the under-represented gender'. In Sweden, in any election, it is necessary that candidates of both genders should always be nominated and the leaders of almost all political parties have officially defined themselves as

feminists.¹ This kind of state commitment is particularly important since university Rectors are ultimately appointed by the state (after hearings in collegial assemblies). Gender equality values are also deeply anchored in the society. In Sweden the similarity discourse has been dominating since the 1970s, when in an effort to equalize women's and men's life opportunities, legislation introduced equal paid parental leave for men and women, individual taxation for husbands and wives, liberal abortion laws, and public day care for all children.

Women make up 47 per cent of the members of parliament. 81 per cent of the women and 88 per cent of the men are employed (2009), and one third of managers are women (SCB, 2010). 86 per cent of all children aged one to five years of age are in public day care. Strong horizontal gender segregation in the labour market persists, so that most people work in occupations dominated by their own gender. During the 1990s, several traditionally male-dominated educational tracks changed gender, and the study of economics, law, medicine and theology are now dominated by women. University lecturers are one of the most gender-equal professions quantitatively, with 43 per cent being women (Högskoleverket, 2011). However, vertical differences still exist, with only 23 per cent of those at professorial level being women (EC, 2012).

The position in Ireland is in some ways very different. Thus despite the presence of equality legislation, the state has made no attempt to enforce its own regulation involving 40 per cent gender representation on state boards. Female representation in the parliament (Dail) has rarely exceeded 15 per cent. It is unthinkable that political parties in Ireland would define themselves as feminist. In an unprecedented move, a Fine Gael/Labour Government has introduced the Electoral (Amendment) Bill (2011) which proposes that unless 30 per cent of the electoral candidates put forward by a political party in the next general election are women, its funding from the state will be reduced by 50 per cent. It remains to be seen what effect this will have on the political representation of women if enacted. Parental Leave (unpaid) exists as does individual taxation, while access to abortion remains in a legal quagmire.

Women's employment rate continued to rise between 2001 and 2007, exceeding the European Union 2010 target, which was 60 per cent female employment, by 2007 (CSO, 2011). However, both men's and women's employment rate started to fall in 2007 and that

¹ All except the leaders of the very small parties of Christian Democrats and the Sweden Democrats, 2001.

decline has continued with relatively little difference overall in the employment rate for men (65 per cent) and for women (56 per cent: CSO, 2011). Only 15 per cent of children are in formal child care (Saraceno, 2011). Parents in Ireland pay up to 90 per cent of their child care costs in comparison to 20 per cent in Sweden (Lynch and Lyons, 2008). Gender equality is most apparent in access to education, with women making up half of those in professional occupations and 30 per cent of those in managerial and administrative positions (CSO, 2011). During the Celtic Tiger era (1997- 2007) an equality agenda was marginalised and the government weakened those structures involved in implementing or monitoring equality (O'Connor, 2008; Crowley, 2010). The structure which has statutory responsibility for gender in higher education (Higher Educational Authority) did not even publish gendered data on university staff from 2004-11. Women constitute 41 per cent of university faculty, with 18 per cent of those at (full) professorial level being women (HEA, 2012), similar to that at European level (EU, 2009) and only marginally below that of Sweden.

The wider Irish societal discourse has for the most part remained committed to difference, rooted in essentialist views of men and women. As in Sweden, horizontal occupational segregation exists, although there too women have also increasingly been accessing areas of university education that were predominantly male (such as, for example, law or medicine). Attempts have been made to resist this by changing the entrance criteria to medicine, so as to reduce the number of women being admitted (O'Connor, 2013).

Across Europe, just under sixteen per cent of higher educational institutions were headed by women; with only ten per cent of universities having a woman as Rector/President (EU, 2013). The difference in the Irish and Swedish contexts is reflected in and reinforced by the differences in the presence of women in senior management positions in the two university systems. Thus for example, whereas 58 per cent of those at Rector/Presidential level are women in Sweden, there are no women at all at that level in Ireland (see Table 1). Similar, albeit less extreme, differences exist at all other levels of the university senior management hierarchy (apart from the lowest level i.e. Dean, where the proportions are broadly similar).

Table 1. Percentage of women in senior management positions at the universities.

	Sweden*	Ireland**
Rector/Presidents	58	0
Pro- Rector/Deputy	50	14

Presidents		
Vice Rector/Other Vice Presidents+	43	18
University Directors/Administrative Managers	46	24
Deans	29	25

* Figures for Sweden from the web (2011) include the 23 state-owned and three privately owned universities and college universities that offer PhD training; **Figures for Ireland are taken from the web and include all seven public universities: + In Ireland these include non-academics.

Methodology and description of the sample

The Irish and Swedish studies were undertaken as part of a wider cross national study (Bagilhole and White, 2011). The objectives were to analyse gender representation in university senior management in quantitative terms and to provide an in-depth qualitative analysis of senior managements' perception of that experience (Neale and Ozkanli, 2011). Senior management was defined as those at dean level or above who are currently or who had been in senior management in public universities in the previous five years. In the Irish study, 40 people were identified in a purposive sample. Interviews were completed with 34 people (85 per cent response rate) although only the 23 senior manager-academics are included in this article. In the Swedish study ten people at publicly-funded universities were identified in a purposive sample. All of these were manager-academics and interviews were completed with all of them (100 per cent response rate).

The interview guide was devised as part of a larger study by the Women in Higher Education Management (WHEM) Network (Bagilhole and White, 2011). 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 university management culture. In the Irish study interviews varied in length from 40 minutes to 90 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. The Swedish interviews varied in length from 45 minutes to two hours with the majority being about 90

minutes. They were face to face and tape-recorded, with the exception of one telephone interview. Supporting notes were taken. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated into English by the researcher. All the interviewing and transcribing was done by the authors. In the interests of confidentiality interview numbers and gender identifiers alone are used (e.g. SWE or IRE, man/woman and number of interview), and features (such as level) that could identify those involved are obscured or omitted.

The researcher in each country selected major themes emerging from the data for analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Using local expertise in identifying such themes contrasts with other cross-national studies and adds to the validity of those themes which emerged cross-nationally. In this paper we focus particularly on replies to the questions about the existence of gendered management styles as well as other references to the similarity or difference between the genders, as indicators of the absence/presence of gender stereotypes. It is impossible to know to what extent political correctness may affect the responses. This is particularly likely to be a problem in Sweden.

In this paper we distinguish between those who reject the existence of gender stereotypes; those who consider that there are differences but connect them not with gender but with other factors (such as academic discipline or power positions); and those who identify the existence and content of gender stereotypes.

Absence of Gender Stereotypes

Gender-neutral areas of activity have been depicted as having a wider scope in northern Europe (Thurén, 2000). In this study, Swedish respondents had trouble defining a male management style. They have an idea of what the stereotypes are, but they do not recognize them as something they have experienced, because women now hold the majority of positions in senior management in Swedish universities. In Ireland on the other hand, there is a greater belief in the credibility of gender stereotypes, reinforced by the minority of women in such positions and the wider societal and cultural context (O'Connor, 1998 and 2000).

Thus, there was much hesitancy about, or downright rejection of the existence of a gendered management style and gender stereotypes by the Swedish respondents. Many Swedish university managers had trouble understanding the question about gendered management

styles: 'There is no masculine leadership style' (SWE woman 2); 'I don't have a definition of a male style....' (SWE man 8) 'There are no differences between management styles of men and women. They do it the same way' (SWE woman 4). Very occasionally similar views were expressed by Irish respondents: 'The assumption is that there is a male management style, I don't think I agree with that assumption. There are different ones but it is not appropriate to consider them gendered, those management styles are related to other dimensions' (IRE woman 2).

In general insofar as the Swedish respondents recognised that variation in management styles existed, they were particularly likely to suggest that such variation reflected personal characteristics: 'It depends on the individual' (SWE man 3). They also referred to different disciplinary cultures, rather than those related to gender (Snow, 1959; Myrdal, 2010). The perceived characteristics of these disciplines varied. However discipline rather than gender accounted for the differences in management styles: 'I think the differences between disciplines are greater than between the genders when it comes to how you are and how you lead' (SWE man 3). References to disciplinary backgrounds did occasionally also occur amongst the Irish respondents, Thus there was a suggestion that women who adopted 'male' management styles were more likely to have 'come up the hard way in an extremely male environment' (IRE woman 13): 'In engineering perhaps women have to conform to male mores or expectations' (IRE man 22)

Arguably because of the greater presence of women in senior management positions in Sweden, and a widespread social acceptance of feminist goals, Swedish women were more willing to challenge the stereotypes by referring to people they knew or by juxtaposing such stereotypes with their own experiences. Thus when asked whether women adopt male management styles a woman says:

I am not so sure. There are many kinds of women and the odd one may do that. But there are also women like X and Y that I work with or who went before me that don't. They don't take on some kind of masculine way of being. My male colleague on the other hand is very soft. Of course I know that traditionally and conventionally there is a kind of stereotype for men and for women ... But when I look at my male colleagues not many fit into that. There are just as many women who are like that... I have always had a problem with that kind of categorical thinking. Masculine – feminine (SWE woman 6).

The view was also expressed that it is power rather than gender (Kanter 1993/1977) that is reflected in stereotypical management styles:

If men dominate, they say it [the management culture] is male, but is it male?...If you take Margaret Thatcher, she was very male in her leadership, wasn't she? If you get to the position she had, if you become Britain's prime minister and stay there, then you are a person who can handle power, who likes to exert power and is able to sort of handle, manipulate people if you want to. You may call that male or female. But there is no woman who reaches that position in a female world either without having these qualities. You are a power person so to speak when you get there. It has mostly been men who have had power and then it has been said that the way that most of them are or become or have to be in order to handle considerable power, that has been said to be male. But maybe it is the power rather than the gender that is characteristic (SWE man 3).

So, exerting power demands that you have a certain competence and qualities, no matter what gender you have. But these qualities have traditionally been defined as male, since until recently people at the top of the hierarchy have usually been men. The value of characteristics is related to the power of the person, rather than to the content of such characteristics (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003).

In summary then Swedish respondents were more likely to problematize the existence of gendered management stereotypes, by denying they existed; by locating such differences in the context of personality or discipline; or by seeing them as a reflection of power rather than gender. Only a minority of Irish respondents rejected the existence of gender stereotypes.

Existence and content of male gender stereotypes

Ferguson (1984) saw bureaucracies as inherently masculine, and in this context, women who were in a minority were under pressure to develop a 'male' management style. In both the Swedish and Irish interviews and amongst men and women, there were a sizeable number of references to a male stereotype in the university context: 'they spoke the language of the guys, they adopted male styles' (IRL woman 5).

Ely and Padavic (2007) suggested that in the United States, where men and women in senior management had similar management styles, it may be that women who have gained access to such positions have learnt 'male' styles, or that those who had such styles were selected by predominantly male bosses because of their perceived similarity to the dominant style (see also Sinclair, 1998). Stereotypes frequently used in the workplace are formed through observations of successful role models and those have historically been male. For some, women's adoption of male management styles was seen as a regrettable reflection of the absence of women as role models in these positions or of the existence of female role models

who were 'more masculine than the men'. There were occasional Swedish women who saw women as assuming male management styles and this was typically criticised: 'that is very tiresome, I think' (SWE woman 5).

Sinclair (1998: 153) found that in groups where there were only one or two women 'women's strategy is typically one of camouflage'. There is a well-known tendency to see the person from a minority as representative of their group, rather than as an individual (Kanter, 1993). Thus, women in male-dominated areas conform to the male majority, while there is greater variety in more gender-balanced areas or organizations (Wängnerud and Niklasson, 2007): 'I suppose if in a university or unit they are all pushy then you can only survive as a woman by being pushy as well or they essentially beat you down' (IRL male 11). Among the Swedish power elite, women in male-dominated fields, such as business, were more similar to their male colleagues than women in the gender-balanced political or (public service) media elite. A further indicator of subalternity may be that women are much more aware of the men's behaviour than vice versa (Freire, 1972). Constituting a minority will also mean that you are defined by the majority more often than the other way around. Thus, for some of the respondents the key issue was not gender but the minority status of women in senior management and this was occasionally referred to by both the Irish and Swedish respondents: 'I can understand if you are the only female in a senior management team.... In order to fit in, not to adopt the maleness of that but to adapt to the functioning of that management team' (IRL man 12); 'you have to be cocky' (SWE woman 4). References were also made to what could be seen as characteristics that were more generally related to women's position in society (such as lack of self-confidence; lack of experience of management) that made them particularly vulnerable to pressure to conform to the majority male stereotype.

Collinson and Hearn (1996) have referred to what they call 'the practical enactment of careerist masculinity, this contrasting with women's poor ability to market themselves and to take credit for their achievements, such patterns reflecting cross-cultural norms about female modesty concerning individual achievements and lack of political awareness (Bagilhole and Goode, 2001; Eagly and Carli, 2007; Doherty and Manfredi, 2010; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Yancey Martin 1996). This careerist concept was also seen as reflecting a male stereotype of self-promotion:

they always brag. I think that is so tiresome. They have a need to tell all the time how great they are and everybody that they know and where they have been positioned.

They create their power by squirting out, and women become like that too. They change, they imitate men's way of being (SWE woman 5).

Women in male-dominated fields are often given the message that they need to conform to a masculine image of leadership (Eveline, 2004). Madden (2005:7) suggested that the 'masculinised context so frequently found in higher education includes the assumption that effective leadership depends on status and power manifested through autocratic behaviour'. There were occasional suggestions in the Irish study that the leadership culture in universities was such a context: 'Academic institutions often have an aggressive style that easily crosses the line from assertiveness to bullying. You don't just defend your position, you assert yourself over someone' (IRL man 3). Typically, the Irish respondents referred to stereotypical views of a male management style as 'aggressive, assertive' (IRL man 19); an 'aggressive approach, target driven approach' (IRL man 21); 'I did adopt male approaches; I was decisive and authoritative' (IRL woman 6). In contrast, aggressive behaviour was rarely mentioned, much less endorsed, in the Swedish interviews. Management styles in Sweden are typically more democratic and less authoritarian than in most other countries. In that context, insofar as a stereotypical male style was referred to, it was seen as characterised by a certain impersonality and a lack of emotional engagement: 'Men are more reticent... What is a male management style? Not listening to people..' (SWE woman 7); 'Unemotional, rational, distanced. They are often so unconcrete and stay on levels of principle' (SWE woman 5). Connell (1995) has suggested that hegemonic masculinity is the most culturally valued form of masculinity in a particular society at a particular moment in time. It seems plausible to suggest that aggression is important in constructions of hegemonic masculinity in Ireland, whereas in Sweden, it was characterised by a kind of emotional distance.

Connell (1995:82) also suggested that the majority of men benefit from 'the patriarchal dividend' in terms of honour, prestige and the right to command. They also gain a material dividend'. Implicit in this is a greater cultural valuation of men and their activities reflected in a gendered culture of entitlement. Some of the respondents, both in Ireland and in Sweden, implicitly referred to this as part of a male stereotype:

if I'm dealing with male colleagues I'm dealing with the fact that we are here to do a job and I'm dealing with the fact of that individual's status, future and rank. If I'm dealing with women it's much more likely to be dealing with the job in hand (IRL man 18).

Men were seen as much more invested in their ideas and in their image in organisations and much less willing to accept authority or criticism:

There is a sort of a competitive instinct in men. If they come up with an idea they have the ownership of it. They have to defend it at all costs, if it is changed or rejected it is a personal slight on them. Women are more open to criticism of their ideas and amendment of them in order to turn them into ideas that might work. They don't call it 'my idea' as men do, women are more focused on making progress rather than defending their idea... Males are interested in looking good. With how they are perceived in the university. They are much more allergic to authority. They hate being told what to do, that their idea is off the wall (IRL man 7).

In some cases this gender difference in interactional styles was seen as reflecting men's 'bigger egos'. Both the Irish and the Swedish respondents suggested that men were stereotypically less committed to delivering job outputs than they were on enjoying the power or status related to that role: 'A lot of men are not so interested in doing the job, just being it. They want to be in it but not doing the job' (IRL woman 15):

Men are allowed to be more negligent without anyone saying anything..... They can be more nonchalant, more careless, less prepared for a meeting. That is easier accepted. But I think it is changing. The younger women do not tolerate it, they will hiss and say: Now really! They are cockier and it is easier for them not to accept what large parts of the university world would accept (SWE woman 6).

This Swedish respondent suggested that a benign attitude to men's underperformance is changing, and this might well be seen as reflecting a reduction in the patriarchal dividend (Connell, 1995). Women are generally seen by both men and women as working harder and more efficiently than men. When men take on a position of trust they may well be counting on others to do the job, while they continue accumulating social and cultural capital by doing other activities. As long-standing monopolists of these power positions they may have developed a trust in their colleagues to cover for them or to protect them or at least to smooth things over. The ability to access resources to enable them to delegate to others can in turn be seen as a reflection of culturally legitimated patriarchal entitlement.

Hartmann (1981:14) has suggested that a key element in the maintenance of patriarchy is the 'interdependence and solidarity amongst men that enable them to dominate women'. This phenomenon has been referred to in various terms which are variants of homosociality (Lipman-Blumen, 1976; Kanter, 1993; Collinson and Hearn, 2005; Blackmore et al, 2006). Witz and Savage (1992:16) suggest that 'homosociality is often gendered as men (and other dominant groups) 'effectively 'clone' themselves in their own image' limiting access to 'those of their own kind' so that a 'culture of sameness' is prioritised (Grummell et al 2009; see also Gronn and Lacey 2006). In both the Irish and Swedish studies it was suggested that

men handled their relationships with other men carefully so as to avoid confrontation, with the outcome of meetings being set up in advance (such a picture contrasting vividly with the stereotypical stress on male aggression and reflecting a kind of male deference and reliance on informal understandings): ‘Men are less likely to cause a row, I think men tend to side with the person in charge of the committee, they tend to try to get away with negotiating outside [the committee]’ (IRL woman 4).

I noticed that when I became dean, some men got confused since they were used to phoning straight to the dean and making deals about things. And they could not do that with me. I could not work that way. I referred them and said that this is the way we’ll do it, this issue has to be taken up there and there and there. We must do it by the book. But I noticed that there was such a culture, some sort of fraternal culture (SWE woman 7).

Powell et al (2002: 190) found that in their study of changes in managerial stereotypes over time, despite a substantial increase in the proportion of women managers between the mid 1970s and the late 1990s in the United States, good managers were still described in stereotypically male terms. Hence an increase in the proportion of women in these positions in itself is not sufficient to erode ‘Think manager - think male’, which ‘seems to be a global phenomenon, especially among males’ (Powell et al, 2002:180). Similar trends emerged in the present study: ‘I think it is easier to accept a man in this position because you imagine a man’ (SWE woman 7).

It was striking how few of the Irish respondents had any experience of working with a female boss. Amongst those who had such experiences, the men particularly were likely to suggest that other people saw it as problematic. There were also occasional suggestions of male discomfort with women in senior positions in the Swedish study: ‘There are some people who are very uncomfortable with having a woman in a senior role’ (IRL woman 23); ‘I think there are always men who have a problem working with women. I meet them everywhere’ (SWE woman 2). There were very occasional examples in the Irish study of those who did not see a woman boss as at all problematic: ‘ I did not think anything of it’ (IRL man 17); “both of these experiences were very positive”(IRL woman 13). However, these comments were more positive and numerous amongst the Swedish respondents: ‘It is great. I really enjoy it’ (SWE woman 5); ‘There is thoughtfulness and consideration for the staff...The Rector tries to put people on assignments that they like’ (SWE woman 4).

In summary, both the Irish and the Swedish respondents referred to a male stereotype, albeit that the content of this stereotype varied. Thus the Irish respondents see a 'male' gendered management style as aggressive, while insofar as the Swedish respondents refer to it, they see it as emotionally detached, reflecting different constructions of hegemonic masculinity. Swedish women and men know about this stereotype, but largely reject it, pointing to their own experiences. Both Irish and Swedish women are challenging a patriarchal sense of entitlement which underpins stereotypical male management styles (and ultimately constructions of hegemonic masculinity).

Existence and content of female stereotypes

Eagly et al (2003:572) suggest that there is a certain 'incongruity' between leadership roles and female gender roles in Western countries: 'People's beliefs about leadership are thus more similar to their beliefs about men than women'. Thus in these contexts 'to act 'masculine' at work raises questions about their status as women; but to act 'feminine' disqualifies them from leadership' (Ely and Padavic, 2007). For women this means that they are continually judged because of their gender: 'her subject position is seen as feminine, thus soft, weak and emotional' (Priola, 2007: 29). In such contexts, women's behaviour as leaders is least offensive when it most closely conforms to their stereotypical gender role.

For Connell (1987: 187) the construction of femininity is seen as being reflected in a 'display of sociability rather than technical competence'; it 'is oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men and therefore emphasises dependency, nurturance, and compliance' (Ely and Padavic, 2007: 1129). Madden (2005:5) also suggested that in a context where competence and sociability were the two key dimensions for assessing the Other, women were more likely to be depicted as sociable than competent. There were suggestions that a feminised style of management involved being focussed on people: 'Females typically would be more people-centric and would know the people in their departments and be also much more adept at understanding personalities' (IRL man 9). Thus in Ireland female stereotypes implicitly reflect and maintain existing power structures.

In a context where women feel that they must try to conform to a masculine style, women can feel the need to avoid any nurturing or caring behaviour for fear of being criticised as too 'soft' (Priola, 2007; Rhodes, 2003). This did not emerge in either the Irish or Swedish study.

In the Irish study, there were occasional references to a kind of emotional intelligence that women were assumed to have, partly drawing on essentialist views of women and partly reflecting women's greater likelihood of being outside the established power hierarchy: 'Women are more discerning.... see more than one side. I would always like to have some women with me when assessing because of how easily men can be hoodwinked by other men' (IRL woman 6). This was a common view in earlier feminist literature (for instance Sørensen, 1982).

Although 'feminine' styles of relating may be seen as morally superior, they are incompatible with control (Cancian, 1986). Thus although a number of studies have shown that men are equally capable of intimate interaction, they preferred to do so less often than women (O'Connor 2002). For some of those in the present study the most important stereotypical difference was women's greater intimacy and in particular their ease in talking about their personal and family situations: 'You can have different conversations.....there is a certain shorthand or short cut that you can get somewhere faster than with men.... with some men you can get to the same place, but with women you can get there much quicker' (IRL woman 23).

In the Irish study, while very few of the respondents had female bosses, most of those who had worked with women at their own level tended to have positive stereotypical views of women. They stressed that women were less likely to engage in status related formulaic conversations; more likely to be concerned with outcomes; more likely to be aware of the context and more likely to be particularly aware of the impact of their decisions on people and less likely to be bounded by convention in their search for solutions:

They have a different perspective, a low toleration of bullshit, cutting straight to the chase.. women are less tolerant of everyone having five minutes of their say so they can say what everyone might expect them to say, there is not so much posturing.. More of a willingness to embrace new ideas, to push the boat out, to do something different (IRL woman 14).

Powell et al (2002) noted that in their study, despite the increased stress on feminine characteristics as useful in a management context, management stereotypes did not involve a positive valuation of them. The female stereotype was also not used or valued in the Swedish interviews. Indeed one respondent mused over the difference between the 'twitterish' image of a female big business leader and her obvious competence at her job.

In some cases the Irish respondents identified specific individuals who implicitly deviated from a female stereotype. Thus for example, in a context where a weak personality and an inability to fight for resources were implicitly part of a female stereotype, they referred to named individual(s) in the present: ‘Generally quite strong people, able to fight their corner in some way better than their male counterparts, able to make their case for whatever they are arguing for’ (IRE man 20); and in the past who was seen as:

Very formidable, terrified men around the college, what she wanted she got. She had only one agenda, promotion of her students and her discipline. If you worked hard for her she would find scholarships for you. She would go and tell the President that she needed an office for you. She was one of the blue-stocking generation. She protected you and she minded you (IRE woman 15).

However in contrast to their Swedish counterparts, these individual experiences did not undermine the gender stereotype.

Oshagbemi and Gill (2003) found that in their study women were less likely than men to delegate (see last section). This may reflect the fact that women are less used to being in power or less able to access resources to enable them to delegate effectively. It could also be seen as reflecting female managers typically highly visible minority status, or the tendency for women to be hired as managers in a crisis situation (what Ryan and Haslem 2005 call the ‘glass cliff’). Sinclair (1998) found that in studies of Australian executives, an eye for detail was seen as more important than international experience to their success, although it can also be seen as indicative of micro-management. In the Irish study one of the main perceived gender differences in management styles was women’s greater attention to detail, something that the men were ambivalent about: ‘the women will be a little more pernicky, the small print, details, exceptions to the rule, men will mutter about it but will wave it away and move on, but women are a little more particular about the detail’ (IRE man 16). From the Swedish women’s point of view men’s ability to access resources, and hence to delegate was important in lightening their effective workload: ‘Women actually do their assignments. You can trust them to do so’ (SWE woman 6)

I take it seriously and they don’t....we are such solid girls....We take our assignments seriously and we do them so well. A guy can be head of a department and still do 50 per cent research because he requires that there be people to delegate to.....Women might be less good at demanding resources (SWE woman 2)

It has been suggested that women's lack of support for each other may also reflect women's subaltern status (the 'Queen Bee' syndrome: Mavin, 2008). This is part of a traditional stereotypical notion about women (O'Connor, 2002). There was very little evidence of this in either study. Indeed many of the Irish respondents explicitly referred to the extent of support they received from other women and the extent to which they were seen as opening up opportunities for such women: 'they saw me paving the way' (IRL woman 5). In the Swedish study also it came out only as a stereotype that was denied (SWE woman 4).

In summary then Irish respondents were more likely to identify and to value a female stereotype (one that was person-oriented and did not disrupt the established power structures). Irish men were most likely to refer to negative aspects of it, such as attention to detail, such attitudes arguably reflecting wider control issues. Both the Irish and the Swedish respondents referred to people who did not conform to the gendered stereotype, but in the case of the Irish respondents, this did not undermine their endorsement of that stereotype.

Discussion, Summary and Conclusions

Sweden and Ireland are in theory characterized by the same ambitions as regards gender equality. But Sweden is implementing equality policies rather strongly in practice, while in Ireland implementation is very weak. Swedish gender equality policy is rooted in strong public opinion and a long tradition of social equality ambitions in general. If you want to survive in politics in such a context you have to be pro-feminist. Gender equality values do not evoke a similar response in the Irish public or the Irish state.

The Swedish respondents are aware that there has been a general discussion in society about gender stereotypes. There are lingering gender stereotypes but these are not corroborated by respondents' immediate experiences. Thus many of them are confused and either hesitant about identifying stereotypes or reject such stereotypes, saying the differences reflect personality or academic discipline, not primarily gender. Especially in Sweden there is also the argument that power, rather than gender is the key phenomenon. Informal structures are seen as common amongst the men in power with homosociality being seen as a key obstacle to women accessing positions in senior management in male dominated structures. In Ireland in contrast the stereotypes are widely endorsed, and reflect stereotypical views of male managers as aggressive and female ones as person-oriented and concerned with detail. Such

stereotypes implicitly reflect constructions of gender which legitimate unequal access to senior management positions.

Hence we suggest that in Ireland the gender order (including senior management in universities) has a wider scope, a stronger force and is effectively more hierarchical than in Sweden (Thurén, 2000). Thus variation in the endorsement of gender stereotypes in Ireland and Sweden provides an insight into the force of the gender order (i.e. the degree of importance assigned to a man being very 'masculine' or a woman very "feminine'.) Since the focus is on gender stereotypes in senior management positions, their endorsement also provides an insight into the extent to which the gender order involves and implicitly legitimates vertical inequality (Thurén, 2000). Senior management in higher education is now gender-balanced in Sweden and the discourse around it is gender-neutral. In that context the gender order has less scope and much less force. This conclusion is tentative, since it is based on two small qualitative studies of those in university senior management and it needs to be tested in other studies.

In the Swedish study gender stereotypes seem mostly to be a remnant of an earlier kind of attitude that in any case is unthinkable as an explanation for women's position in academia. In the Irish study on the other hand, such stereotypes reflect and reinforce the absence of women from senior management positions. In Sweden articulated feminist values and measures, that both men and women relate to in the wider state, as well as a societal discourse that is actively supportive, is important in reflecting and reinforcing very different patterns amongst university senior managers. In this context the strong presence of women in university senior management in Sweden can be seen as reflecting and weakening an identification of women as Other. These are simply no longer gendered (male-coded) positions. In Ireland, the absence of women from such positions and its taken-for-grantedness in the context of the gendered stereotypes, reflects and reinforces a very different reality: one that reinforces the position of women as Other, and could be seen as 'inevitable' and 'natural' were it not for the contrasting Swedish example. Thus the comparison between Sweden and Ireland highlights the implications of the loss of meaning by stereotypes in a context where the social context no longer confirms them. This is indeed an argument for introducing quotas in order to undermine such stereotypical ideas.

Comparative gender research has suggested that the outcome of a gender order in a specific situation (such as senior management) is determined by a number of factors, including the

general political situation and particularly its views on gender equality; by the strength of the women's movement; the existence of networks and organisations promoting gender equality as well as by the recruitment process, and the degree of support from so called femocrats and politicians in parliament and public administration (see for instance, Bauer & Tremblay 2011). At each of these levels in Sweden there is pressure to implement gender equality.

In a national context such as Ireland, pressure from external structures can be very helpful in shaping the concerns of policy makers. Thus for example, the OECD (2012) report which stresses the link between gender equality and economic growth is an important reminder to policy makers of the importance of a gender agenda, and this as well as on-going EU pressure is arguably not unrelated to the decision of the Higher Educational Authority (the statutory planning and policy development body for higher education and research in Ireland) to resume (after a lapse of seven years), collection and publication of data on the gender profile of academic staff in universities. Even yet however (and in contrast to Sweden), such data is not being collected on those in senior management. Without such data, it is impossible for the state or the wider public to monitor changes, or even to be aware of existing patterns.

In Sweden the appointment of the Rector is officially made by the state (following nomination by a collegial assembly or committee, which after the managerial university reform is only advisory). Nevertheless, insofar as state policy favours equality, then gender balance is more likely, and those who are appointed are likely to support it. However in Ireland, the President of each university is appointed by that University's Governing Authority, which is typically overwhelmingly male, despite (unenforced) state regulations as regards gender balance: reflecting and reinforcing a widespread pattern of poor implementation in the gender area (OECD, 2012). Furthermore, at Presidential level there is a strong tendency for candidates from inside the university to be appointed, with these people then appointing people who are like themselves (and given the scope and force of the gender order, these are frequently of the same gender).

The increased power of the President/Rector under managerialism increases the possibility of the effectiveness of any action that is taken in this area, although it also creates a dependence on his/her support in a way which is reminiscent of a medieval court (O'Connor, 2013). Arguably reflecting that support, in a context where there were other strong pressures as regards equality the proportion of women at professorial level in the University of Limerick went from zero in 1997 to 34 per cent in 2010 (the highest in Ireland and considerably above

the EU average): while in a sister university 100 kilometres away, the proportion is very much lower than the average (i.e. 12 per cent: HEA, 2012). Being a professor is mandatory for a career in management in Sweden. Efforts have been made to increase their number, but progress is slow, only comparable to that of women in big business. Nevertheless the under-representation of women at professorial level has not been reflected at Rector level there.

Cross university initiatives to promote gender equality in senior management are possible at the national and European level. Thus it is possible for structures to be created which foster gender balance at management level at these levels. In Swedish universities young feminist researchers, already active in the women's movement, formed a grassroots organisation (Forum) in 1978 in order to further both women's academic situation and feminist research. It soon spread to all universities and gained support (both economic and political) from femocrats in the Agency for Universities and in research councils as well as that of women members of parliament. This cooperation between levels is typical of the reformist tradition in Sweden and has led to the situation today when gender equality policy is an established political and administrative field. The Forums are now integrated into the university system as research and education institutions; while the gender equality aspects are handled in general legislation and policy recommendations. In Ireland, although the issue of the representation of women in university management was recognised as an issue in the 1990s, it has been effectively ignored by the universities and the state since then. There is mounting grass roots pressure among academic staff for the implementation of a cross-institutional action plan to promote gender equality (Ni Laoire and O'Grada 2012), reinforced by EU funding for various gender projects (at University of Limerick; University College Cork and Trinity College Dublin).

At the level of the individual there is also scope for action since gender patterns are maintained at this level. Some of this may involve facilitating the creation of networks for women at senior management level; the initiation of single sex leadership development for early and mid-career women as well as cross gender mentoring. In recent years new networks for women in senior management, courses, mentoring and special research support for women have been introduced at Swedish universities. In Ireland initiatives have focussed particularly on mentoring and generic management development courses. However there is an increasing recognition that such initiatives may be less than effective if they are not rooted in feminism, since in that context they may simply transfer responsibility for change from the organisation to the individual. Gender awareness workshops which highlight the realities of

gendered micropolitics as well as the use of gender targets in management may also be effective, not least through highlighting the expectations of senior management that these patterns will be changed.

There is considerable evidence from the international business sector that gender balanced management structures facilitate innovation and creativity. It is unthinkable that such patterns would not exist in knowledge creating and transmitting organisations such as universities. As such, universities have a special responsibility to model examples of best practice for other institutions and employment sectors. They have the potential, and the responsibility, to create structures which promote gender equality and other forms of equitable management. It is unthinkable that they would not respond to this challenge.

References

- Acker, S. (1980) 'Women: the Other Academics', *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 1(1): 81-91
- Acker, J. (1990) 'Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organisations', *Gender and Society* 4(2): 139-158
- Alvesson, M and Sveningsson, S. (2011/2003) 'Managers doing leadership: the Extra-ordinization of the Mundane', in D. Collinson,, K. Grint, and B. Jackson, B. (eds.) *Leadership Volume 3 2000-2005* London: Sage, 357-78
- Bagilhole, B. and White, K. (2011) (eds) *Gender, Power and Management: A cross Cultural Analysis of Higher Education* Palgrave MacMillan
- Bagilhole, B. and Goode, J. (2001) 'The Contradiction of the Myth of Individual Merit, and the Reality of a Patriarchal Support System in Academic Careers: A Feminist Investigation' *European Journal of Women's Studies* May, 2001 8: 161-180.
- Bauer G and Tremblay M, eds (2011) *Women in Executive Power. A global overview*. Abingdon, Oxon, New York: Routledge.
- Bengtsson M (2001) *Tid, rum, kön och identitet. Om föräldraidentifikationens förändringar 1959-1993*. Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur.
- Blackmore, J. Thomson, T. and Barty, K. (2006) 'Principal Selection: Homosociability, the Search for Security and the Production of Normalised Principal Identities', *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, 34(3): 297-317
- Cancian, F.M. (1986) 'The feminisation of love' *Signs, Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 4:692-709
- Collinson, D.L. and Hearn, J. (2005) 'Men and Masculinities in Work, Organisations and Management', M. Kimmel, J. Hearn and R.W. Connell (eds), *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* California: Sage
- Collinson, D.L. and Hearn, J. (1996) 'Breaking the Silence: On Men, Masculinities and Managements', in D.L. Collinson and J. Hearn (eds) *Men as Managers, Managers as Men: Critical Perspectives on Men, Masculinities and Managements*. London: Sage: 1-24
- Connell, RW (1995) *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Connell, R.W. (1987) *Gender and Power*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- CSO (2011) *Women and Men in Ireland 2010* Dublin: Stationery Office
- Crowley, N. (2010) *Empty Promises: Bringing the Equality Authority to Heel*. Dublin: A and A Farmar
- Davies-Netzley, S. (1998) 'Women above the glass ceiling: Perceptions on corporate mobility and strategies for success', *Gender and Society*, 12 (3), 339-355
- Deem, R. (2003) 'Gender, Organisational Cultures and the Practices of Manager-Academics in UK universities', *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 10(2): 239-59
- Doherty, L. and Manfredi, S. (2010) 'Improving women's representation in senior positions in universities', *Employee Relations*, 32(2): 138-155
- Eagly, A. (2005) 'Achieving relational authenticity in leadership: Does gender matter?' *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16: 459-474
- Eagly, AH, Johannesen, Schmidt, MC and Van Engen, M. L. (2003) 'Transformational, Transactional, and Laissez-Faire Leadership Styles', *Psychological Bulletin* 19(4): 569-91
- Eagly A. H. and Carli, L L. (2007) 'Leadership' *Harvard Business Review*, September 63-71
- Ely, R. and Padavic, I (2007) 'A feminist analysis of organisational research on sex differences', *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4): 1121-1143
- EU (2013) *She Figures 2012 Gender in Research and Innovation*
http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/she-figures-2012_en.pdf accessed 12th April 2013
- EU (2012) *She Figures 2012* Accessed 23rd October 2012
http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/she_figures_2012_en.pdf
- Eveline, J. (2004) *Ivory Basement Leadership*, Crawley, Western Australia: University of Western Australian Press
- Ferguson, K. (1984) *The Feminist Case against Bureaucracy* Philadelphia: Temple University Press
- Freire P (1972) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Gronn, P. and Lacey, K. (2006) 'Cloning their own: Aspirant principals and the school-based selection game', *Australian Journal of Education*, 50(2): 102-121.
- Grummell, B. Lynch, K. and Devine, D. (2009) 'Appointing Senior Managers in Education: Homosociability, Local Logics and Authenticity in the Selection Process', *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership* 37(3): 329-349
- Göransson, (2011) 'Gender equality and the shift from collegiality to managerialism', in B. Bagilhole and K. White (eds) *Gender, Power and Management: A Cross Cultural Analysis of Higher Education*, London: Palgravemcmillan: 50-77
- Göransson A (2000) Inledning. In: *Sekelskiften och kön: strukturella och kulturella övergångar år 1800, 1900 och 2000* (Göransson A, ed). Stockholm: Prisma förlag.
- Göransson A (1998) Mening, makt och materialitet. Ett försök att förena realistiska och poststrukturalistiska positioner. In: *Häftet för kritiska studier 1998* (4): 3-26
- Government Publications (2011) Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Bill accessed 3rd January 2012
<http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/bills/2011/7911/b7911s.pdf>

- Hartmann, H. (1981) 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union', L. Sargent (ed) *Women and Revolution: A discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism* Boston: South End Press:1-41
- HEA (2012) Data by gender and level in the universities. Unpublished
- Hilton, J.L. and von Hippell, W. (1996) 'Stereotypes' in J.T. Spence, J.M. Darley and D.J. Foss (eds) *Annual Review of Psychology* 47:237-271
- Högskoleverket (2011) Rapport, Stockholm: Högskoleverket.
- Inglehart R & C Welzel (2005) *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kanter, R M (1993/1977). *Men and Women of the Corporation*. 2nd Edition. New York: Basic Books .
- Lindgren G (1985) Kamrater. Kollegor och kvinnor: en studie av könssegregeringsprocessen i två mansdominerade organisationer. Umeå: Dpt of Sociology. Diss.
- Lipman-Blumen, J. (1976) 'Towards a homosocial theory of sex roles' in *Signs*, (3): 15-31;
- Lynch, K. and Lyons, M. (2008) 'The Gendered Order of Caring' U.Barry (ed) *Where are we now?* Dublin: TASC Publications: 163-183
- Madden, M.E (2005) 'Presidential Address: Gender and Leadership in higher education', *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 29:3-14
- Marshall, G. (1998) *A Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford: OUP
- Mavin, S. (2008) 'Queen Bees, Wannabees and Afraid to Bees: No More 'Best enemies' for women in management?' *British Journal of Management*, 19: S75-84
- Miles, MB and Huberman, A.M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Sage
- Myrdal J (2010) *Spelets regler i vetenskapens tjänst*. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur.
- Neale, J. and Ozkanli, O (2011) 'Research Design' in B. Bagilhole and K. White (eds.) op cit
- Ni Laoire, C. and O'Grada, A. and (2012) *Recommendations for Actions towards Gender Equality in Academic and Research Careers in the Higher Education Sector*, launched 17th November, UCC.
- Oshagbemi, T. and Gill, R. (2003) 'Gender differences and Similarities of UK Managers', *Women in Management Review*, 18 (6):288-298
- O'Connor, P. (2013) *Higher Education and the Gendered World of Senior Management*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, forthcoming
- O'Connor, P. (2008) 'The Irish patriarchal state: continuity and change', M.Adshead, P. Kirby and M. Millar (eds.). *Contesting the State*. Manchester University Press: 143-164
- O'Connor, P. (2002/1992) *Friendships Between Women*. New York, Hemel Hempstead, Eastbourne: Guildford, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Pearsons
- O'Connor, P. (2000) 'Ireland: A Man's World?' *The Economic and Social Review* 31(1) Jan: 81-102
- O'Connor, P. (1998) *Emerging Voices: Women in Contemporary Irish Society*. Dublin: IPA
- OECD (2012) *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now* <http://www.oecd.org/gender/closingthegap.htm> accessed 19th December 2012
- Powell, GN, Butterfield, D.A. and Parent, J.D. (2002) 'Gender and Managerial Stereotypes: Have the Times Changed?' *Journal of Management*, 28(2):177-103

- Priola, V. (2007) "Being Female Doing Gender. Narratives of Women in Education Management", *Gender and Education*, 19(1): 21-40.
- Rhodes, D. (2003) "The Difference 'Difference' Makes", In Rhodes, D. (Ed) *The Difference 'Difference' Makes: Women and Leadership* Stanford :3-50
- Ryan, M. K., & Haslam, S. A. (2005). The Glass Cliff: Evidence that women are over-represented in precarious leadership positions. *British Journal of Management*, 16: 81-90.
- Saraceno, C. (2011) 'Child care needs and child care policies: A multidimensional issue' *Current Sociology* 59 (1): 78-96
- Scott J W (1987) *Gender and the politics of history*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- SCB (2010) Statistisk årsbok 2010. Table 286, p 284.
- Sinclair, A. (1998) *Doing Leadership Differently*. Victoria: Melbourne University Press
- Snow C P (1959) *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Sörensen B A (1982) "Ansvarsrasjonalitet: om mål-middeltenkning blant kvinner". H Holter (ed), *Kvinner i fellesskap*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. pp 392-402.
- Thurén B-M (2000). 'On force, scope, hierarchy: Concepts and questions for a cross-cultural theorization of gender'. Paper presented at the European Feminist Conference in Bologna. (Short version published in Swedish as "Om styrka, räckvidd och hierarki samt andra genusteoretiska begrepp", in *Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift* (1996), 3-4.
- Sinclair, A. (1998) *Doing Leadership Differently*. Victoria: Melbourne University Press
- Wängnerud L & B Niklasson (2007) *Maktens åsikter*. In: *Maktens kön* Göransson A, (ed). Nora, Sweden: Nya Doxa förlag.
- Witz, A. and Savage, M. (1992) 'The Gender of Organisations' M. Savage and A. Witz (eds.) *Gender and Bureaucracy* Oxford: Blackwell: 3-62
- Wikander U (1988) *Kvinnors och mäns arbeten. Gustavsberg 1880-1980. Genusarbetsdelning och arbetets degradering vid en porslinsfabrik. Det svenska arbetets historia*. Lund: Arkiv förlag.
- Yancey Martin, P. (1996) 'Gendering and Evaluating Dynamics: Men, Masculinities and Managements', in D.L. Collinson, and J. Hearn, (eds) op.cit.